Notes on an expedition through the interior of Viti Levu

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SINCE the Cession of the Fiji islands to Great Britain, mischievous mis-representations have been circulated among the natives, to the effect that their lands were about to be confiscated and they themselves driven to live upon certain small reserves. These stories were to some extent credited, and excited considerable uneasiness and apprehension in the minds of the chiefs and people, to allay which, the Governor, soon after his arrival, thought it expedient to send a messenger to the interior Tribes to explain how little he entertained any such intentions.

For this service Mr. Walter Carew, a gentleman for some years resident in Fiji; was selected by His Excellency, and it was my good fortune to be permitted to accompany him on his journey.

Before I go further I cannot but express my strong feeling of the fitness of Mr. Carew for the duty assigned to him by the Governor, and my earnest conviction that, as a medium of communication between the Government and the native population of Central Viti Levu, no one could have been chosen better qualified than that gentleman. A perfect Fijian scholar, he is conversant with the various idioms made use of in the different dialects; he thoroughly understands and appreciates the native character; not blind to their faults, and boldly denouncing their evil practices, he is at the same time patient and untiring in his endeavours to explain to them the benefits they may expect by leading peaceable lives. On the other hand, the natives place in him implicit confidence and reliance; he has penetrated, alone, with safety, into the interior of the country, further than any other white man, and he has lately, unaided and on his own responsibility,

performed an action which merits the highest praise, in inducing the chiefs of hitherto most lawless tribes (up to that time utterly beyond the reach of the Government, and even at enmity, among themselves,) to descend from their mountain homes, and giving up their former quarrels, with one mind to submit to the British Government. The circumstances of this exploit are well known, though hardly, I think, sufficiently appreciated. It is not, however, my place to comment upon the manner in which Mr. Carew's services in this matter have been recognised.

Our start for the interior was to be made from Bau, and to that place we were kindly given a passage. on the 13th July, by the ex-King Cakobau, in his yacht the "Lurline," in which he himself and his suite also sailed.

The wind being unfavourable, after coasting round the western point of Ovalau, we put in for the night at Niu Basaga, a small village on the south coast of the island of Moturiki. This island is a favourite resort of Cakobau who keeps a considerable stock of cattle upon the excellent pasturage it affords. These herds, however, are to some extent a burden upon the villagers, whose vegetable gardens are occasionally trampled over and injured by them.

We were somewhat disappointed to learn the next morning that Cakobau did not intend leaving for Bau until the following day. This delay, we afterwards ascertained, was for the purpose of collecting contributions of yams and other vegetables, and in some cases, I believe, pigs, from the inhabitants of the island. And here, for the first time, I saw the "Lala" system carried Into actual practice. From long usage,

the people have become used to this kind of extortion at the hands of their chiefs, that they scarcely look upon it in the light of the hardship which, in some cases, it undoubtedly is.

During the day I walked across the centre of the island, over a low range of hills, in some parts well wooded, and following along the coast on the opposite side, viz., on that facing Ovalau, returned to Niu Basaga round its south-eastern extremity of the island, (a distance of about 10 miles), passing through seven small villages, all of them ill-kept and dirty. This may partly be accounted for by the state of inaction and depression existing among the native population consequent upon the late epidemic of measles; and I may here mention that at Moturiki, and at all the places we afterwards passed through on the island of Viti Levu, the people appear to have suffered terribly, at least a third of the entire population having died, from this disease or its consequences, the latter generally taking the form of acute dysentery or diarrhoea.

On the following day, as Cakobau had completed his arrangements, we started about midday for Bau, where we arrived after a fast run of two hours.

Everyone who has written anything about Fiji has given a description of Bau, its ancient capital, and I need therefore say no more than that as we neared the small islet on which the town is built I was much struck by its picturesqueness. Encircled by a rough grey stone embankment, it rises from the sea, the high brown roofs of the houses contrasting well with the green of the trees among which they appear to be embedded.

Much damage has been done to this

town by the late fire, twenty-seven houses in the Lasakau quarter having been burnt, together with a large meeting house, a building of 140 feet long, and one of Cakobau's largest double canoes. Many more houses, if not the whole town, would have been sacrificed, had it not been for the prompt energy displayed by Lieutenants Carslake and Harrison, of HM.S. " Pearl," who happened to be there, while on leave of absence, on the night on which the fire took place. The great service they have rendered to the people of Bau I was glad to find was fully appreciated by at leist one of the natives,— Adi Kuila, Cakobau's eldest daughter,— who spoke most warmly of the aid afforded by these gentlemen, and graphically described their exertions in endeavoring, and happily with success, to restore order where all was panic and confusions

This lady deserves far more than a mere passing comment, and I wish I were more qualified to describe in terms which cannot be misunderstood by those who may hereafter read these words, the respect and admiration with which she has inspired most of those who, like myself, have had the privilege of her acquaintance.

A daughter of the great Chief, Cakobau, she inherits from her mother yet higher rank. The widow of the Chief of a large district in South-east Viti Levu, she has wisely ruled the people, who, since his death, have regarded her as their Chief. Learned in native politics, her opinion has much weight in her father's home ; and it is, I believe, universally admitted among Fijians that, although according to their laws a woman has no right to give expression to an opinion in public, she is as well qualified

as any man among them to decide the course of action to be pursued in serious and difficult questions affecting either the Chiefs themselves or the people.

In her own house she makes a charming and admirable hostess, and, notwithstanding the numerous occupations which engage her attention — now hearing some complaint, now issuing an order, now intent upon reading, now receiving and writing letters, — she does not despise the simpler duties of a good housewife. She is a staunch adherent of the Wes. leyan Church, and in the education of her children pays due regard to their religious instruction. It is a pleasing and at the same time touching sight to see her youngest son, *Ratu Timoci*, a little boy of between three and four years old, who bears the somewhat incongruous appellation of Qio Leva (the great shark!), nightly, before being laid on his mat to sleep, taught to kneel, and with his little head pressed close between the kind motherly hands, follow and repeat, in childish lisping accents, words, caught from his mother's lips, of prayer and praise.

The personal appearance of Adi Kuila is preposessing and dignified, and her manner both graceful and ladylike. Both by character and natural attainments she is fitted to take her part in any society, far better so indeed than some so-called ladies as frequently met with in the colonies as elsewhere, who, in their self-conceited ignorance, would consider it a condescension on their part to speak to her, did they not, indeed, positively refuse to do so.

I visited the Wesleyan Mission House which occupies the summit of the hill

round which the town lies. It is at present temporarily occupied by Mr. Webb of the Rewa district, Mr. Langham, the Superintendant, who usually lives here, being on a visit to Sydney. The house is a very good one, according to the standard of European residences in Fiji. It was commenced many years ago by the Wesleyan Missionary, Mr. Baker, who lost his life in the district of Ba, at a place called Na Butautau, where he was treacherously set upon, clubbed from behind, and his body eaten, by the Vatu Sila tribe. Efforts have from time to time been made to recover his bones, and with such success, that in one Mission House alone I have seen no fewer than three of his skulls!

We also visited the native magistrate of Bau, Ratu Ilaitia, a fine old man of -prepossessing appearance, much respected both by the Europeans and natives. It was dusk when we entered his house, and as I sat down on the. mats I saw, what appeared to me in the uncertain light to be an European child. It turned out, however, to be an Albino, a son of Ratu Ilaitia, and I learnt on enquiry that this freak of nature is not at all uncommon among the Fijians. I myself afterwards came across another Albino among the mountain tribes: a boy of about ten years old, a son of the chief of Na Drau. The hair of this latter boy was perfectly white, and his eyes of a light blue, the whole of his skin, naturally of a pinkish white colour, being from exposure to the sun, thickly covered with large freckles.

Next day, before leaving Bau, we visited the quarter of the town occupied by Ratu Abel, where we met Ro Vucago, a young chief from the interior of Viti

Levu, well known to Mr. Carew as the last to give up cannibalism amongst those who lately tendered their submission. lie is a tall and well made man with a wild and restless look. Like most of the natives of the interior, his skin is of a darker colour than that of the coast tribes, and his features flatter and more of the negro type. This, however, is by no means an invariable rule, for I afterwards found in the interior many individual cases of persons possessing features of a regular, and in some cases even aquiline cast. Where, however, the latter is found, it is by some authorities supposed to be an indication of a strain of Tongan blood. Ro Vucago had come to Bau in search of his younger brother who had been, when a boy, taken a prisoner of war by the Bauans :— The object of his search had been accomplished, and we found the two sitting together in one house, the elder trying to persuade the younger, (who is about to marry a Bau girl,) to return to his own country, a matter in which he did not seem likely to b successful. A year ago a Mountain Chief would have no more dared to set foot in Bau, than would one of his own women have dared to stand upright in his presence!

Sending our baggage round by water to Navuso, a village on the Rewa River, about 15 miles from its mouth, we ourselves, in a small canoe, ascended for a distance of about three miles the large creek which runs inland opposite to the island of Bau, and then walked across the intervening country to the left bank of the Rewa, the road, some seven or eight miles in length, leading to a point on the river just opposite to Navuso.

It was fortunate that we did not take our baggage with us, for on leaving Bau,

and just before entering the creek, our waterlogged and overweighted canoe sank, obliging us to swim to a mudbank and empty her out before proceeding.

The country lying between Bau and the Rewa is of a low undulating character, partly covered with forest. The soil is of a poor quality until the rich flats which extend along the banks of the river are reached. We passed through two native villages, one of them, (Verata), surrounded by three deep fighting ditches. In many places also I noticed the remains of former earth works giving evidence of the turbulent times which existed in Fiji only a few years ago, and at one point on the road side there still exist about thirty circular patches, carefully kept clear of grass and weeds. These patches represent thirty "bokolas," (dead bodies of people slain in war, and designed to be eaten,) of men killed by the Namata people some years back and brought by them this way. This place is called "*The Tokatoka men's heads*."

The village of Navuso is built close to the river, and on its right bank. It is surprising that this site should have been so long retained, for although when the river, which at this point is about 400 yards wide, is at its usual height, the banks rise from 20 to 30 feet above the stream, yet, after heavy rain, it frequently overflows, and the houses, with one exception, are flooded. That house, (the finest specimen of Fijian architecture I have seen), is one belonging to Adi Kuila, and is raised above the reach of the floods, upon a high terraced platform of rough stonework.

We stopped at this place during Saturday and Sunday, and I had the opportunity of seeing a good specimen of native

roadmaking across a low piece of swampy land. Two deep ditches are cut parallel to each other and about twelve feet apart, the earth from them being thrown up in between to a height of some five or six feet, the sides sloped up from the ditches, and a roadway formed on the top about five feet wide. The fault of the work is the absence of a regular fail in the ditches, holes consequently being left where water would collect and stagnate; but with all its defects this mode of crossing swamps is far preferable to that more generally in use, viz., by means of a series of upright posts of unequal height driven into the ground, and supporting at a height of from six to eight feet, single trees laid longitudinally across them in the form of a rough bridge. The native Wesleyan Church at Navuso is a fine large building, over the doorways of which I remarked very good specimens of sinnet work, most elaborately plaited, each lintel being bound in a different pattern; the roof also is remarkable from the rafters being composed of a small kind of palm, in appearance very similar to the West Indian gree gree.

A native teacher stationed at Na Duta in the district of Navosa arrived at Navuso during our stay there, stating that he had been forced to abandon his mission to the Nuya Koros, on account of the effect produced npon them by the terrible ravages of the late epidemic. Their faith in the new religion had, he informed us, been so shaken thereby, that they had again sought the aid of their former gods, and even endeavoured to persuade the teacher himself to return to heathenism. His refusal to do this, and also the fact of his having, without permission, taken a lemon from

one of the chief's trees, (an almost unpardonable offence in the eyes of Fijians), rendered it unsafe for him to remain any longer among them.

It would have been in accordance with native ideas for us to have been accompanied by a native messenger of authority, whose duty it would have been to forward other messengers from tribe to tribe, to announce our coming, and a "mata" was given us by Ratu Abel for this purpose. Before we left Navuso, however, the man, without giving any warning, returned to Bau, and Mr Carew foreseeing much delay had we sent again for him, decided to dispense altogether with the services of a messenger, particularly as there was no doubt of the news of our journey and its object being quickly spread through the tribes of the interior, on the return of Ro Vucago, to whom we had already delivered the Governor's message. It tuned out later, however, that Ratu Abel's messenger had, after all, performed his share of the task, the Buli of Naitasiri alone failing to send a "mata" to the next tribe.

Having made all the necessary preparations, and hired a good large canoe for the occasion, we left Navuso on the morning of the 19th July, taking with us five natives, viz., one police constable, one teacher, two young men being trained as teachers, and my boy Nemani. Our intention was to ascend the Wai ni Buka, and crossing over the dividing ranges, strike the headwaters of the Sigatoka River, follow down one and up another of the feeders of that river, arid then recrossing the dividing range to the watershed of the Wai ni Mala, to return by it to the Wai Levu (Rewa).

Paddling and poleing up stream in a

Fijian canoe is a tedious operation, and, were it not for the beauty of the scenery, the ascent of the Rewa by these means would be intolerable.

On our way to Deladamu, at which place we stopped the first night, we visited the European plantations on the banks of of the river in the following order :— Pioneer Sugar Mill, (left bank) ; Wai ni Vau, small plantation, (left bank) ; Tole, Sugar Plantation, (right bank), Mr. Henry Eastgate ; Melbourne Cornpany's Sugar Mill, (left bank) ; Wai ni Sasi, (left bank), Mr. E. Graham, J. P. ; Viti, plantation, (right bank), Mr. J. P. Storck.

The Planters established in this district have of late had their hopes much raised by the establishment and opening of the Melbourne Company's Sugar Mill. Large quantities of sugar cane have been planted, but up till now they have had no means of having it crushed, and I fear much of that which they are now crushing has been left standing far too long, while acres and acres of it lie rotting in the ground.

The climate in this part of Viti Levu is not, I think, as well adapted for sugar cultivation as that on the west and south-west coast, it being impossible to count upon having a dry season, although dry weather frequently does last for seven or eight months together. As, however, the country gets more cleared of timber, no doubt the climate will alter in this respect, and. the seasons become more regular. At present rain is very abundant, causing, as I have before mentioned, frequent floods; from which, however, the canes do not appear to suffer.

Wide level flats extend on either side

of the river for many miles along its course, and here the soil appears to be very fertile and of great depth. These flats, where they are not under cultivation, are covered with a species of wild cane, exactly resembling the sugar cane. On approaching Dela-damanu, the country becomes more undulating, and low ranges of hills in some places approach close to the river side. Wild ducks and a dark grey blue heron, are very plentiful on the iiver, while green and yellow, and red and blue, parrots fly from time to time across the stream. The parrots are considered by the planters a great pest, on account of their partiality for Indian corn.

Dela-damanu is a small village on the left bank of the river. The chief's house, at which we slept, is also small. It is a somewhat dirty, and intensely smoky establishment, but, like all Fijian houses, wonderfully picturesque inside. Two roughly-hewn posts support the ridgepole, and the cross-beams, equally rough, are attached to the posts by a great knot of twisted creepers. Along the inside of the low reed walls run a row of posts supporting the wall plates, from which the smoke-bronzed bamboo rafters rise, and are lost in the darkness of the high pitched roof. The bright light from without streaming in through the low door ways strikes along the matted floor, and through the grey blue haze of smoke rising from the fireplace, numerous forms both animate and inanimate are seen. The fireplace itself is placed sometimes in the centre, and sometimes on one side of the floor, and consists of an oblong space, separated from the matting by squared blocks of wood. This space is large enough for two or three fires, and

here, huge black earthen jars, resting above the fires on large cone-shaped stones, loom through the smoke, while from their contents, consisting chiefly of boiling vegetables, white wreaths of steam proceed. The whole fireplace is covered by a canopy of logs, supported by four upright posts, a man's height from the floor. Round the walls hang wooden bowls of various shapes; earthenware bottles stand in the corners, with cocoanut-shell drinking cups covering their mouths; neatly plaited pandanus leaf fans lie about the floor, and here and there, from under the rafters, the head of a spear peeps out, or the eye is attracted by the light falling on the carved handle of a war club. Such is the interior of a Fijian house, the living forms of men and women within which complete a picture, the beauty and quaintness of which, I fully appreciate, but am, alas, incompetent to describe.

From a small hill near the village, the summit of which has been used as a cemetery, a fine view of the surrounding country is seen, backed by the mountains from beyond which the Wai-ni-Mala takes its source.

After passing the night at Delademanu, next day we continued our voyage upstream as far as Vuni Urala, which place we reached towards evening. The town is situated about half a mile from the river and on its left bank, just opposite to the junction of the Wai-ni-Mala and Wai-ni-Buka, and is the furthest point reached last year by the steam pinnace of H.M.S. "Pearl ".

We passed through some very pretty scenery with well-wooded hills, and occasional peeps of high distant mountains. The river winds considerably, but there

are some magnificent reaches of about a mile in length.

At Vunidrala we again met Ro Vucago at the chief's house. He had followed us from Bau, and had overtaken, and passed us the night before, while we slept at Dela-damanu.

In the evening Mr. Carew gave the Governor's message to a large number of people who had assembled. General satisfaction was expressed, and one chief in reply to Carew's suggestion that at the proposed meeting of chiefs the Governor might possibly distribute some presents, said, " No presents are needed; our precious riches are thewords you have brought us, that our lands will not be taken from us!"

The Chief of Vunidrala, (Ro Bati-ratu), was absent when we arrived; he appeared, however, next morning, and accompanied us about three miles up the river Wai-ni-Mala, to the village of Nakorovatu, which place we visited, returning for the night to Vunidrala. The view from Vunidrala looking towards the river is very beautiful. It is backed by a long range of distant mountains, with a deeply serrated outline; three or four well wooded lower ranges lead down the right middle distance, to a wide-spreading cane-covered plain, with strips of woodland marking the courses of streams, while the foreground is occupied by two bends of the river overhung by a high wooded bluff on the left.

The next stoppage we made was at Dreke ni Wai, also on the left bank of the Wai-ni-Buka, and about half a mile from the landing place. It is built upon a low and narrow ridge midway between the Wal-ni-Buka and a good sized stream called Wai Sorno, which at this point

falls into the Wai-ni-Buka. Here we arrived on the afternoon of the 22nd, after a very delightful day, during which we followed the windings of the river through a beautiful hilly country, chiefly wooded, although here and there the hill sides had been cleared by the natives for planting yams. We passed several fine valleys, well sheltered, and apparently well adapted for the culture of coffee or cocoa. The soil appears to be very rich along the river sides, and in many places there are extensive flats covered with a rich grass and "Sila" (Job's tears) which would afford excellent pasturage for cattle. Villages along the river are pretty numerous; we passed about 30 in the day's journey.

At Dreke-ni-Wai we put up at the teacher's house, by far the largest and cleanest in the place. The teacher's wife was still suffering from the effects of the measles, of which disease the Chief of the village lately died. This is the first place at which the appearance of the people becomes remarkable as differing from that of the coast tribes.

Up to this point the Wai-ni-Buka plantations have, from time to time, been peaceably occupied by white settlers. About eight years ago, however, they had all to be abandoned, the natives being at that time, from various causes, in a most unsettled state. How far the settlers had to thank themselves for being thus turned out, I cannot say.

The following day a shorter voyage than usual brought us to Dela Vatu Levu, also on the left bank of the river. On leaving Dreke ni Wal we did not return to the place at which we had landed the day before, but walking across the land within a bend in

the river, joined our canoe at a point about half a mile higher up. It was a lovely morning, and while waiting for the canoe I sat down at a very pretty spot, by the river side, at the top of short rapid, running into a deep clear pool of which a steep rock topped by over hanging trees formed the opposite bank. Some children from the village were playing about, and one bright-eyed little girl of about eight years old, plaited for herself in a marvellously short space of time, the most fairy like liku of greenest grass, attired in which, and with a reed in her hand, she skipped about in the shallow waters mischievously splashing her playfellows and being splashed in return, the showers of drops glistening like gold in the morning sunshine. I was a good deal amused also by the antics of a horrid old cannibal, a very ancient and shrivelled up specimen of humanity, who was in the highest spirits and greatly delighted with one of our guns, swaggering about and playfully pointing it at the children, grinning and squeaking the whole time in a most diverting manner. He was much pleased with an empty match box we gave him, placing it as an ornament in a slit he had in the lobe of his ear.

The nature of the country here gradually begins to change; the hills for the most part are nearly bare of trees, and covered with reeds or a long coarse grass, but here and there there are still patches of forest. The native villages along the river become more numerous, some of them occupying positions of considerable elevation, while the number of vegetable gardens also, proportionately increases.

In the vicinity of Dela Vatu Levu,

the soil, from want of sufficient moisture, is of a poorer description. This is evident from the fact that the natives soak their taro slips, before planting, in order to entire their striking, a precaution which is totally unnecessary on the rich lands lower down the river, and which, indeed, is never taken there. Tobacco grows well, and a good deal is planted by the natives on the sites of old houses which have been previously burnt, the ashes forming an excellent manure. To reach Dela Vatu Levu we were obliged, on account of the swiftness of the stream, and the numerous rapids, to send back our large canoe and hire a smaller one, better adapted to the upper waters. Owing to this change a great misfortune occurred to us, and one which at the time I thought bade fair to impede our further progress. Through the carelessness of one of our men, Mr. Carew's boots, with some other things which we intended to take with us, were sent back to Vuni Drala in our large canoe, and he was compelled to perform the rest of the journey barefoot.

At Dela Vatu Levu I sketched the head of an old man of the Nailega tribe, possessing a very striking face with a high Roman nose, and altogether European cast of countenance. He sat splendidly for at least twenty minutes without moving a muscle, and seemed pleased with his portrait when I shewed it him, but far more so, with a piece of tobacco and a fishhook, with which I presented him.

At this village we again took possession of the teacher's house, the teacher himself being absent. This man has taken much trouble to make his place look nice, and has planted various flowering shrubs and trees around his

house, setting thereby an excellent example to his neighbors, which, however, they have not as yet attempted to follow.

The native teachers, trained by the Wesleyan Missionaries, are a most useful body of men. From their numbers — (one is stationed in almost every native town) — and their constant communication with one another, and with their head quarters, an organisation for providing information, and for rapidly circulating orders or advice even to the merest detail, has been established, that might prove to be most dangerous were this power possessed by a body less well affected towards the Government than the Wesleyans at present fortunately are. As it is, these teachers are, without doubt, a great assistance to the Government, for while inculcating the precepts of the faith, they at the same time teach the people to obey the law and uphold authority. By their habits they set an example of cleanliness, orderliness, and industry which in time must bear fruit.

In the small villages it is always the teacher's house that is the best, being from the greater size of the doors both lighter and better ventilated than others. Before quitting the subject of the influence on the manners of the people of the Wesleyan Mission I may mention that to my mind, one of the most striking things in Fiji is the daily morning and evening public prayer, that is held by the teacher in every native house, and attended by all with the greatest reverence.

Leaving Dela Vatu Levu early on the morning of the 24th we continued the ascent of the Wai-ni-Buka for another six or seven miles to a point where the river divides into two streams of apparently about equal volume, the left

hand branch being still called Wal-ni-Buka, and the right Wat-ko-na-Lawa. There we landed all our possessions, and, dismissing the canoe, followed a path leading along the ridges of the hills between high coarse grass and reeds with which the country for some distance round is chiefly covered. A short walk brought us to the village of Na Waciwaci, from which place the sea, at Viti Levu Bay, on the north coast, is distinctly visible. Our men got quite excited at the sight of their darling "*wai tui*," and we all made a rush for an old fortress just above the village to obtain a better view. After halting here for a few minutes while a bowl of yaqona was being prepared, another hour and a half's walk brought us to Bulibuligone, the chief town of the Na Lawa district. Before reaching this place, the road makes one deep dip and somewhat steep ascent, from the top of which the town is seen, raised some height above the surrounding hilts, on the summit of a wooded bluff forming a precipice on the left, but in front and on the right descending in steep grassy slopes. From Bulibuligone itself the view is very striking. Low ranges of hills run in every direction over a wide-spreading stretch of country, till gradually increasing in height they are at last overtopped by the far distant peaks of high mountains. The only break is towards the north, where Vitj Levu Bay is again seen, at a distance of about 9 or 10 miles. From this point with a small pocket compas we took the following bearings: -Most western point of Viti Levu Bay N. ¾ east. Bou-buco, SW ½ S.; the latter place is a village two days journey from Bulibuligone through which we afterwards passed.

We spent Sunday, the 25th, at Bulibuligone, at the Taukei na lawa's house. The weather was abominable, — damp and raw and disagreeably cold, and we remained indoors the whole day. The old Taukei, having seen my sketchbook, was most anxious for me to take his portrait, which I accordingly did, and presented him with a copy of it, done on a separate sheet. I took this opportunity of asking permission to sketch his daughter, Adi Samanumu, a really very pretty girl. She was a little shy at first but eventually sat still, looking very grave, a most unusual thing for that lively young lady. Our teacher went off to one of the neighbouring villages to preach.

On Monday morning we made an early start, accompanied by an escort of about twenty men of the local police, each armed with a musket. They were on their way to Bucobuco, to collect taxes, and we afterwards learnt, that they had no authority from Ratu Isikeli to do so, the Taukei of Na Lawa having sent them on his own responsibility. Walking was very disagreeable on account of the rain, the path, which led constantly up and down hill, being exceedingly slippery. We got no distant views, the riu and mist being too thick, but the country traversed was of the same character as that we had passed through the day before, viz., hills covered with grass and reeds, with patches of forest here and there in the valleys. The soil however became of a richer description, and the gardens appeared to flourish. I noticed that near their houses, the natives generally have a few plants of sugar cane; a little tobacco is also cultivated and grows to perfection, as I have before described, on the sites of old houses

that have been burnt down. Whether it would do as well on the hill slopes is another matter, of which I am uncertain, but the climate and soil are evidently very favourable to the plant.

We had to cross the Wai ko na Lawa three times in the course of the day, and at one of these crossings a little incident occurred which I think is worth noticing as shewing that heathenish superstitions are not wholly eradicated, even from among the natives who inhabit the coast provinces.

Having stopped for a few minutes at the river side to have a bowl of yaqona, one of cur men, (the constable, Pita,) was seen carefully collecting all the chips of the root that had been used and that were lying about. Carew at once called my attention to him, and having told the man not to make a fool of himself, gave me the following explanation of his proceeding.

A superstition exists among Fijians, that if any person evilly disposed towards them, finds anything lying about, left by the person he wishes to injure, the object so found forms a charm, with the aid of which, either some horrible disease or even death itself may be made to fall upon the unhappy victim. Therefore, there being with us a number of men of a strange tribe, Pita, dreading the possibility of such consequences, would, if left to himself, have secretly buried every scrap on the ground. As it was, the poor fellow was much ashamed at being caught, and had evidently not supposed that Carew was so well up in Fijian notions. In the interior of Viti Levu this superstition is called "*Noca-ta*," and in the Bau dialect "*Vakadraunikautaka*."

In the afternoon we reached a village

of only four or five houses, called Vuni Koro. Here we lodged for the night in the men's Bure, a building with only two low doorways, one of which was kept closed, and so crowded with men who, on account of the cold, had lighted numerous fires, that the atmosphere was somewhat unpleasant.

We left Vuni Koro the next morning (27th July) about 9 o'clock, in pouring rain, which continued the greater part of the day. Descending into the valley below and crossing a mountain torrent called "Wai na Vatu," a tributary of the Wai ko na Lawa, the path leads up a most precipitous ascent for about 300 feet, after gaining the summit of which, it passes into forest land, and contnuing to ascend, though more gradually, reaches at length an elevation probably some 2000 feet. Before, however, gaining the highest point, we passed through the village of Mataitova (in that district pronounced Ma'i'ova, the t being left out). A. series of severe ascents and descents follow, through a country the whole of which is densely wooded, and well watered, and before leaving the Wai-ni-Buka water-shed the path again crosses another tributary of the Wai ko na Lawa, called Wai na Sogo. Then comes the separating range of hills, having crossed over which we entered a magnificent valley, down which flows the river Wai Loa, one of the heads of the Wai-ni-Mala, Following the course of this stream for about half a mile, and crossing it several times, over the more shallow parts, to avoid the deep pools at the bends, we left its right bank, and the path again mounting to a considerable height, at last brought us to the village of Boubuco.

Boubuco is situated on the spur of a

rnountain about 1000 feet above the valley through which the Wai Loa runs. It was evident that in fine weather, the view from this place must be very beautiful, but unfortunately during our visit the rain poured down unmercifully, the mist only occasionally lifting above us, but never leaving the mountain tops entirely disclosed. The walking this day was very severe. Our clothes being saturated, became very heavy, and the constant rain made the pathway into a regular quagmire. The soil, through this forest land, appears, even upon the mountain ridges, to be of a rich and fertile character, and the country perfectly adapted for the cultivation of coffee.

The Chief of Boubuco, a young man, was very shy until the nature of our visit was explained to him, when he became more at his ease. They have no native teacher, but the people seemed anxious to have one, though, from the evidently recent cutting of many of the men's hair, it would appear that before the announcement of our visit they had had thoughts of returning to heathenism.

On the 28th July, leaving Boubuco about nine in the morning, after walking for seven hours, and passing through the village of Kuru Yawa, we reached the town of Wai Dradra. The road leads through dense forest the whole way until about a mile from the town, where the forest ceases and grass country begins, again. We had to cross innumerable streams and one large river, all tributaries of the Wai-ni-Mala, and at one time we had to follow up the course of a torrent for more than a mile, climbing over huge boulders of rock and frequently having to wade across the stream. The forest through which we passed is very beautiful and tropical-

looking. This, however, is owing chiefly to the luxuriance of the undergrowth, and creepers, rather than to the trees themselves, which, to any one who has been in the West Indies, appear small. The largest one I noticed, a Dakua, (*Dammara Vitiensis*), was about six feet in diameter at the base. Tree ferns are very numerous throughout the forest, while in many places the whole of the ground is carpeted with endless varieties of other ferns, mosses, and lichens.

Wai Dradra is situated about the highest point of the Wai-ni-Mala watershed, in the centre of a wide grassy plateau, surrounded by undulating country on which there are small patches of forest. The houses are quite unlike any I had seen before. They are built square with rounded corners, and possess only one low doorway. The roof rises up from each side almost to a point, the ridge pole (which is only about three feet long) being supported by a single upright post in the centre of the house. The whole, both roof and wails, is thatched with grass. They have no teacher at this place, the one at Na Drau, the capital of the district, having been forced to leave during the measles, returning to his home at Ba. Consequently the people, since his departure, hav. been again practising heathenish rites, and drumming with bamboos to appease the wrath of their former gods; they, however, were quite willing to allow our teacher to pray with them in their houses.

This evening we discussed our further movements and the possibility of our passing through a town presided over by the great chief and noted cannibal Wawa

Balavu, ("long belly"), a man deeply concerned in the massacre of the Burns family on the Ba River, and in other murders in that district. On asking Carew if he had ever met the abovementioned personage, his reply was significant — "Never; nor has any white man, I think, except to be killed!"

The house we here lodged in was crowded with natives, and the smoke from the numerous fireplaces, each with its burning logs, rendered the place almost unbearable. At one moment in the night I awoke almost suffocated and could only obtain momentary relief by pressing my face against the reeded wail, and sucking through it a breath of outer air. To have slept outside would have been far preferable, notwithstanding the cold, but would have been considered an act of discourtesy which might have entailed disagreeable consequences.

The next day we walked over to Na Drau, a distance of about four miles. The road leads across the plateau, or table land, on which Wai Dradra is situated, passing through one or two narrow belts of forest which here, as seen from the open country, entirely loses all tropical appearance. This is caused, I think by the dark grey green colour of the leaves of the Dakua trees, which are very numerous; whilst the fact of the grass being covered by a low kind of brake fern, gives an European effect to the country generally. On arriving at the edge of the plateau, a most unexpected and magnificent sight appears. At ones feet lies a rugged and precipitous gorge some 1500 feet in depth and about a mile in width at the top. As the eye follows down its course, ravine after ravine appears opening into it, with but

little vegetation On their steep grey sides. Down these ravines flow the headwaters of the Sigatoka river, in clear and rushing torrents. Beyond again, are just visible the edges of one of the gorges from which the Ba River springs, and in the back ground range after range of peaked and rocky mountains fade away into the distance.

The steep path which descends into the gorge, passes, from about midway down to the bottom, through bright green taro plots, most ingeniously laid out on the steep slopes, which are terraced, and irrigated. On a small rocky elevation, near the bottom, a most picturesque native village is situated. Here we stopped for a few minutes, and heard from the natives that we were expected at Na Drau, news having reached that place of our intended visit. The path here crosses the gorge, and following the opposite side at a height of some 200 feet above the stream, after passing along taro plot embankments for about a mile, turns to the right almost at right angles, and enters a narrow rocky defile with a clear deep stream rushing between the stones and boulders along its bottom. Na Drau is situated about a mile from the entrance of this defile. The village is well placed, high up, on the right bank of the stream, a precipice almost overhanging it. The opposite face, though steep, is thickly clothed with trees and other vegetation. The high, grass-thatched, yellow, conical roofs of the houses, (which are raised on stone platforms, some of them 10 feet from the ground), peep out between grassy terraces, lemon, cocoanut, and other tree, and, with the clear rushing river below, and the rocky sides of the defile gradually narrowing behind, form a most striking and beautiful picture.

The old heathen Bure, thatched like the other houses, but brown and weather stained with age, is still in existence. In front, and close to the grey stone platform on which it is built, stands a row of tall upright stones in memory of the chief victims that have been murdered by the tribe, and eaten within its walls. A little distance from it stands the new, but for the present neglected, Christian Church, the teacher, as I have before mentioned, having left during the excitement caused by the measles. A few paces from the Bure, the Chief's house is built, on a platform at least 10 feet high, with rough steps leading up to a doorway so low that we had to go in on our hands and knees. On first entering one of these houses the darkness is so great that for a few moments it is difficult to distinguish anything.

From hence we sent messengers to Tavuaicolo, a town at the foot of the Vatu Sila Mountain, and in a direct line about five miles from Na Drau, to ascertain what kind of a reception we might expect there, as our return journey would necessarily lead us through that place. In the meantime the Chief of Na Drau gave us a very bad account of the Tavua people, who are a mixture of various tribes whose villages were destroyed by the late Government, in consequence of murders committed by the mountaineers on the Ba River. He told us that three weeks before, a man was clubbed and eaten there, the murder being sanctioned by the young Chief Tutivi, a son of the noted Wawa Balavu, of whose recent death we here received intelligence. In consequence of this news much discussion arose as to whether after all we attempt to pass through Tavua,

our men being much disturbed at this thought of so doing, and in favour of a change in our programme, by, which we might reach the coast in two days time. The messengers having returned from Tavua, reported that the people were ready to receive us, and were preparing a feast in our honour. There would in all probability have been no danger in going there, but after the flagrant violation of the law that had so lately been committed there, we could not with propriety give the Governor's message to the people, or receive hospitality at their hands. Instead, therefore of going there and returning to the flown by the Wai-ni-Mala, as we had originally contemplated, we reluctantly decided to change our course, and endeavour to reach the north-west coast at Ba. Messengers, accordingly, were again sent to Tavua i colo to inform the people, that having heard of their evil doings we did not intend to visit them, and that, for their own sakes, it would be advisable for them to give up the murderers to the Government.

Whilst at Na Drau we learnt the facts of a transaction, of which we had before gained some knowledge, and in which a man who had held an important post in the service of the late Fijian Government, counting on the influence of his farmer position, had purchased some men of this district of their chiefs in order to dispose of them to planters for labouring purposes.

The following narrative was taken down by me from the lips of Na Sau nj Valu, Chief of Na Drau :—

About the beginning of January last two white men, of whom the above-mentioned individual was one, came here

bringing a small quantity of trade, and saying that they were anxious to obtain men. The Chiefs were unwilling to let their men go, but the native magistrate of Ba, a Government officer, (since dead) pushed the bargain by a gift of whales teeth, furnished by the labor hunter, and this present extracted the promise of ten men. Negotiations having reached this stage, a letter arrived from the Roko Tui of the district, warning the Chiefs that it was against the law to sell men, but it was too late. The trade, and especially the whales teeth, had been already accepted, and after this it would, according to native ideas, have been a direct insult to draw back from the bargain. Having gone so far, and probably being enticed by promises of more trade, the Chiefs then sent for, and procured, forty more men from the Yala Tina tribe which is tributary to Na Drau. For this second batch of men, money was promised to the chiefs, but they have never yet received it. The Chiefs at the time were distinctly given to understand that the men would only be required to work for one year, at the end of which they could return to their tribes.

Na Sau ni Valu willingly gave this information, although he himself was in a great measure to blame in the matter, and he was most anxious that the men he had thus sold should be sent back at once, for, owing to the numbers carried off by the measles, his people found themselves much in want of hands for yam planting.

It is known that the men thus bought were sold at £4 a head to a planter to work for a term of two years on his plantation, where, I have reason to believe, they still remain.

The Chief of Na Drau, Na Sau ni Valu, is a fine old man, apparently very well affected towards the Government. He professed great indignation with the Tavua people for their bad behaviour. This, however, might have been only because the murdered man happened to belong to Na Drau. I here had an opportunity of sketching a man from Tavua, of the Vuna Gumu tribe, who still retained his cannibal head of long hair. It certainly gives a striking appearance, adding as it does so much to the height.

Colai Wase, the Chief of a neighbouring town, one of the murderers of Spiers and Macintosh, who were murdered about four years ago while residing on their plantations on the Ba River, was stopping here in the Chief's house during our visit, and both he and the man with the cannibal head of hair were one morning summarily called to order by a significant gesture of the old Chief, Na Sau ni Valu, for retaining their tappa (native cloth) head coverings, during prayer time; the order to remove them being instantly obeyed by both, in the most abject and shamefaced manner. Leaving Na Drau early on the 31st we mounted the side of the gorge over the village, and, after a walk of about half a mile across the top, reached the village of Na Kaito, from which a great stretch of country, broken up by ravines leading down to the Ba district is visible. From this point, and with the help of the natives who pointed out the direction, we were enabled to take the following bearings by compass :—

Nabutautau, S. by W.
Ba, W. by N.
Tavua, N.W. by W.
Vatu Sila, (Tavua i Colo), S.S.E.
Na Drau, N.E. by N.

From the village of Na Kaito we descended into a deep ravine, and walking along the course of a beautiful clear stream which from the number of its tributaries rapidly becomes a good sized river, we followed its windings for about seventeen miles, when, leaving its right bank, and bearing in a northerly direction for about three miles, we arrived at a place called Sulua Narata, where, at the height vf about 200 feet above a considerable stream, and under a face of cliff, there exist some caves formed of huge boulders of rock. These caves are at present inhabited, and here we lodged for the night. During the evening there was much talk among our men about the Tavua affair, and they all professed to believe that we should most certainly have been killed and eaten had we gone there. They had heard at Na Drau, that after a grand meke that was performed at Tavua on the recent death of the Chief Wawa Balavu, the young men of the town being pleased with the dancing of the women, had promised them a white man to eat! It also appeared from their conversation that not Tutiri, but the Chief of Vatukoro, Na Mututu by name, gave his sanction to the murder which took place at Tavua i Colo the other day. Na Vatukoro is one of the towns in this district that was burnt by the late Government in consequence of the murder of a whole family of white settlers about four years ago, on the Ba River. This town has lately been rebuilt by Namututu, and with Tavua, Nabutautau, and one or two other places in the neighbourhood of the headwaters of the Sigatoko and Ba Rivers, is now the resort of many lawless refugees from the various tribes that inhabited the villages destroyed at that time.

The last stage of our journey by land was accomplished on Sunday the 1st August, when we arrived at the village of Sagunu, about six miles and a half from the mouth of the Ba River, after a walk of at least 25 miles. The road leads across several ranges of hills before it reaches the Ba flats. The soil on these hills is of a very poor quality, large masses of volcanic rock cropping up here and there, and the vegetation is chiefly a coarse kind of grass. From the mouth of the river a good wide stretch of flat land extends on each side some seven miles beyond the village of Sagunu. The land on these flats is of a light but fertile description, easily ploughed and well adapted for sugar cane, the climate also being very favourable for that cultivation.

The village of Sagunu is on the left bank of the Ba. Much credit is due to the native Governor, Roko Tui Ba, for the cleanly state of this village, and the encouragement he gives to the people to plant gardens, &c.

Here we spent a day or two at the Roko's house, where his wife, Adi Alisi, treated us with much hospitality and kindness.

Although living on the banks of a large river, and not far from the sea coast, Adi Alisi, like a true Bau woman, pines after the sea shore, and makes a great grievance of her banishment so far from the centre of Fijian aristocratic society, to a place where her husband's duty necessitates the frequent reception in her house of the "kaisi" (common people,) and barbarous mountaineers, who, as she characteristically but somewhat forcibly expressed it, "Squash out their vermin on my mats, as flat as any turtle!" adding, (I hope with more

humor than truth), "that's the way we Bau ladies talk."

Shortly before our arrival, the intelligence had reached Sagunu of the murder of three people, two men and a woman, the last having also been eaten, at a village named Vatu Bau, a few miles above Sagunu, among the hills near the banks of the river; and we found the European Magistrate of the District earnestly discussing with the Roko Tui Ba, the advisability of issuing warrants for the arrest of the murderers in this case, as well as in that which had taken place at Tavua-i-Colo. Warrants were eventually issued against the murderers at Tavua-i-Colo and sent in charge of some native special constables. The Chief, "Na Matutu," said he was ill at the time of the murder, and being angry had ordered the body to be cooked and eaten. He had the meaning of the warrant properly explained to him, but refused to give the people up. After a private consultation with his friends, to the exclusion of the Government messengers, he presented two “tabua" (whales teeth) saying "*A neitou soro oqo, a neitou bole taleqa mai*," thus conveying an apology for what had been done, but also an intimation that they were ready to fight if necessary.

I have before mentioned the fact of Mr. Carew's boots having been left behind, and the fear that I then felt that our journey would, by this means, be greatly retarded, to say nothing of the suffering such a loss would, I thought, entail upon the unhappy pedestrian. To my astonishment, however, no less than to-his, the whole of this somewhat arduous journey was successfully accomplished barefoot, and although the nature of the ground rendered

it impossible for him to proceed except at a very gentle pace, yet it was, fortunately, only during the last two days that the discomfort of going bootless amounted to positive suffering.

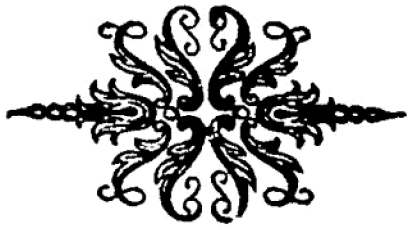
There is a Fijian custom in connection with the drinking of yaqona which, on account of this incident, was brought into play. When a person has finished his bowl, he expresses aloud a wish for some coveted thing, such as "a club!" "a turtle!" &c. So whenever the evening bowl passed round, Mr. Carew invariably cried out, "*noqui vava*" (my shoes), thus heaping coals of fire on the heads of the men through whose carelessness he was left shoeless.

The men of the different tribes of the interior that I have passed through, are far more decent specimens of humanity as regards physique, than I had been led to expect. They are occasionally, but not always, slightly tatooed in small patterns here and there, either on the arms or legs; the only actual disfigurement they practice, being a slit in the lobe of the car, generally of one ear only. This slit is often used for carrying a portion of some sea shell by way of ornament, or a short piece of bamboo, carved in patterns and containing tobacco. The girls before marriage are not ill-looking, and same of them very graceful. Their only dress is a necklace of beads, and a grass *liku* not more than nine inches deep. The married women are rendered perfectly hideous by tattooing round the mouth. They are also tattooed all over the lower part of the stomach and high up round the thighs. The *liku*, no longer than that of the girls, is worn low down on the hips, and is one of the most unsightly garments I have ever

seen. They are also sometimes tattooed on the back, arms, and lower part of the legs.

From the time we left Na Drau and entered on the watershed of the Ba River, we found ourselves in a region the climate of which is of a totally different nature from that on the eastern side of the dividing range. Clear, almost cloudless skies, with hot sun but refreshing breeze prevailed during the day, and the nights were quite cool, I had almost said cold.

At Sagunu the weather was perfectly delicious, and I regretted having to leave, but my time was up, so I took the first opportunity that offered, and returned to Ovalau, round the north coast of Viti Levu, in the magistrate's boat, at that time on its way to Levuka.



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