Shores and Sails in the South Seas

By Charles Allmon

With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

RAINY NIGHTS, when little ships snuggle close to harbor, I think of the *Vaitere* loading at Tahiti for our voyage to the Marquesas, cannibal islands of yesterday (map, page 77).

The Tahitian wives and sweethearts who came down to the schooner that morning to bid farewell to their brave young men were drenched. Aboard, big husky Marquesan crewmen huddled on the Pullman-sized deck aft and shouted promises to women on shore. Six or seven weeks would elapse before they returned from this voyage across the sea.

I clutched a tarpaulin about me—no one expected me to promise anything—and tried to steady my footing as the *Vaitere* tugged at her moorings.

Lines were cast off, two shrill blasts issued from the vessel, and we headed for the narrow pass in the barrier reef. Heavy seas pounded the coral heads. Now the *Vaitere* lurched and dipped as she fought the strong current pushing through the pass.

I felt about as secure as a carrot in a pressure cooker ready to explode. Ostrich-fashion, I covered my eyes, but only for a blink. The sea broke across the deck, up to my knees.

If I am going to wash away, I decided, I should at least know when it happens.

Into the Open Sea

A good skipper, Lou Lecaill got us through the pass and into open sea. With determination the *Vaitere* nosed her way through the driving rain toward the Marquesas. Behind now was the island of Tahiti and the town of Papeete—port of adventure.

By the fifth night I was ready to send out a dove, but at dawn on the sixth morning the sun climbed smugly into place.

As the mists cleared, land loomed to starboard where the lava-blown, wind-polished peaks of the island of Ua Pu strain 4,000 feet skyward out of the Pacific (page 102). My eyes smarted, unaccustomed to the dazzling glare. Ahead wide laps of the sea smacked corrugated cliffs and churned up spray nine times the height of a man. The regurgitation of blowholes shot geysers into the air.

Between stern sentinel rocks the *Vaitere* slithered into Taiohaé Bay in the island of Nuku Hiva, Marquesas (pages 88, 91).

We dropped anchor at 2:30 in the afternoon. Over the side went the first whaleboat, its gunwales bulging with young Marquesans, pigs, chickens, and bedding.

I elbowed my way into the second boatload. Ashore, I received an invitation from the French administrator of the island group, who also is resident medical doctor, to a feast the following Sunday.

Then I asked directions to the community bathhouse, where I loosened the crust of salt I had accumulated in our tempestuous voyage. I have had luxurious baths before, but few have provided the comfort of this tepid pool shared with half a dozen of my brown-skinned fellow travelers.

Afterward, just to walk, just to plant one foot before another with the conviction that it would stay put until your own muscles moved it, was wonderful. Just to lean against a palm tree, something rigid, was reassuring.

Coconut Milk Fresh from the Tree

The palm tree against which I leaned seemed strange. Closer examination showed it had been notched. While I studied it, a Marquesan lad approached me.

He grinned obligingly. Then, with his ankles braced about eight inches apart by leaves of the palm frond, which held securely in the notched trunk, he literally pulled himself up by his bootstraps. He knocked down a few coconuts, deftly cracked one, and offered me a tall drink of coconut milk. The process took less time than it takes the counter boy to draw a limeade at the corner drugstore. And the result was just as satisfying.

As the young lad ran across the beach, I could imagine proud Polynesian adventurers who lived at Taiohaé before white men came. How did they watch the imperial procession—admirals, governors, warships, troops, prisons, plantations, schools—invading the bay? With bewilderment? Resignation? Resentment? About the bay stand the remnants of the imperial procession, a small group of government buildings over which the Tricolor flutters.

The French have had their flag over the Marquesas since 1842. Magellan, in his voyage around the world in 1519-21, may have passed between the Marquesas and the Tuamotu Archipelago.*

* See, in the National Geographic Magazine: "Greatest Voyage in the Annals of the Sea," by J. R. Hildebrand, December, 1932.

Rosewood Bowls, Elaborately Carved by Hand, Are the Pots and Pans of Polynesia

The chief of Fatu Hiva Island, who collects Marquesan carvings, owns these three prizes. His family has preserved the center one 70 years (page 104).

In 1595 Spanish ships sent from Callao by Don García Hurtado de Mendoza, Viceroy of Peru, found the southeast group of islands, and their commander, Alvaro de Mendaña, named it for his patron's wife—Las Marquesas de Mendoza.

One hundred and seventy-nine years later, in 1774, Captain Cook came to the Marquesas while on his second voyage through the South Seas and added Fatu Huku to the list.*

In the brig *Hope*, of Boston, Capt. Joseph Ingraham, a former mate on Capt. Robert Gray's *Columbia* (the famous vessel which started the Boston trade to our Northwest coast), visited Nuku Hiva in 1791 and called the islands Washington Islands for his beloved hero, George Washington.

The same year a Frenchman, Etienne Marchand, also visited the northern group of islands. Marchand, the fires of liberty blazing high in his native land, named the group the Iles de la Révolution.

One hundred and thirty-seven years ago the Stars and Stripes flew over the little hill overlooking the bay of Taiohaé. A light now stands there, and its friendly gleam in the night means a haven for mariners venturing into the Marquesas.

The Adventures of Captain Porter

The adventures of Capt. David Porter, the American, were as strange and romantic as those of any of the hundreds of gypsies of the sea who sailed these southern waters.†

Porter had left the United States in command of the frigate *Essex* to destroy British shipping and to capture their ships and sailors. He harassed the British in the Atlantic, rounded Cape Horn, and attacked in the South Seas. At last, with prisoners and prize crews aboard some of the captured vessels,

* See, in the National Geographic Magazine: "Columbus of the Pacific (Cook)," by J. R. Hildebrand, January, 1927.

† See, in the National Geographic Magazine: "American Pathfinders in the Pacific," by William H. Nicholas, May, 1946.

Crewmen Dump Hiva Oa's Copra into *Vaitere's* Hold

Copra—coconut meat today, soap tomorrow—provides the Marquesas' money crop. Bags are emptied at the hold, for loose storage allows more bulk (pages 88 and 89).

he made for the Marquesas to refresh his men, repair his ships, and get water, food, and wood for the voyage home. In Taiohaé Bay he moored his ships.

Captain Porter failed to establish American rule in 1813 in Nuku Hiva, which he called Madison; otherwise the Marquesas might today be flying the American flag.

Taiohaé became the whites' chief city in the group.

The little whaleboats, shuttling through the surf with their provisions and mail, marked the greatest activity Taiohaé had seen since the *Vaitere's* last call. By sundown the bay and valley seemed empty. The sun slid over the rim of the mountains, red, intense.

Aboard the *Vaitere* again, I watched the moon rise over placid waters. For the first time in a week I was to have a night's rest undisturbed by a tossing ship.

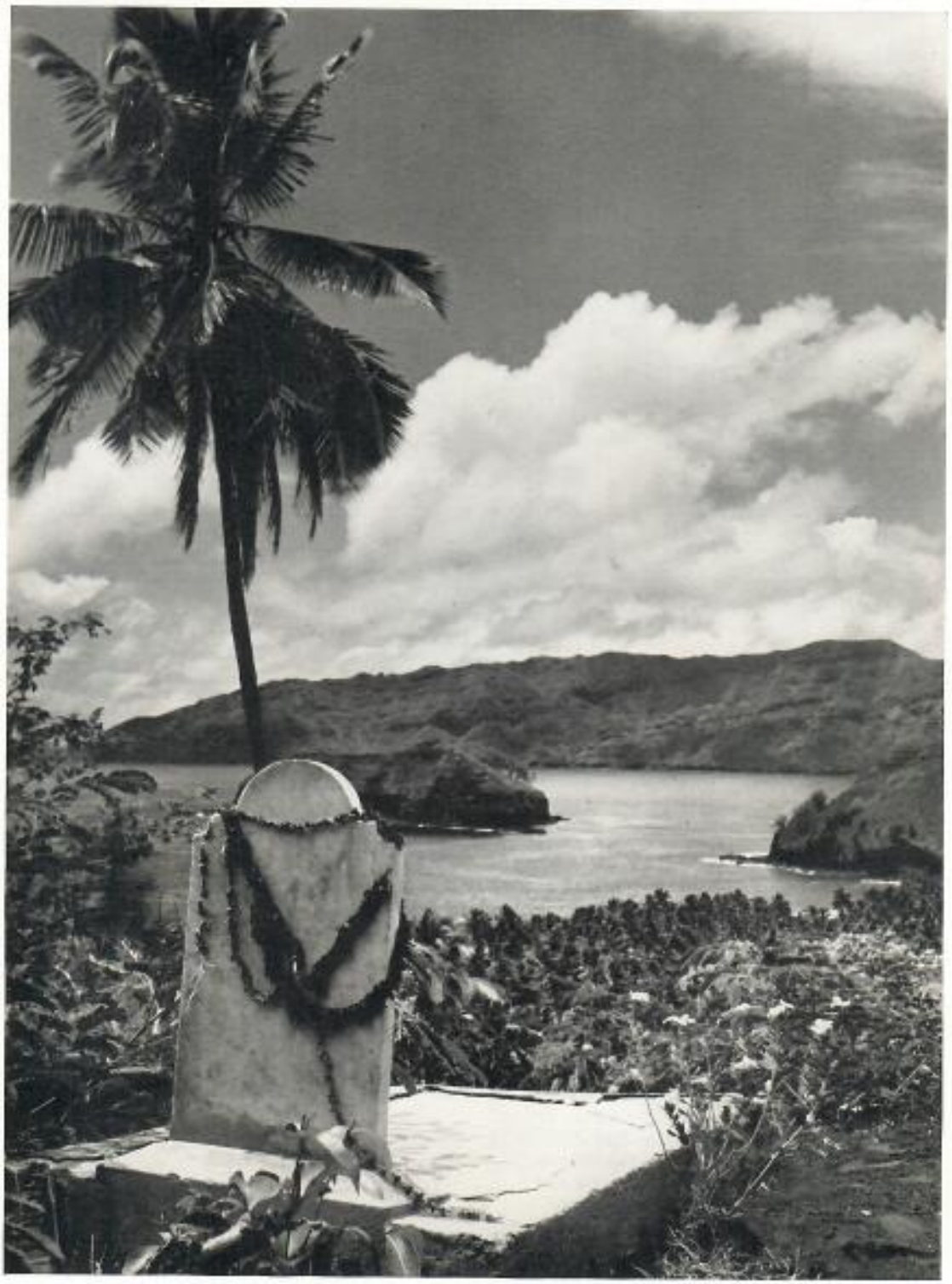
The Marquesan crew had gathered on the afterdeck. In low voices they sang old Tahitian and Marquesan songs to the soft strumming of a guitar. A laugh and a chuckle broke the spell once or twice, and then I was asleep.

Sometime that night the *Vaitere* pulled anchor and cruised around to Hatiheu Bay (Baie Atiheu), on Nuku Hiva's north coast (pages 83 and 94). Mountains here lie close to the sea. On the right side of this bay are four slender obelisks not unlike formations of rock I have seen in Bryce Canyon, Utah. Lush green vegetation abounds, for the tall mountaintops puncture passing clouds and rob them of their rain.

Coconut Palm Is Tree of Life

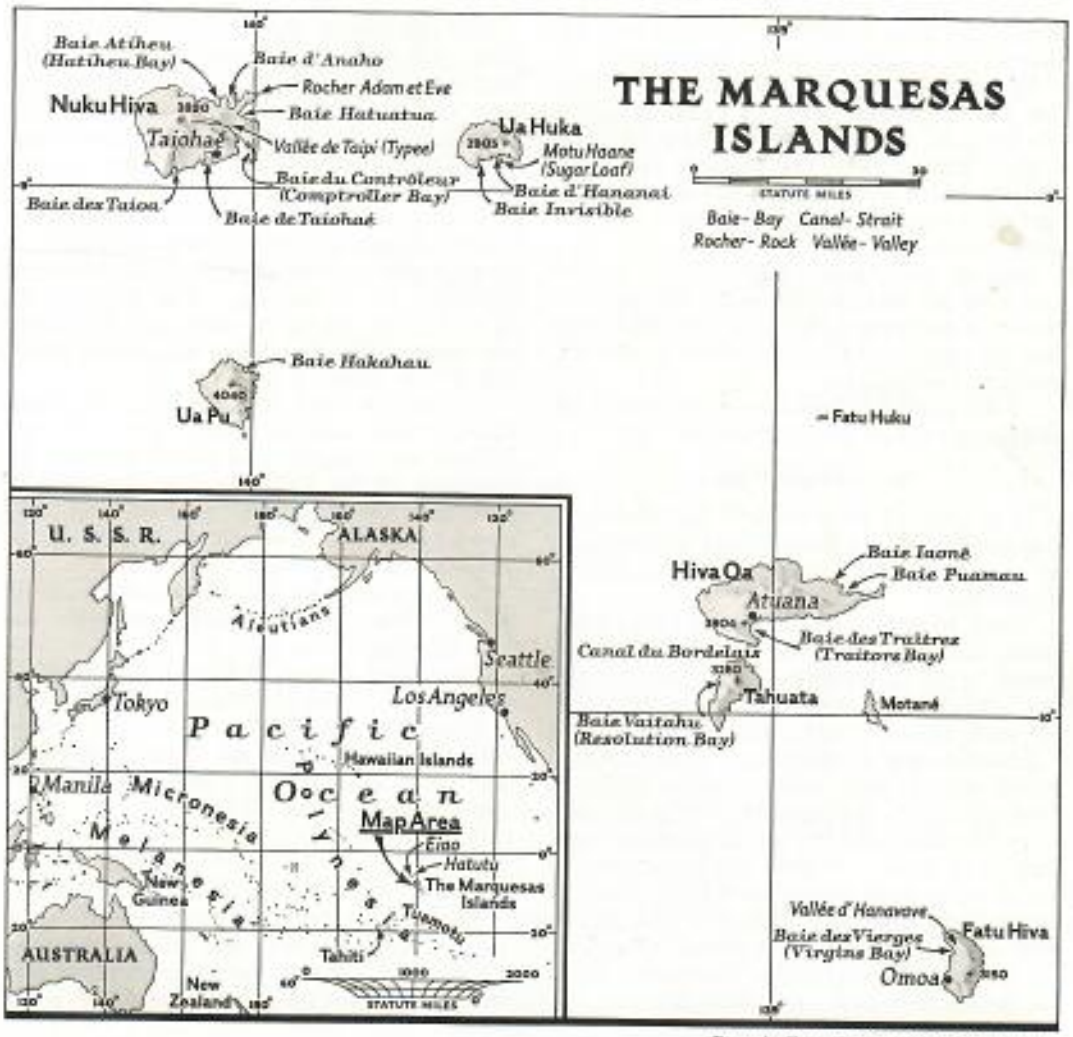
Already the whaleboats were going ashore with flour, sugar, bolts of cloth, tinned goods, building materials, and various odds and ends. This is an important stop, for here the Donald Company of Tahiti has built a copra shed.

In the Polynesian Garden of Eden the Tree of Life is the coconut palm (pages 88 and 89). Not only does this versatile tree



The Grave of Paul Gauguin Looks Out upon His Beloved Hiva Oa

Gauguin, an obscure Parisian, forsook wife, children, and job to devote his time to art. Going to Tahiti, he adopted the natives' life. Their portraits, painted against color-splashed backgrounds, made him famous. Gauguin spent his last years in the Marquesas. Dying in 1903, he was buried above Traitors Bay (Baie des Traîtres) (p. 82).



Drawn by Harry S. Oliver and Irvin E. Allenson

The Lonely Marquesas Rise Out of the Pacific 850 Miles Northeast of Tahiti (Inset)

Less than 150 years ago some 100,000 happy Polynesians inhabited this fertile archipelago. Today there are a melancholy 2,500. So isolated are the islands that no one has seriously tried to repopulate them. All that the people see of the world comes to them through the trading schooner from Tahiti.

supply food, clothing, and shelter for the natives, but it has a high commercial value. In exchange for copra, the dried meat of the coconut, the natives buy the variety of objects the *Vaitere* brings.

In this part of the world the economy is built upon the production and trade of copra. Shipped to industrial markets in America or Europe, oil is extracted for the making of soap and for use in other industries.

Today the skipper could accompany me. We hesitated before a trail which wound back and forth over the mountains south to Taiohaé.

"How about it?" I asked.

"Too ambitious," he laughed. "Besides, I want to show you something."

I followed him along a trail that led through palm groves and then up into grazing land. Contented cows and sheep munched on the grass. A wire spool hanging on a fence post spelled out "Chicago, Illinois."

"Ever been there?" I asked the skipper.

He shook his head.

"You probably wouldn't like it, anyway," I said cheerfully.

When we stopped to rest, we looked down into the valley and bay below. Our schooner's white hull glistened in the morning sun. The skipper's eyes were all for her. The *Vaitere* was built in the shipyards of Tahiti in 1941 of native woods. Ever since, at quarterly intervals, she has been tacking her way

across the nine degrees of latitude and ten degrees of longitude to the Marquesas.

In several hours we reached the crest of the ridge. Anaho Bay, an emerald green, sparkled in the distance. White breakers fringed the shore. The coconut plantation through which we had hiked was deeper green, and the mountains, where they were exposed, were rust-brown.

Far, far out was the vivid blue sea. A bird can wing its way to this height and poise in flight; it can come often, can even nest here; but all that I could see I must remember, perhaps forever.

"Your mind has a camera of its own," the skipper philosophized. "Memory."

An Indelible Picture

It is true. I have carried that picture of Anaho Bay about with me in my memory as a man will carry a snapshot in his billfold (page 90).

When we returned to the beach that afternoon, the crew was still working with the boats, bringing supplies ashore and carrying back copra. The surf was running high, and all hands were alert lest a comber capsize them.

Maneuvering a whaleboat safely through heavy surf to deep water requires skill and experience. A few minutes elapse between large breakers, and during these minutes the men pull hard. Fifteen men standing in water up to their waists exert every effort in shoving the boat off. Only the man at the steering oar sees the water ahead. The lives of all aboard depend on his judgment. When he shouts, they pull. Out they go.

Toward them rushes another comber. Will they make it before the green wall of water breaks over? For an instant they shoot skyward and we cannot see them. Again they climb up on a swell. They are safely out. The men's grip upon the oars relaxes, and they pull easily out to the schooner.

One we watched did not fare so well. A comber struck it and turned it end for end. Oars, bags of copra, and men flew through the air. A heavy oar could crush a man's skull, and a capsized boat could smash his body. This time no one was hurt; but would they be so lucky another time?

"Next stop, Hatuatua Bay," the skipper told me as we once again hauled the anchor aboard.

Two rock configurations which rise 500 feet above the sea at the entrance to Hatuatua are called Adam and Eve.

We were stopping here to pick up logs of the valuable tou wood, used in cabinetmaking and shipbuilding.

The whaleboat went within 50 yards of land, and eight of the crew dived overboard and swam ashore. They would shove the logs into the surf, only to have some of them thrown up on the shore again. But the strong-bodied Polynesians persisted and pushed through the breakers.

I was grimly fascinated, as I had been when the whaleboat had overturned at Anaho, to watch two heads bobbing there in the breakers, separated by a tou log. The boys would shoot up one side of a swell and slide down the other. This dangerous occupation would not be my choice.

One family lives at Hatuatua. The man, his wife, and their six children have only one another for company and might welcome the diversion of the *Vaitere's* crew, but at this port the crew must work so hard that little energy is left. There was no singing as the moon rose over our bow.

Passages between the islands are made at night. The skipper manages to enter the bays precisely at dawn.

The island of Ua Huka, 25 miles east of Nuku Hiva, is like the Painted Desert in the southwestern United States. Copper-colored cliffs rise sheer out of the water at Invisible Bay, so named because it is not distinguishable until you reach its mouth.

The Perils of a Tidal Wave

When a tidal wave struck the narrow bay in 1946, water receded until the spot where we now anchored was not much more than a mere pool. Later, the water returned and rushed up the valley, sweeping away every building in its path.

I estimated that no more than fifty people now live in the valley, though once it must have supported many times that number. I examined retaining walls, embankments, and footpaths several hundred years old.

The natives watched me, smiling. As I walked up the main pathway of a small village, I heard a shout from below. Running up the steep slope toward me came a woman swathed in bright-red calico, a basket in her hand. She was out of breath when she reached me, but she said something amiable in the island language and handed me four huge mangoes. Before I returned to the schooner, other gifts were added to this—pineapples, oranges, and papayas.

On the beach an orderly community program of copra drying had been arranged. The meat of the coconut was placed on a platform more than 100 feet long and 10 feet wide. A platform constructed of small saplings propped it above the ground to prevent hogs

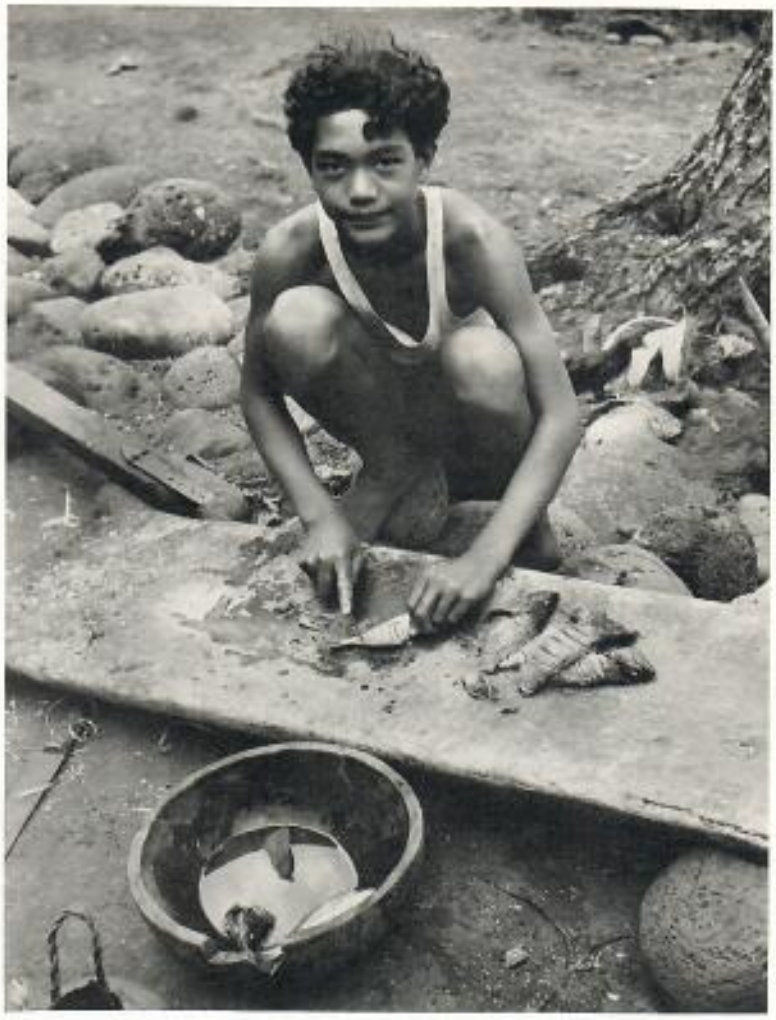
from fattening themselves on the only money crop of the island. It takes 5,000 to 6,000 coconuts to make a ton of copra.

In July, 1941, copra in the Marquesas brought $4 per ton from the trading schooner calling there. At the time of my visit it was bringing $174 per ton in the Tahiti market. Production in the Marquesas is about 3,000 tons a year, and brings a premium for high quality.

The natives barter copra for trade goods and building materials. The skipper checks weights of bags on portable scales, all weights determined in kilos (page 88).

Wild Pigeons of Invisible Bay

Invisible Bay harbors hundreds of wild pigeons. The skipper, who is a good shot, and I (who imitated his technique as best I could) bagged 18 for eating aboard the schooner. Earlier in the morning he had shot a bird which looked like a raven. It was even tastier than the others.



Fishing Is Sport, Cleaning Drudgery, the World Over

Fish—baked, boiled, or stewed—puts protein into the Marquesan diet. A favorite dish is made by wrapping fish in leaves and baking them over hot stones in outdoor ovens. The wooden bowl is a homemade product of Tahuata.

Sailing along the coast, we saw a large table rock jutting out of the water. Several hundred yards in diameter, it was separated from the mainland by a deep channel. Sooty terns nested here by thousands. When we were quite close, the schooner's Klaxon sounded. The birds blackened the air as they flew up.

"Say," I hinted to the skipper, "this would be a good place to take photographs."

"Sure thing," he said obligingly. We circled the rock and then continued to Sugar Loaf (Motu Haane) (page 86).

This rock resembles Sugar Loaf at Rio de Janeiro. Close as we were to land, we could not anchor, as the water is about 20 fathoms. Lines were put off each end of the schooner and made fast to sharp rocks ashore.

More copra was taken aboard, along with horses and cattle (page 87). Led by ropes around their necks, the animals swam unwillingly out through the surf to the schooner. The horses were then hauled aboard with a rope sling. All the while they protested by thumping the hull of the vessel with their hoofs. However, they were soon mollified by fresh grass which had been placed aboard for them.

As for the cattle, they received less considerate treatment. A member of the crew would dive down and fasten a rope about one hind leg; by this the animal would then be dragged up to the deck. What bellowing! I thought of this as a possible substitute for the *Queen Mary's* foghorn, should it ever fail.

"Think I can bathe around here?" I asked the skipper.

"First stream to the left," he indicated.

Apparently it is customary for the children of the village to accompany bathers, for while I washed myself in the cool water 20 youngsters kept up a constant babble.

The group spirit prevails in Ua Huka, where many enterprises are carried out in communal fashion. The entire community of Hananai Bay was building a 40-foot surfboat. Some workmen cut the timber; others did the actual building. They expected to complete this particular boat in two months, so that they could travel to adjacent islands.

Thanksgiving on Ua Huka

Thursday, and Thanksgiving at that! I did not suppose that we would celebrate it, but the Polynesians, who enjoy a feast for any reason, saw that bountiful fare was provided aboard the *Vaitere*.

We were anchored in a bay on Ua Huka where a plentiful supply of chickens and pigs is always on hand. One of the latter, roasted a deep brown, was brought to our table. Someone had thoughtfully placed behind each ear a hibiscus flower—in Polynesia the "flower of friendship."

Sunday was the day of the feast in Taiohaé to which I had been invited by the island administrator. This time a sizable mutton, which had been barbecued over a charcoal fire, was placed in the center of the table on two banana leaves. The guests, knives in hand, attacked the carcass. When each had cut off a portion to his liking, just the skeleton remained.

"And have you been yet to Typee (Taipi) Valley?" the administrator inquired.

"Not yet," I answered. "I want to go there. I've read Melville's book."

"It's very different now," he said. "No more tattooing; that's been outlawed. You know, the natives used to undergo great torture and danger of blood poisoning to decorate their bodies. The French outlawed it."

"How about cannibalism?" I asked.

"Oh, there's no more of that," he assured me.

Three days later the *Vaitere* entered Comptroller Bay (Baie du Contrôleur), the door to Typee Valley, on Nuku Hiva's southeast coast.

During the war, huge transports such as the *Queen Elizabeth, Monterey,* and *Coolidge* rendezvoused here for refueling. The Marquesans, who have been throwing rocks all their lives either in war or in hunting goats, tried to heave stones up to the first deck. Few succeeded, and they reported to their families that the steamers were "big like hell."

Typee Valley is a South Seas "ghost town" (page 93). Fence rows of stone stretched up the mountainsides. Still standing were many *paepaes,* stone platforms or house foundations, some 30 feet square. Built without mortar or cement, they are still habitable, but there are only a few families left to use them.

Bloody battles took place in Typee Valley. It was here that Herman Melville, captive among savages, was treated as a king. *Typee,* his personal account of experiences on Nuku Hiva, has been read in many languages. I read it for the first time in an American literature course at Purdue University and found it thrilling.

Though the disintegration of the race here in the Marquesas was not of our time, nevertheless little has been done to help these people. Their decline is a tragedy which I could not help thinking about as I wandered through this beautiful valley.

It is watered by the largest stream (nine miles long) in the Marquesas. Everywhere grow mangoes, bananas, *fei* (red mountain bananas), papayas, limes, breadfruit, and other tropical fruits. Once it was a Marquesan custom to plant breadfruit trees upon the birth of a child, to ensure food for the days ahead.

A Swim in a Mountain Stream

I enjoyed a swim in the cool mountain stream and ate in the approved fashion a fresh watermelon which the natives gave me.

My second approach to Typee Valley was over the mountains with the skipper. We started from Taiohaé Bay the next morning at 6:30 on two sturdy horses. As on the day when we had hiked to see Anaho Bay from a mountaintop, I could watch the changing vegetation as we gained altitude. Up to 800 feet coconuts grew profusely. Beyond that they dwindled and soon disappeared (page 104).

Things were extremely dry up to about a thousand feet; then the higher we climbed, the greener the plant life. Heavy underbrush off the trail now was all but impenetrable. Lush green grass grew everywhere, and a number of horses had been tethered along the trail for grazing.

From one of the switchbacks I looked down at Taiohaé Bay. There our schooner quivered in the morning sun. To the right and left of the bay and far into the distance the parched ridges along the coast contrasted boldly with the scene at hand.

Kodachromes by Charles Allmon

Live Cargo Rides the Deck of the Schooner *Vaitere* from the Marquesas to Tahiti

For 41 days the author-photographer accompanied the skipper on a 2,700-mile trading voyage. He saw the sheep's wool gather brine from crashing seas and watched Piggie enjoy his sun bath. Cattle got seasick.

Vaitere Drops Anchor → Beneath Hiva Oa's Frowning Cliffs

Hiva Oa gained the sobriquet "Bloody" because it resisted its French conquerors long and fiercely. Victims of the white man's diseases, the independent Polynesians who inhabited its high plateau are gone, their domain abandoned to wild dogs, cattle, and pigs.

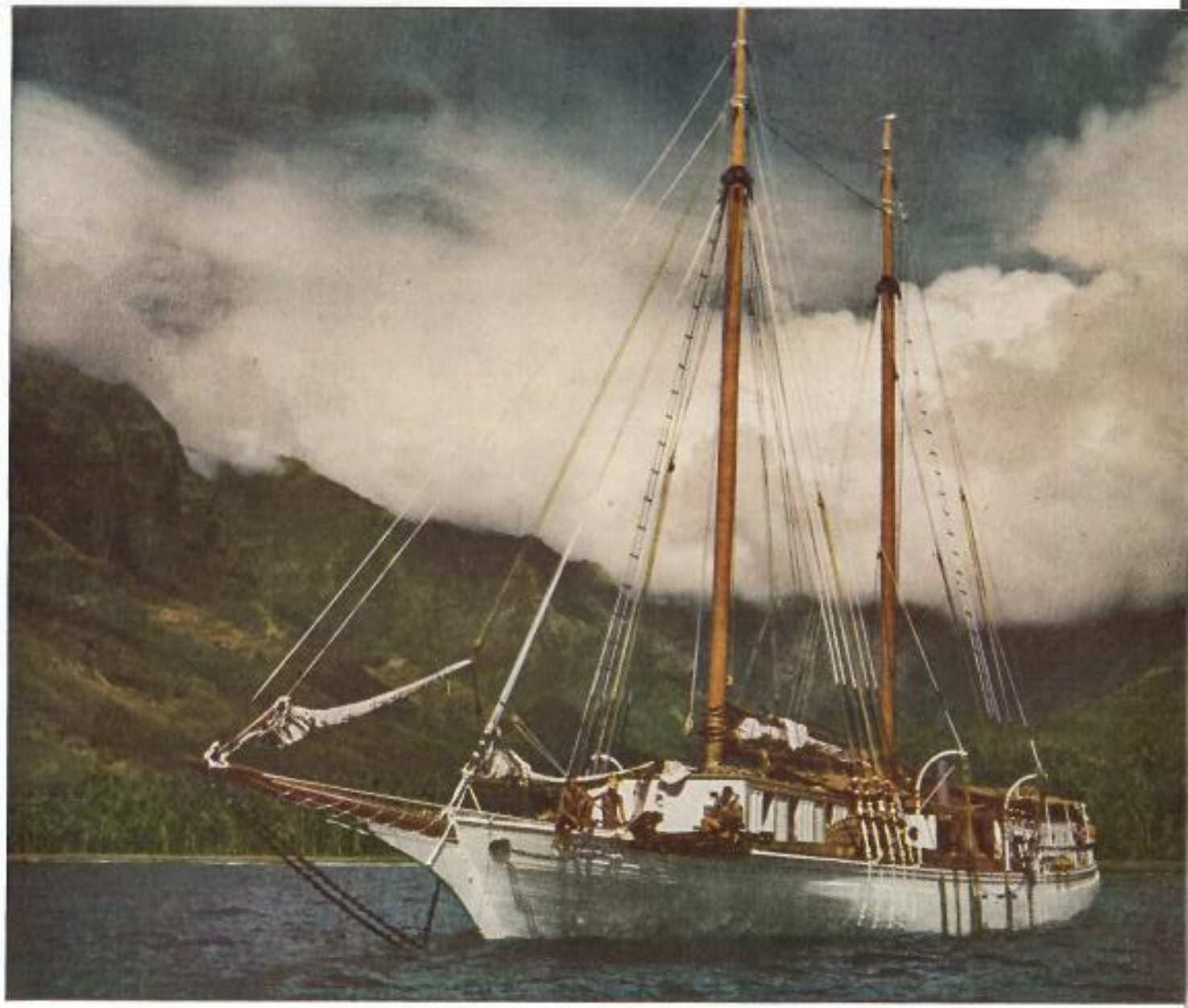
Copra, dried meat of the coconut palms rustling on the shore, is the island's export, and the *Vaitere* has stopped in Traitors Bay (Baie des Traîtres) to collect the crop. In return, she puts ashore trade goods.

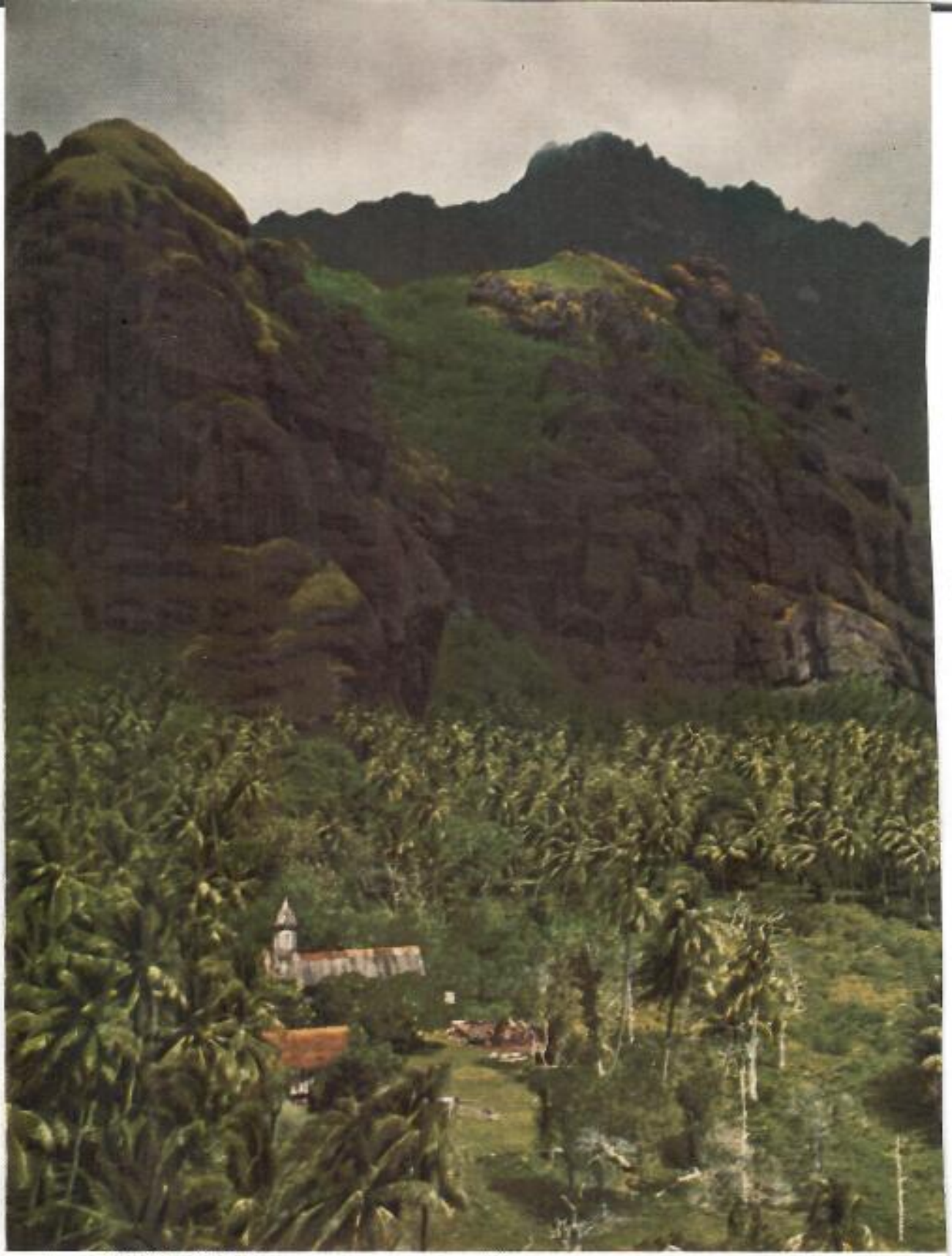
The schooner, built in Papeete, is 110 feet long. Two Diesel engines assist her sails. Her crew consists of 14 husky Marquesans.

↓ Launching a Whaleboat

In Hatiheu Bay, Nuku Hiva, one of the Marquesas, crewmen load a boat with sacks of copra. Soon they will be rowing toward *Vaitere*, moored in the distance. Their backs to the surging sea, the oarsmen depend for their lives on orders shouted by the coxswain, who stands at the steering oar. Only husky, experienced hands can run the breakers, which sometimes rise eight to ten feet.

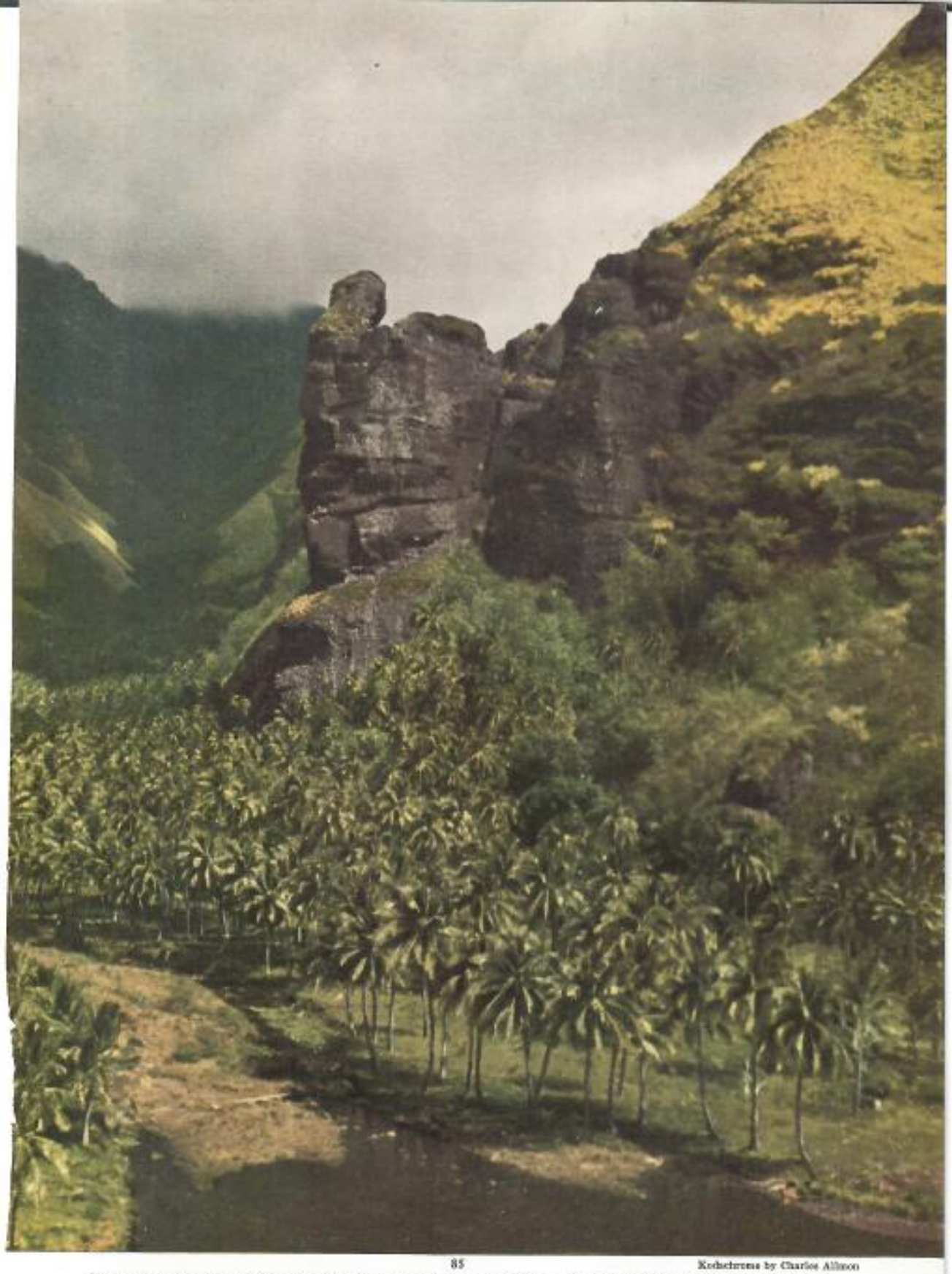
Kodachrome by Charles Allmon





To This Green Island Came the Outsiders in 1595; Fatu Hiva's Evil Days Began

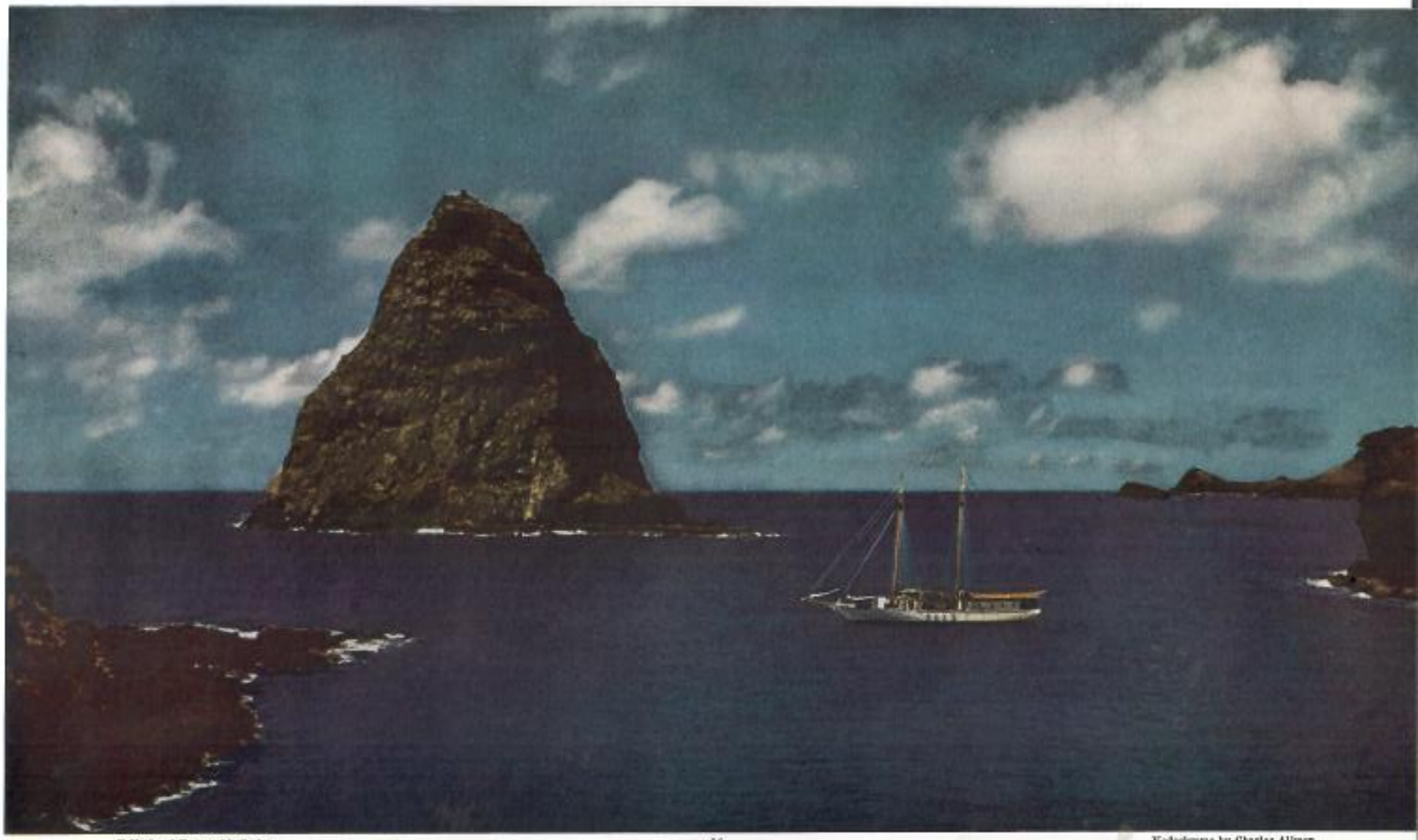
Sailors, whalers, and traders brought such a plague of ills that the population dropped from thousands to hundreds. Palms hide a village's ugly iron roofs. The steepled church stands out.



Kodachromes by Charles Allmon

Far up Hanavave Valley, Hemmed by Lofty Sierras, Tufted Coconut Palms Extend

The little stream flows into Virgins Bay, so named for the fantastic lava pinnacles resembling cloaked and hooded virgins which guard the entrance. An imperfect example is the crag on the right.



Kodachrome by Charles Allmon

A 500-foot Rock, a Sugar Loaf Like Rio de Janeiro's, Springs from the Sea Off Ua Huka

With lines attached to opposite points on shore, *Valtere* rolls in 20 fathoms of water, too deep for her anchor. She waits to load livestock (opposite page). Natives sometimes use Sugar Loaf as a fish-spearing platform.

Dragged Swimming Through the Surf, a Tired Horse Accepts an Ignoble Embarkation Without Complaint

At that, the horse is lucky. Cattle, bellowing their protests, swing aboard on a rope attached to one hind leg.

Kodachrome by Charles Allman

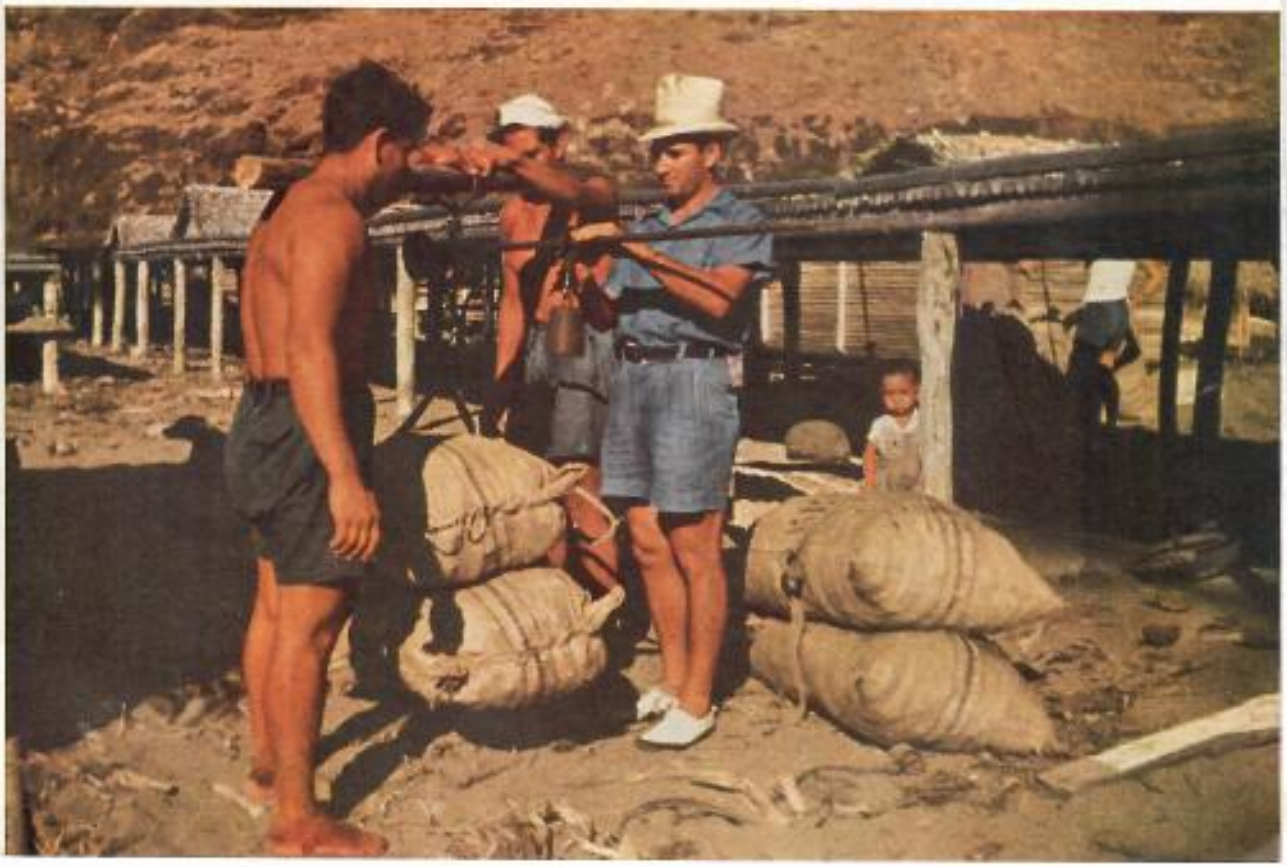
Kodachromes by Charles Allmon

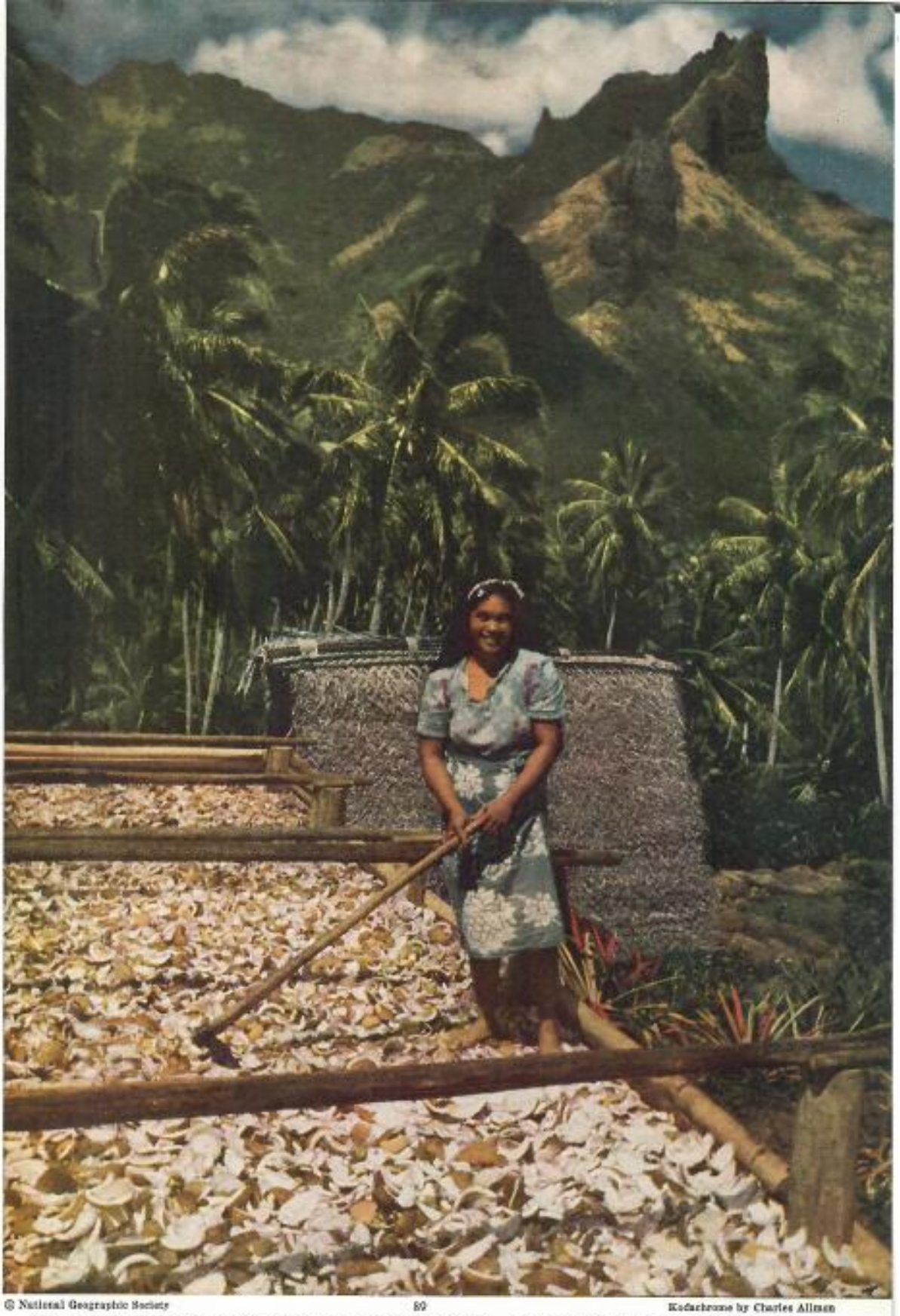
↑ Islander, Daughter, and Pony Walk to Market with Copra

Beside this quiet, palm-ringed bay on Nuku Hiva sits Taiohaé, which in its days of glory boasted of having bishops, governors, prisons, saloons, and warships. A death-dealing opium habit, enslaving the people, left only ruin. This load of dried coconut meat represents a month's work.

↓ *Vaitere's* Skipper Checks Each Purchase on His Portable Scale

Here on Ua Huka the captain is a man of dignity, the islanders' periodic contact with the world. His assistants, who carry a 250-pound load of copra, are sailors at sea, stevedores on shore. They bear out the Marquesans' reputation of being the best physical specimens in the South Seas.

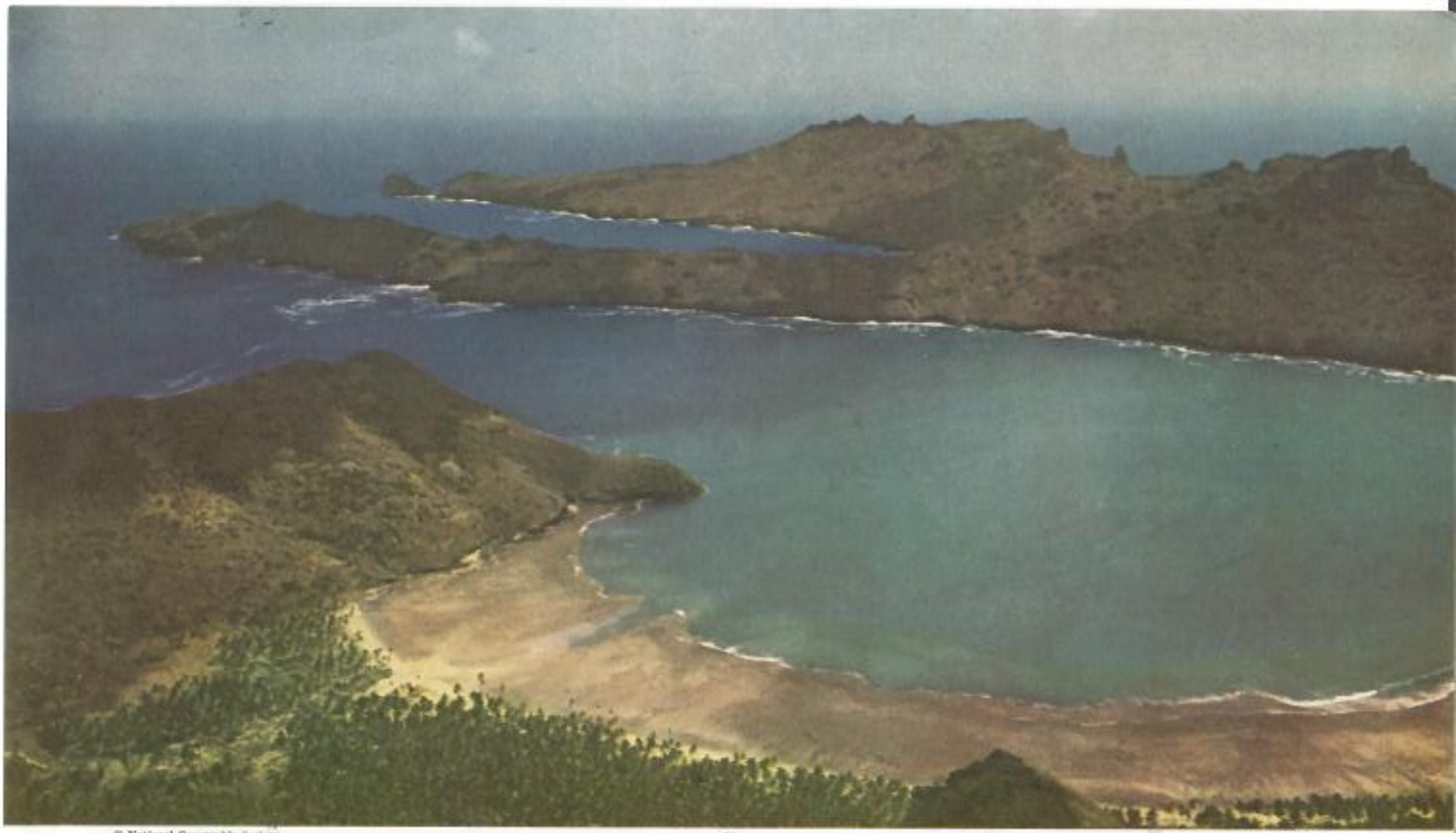




Kodachrome by Charles Allman

Nuku Hiva Coconut, Dried on a Pig-proof Platform, Becomes the Copra of Commerce

The stately palm shades and feeds the Polynesian, makes his baskets, twine, and fans, kindles his fires. Its nutty drink slakes his thirst. It is more than the ancestral Tree of Life; it is cash in hand.



Kodachrome by Charles Allison

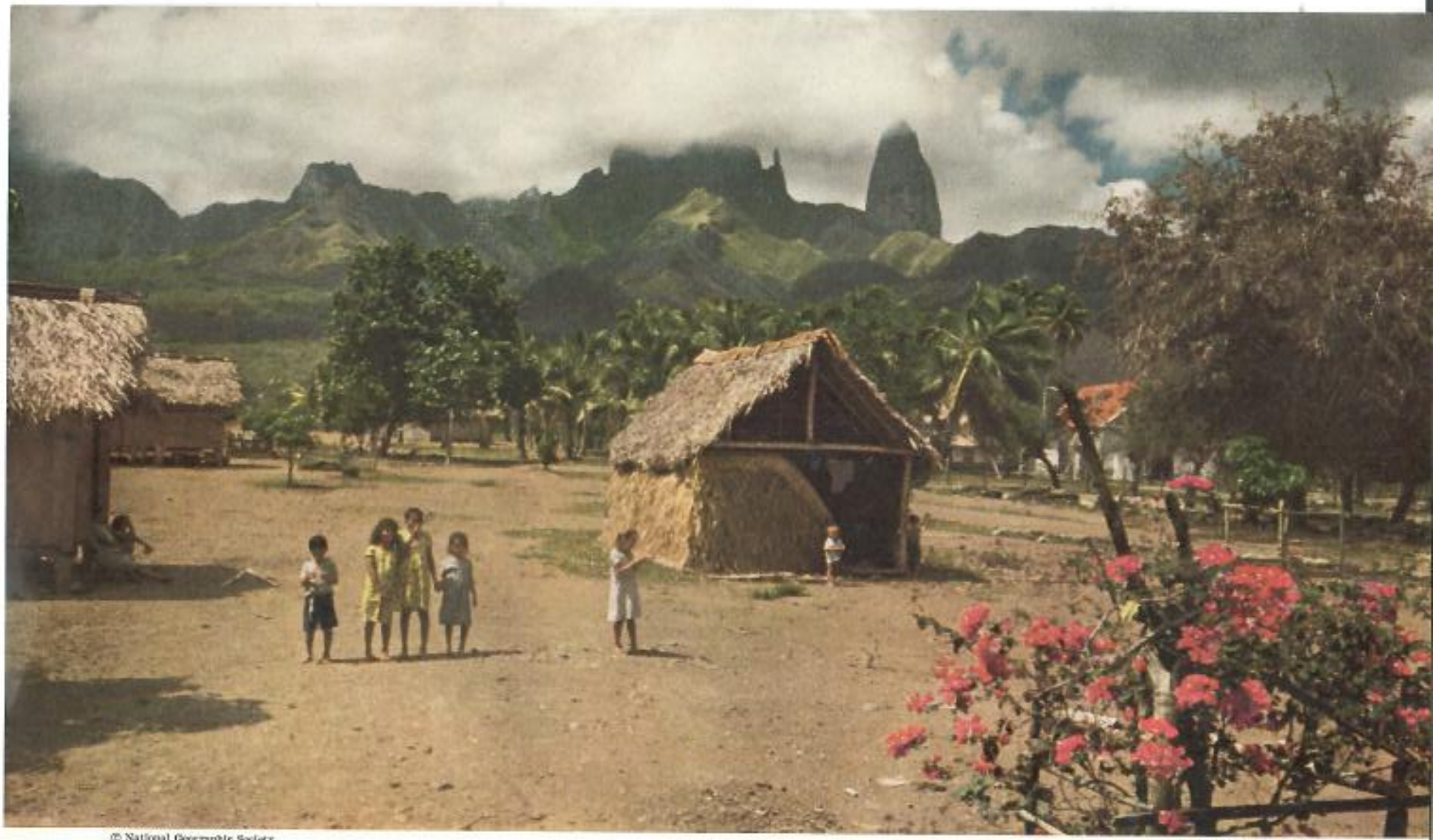
In Anaho Bay, Nuku Hiva, Robert Louis Stevenson Met His First Marquesans, "Stalwart Six-foot Men in Every Stage of Undress"

Curiosity-filled visitors thronged Stevenson's ship, "regarding me in silence with embarrassing eyes . . . A kind of despair came over me . . . to think they were beyond the reach of articulate communication, like furred animals . . . or dwellers of some alien planet" (*In the South Seas*, Charles Scribner's Sons).

The Coconut Palm, Like Man, Clings to the Shore of Taiohaé Bay, Nuku Hiva Island. Lava Mountains Reflect Six Years of Drought

Herman Melville, jumping ship in 1842, escaped through these hills and dwelt among the kindly cannibals, as he related in *Typee*.

Kodachrome by Charles Allmon



Kodachrome by Charles Allmon

Spirelike Lava Cores of Weathered Old Volcanoes Puncture the Clouds Above Ua Pu

These humble homes belong to one of the island's small villages. The children were amazed by the photographer and his camera.

Nuku Hiva's Grassy Plateau Looks Down into Typee (Taipi) Valley. Melville's Barbaric Paradise Is But a Graveyard Now

Kodachrome by Charles Allman

← **Palms and Pinnacles Ring Hatiheu Bay on Nuku Hiva**

On a dark night the photographer saw the skipper guide *Vaitere* into the cove by taking a sight on these lava plugs.

Children on the beach represent a pitiful fraction of the happy, spirited thousands whom Capt. David Porter found on Nuku Hiva in 1813.

Porter, commander of the frigate *Essex* in the War of 1812, ran up the American flag, called the island Madison, and took possession in the name of the United States. In an amazing campaign—guns against war clubs—he defeated the cannibal tribes.

Sailing away, Porter was captured by the British. A garrison which he left ashore was destroyed in a rebellion. Finally, the United States declined to ratify the annexation. France later took over.

↓ **Ua Huka Gets Lumber**

In 1946 a tidal wave swept into this valley, destroying all homes within its path. *Vaitere* has put ashore these boards for fresh construction. Before civilization spoiled them, the islanders would have been content with their native coconut logs.

Ua Huka's barren hillsides reminded the photographer of Arizona's Painted Desert.

Kodachromes by Charles Allmon

Nuku Hiva's Grassy Plateau Looks Down into Typee (Taipi) Valley. Melville's Barbaric Paradise Is But a Graveyard Now

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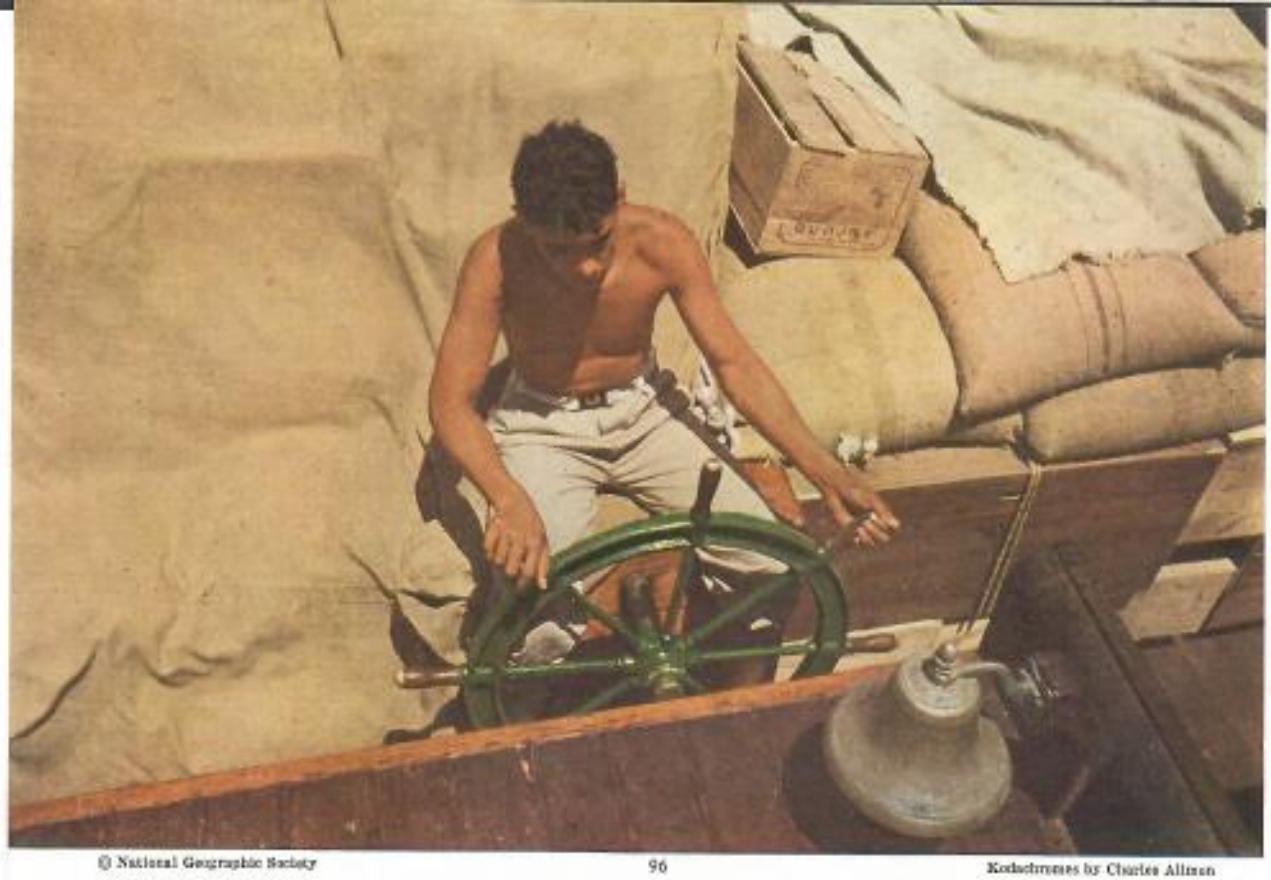


Kodachromes by Charles Allmon

Marquesan Helmsman Steers the Ship

Using a compass, each man in the crew takes his turn at the wheel and, with the bell, sounds every hour. If he thinks the captain isn't looking, he may sneak a smoke while on duty. On the voyage home, every inch of *Valtere's* deck is piled high with cargo.

Crew's Mess Is Served on Boxes and Bags

These robust fellows think nothing of working 14 hours a day handling 125-pound bags of copra. Scorning shoes, they love to climb the rigging. Rice, fish, and corned beef compose their staple fare, which they wash down with coffee.

"I almost shook hands with myself on that turn," I laughed to the skipper as we rounded a sharp switchback.

Near the summit vegetation thinned. Small trees and bushes gave way to grassy slopes. Soon we were out in the open and on top. Over the crest we trotted and looked out upon a great expanse of gently rolling, green grazing land.

"This is the route your Melville took in his escape from the whaler," the skipper informed me.

Waterfalls of Typee Valley

Typee Valley forks at the head. In the left branch we could see two cascading waterfalls, perhaps 500 feet high. The right branch was green. At the very head I could see the trail leading over the next range of mountains, across the island to Hatiheu Bay on the north side. Likely it was similar to the route we had just followed, worn two feet deep by centuries of use.

"Now you've had a worm's-eye view and a bird's-eye view of Typee," the skipper said. "You've seen it from its floor, and you've seen it from its roof."

"Can't we stay here awhile?" I wondered. But we couldn't, and back we headed. We met a native and his family on their way to Typee. The man rode a handsome horse; behind trailed his wife, all five children, four dogs, and a cat.

In the Marquesas a horse is a valuable asset. The open sea confronts you at every turn, and a visit into the next valley requires a ride over several mountain ranges. On a few of the islands, where the mountains do not drop so abruptly into the sea, the trails wind along the coast.

A small throng had gathered at Taiohaé when we arrived late in the afternoon. They were examining a 25-foot native sailing craft just in from the island of Ua Pu, 30 miles distant. A heavy sea had been running, and this flimsy craft, with four occupants, had made the voyage in six hours, bailing all the way.

The purpose of their journey was to obtain two liters of red wine from Bob McKittrick, a Scottish storekeeper who has lived in Taiohaé 38 years. Wine is rationed to the natives in these islands; otherwise, there would be no work and all play.

Bob's new Servel kerosene refrigerator, which arrived with our schooner, was already paying handsome dividends.

The kids were buying ice cubes from Bob for a franc. Bob gave me four ice cubes, no charge, in appreciation of suggestions I had given him on the operation of the new refrigerator. I had used the same kind in the Tropics in Central America and Africa, but had never realized a franc apiece on ice cubes!

At the mission house in Taiohaé I picked up a 1919 National Geographic Magazine and browsed through it.

Outside, flamboyant trees were in full bloom—another picture for my mind's "camera!"

By late afternoon my attention had been distracted by the sand flies. Nuku Hiva is full of these pests, which raise red welts similar to mosquito bites on vulnerable white skin. They itch—and citronella doesn't help!

Moving along the coast from Taiohaé, we entered Taioa Bay under the shadow of majestic mountains which towered more than 1,600 feet beside and above us. The right fork of the bay was a favorite spot of whalers to beach their ships and repair hulls.

Charles Conlon, the supercargo, and I hiked up the valley to see a waterfall. We met Marquesans typical of earlier generations—tall, muscular men, stocky women.

Before one grass hut women were grinding breadfruit, which they would allow to ferment for *poipoi*. In early days a hole was dug in the center of the houses for storage of poipoi.

The women were wearing garments of tapa cloth, pounded from the bark of the breadfruit tree. Banyan, paper mulberry, and other barks also may be used for clothing. When the cloth *pareu* was introduced into Polynesia, it quickly replaced tapa cloth, which does not wear well and disintegrates in water.

2,000-Foot Shower Bath

We found our waterfall at the head of the valley and somewhat to the left. From where we stood, it must have fallen a thousand feet. All of it was not visible, and estimates have it that this cascade is over 2,000 feet in height.

At the base of the falls is a stream. In this warm climate a mountain stream is always an invitation to bathe. This is the first time I have ever had a 2,000-foot shower bath at my disposal!

A silver ribbon of water splashing down outcroppings of a half-hidden mountain on a pebble of an island in the South Pacific—this is another of the pictures exposed in my mental camera.

"Pheasants?" I asked the supercargo quizzically as we retraced our footsteps.

"Ha, ha," he laughed. "Wild chickens!"

But they did look like pheasants. They had brilliant plumage and a sheen to their feathers. They would run through the underbrush and take wing just as a pheasant does.

They were strong, swift flyers; some of them stayed in the air for at least 200 yards.

"The natives sometimes capture a cock or hen alive," the supercargo told me, "and mate it with their domestic fowl. The people of Polynesia are great for cockfights, and once in a while an offspring from a wild bird finds its way to Tahiti to take honors in the cockfights there."

Taioa Bay is on the edge of the desert land of Nuku Hiva's west coast. We saw wild goats, but they scampered up rocky cliffs out of sight at the sound of the Klaxon. On a previous trip along the western end of the island I saw herds of wild cattle grazing on parched slopes. Early explorers found pigs in the Marquesas, but cattle, sheep, and goats were brought in sailing vessels. Today cattle and goats are found wild on every island.

Hunting Cattle with Harpoons

Natives, lacking guns and ammunition, hunt cattle with harpoons. Two men station themselves in trees and hover over trails visited by the large herds. As a bull comes by, he usually falls into the trap, but terrific battles are sometimes staged.

A good hunting dog will grab a cow or bull by the tender nose and hold it while hunters rush in with their harpoons. Although there may be some savage satisfaction in killing cattle this way, the animals are hunted only for food, not for sport.

In the bay we caught a 150-pound tuna. The cook cut it into small bits, soaked it in lime juice, and then served it with coconut cream. I smack my lips just thinking of it!

The islands' largest settlement is the village of Atuana, on Hiva Oa, once administrative center of the islands. Like Taiohaé, Atuana has radio communication with Tahiti. Tons of supplies went ashore here.

Wooden casks, containing 50 gallons each of red wine from French North Africa, were dropped overboard into the sea. Geysers flew half the height of the masts, for the casks resembled depth charges being put down. Crew members, swimming in the water, jockey the casks near enough to shore to be washed onto the beach by breakers.

What a happy day it is when one cask accidentally drops upon another and breaks open! The crew members gulp up a mixture of salt water and red wine.

I walked with a bishop of the mission at Atuana to Paul Gauguin's grave. The bishop, who has lived in the islands 55 years, and the artist were friends. Gauguin died in 1903 and is buried on a knoll overlooking the settlement and bay (page 76).

On the north coast of Hiva Oa we put into the small bay of Iaoné. The valley behind it is owned by a Norwegian, Henry Lie. He was waiting on the beach, waiting for mail from Tahiti and his beloved Norway, and for the large demijohn of red wine for Christmas celebration.

Lie, who speaks English easily, told me a little of his 40 years in the Marquesas. He was a cabin boy on a trading vessel operating from Europe—a German four-master. Life in those days aboard sailing vessels was rugged for a lad of 14 years. Jumping ship on one of the small islands, he has been here ever since, with an occasional trip to Tahiti and once in awhile to New Zealand. He was for a time supercargo on a trading schooner operating out of Tahiti.

Cannibalism had disappeared when Lie arrived, but he related a story about his son's great-great-grandparent, Kekela. The Reverend James Kekela was a full-blooded Hawaiian who came to Puamau Bay as a missionary.

For several years he labored hard trying to convert the natives to Christianity. Then a blackbirder carried off several men and women. The tribe swore vengeance on the next white ship entering the bay.

In 1860 an American whaler put in to obtain water and food. The first mate, a man named Whalon, was captured while ashore and was immediately handed over to the chefs for "long pig." Fires were prepared, and Whalon was about to be placed in the oven. Only the men would eat, as "long pig" was tabu for women.

Historic Rescue

Kekela's first pleas to the chief were in vain. The fires burned brighter; Whalon was soon to toast.

Kekela offered a black frock coat, then a rifle. Finally a canoe carved by a master boatbuilder aroused the chief's interest. Whalon was set free.

When Whalon returned to the United States, his thrilling adventure in the South Seas received publicity. President Abraham Lincoln then sent Kekela, in the name of the Government of the United States, a written testimony of appreciation for his intervention, together with an inscribed gold watch and telescope.

At the head of Puamau Valley, where Kekela carried on his missionary activities, are the largest stone images in the Marquesas. I stood beside one stone *tiki*, or god, measuring eight to nine feet in height.

Some were lying on the ground as if toppled over. One tiki was said to represent a woman

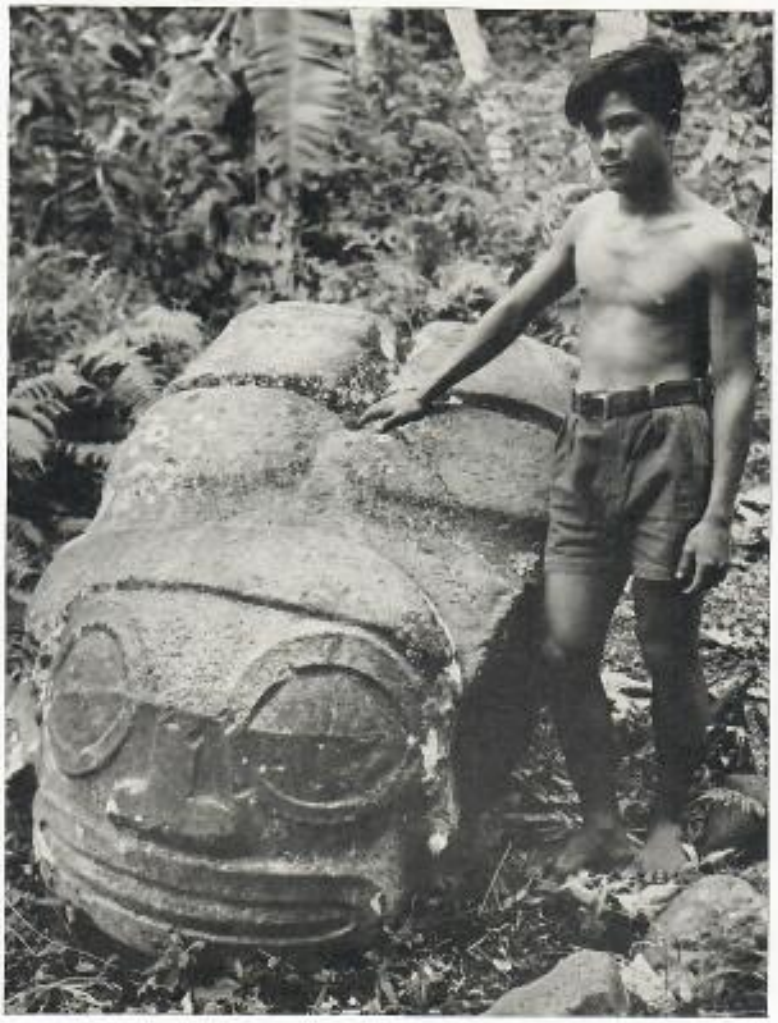
kneeling, head on the ground, in position for childbirth.

Although I got to the shore about 5 p. m., it took us more than an hour in the whaleboat to get through the surf to the schooner.

Through Bordelais Strait we moved on to Tahuata and Resolution Bay (Baie Vaitahu), named for Captain Cook's command ship, which visited here in April, 1774. The valley sloped up to the mountains from the water's edge. The ruins of an old French fort are visible, relic of a campaign to subdue the natives.

A monument to commemorate French soldiers and sailors who lost their lives in fighting the fierce tribes of the island was erected 50 yards back from the beach.

The tidal wave of April, 1946, tore the monument from its foundation. The huge slab of concrete toppled over. The plaque is gone, possibly to furnish metal tips for the natives' fishing spears. An old ship's cannon remains, however, pointing out to sea.



Goggle-eyed Images Reflect Hiva Oa's Pagan Days

The author saw many toppled *tikis*, or gods, some measuring nine feet. This centuries-old stone figure is believed to represent a woman in childbirth.

The morning of December 9 I awoke to see the jagged spirelike peaks of Ua Pu (pages 92, 102, and 103). We were anchored at Hakahau Bay, and dozens of native canoes were coming out to visit the schooner.

In 1815 the sailing ship *Matilda*, under Captain Fowler, put in at Hakahau Bay for a cargo of sandalwood. Controversy over women caused the natives at night to cut her anchor chain. A heavy sea was running, putting her on the rocks in short order, and she sank before daybreak.

The 1946 tidal wave washed ashore the hull which had been submerged for 131 years. Never was the old ship more needed, for most of the buildings along the beach had been carried out by the tidal wave.

Landings any place on Ua Pu are dangerous. Bays are short and poorly protected. Certain bays are calm in one season, dangerous and difficult a few months later. At times the northeast trades blow this way, causing bays on the north side to have heavy surf.

The Chief of Omoa

The middle of December we reached Fatu Hiva.* At Omoa we anchored well in. The general orderliness of the small settlement was conspicuous. A small avenue runs from the beach for half a mile up the valley. On either side, native houses have neat yards with grass and flowers.

* See "Turning Back Time in the South Seas," by Thor Heyerdahl, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, January, 1941.

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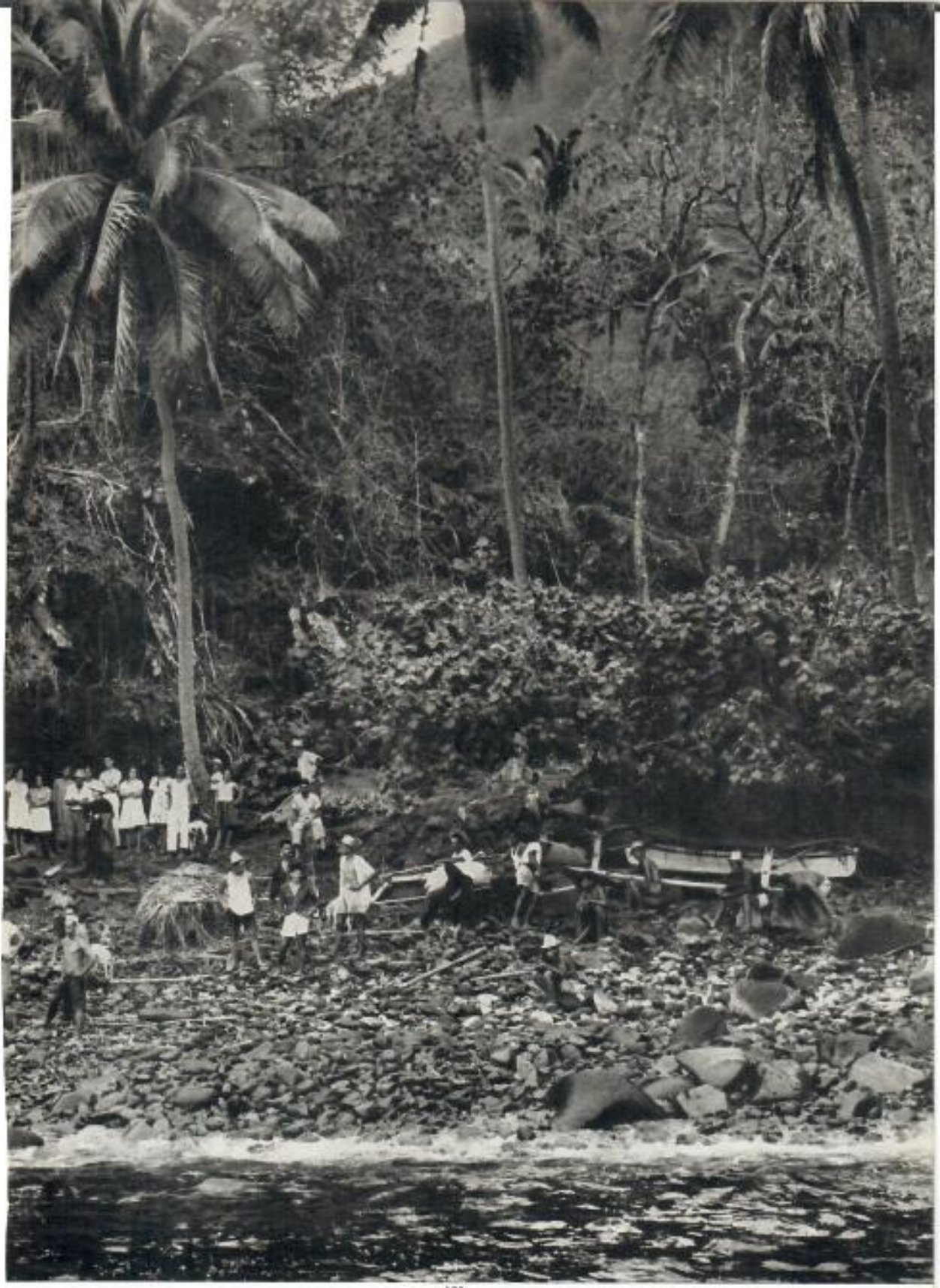
Like Castaways, Omoa Villagers Dejectedly Watch the World Sail Away from Fatu Hiva

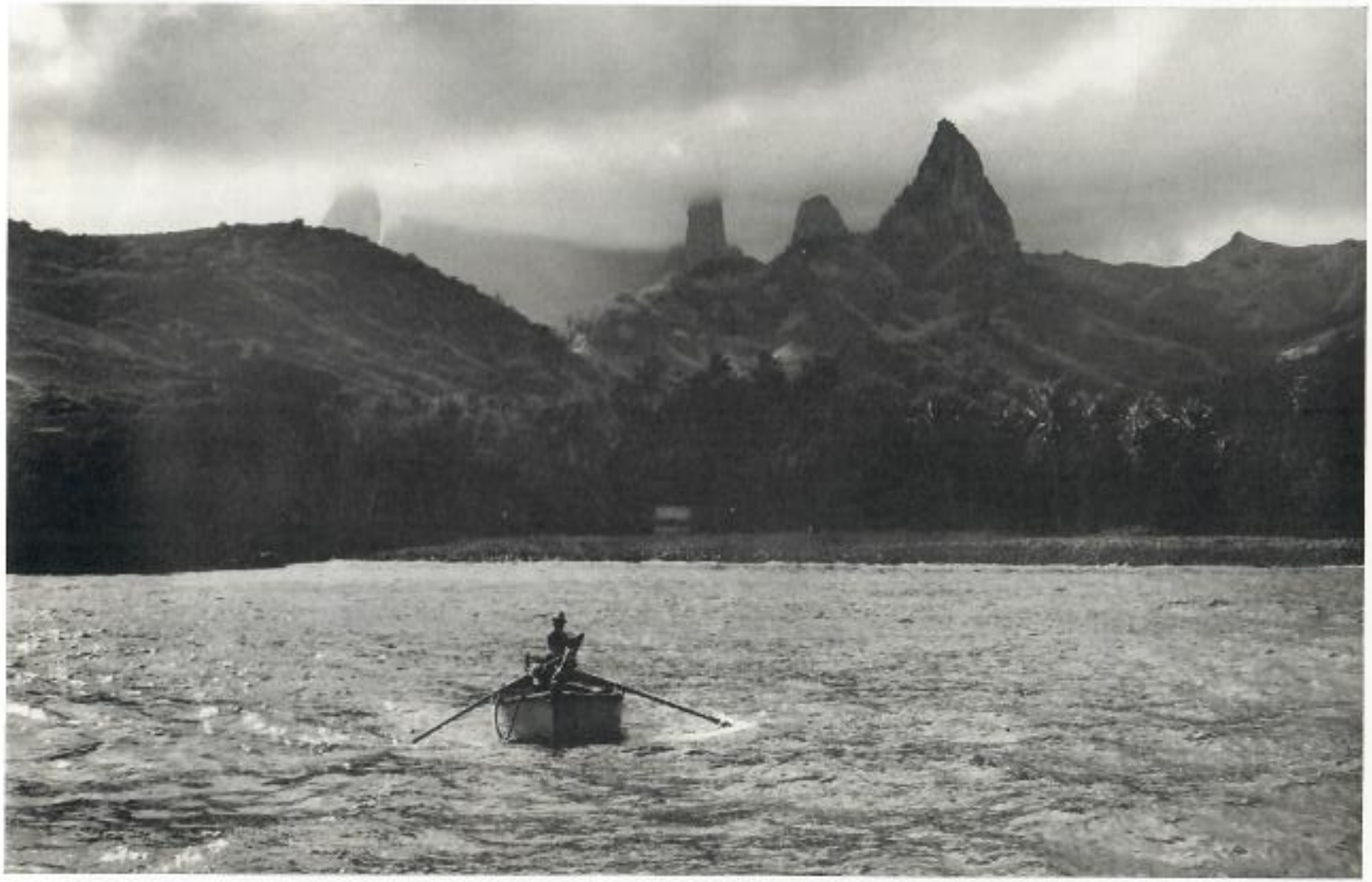
Four times a year the islanders rejoice in a visit from the trading schooner *Vaitere*. Their only contact with other people, she brings salt, sugar, calico, canned goods, and mail.



101

Men, Women, Children, and Dogs Line the Rocky Shore; Their Solitude Closes In Again

Every soul in the village sees the schooner off. She bears away baskets of fruit, their parting gift. Here the author took his last picture of the Marquesas (page 104).



Lava Steeples Hide Their Heads in Rain Clouds 4,000 Feet Above Ua Pu

No reefs protect Ua Pu's bays. Heavy surf and treacherous currents make landings hazardous. The whaleboat, after putting provisions ashore, battled massive rollers on its way back to the schooner (page 92).

Vaitere Drops Anchor in Hakahau Bay. An Entire Community Paddles Out to Meet Her

Once every three months when the schooner calls, Ua Pu folk race to get a head start in the trading. Girls exchange pandanus hats for cheap perfume; men bargain for tobacco. These dugouts, carrying outriggers on the starboard, were fashioned by hand from breadfruit trunks.

Hoofbeats Break the Silence of Typee Valley, Once the Noisy Eden of a Happy People

Just over a hundred years ago Herman Melville jumped ship on Nuku Hiva and lived like a hostage king among Typee's handsome cannibals and fair maidens. He immortalized the valley in his novel, *Typee*. Today it is deserted save for a few people living in thatched huts scattered through the coconut grove (page 93).

The chief's hobby is collecting Marquesan carvings. He has three bowls, each more than 30 inches in diameter and carved by hand, of miro, a rosewood. Elaborate designs on the outside mark the work of a master craftsman.

One of these bowls has been in his family 70 years (page 74). Fatu Hiva has the best wood carvers in the entire group.

North along the coast from Omoa we made our way, close in to shore. Steep cliffs now towered above us. In the lee of the island the sea here was as calm as a river and 40 fathoms deep. There was no danger of running aground.

Fantastic Rock Formations

At last, as we rounded a headland jutting out several hundred yards, Virgins Bay (Baie des Vierges) lay directly ahead. The wheel was hard to starboard, as auxiliary motors were throttled back. It was late afternoon, and the fantastic, grotesque rock formations here took on a yellow hue.

The Hanavave Valley runs back from the sea through two gaunt rock formations (pages 84 and 85). Here and there a tin roof catches the long rays of the disappearing sun.

The whole population came down to the landing place when it was time for us to go. They proffered baskets of fresh fruit. Perhaps three months would pass before the *Vaitere* touched here once again (pages 100 and 101).

"Apai! Kaohae!" I shouted with the crew as we put out to sea. All hands pulled on halyards as the mainsail went up. A gust of wind filled the canvas overhead. The foresail was up now; the jibs had been set earlier.

I walked aft and took my last picture of the Marquesas, as the southeast trades abeam began to drive us into the evening sun.*

* See, in the National Geographic Magazine: "At Home on the Oceans," by Edith Bauer Strout, July, 1939; "Romance of Science in Polynesia," by Robert Cushman Murphy, October, 1925; "Dream Ship," by Ralph Stock, January, 1921; and "Vanishing People of the South Seas (Marquesans)," by John W. Church, October, 1919.

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