

THE

# LIVING RACES OF MANKIND



Photo by P. 42001

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A BURMESE LADY

A POPULAR ILLUSTRATED ACCOUNT OF  
THE CUSTOMS, HABITS, PURSUITS,  
FEASTS & CEREMONIES OF THE RACES  
OF MANKIND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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Photo by Henry King]

(George Street, Sydney.

A WAR-DANCE, FIJI.

## THE LIVING RACES OF MANKIND.

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### CHAPTER I.

*FIJI ISLANDS, POLYNESIANS, POLYNESIAN RELIGION, TONGA OR FRIENDLY ISLANDS, SAMOA, HERVEY ISLANDS, SOCIETY ISLANDS, PITCAIRN ISLAND, AND SANDWICH ISLANDS.*

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#### FIJI ISLANDS.

THE inhabitants of Fiji—a group of more than two hundred islands in the South Pacific—are properly classified as Papuans; but since they form a sort of link between the Papuans and the Polynesians, it is convenient to describe them first before treating of their neighbours on the east and west. They have greatly declined in numbers since white men brought them the vices and the diseases of civilisation. In 1859 the population of the islands was estimated at 200,000; and in 1897, 122,000. Of this last number about 100,000 were Fijians, and 2,300 Polynesians. The people are dark-coloured, frizzly-haired, tall, and muscular; altogether a decidedly fine race. Some of them exceed a height of six feet. Their complexion varies from dark brown to the chocolate colour of the Papuan. Their features are more regular than those of the latter. They use the bow and arrow, and also make pottery, both of which arts are foreign to the true Polynesian.

The men of Fiji devote a great deal of time and attention to dressing their hair. Nearly every chief has a hairdresser, who operates upon him every day, sometimes for several hours. The reader will gather from our illustrations some idea of the effect produced. The hair is naturally strong and somewhat wiry, and therefore capable of retaining its position at a distance of more than six inches from the head. Its frizzly nature is due to each individual hair being elliptical instead of circular in cross-section, and thus tending to twist. As might be expected, much ingenuity is expended in devising different methods of dressing the hair. It is dyed in various colours—black, red (in several shades), and ashy white. A chief sometimes

## The Living Races of Mankind

protects his enormous mop of hair by a kind of turban, made of very delicate bark-cloth (*masi*), nearly as thin as gauze. This bark-cloth is also used for dress, being wrapped round the body so as to form a loin-cloth, and to fall behind in a kind of sash and in front like an apron. The women wear a broad band of beautifully variegated braidwork, also made of bark-fibre. This garment, known as the *liku*, is fastened round the waist with a fringe hanging from the lower edge at least three inches. Young girls wear very narrow fringe, and at the time of marriage this is increased in depth until it reaches half-way down to the knees, and it entirely surrounds the body. On becoming a mother, the woman wears an apron reaching down to the knees, or rather lower. Formerly paint was largely used for decorating the person, the favourite colours being black, white, and red. Some of the dandies favoured very piquant devices. They are all fond of wearing flowers, weaving them into



Photo by Henry King

[George Street, Sydney

A GRASS HOUSE, FIJI.

strings, and passing them like belts over the shoulder and under the arm; also as chaplets for the head. Tattooing was until recently practised, but almost exclusively by the women, whose fringe, or apron, hid most of it, except when the fingers or the corners of the mouth were tattooed. In the matter of ornaments the Fijians are not very lavish, and do not load themselves as some of the Papuan tribes do. The frontispiece shows a man wearing a necklet of the curved teeth of the *cachalot*, or sperm whale, more or less cut into a square shape at the base, and probably derived from young whales. In other cases, however, bits of tortoise-shell, dogs' teeth, or the jaws of the bat are used. A large breast-ornament of pearl-shell is sometimes worn. The ear-ornaments are often of great size, so that it is necessary to stretch the lobe of the ear round the ornament, as in the case of the Solomon Islanders. The ornament itself may be a white cowry, a cylinder, disk, or large ring—some of the rings being as much as ten inches in diameter. The natives often used to mark their bodies



*Photo by Josiah Marten*

*[MacLachlan, New Zealand.]*

A WOMAN OF FIJI



Photo by Josiah Martin

[Auckland, New Zealand.

NATIVES MAKING FIRE, FIJI.

circumstances. When two people of equal rank meet early in the day, the correct phrase is "Awake!" or "You are awake!" Whereas in the evening they will say, "Sleep!" or "Go to sleep!" When the master of a house receives a visitor from a distance, he claps his hands three or four times, exclaiming, "Come with peace from your home." In offering a present they modestly remark, "I have nothing to offer you but this gift as an expression of my love for your children." Every kind of present must be offered in some set form of words, varying according to the nature of the gift.

Although the Fijians may be said to be in many respects a civilised people, yet within recent times they displayed a most reckless disregard of the sanctity of human life, and cannibalism was practised on a very large scale. Almost incredible cruelties took place in connection with their cannibal feasts, and even natives who professed to be converted to Christianity were liable at times to break out and revert to the old customs. King Thakombau, for example, became nominally a Christian; but on visiting in his war-canoe a district under his rule, he was invited to walk through a double row of living victims—men, women, and children of all ages—suspended by their feet, and placed there so that he might choose those which were most to his fancy. The king, notwithstanding his recent profession of Christianity, fell in with the local customs, and condescended to accept this horrible offering, touching with his club those unfortunate wretches whom he thus marked out for slaughter. Cannibalism was so ingrained in their nature that some individuals proudly boasted of the number of human bodies they had consumed, and one chief, who had "beaten the record," as we should say, was held in great respect, and received the nickname of the "Turtle-pond," thus comparing him with a pond in which

with sears, as the Australians do to this day. Finger-rings, armlets, and anklets are still worn, but the old native customs in dress are rapidly dying out.

The Fijians have an abundant supply of food. From the sea they obtain plenty of fish, turtles (of which they are very fond), crabs, and shell-fish. The soil produces yams, tomatoes, bananas, coconuts, and bread-fruit in considerable quantity. An intoxicating drink is produced from the root of a tree of the pepper tribe (*Piper methysticum*). They are very fond of feasting and giving entertainments on a large scale, and on these occasions their manners are extremely polite, and the utmost good-feeling prevails. Everything is done according to a strict code of etiquette; indeed, there is no part of the world where etiquette is carried to a greater extent, or where it is more intimately interwoven with every action of ordinary life.

There are various modes of salutation, which differ according to



Fijee, Javah, Men

F. Cook, N. Z.

A MAN OF FIJEE

## The Living Races of Mankind

many turtles are kept. This man adopted a curious way of keeping his record. Every time he consumed a human body he set up a stone, and it is said that when he died his son counted no fewer than 900 stones. Human flesh was considered the greatest luxury, and friends and relatives were occasionally sacrificed. At great feasts sometimes as many as twenty human bodies were cooked. Slaves were kept for the purpose; but when a chief demanded "long pig" nobody was safe, because his attendants would rush out and kill the first person they happened to meet. The women were very seldom permitted to partake of human flesh.

The reader is probably aware that the practice of cannibalism is not based simply on the appetite for human flesh, and that the idea underlying this revolting custom, in all parts of the world in which it has been practised, is that when a man eats another man he assimilates the victim's qualities, it may be physical strength, courage, cleverness, or cunning. Hence it was considered highly desirable to catch a brave enemy and to eat him, in order to partake of his bravery.

It is not surprising to learn that years ago human sacrifices were very frequent, and often on a large scale. Every important event was attended by one or more sacrifices. When a chief built a war-canoe, numbers of slaves and others were sacrificed in order to bring "good luck." A big canoe belonging to a chief was dragged along to the sea over the bodies of a number of men lying side by side to act as rollers. Of course they were killed by the weight of the canoe; and afterwards their bodies were baked and eaten. Like "Koko," in Mr. Gilbert's delightful Japanese opera, some chiefs kept "a little list" secretly of people to whom they were not particularly attached; and when the occasion demanded "long pig," some of these black-list men were sacrificed without any warning.

The Fijians, like many other primitive people, have no fear of death. In heathen times,



*Photo by Thos. Anderson*

[Apia, Samoa.]

A QUIET GAME OF SPELLICANS (VAVA, TONGA ISLANDS).

when a man became feeble from old age, or any other cause, he asked his sons to strangle him. Indeed, this act was considered a filial duty. To be strangled by one's children, or to be buried alive by them, was considered a highly honourable way of dying. The people being of a really affectionate nature were unwilling to see their parents dragging out a useless existence; death was considered preferable to infirmity, for these people firmly believed that their condition after death in the spirit world would be entirely dependent on their state at death. Therefore, however strange and cruel such a practice may appear when judged by our own standards, it may be considered as simply the logical consequence of firmly rooted ideas. In judging of the manners and customs of alien races, it is only fair to make great allowances for their idiosyncrasies, and to remember always that their standpoint is generally very different from ours.

In old days, when a chief died, many of his slaves and favourite wives were strangled, in order that they might still continue to attend him in the next life. One might have supposed that the women would have objected to this practice; but so far from that being the case, they died quite willingly, in the belief that they were securing for themselves a happy and honourable life in the next world. Custom demanded that they should not survive their husbands, and any woman refusing to die would only have found herself condemned to a miserable life of neglect and insult. Such practices were common in Britain in prehistoric times, as is proved by the researches of archaeologists who have explored British barrows; and the reader is probably aware that the same ideas prevailed not long ago in India, when *suttee* was practised, and women offered themselves willingly, often lighting the funeral pyre with their own hands. Again, in China, women frequently preferred death to widowhood.

A missionary was once invited by a young man of Fiji to attend the funeral of his mother, and great was his surprise on joining the funeral procession to see the old lady taking part in it, and cheerfully walking to her grave. It is related in "Erskine's Journal" that a certain young man, on becoming very thin and weak from illness, expressed a desire to be buried, because he was afraid the girls would laugh at him and call him a skeleton. Accordingly his father buried him alive; but when the young man requested to be first strangled, he was scolded and told to be quiet, and be buried like other people, and give no more trouble.

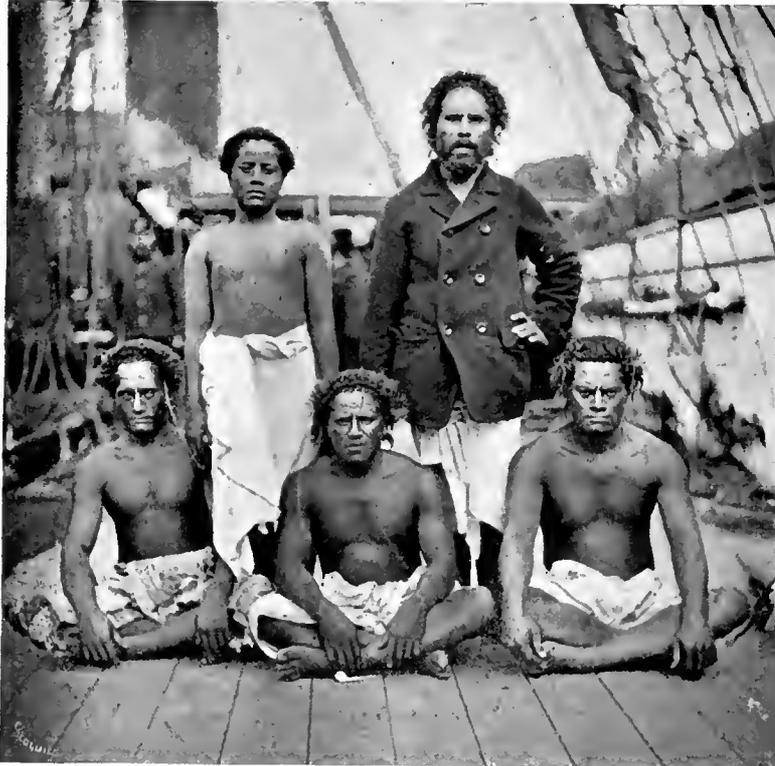
The Fijian women are simply the domestic slaves of their husbands, and they perform a great deal of hard labour. The daughter of a chief is usually betrothed early in life. Should her intended husband refuse to carry out the contract, it is considered a great insult, and becomes the cause of a serious quarrel, sometimes leading to blows. Should the young man die before the girl is grown up, then his next brother takes his place, and the child is betrothed to him. If a young man wishes to marry a certain girl, he must obtain her father's permission. This having been granted, he makes her a small present. Shortly afterwards he sends to her house some food prepared by himself; this is the ceremony known as "Warming."



Photo by Josiah Martin

[Auckland, New Zealand

THE KING OF THE TONGA ISLANDS.



GROUP OF TONGA MEN ON BOARD H.M.S. "CHALLENGER."

*Taken during the Scientific Expedition of 1872-6. Published by Horsburgh & Son, Edinburgh.  
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For four days the girl enjoys a brief holiday, sitting at home arrayed in her best, and painted with turmeric and oil; she is then taken to the sea by some married women, and all set to work to catch fish. As soon as the cooking of what they have caught is finished, the young man is sent for, and the betrothed couple partake of a meal together. Some little interval follows, during which the future husband is busily occupied in building the new home. On the completion of the house a great feast takes place. On the bride's departure from home her friends and relatives make a great fuss, all showing their affection by kissing her.

The Fijians are by nature very superstitious. A Frenchman who visited them

some years ago relates that the natives of a certain island in the group evinced great emotion the first time that they saw a European smoking a cigar. Great was the excitement, and people were hastily summoned by their chiefs to come and see this extraordinary spectacle. To them the white man with his cigar was a god, burning internally! There was no room for doubt, because smoke came out of his mouth!

The people have of late years abandoned all their old barbaric customs. This great change is entirely due to missionary enterprise. As far back as the year 1835 the Wesleyans established a mission in the archipelago, and probably there are few places in the Pacific Ocean where missionary effort has been more successful, or its fruits more visible. Native teachers and ministers are trained for the work. In 1891 there were as many as 914 Wesleyan chapels, with a large number of native teachers, and about 100,000 followers. The Roman Catholics also have a numerous following, and twenty European Sisters are engaged in teaching the girls. The children nearly all attend school. The Church of England has two churches, one in Suva and one in Levuka. The islands have been under British rule since 1874, and the state of things at the present day offers a marvellous contrast to the pictures drawn by the earlier travellers.

#### POLYNESIANS.

PROCEEDING eastwards from Fiji, we pass over the boundary-line that separates the dark frizzly-haired Papuans from the brown Polynesians, who inhabit most of the Pacific islands. The Polynesians are certainly of a distinct race; but for all that the term Polynesian implies a purely arbitrary division, not founded upon geographical or racial distinctions. Polynesia