What we can learn from the Polynesian islanders of the South Seas about reducing our tension, hurry and worry, and being happier, more kindly and tolerant.

the Reasonable Life

by Clifford Gessler

Clifford Gessler
the Reasonable Life
John Day

$2.75

The Reasonable Life

By Clifford Gessler

Among "self-help" or "peace-of-mind" books, this one is perhaps unique. It has been suggested, half in earnest, half in irony, that the people of the Southeast Pacific ought to send missionaries to America to convert us to the reasonable life. On those islands which have been least touched by western "civilization", there is no hurry, no strain, no frenzied striving for success; and people are kind, tolerant, and calm, at peace with themselves and one another. Our confused world, gnawed by doubt and fear, cannot copy their way of life. But as individuals we can learn much from it. Clifford Gessler shows us how.

There is no psychoanalysis in this book. The Polynesians do very well without it. There is much about healthy habits, relaxation, sleep, music, dance, and much, too, about hard useful work and the importance of handicrafts. The Polynesians have no single word for "love", for in their warm-hearted living there are different ways of loving different persons. Their sexual practices would not be approved by our moralists, but they have their reasons, and sex is not troublesome among them.

The author says: "Life cannot be for us a quiet music, as it is for those far kindred of ours, but we can be mindful that theirs is so, and try to catch some tones of it within the turbulent rhythms of our own."

THE JOHN DAY COMPANY
NEW YORK

CLIFFORD GESSLER's interest in Polynesia began when he was called from the Chicago Daily News to become night editor of the Honolulu Advertiser in 1921. It grew during his two years' service on that newspaper and eleven years on the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, where he was editor of the department of Letters and the Arts, and in the course of incidental editorial work at the Bishop Museum of Polynesian Ethnology and participation in activities of the Anthropological Society of Hawaii and later in the Polynesian Society.

Opportunity to accompany the Mangareva Expedition of the Bishop Museum, in Southeastern Polynesia, fulfilled a long cherished desire for contact with Polynesian life where it is still actively functioning in a relatively undisturbed state, as it no longer is in Hawaii. This was particularly the case in the more remote atolls of the Tuamotu Islands, where he lived in a house woven of coconut leaves, slept on a mat of pandanus leaves on a floor of coral pebbles, and mingled day by day with the people in their work and play, studying their traditions, language and customs, in company with a professional ethnologist from the museum.

A result was the book *Road My Body Goes*. Mr. Gessler is also the author of *Hawaii: Isles of Enchantment, Pattern of Mexico, The Leaning Wind, Tropic Landfall: The Port of Honolulu,* and three books of verse.

Now Music and Dance Editor of the Oakland Tribune, he lives on a hillside in Berkeley, California, with his wife, Margaret Gessler, pianist and music commentator, who shares his busy life of attending concerts and ballet and collaborates with him in that work.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

By the same author

ROAD MY BODY GOES
(The Dangerous Islands)

HAWAII: ISLES OF ENCHANTMENT

PATTERN OF MEXICO

TROPIC LANDFALL: THE PORT OF HONOLULU

THE LEANING WIND

TROPIC EARTH *(verse)*

KANAKA MOON *(verse)*

The Reasonable Life

SOME ASPECTS OF POLYNESIAN LIFE: WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM IT IN DEVELOPING IN OUR OWN LIVES THE STRENGTH OF QUIETNESS

Clifford Gessler

THE JOHN DAY COMPANY NEW YORK

This book is published by The John Day Company, 62 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y., and on the same day in Canada by Longmans, Green & Company, Toronto

Manufactured in the United States of America

Contents

Foreword

WHILE this book was written primarily from my own notes and from memory, these primary sources obviously reflect the researches and experience of others which prepared for and illuminated my own experience.

After more than twenty-five years of interest in Polynesia, it is impossible to enumerate all such sources or to recall where a particular bit of comparative data was first heard or read.

I am indebted most to publications of the Bishop Museum, materials in its collections, and conversations with its ethnologists. Journals of the Polynesian Society, of the Société des Études Océaniennes, papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society, discussions of the Anthropological Society of Hawaii, publications of the University of Hawaii, journals of explorers and memoirs of later visitors to the Pacific, have had their part in forming my conception of Polynesian life. To all these, thanks.

I am responsible for the interpretations and conclusions.

C.G.

Berkeley, California
January, 1950

THE REASONABLE LIFE

1. *"Walk Gently"*

THE lagoon of Tepuka Maruia lay before us like a liquid mosaic, framed in curving sandy shores feathered with green and tawny palms. A reef-hedged segment of the south-east Pacific, quiet under the sub-equatorial sun, its depths were a changeable fabric of lavender and blue and purple over the coral, shading to yellow and green over the sandy shallows. Far off at the windward rim of the atoll, the sea charged in across the sand bars at the mouths of shallow channels, blooming up in tree-tall plumes of white spray.

Spear in hand, loins girt with white-flowered scarlet *pareu*, we stepped, on feet protected only by the thickened sole-skin that nature provides to dwellers on coral islands, into the luke-warm, rippling water.

"*Haere maru*," warned Tauria. "Walk gently."

There were knife-edged shells embedded in the sand, needle-points of protruding coral, strange little tubular shell-creatures clinging to exposed patches of reef, whose exterior skeletons enter the flesh with a circular puncture and break off to fester in the wound.

"Walk gently" was sound advice. It was a bit of practical wisdom gathered by generations of Polynesians who had dwelt around that many-colored lagoon, their bare feet treading the broken coral heaped by storm upon the unprotected low island, through unnumbered centuries of wresting a living from thin, rocky soil and often dangerous sea.

You are not likely to find Tepuka and Tepoto, the two Lands of the Puka Trees of Maruia, on any map under these, their indigenous names. The maps and charts of that part of the Pacific are antiquated; many of them have not been revised since whaling days. But on most maps of moderate size, a ragged cluster of dots stretches for several hundred miles roughly eastward from Tahiti, bearing variously the names Tuamotu, Paumotu, the Low Archipelago, and the Dangerous Islands. In the northeasterly part of this cluster, separated by some hundreds of miles of blank blue sea-space from their neighbors, are two very small dots that are Tepuka and Tepoto. Sometimes they bear the name that Commodore John Byron gave them, when he was unable to land there to ease his crew of scurvy—the Islands of Disappointment. An unfair name, I think, but Byron was really disappointed. Sometimes they are labeled by the names that Lieutenant Charles Wilkes's interpreter plucked from who knows where: Wytoohee and Otooho. In the records of the French Establishments in Oceania, they comprise the District of Napuka.

I was there by chance, but a chance that had come about in response to a cherished desire. For some years I had been studying Polynesian life as it remains embalmed in the files and exhibits of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and as it has been described in the accounts of early and late voyagers, missionaries, and random wanderers. When the Mangareva expedition was organized by the museum, Captain William Anderson of the sampan *Myojin Maru*, renamed the motorship *Islander*, which had been chartered for the expedition, wanted to fill out his crew with volunteers; and Kenneth P. Emory, ethnologist of the museum, wanted company and assistance during his sojourn in the Tuamotu. The result of these interests, coinciding with my desire to see Polynesian life functioning in a relatively undisturbed state, was an invitation to accompany the expedition.

So much for necessary orientation. We visited many islands, for varying periods of time; but I came to know best these two remote atolls where Polynesian life, although nowhere entirely unchanged, retains more than most islands its ancient ways.

"Walk gently," my companion had said.

Life does not flow altogether easily in the Dangerous Islands. Fruit doesn't drop into one's lap—unless it be a coconut, which is as likely to fall from an eighty-foot height upon one's head. Each day is a battle with the ocean, in fragile dugout canoes, stabilized by a rude outrigger, trailing a handmade line all day under blazing sun—on occasion the fiercer battle with a four-hundred-pound sea turtle, wrestling bare-handed in treacherous currents with the powerful reptile of the sea. Even in the usually calm inner lagoon, the tridacna shellfish waits to trap careless feet, holding the victim down to drown when the tide rises; razor-toothed eels lurk under coral ledges; sharks cruise in the deeper spaces—regarded by natives with a degree of contempt, but still by no means to be trusted.

"At other islands, sharks eat men," boast the fishermen of Tepuka. "At Tepuka, men eat sharks."

It was apparent, I reflected, that one could not always "walk gently." In the swift moment of capture, one must be quick and daring, matching human mind and muscle intently against the craftiness and strength of the sea's beasts of prey. There was a time to walk gently, and a time to be swift and sure. In my youth in my own country, I had learned not to be gentle with the stinging nettle.

But I thought, too, of the ways in which the people of that island, and of others like it, walk gently, in their relations with their families and their fellow citizens, and in the ordering of their own lives. It was that gentleness of spirit, I felt, that made the atmosphere of daily living there so tranquil, voices so soft, laughter so kind, disputes so infrequent and, when they did

arise, so readily adjusted. These people walked gently with one another, and so there were kindness and tolerance among them. They walked gently in their inward being, and so they were at peace with themselves as well as with one another.

To my painful experience, I became so absorbed in these thoughts that I forgot to walk gently in the literal sense and trod upon one of those dangerous tubular shell creatures. Out of pain blossoms enlightenment—I had occasion to admire the calm precision, devoid of "nerves," with which Tauhoa and Fangu dug the poisonous fragments of shell out of the sole of my foot with the knife with which they had been cleaning tridacna clams.

That was one of the lessons of that small, self-contained, still largely stone-age world, a lesson that, if I might practice its teachings wisely, could sustain me in the wider but confused and feverish world that "civilization" has made—to walk gently through our own jungles, over our own reefs, although ready to act swiftly and decisively when the time arrives for action.

It is easy to endorse this principle. To carry it out in practice is more difficult. One forgets so easily under stress, and old habits are tenacious. Moreover, ours is a different world. The Polynesian knows when to walk gently, and when to strike swiftly and hard, for his environment is more natural, his circumstances more simple and definite, than ours. The sharp shells are in plain sight on the reef, if one looks keenly; the turtle, the low-island man's most prized prey, is either there on the water, or it isn't. In our more complex world, the conditions surrounding each action are less amenable to prompt definition and less likely to be within our control.

As I lay on my mat of pandanus leaves in a house woven of coconut leaves, recuperating from the wound—for my native friends advised me to rest the injured foot for a few days—I pondered further how the action and interaction of these two principles permeate Polynesian life as I knew it in that Tuamotuan village. We Occidentals tend to overdo the second principle, by striking prematurely or too often or without adequate reason. We are not a restful or a patient race. And how seldom do we walk gently! As I sat, on other mornings, beside that pleasant lagoon, I felt, as I have come to feel even more strongly in the times of turmoil that have intervened, what need we have for something of the calm that I found in these island people, for something of their unhurried dignity, their strength in quietness.

And the thought came to me that it would be a kindness to my countrymen to tell them about this island life. Perhaps we could learn, from contemplation of its spirit, to make our own lives more gracious. But the question again intruded: to what extent is this peacefulness, this harmony, the result of the simpler circumstances in which these people live? Does it grow solely out of their environment, and hence may it be impossible to transplant to our fevered world?

The question may never be settled, to what extent we shape our environment, and to what extent it shapes us. Man seldom leaves nature unmodified. Even the very simple tribes, the shy forest dwellers with virtually no material culture, make trails through the jungle and build crude temporary shelters in their encampment places. Man, wherever he is, adjusts himself to nature and at the same time modifies nature, in greater or less degree, to carry out that adjustment and serve his needs. There must always be a balance of some kind between nature and man.

Polynesian life is in tune with its environment, and is successful within that environment, although it is a restricted one. I do not wish to overemphasize the environmental factor. A culture is shaped not only by the physical scene in which it exists, but also by the inner impulsions of the men and women who live in that scene. There is an element of choice, as is shown by the varying patterns of culture that have developed in similar

physical environments. To some extent, a people builds the sort of life that it likes.

The Polynesians are more like us than are many peoples. But their inner drives seem to have differed, at least in emphasis, from those that have shaped European and American civilization. Economic competition does not figure as largely among them, although the economic motive is probably nowhere entirely absent among mankind. They are more easily content with little, and more ready to share what they have. Although there have been fighting and conquest in Polynesian history, as in that of all peoples, they are not now an aggressive people. They have chosen, on the whole, a quieter kind of life.

What is there in that way of life for us, whose environment is so different? Might we derive from it principles of conduct which would make our own lives more serene? What can it give to the individual of our race, in his own struggle to order his life successfully in our world? Could we, with our background of physical and mental inheritance, our training and experience—all so different—acquire something of the poise, the serenity, the dignity of the Polynesian?

It is even conceivable that such qualities might help us individually to be "successful," in a world that worships its own peculiar kind of success. Perhaps not. It appears sometimes that success, as defined in the popular mind, comes, among us, to the shallow, the blatant, the aggressive. But the qualities of which I speak would help toward success of a worthier kind. We so need a kindlier and more tolerant and happy life. It might not make us any the less victims of circumstance, but it would strengthen us to endure circumstance. It would make us better citizens of any world.

So I observed how the Polynesians I knew conducted themselves in situations comparable to those that occur among us. I draw primarily from the life of Tepuka, where I came most

into contact with Polynesian living, but I think also of other island communities I have known, and what I have learned of still others. Polynesians are not everywhere altogether alike, but the qualities I found among them at Tepuka and elsewhere seem to be fairly characteristic of the general temperament of the race.

Not to be unrealistic, I should report that there was some mild grumbling, now and then; some jealousy of prestige or of the degree of favor with us visitors that one or another citizen acquired; some gossip; certain perennial divisions of opinion, such as between the old and conservative, like Temae, and the young and brash who neglected some of the old customs and tried to imitate such foreign ways as came to them through Tahiti. But on the whole, I believe I have not exaggerated the kindly atmosphere of daily life there in general.

It is not my intention to augment the literature of South Sea romance. The fallacy of paradise among the palms has long since been exposed. The islands of Polynesia have their peculiar advantages and disadvantages, as do other areas of the varied surface of our planet, and the people who inhabit those various fragments of land have their faults as well as their virtues, both of which have often been subject to misinterpretation or to overemphasis, from the time of the first contact of Europeans with the people of the islands.

I would not encourage the lingering notion of the "South Seas" as a haven of ease and unlimited leisure, inhabited by paragons of nobility. Nature does not distribute gifts, even there, without requiring human effort, nor do Polynesians distribute gifts without the expectation of gifts in return. The ease and leisure that exist are, rather, an attitude of mind. The nobility is subject to human frailty.

Most people from our own world would find a protracted sojourn on a South Sea island restricted and boring. Even ethnol-

ogists tend to become restless after a few months on an island, and eager to move on to another. Or rather, their feeling that they still have not had time to study fully the island where they are conflicts with the eagerness to begin study somewhere else. Most of us would find it difficult to subsist in that environment, after initial supplies ran out. We lack the skills that the people who have lived there for centuries have developed, techniques which are not mastered in a hurry. One can even tire of perpetual natural beauty, or of perpetual tranquillity.

In describing certain aspects of life on certain islands, I am aware that conditions in Polynesia were not at all times and in all places as peaceful and equitable as we found them at Tepuka and Tepoto and in other island communities. The history and legendry of the Polynesian Pacific, fragmentary and not wholly reliable as much of it is, indicates that the island peoples made their human errors, some of them grave ones. But I am writing not primarily of the past, but of life as I observed it and to some degree participated in it in recent years, with particular reference to two islands, relatively remote and relatively little influenced by foreign ways, where circumstances afforded an opportunity for intensive observation.

In a sojourn of several months on a small island and in a closely integrated community of people who inhabit porous houses and who live, to a considerable extent, out of doors, one becomes pretty well acquainted. Tepuka and Tepoto constituted, from one point of view, a kind of laboratory, where a contemporary Polynesian way of living unfolded itself day by day around us—conditioned to some extent by local environment and local habit, but, I believe, fairly representative of a Polynesian community that has been left largely to itself.

If it be true that the present peaceable disposition of most Polynesians is attributable, as some authorities have contended, to missionary influence and other foreign contacts, it may fairly

be accounted to the credit of the island peoples that in making the inevitable compromises with our civilization, they have adopted some of its more benign aspects and observe them more faithfully, on the whole, than we do ourselves. This can scarcely be the result of observation of foreign relations in the white man's world. It is perhaps significant that we found these benign aspects most in evidence where foreign contact had been at a minimum. If I dwell upon those ways which seem wiser and kinder than ours, it is because it is from these that we have most to learn.

Much has happened, since I last saw the Dangerous Islands, to confirm the conviction that grew upon me in those sunny mornings by that calm lagoon.

What need we have, indeed, for calm in this confused world! For we live in a world gnawed by doubt, palsied by uncertainty, and oppressed by fear, a world in which man's inventive genius, turned to destructive use, threatens to destroy him. Total destruction, to be sure, does not necessarily follow as our fate; the physical earth does not appear likely to be burned up or vaporized, or mankind utterly liquidated. But it is quite possible that civilization, as we know it, may be shattered within the lifetime of people now living.

This would come about, not primarily through direct destruction of life, but rather through destruction of the means of supporting our large populations and of carrying on our complex industrial economy. If that is the direction history is going to take, the kind of life I am describing at Tepuka is the life that is most likely to survive.

For our civilization is vulnerable in proportion to its complexity. There are so many of us; as individuals we are so interdependent, and all of us together so dependent for survival upon the modern industrial and economic system, that few of us could function if the system were disrupted. Take away our power

centers, our communication systems, and our means of mass production and transportation, and we'd be back in primitive life—with no preparation for it.

If means of production are destroyed thoroughly enough, only primitive life—or, as I prefer to call it, direct life—remains possible. Those who are already living such a life will lose little, provided they have been out of range of actual physical destruction. The survivors among more "advanced" peoples will be able to subsist only in so far as they can adjust themselves to direct life. If there are too many of them, they will have to fight one another for survival, since the world will support only a small fraction of the number of people, on a primitive scale of living, that it now supports by virtue of the complicated structure of industry and trade.

Consider the vulnerability of a modern city. It can not function, its people can not live, without water supply, motor fuel, gas and electric services, sewers, trolley and bus lines, and the power sources to operate them. Nor can they live without railroads, motor truck lines, air services, ships, to bring them the food they can not produce and the materials with which they work. Millions of us, indeed, produce nothing, although we earn a living by working forty or more hours a week. We live on what others produce, in exchange for our professional or technical services or our activities in trading in those products. Our life is indirect, far from its sources, and if lines of communication with these sources are disrupted, we are in a fatal trap.

Civilization has survived, hitherto, because destruction was not so thorough or so widespread as to prevent rebuilding and reassembling the shattered portions of the economy. But civilization was never as complex as now. The time may come, and it looks as if that time is approaching, when it will not be possible to recover quickly.

It has long seemed to me, even before the development of atomic weapons, that our civilization was already precarious, because of its complexity and, too, simply because there are so many people in it. There are too many of us, and there are too many among us who worship the false god, Success. An economic depression, if severe enough and of long enough duration, would suffice, as readily as war, to topple the topheavy structure of our society. Though the means were less spectacular, the results might not be very different from the kind of destruction the alarmists envision in atomic warfare.

For this reason the life of the people I am trying to interpret may have a historical significance that hitherto has not been apparent. Human life has a habit of carrying on, despite setbacks, and it may well be such peoples as the Polynesians, still relatively close to the sources of life, who will carry on when our civilization falls of its own weight and complexity or when its members destroy one another.

But if all the alarms are unfounded and our world goes on, enriched by further advances in science and industry, there is still more reason to contemplate the ways of life of my island dwellers, and to ponder on what they have that we lack and how we may make our lives more gracious by introducing into them what we can assimilate of the sweetness of theirs.

It is a comfort, to those who love peace and tranquillity, just to know that somewhere there is a country where there is no hurry, no strain, no frenzied striving for "success"; a place where people are still, in large part, kind to one another and reasonable and calm. The individual can profit more by the knowledge of such a life than can the organized society that is made up of individuals. But only through growth in individuals can society itself improve in terms of human values. Helpless as we sometimes seem, buffeted by chance and at the mercy

of economic forces, there is still a part of our lives that is our own, which we can strengthen and sweeten if we choose. Life can not be for us a quiet music, as it is for those far kindred of ours, but we can be mindful that theirs is so, and try to catch some tones of it within the turbulent rhythms of our own.

2. *The Well of the Tefano Flower*

OUR doorway looked out upon the center of the village. Two streets intersected there. They were neatly spread, inches deep, with sand that had been dragged up from the beach in turtle shells. They were curbed with slabs of sun-bleached coral. Along those streets, coconut palms leaned overhead, their fronds casting sharp patterns of deep shade.

"Beautiful the streets of Tepuka," sings one of the chants-in-praise-of-the-land. "Beautiful the streets, and gay the dancing in the shade of palms."

The villagers, in clean, though few and ragged, garments, sat on the curbstones or leaned against tree trunks. As we listened, we learned that they had met to settle a dispute.

The chief and his council had ordered improvement of the village well. It was to be cleaned out, dug deeper, relined with stone and recurbed. There are no streams on these coral islands, and fresh water, of which the people use a great deal for bathing, is obtained by digging down to the level where water accumulates. So the well is important in community life. All the patriotic chants, all the genealogies begin with the name of the island, that of the temple, of the assembly ground, and of the well.

Already Tehau, the peace officer, and his deputies had begun preparations for the work. The men of the island had assembled, each laying down a stone as a tally. Tehau and his aides had sorted the tally stones into three heaps, dividing the workers

into groups. One group was to work on the well, another to fish for food for the workers and their families, the third, to cook the food. All was voluntary and co-operative in the community undertaking, but with this necessary element of direction.

As these preparations were under way, our neighbor and landlord, Kararo, had objected. The well, he contended, was situated on land that belonged to his family. Hence it was family property and the community had no right to work on it. This was not very reasonable on Kararo's part, since he stood to benefit as much as any one else by the improvement, but he was asserting his rights as he saw them.

So the meeting had been called, and debate ensued. Kararo stated his case, showing that the land had been held by his family group since the initial settlement of the islands by Maruia, the founder of the community, many generations ago. He himself could prove his title at any time by reciting his genealogy, which stemmed from Maruia herself. The very name of the well, The Tefano Flower of Maruia, commemorated its establishment by his ancestress.

Others spoke. They admitted all Kararo had cited of the history of the well. But, they pointed out, down through the generations the community had drawn water from the well and none of Maruia's descendants had protested, until now. Thus a community right had been established by consent and custom.

Maruia had indeed established the well, as she had founded the settlement. That was why the island itself was called Maruia's Land of the Puka Trees. But she had permitted the three other founders of the four clans to settle on the island and to share in the use of its resources.

The land occupied by the communal papaya plantation on the windward side of the atoll must have been the property of family groups at one time. (The economy of Tepuka, as originally of Polynesia in general, does not recognize individual property rights, with the exception of very personal belongings, but

only family ownership.) Yet now this land was held in common, and the fruit was distributed equally among the fifty-odd families in the village. It was true enough that, by ancient custom, land was owned by families, and not by the community any more than by individuals, although when a hurricane had destroyed landmarks, some years before, the area that was in doubt had become public property. But the people of Tepuka were "brothers"; the four clans were closely united by intermarriage. The basic resources of life should be available to all—the fresh water, like the sea whence they drew their daily food.

It was not Kararo's intention, according to my understanding, to deny his fellow citizens the use of the well. He was merely asserting the principle of family ownership, and his feeling that community administration of the well infringed on his family rights. But the debate necessarily took this theoretical trend.

The discussion continued for an hour or more. At times, several citizens tried to speak at once, and some became vehement, but every one who wished to speak was permitted to do so. At length Temae, the oldest man on the island, father-in-law of the chief and a member of the council, spoke, slowly and gravely. Let Kararo's family continue to own the land. But the use of the well, and its maintenance, should be a function of the community. Maruia was the mother of the land, in a spiritual sense the ancestress of all. Was she not honored in the chants-in-praise-of-the-land, as the discoverer who followed the white terns to the Two Lands of the Puka Trees and established there the foundations of the community? Let Maruia's Flower of the Tefano bloom for all the people of Maruia's Land of the Puka Trees. For water is life; it is the gift of God, Who gives all things to His children.

Other councilors agreed. Shouts of *"Parau mau"*—true words—arose here and there among the crowd. There was a general murmur of assent. Kararo himself seemed convinced. At least, he accepted the decision. No vote was taken; indeed,

there had been no discernible rules of order or formal conduct of the meeting. But the community sentiment was clear, and the will of the community was accepted. Kararo prepared to carry out his part of the community project.

The work went forward. Young men dislodged and lifted out the stones, deepened and enlarged the well. Others carried fresh slabs of stone, lashed to logs that rested on their shoulders, and laid them in place, building a neat, smooth casing and wall and parapet. Here the women might lean to gossip as they drew water in the buckets made of coconut shell or the square oil tins that had been obtained from visiting ships in exchange for chickens. As the middle-aged men came in from fishing, Kararo, the erstwhile protester, crouched over a small fire, broiling fish on heated stones for the workers.

There had been no attorneys' fees, no court costs, no delay. All, including Kataro, seemed satisfied. It was so in every dispute that occurred while we were on the island. Settlement was simple, clear, and reached without unnecessary fuss. It was so when Tauria and Tupu were accused of falsely signaling the arrival of a ship. They explained that their arm waving in reference to some other matter had been misinterpreted as a ship signal. The citizens talked the matter over, the two young men were admonished to be more careful in the future, and the incident was dismissed.

All this seemed a highly reasonable and civilized procedure. The people affected by the situation met with their fellow citizens, discussed the problem, and arrived at a settlement. Angry words were at a relative minimum; no apparent bitterness or lingering resentment followed. On the part of the community, Kararo's rights, in so far as they did not conflict with community interest, were recognized. As for Kararo himself, who was accounted the least reasonable man in a reasonable community and, indeed, as Polynesians go, something of a curmudgeon, he was not stubborn in the face of community sentiment. Apparently he never even thought of building a fence around the well. He yielded to the opinion of his fellow citizens and accommodated himself to their needs.

I remembered the long-standing feuds of which I had known between neighbors in American communities, over disagreements much more trivial than that over Tepuka's well—such as the two families who refused to speak to one another for years because one of them had built a high board fence along the property line between them. There was, however, a certain grim sense of humor in the other family's retaliation. They planted trees close to the fence, so that the trees would rot it and their roots undermine and distort the fence.

I remembered litigations over equally unimportant disputes —expense, bitterness, harassment—that might have been avoided by submission to a neighborhood council, as was accepted procedure in the community of Tepuka.

There is no reason, save in our self-centered hastiness and self-importance, why we can not all be at least as reasonable as Kararo, the least reasonable man at Tepuka. I have heard angry and unnecessary words exchanged over a bent automobile fender, or things more trivial. If we practiced the reasonable life, we would talk these things over calmly, try to understand one another's point of view, study what the conflicting viewpoints have in common, and by what degree of compromise they might be adjusted. A sense of proportion is too often lacking. Most annoyances are not worth the time and energy most of us waste in raging about them.

We have lost something, particularly in city life, by decline of old-fashioned neighborliness. Many of us city dwellers are insulated, not even knowing our neighbors' names. This has come about because life no longer centers in the neighborhood, but in the office, the factory, or the shop. We no longer feel the bond with those who dwell around us. We are too occupied, and indeed, they may not be interesting to us. Yet there are inter-

ests in common, which might be advanced by getting together. The old neighborliness had its values. It kept people more human, less self-centered. Perhaps we should take time to know our neighbors. Perhaps the getting together to solve common problems would save more time and effort than it would involve.

Twice in my lifetime, hope has arisen that such a principle might be applied to relations among nations. Some slight progress has been made in that direction, although the development is still in an elementary stage. If nations were as reasonable as Polynesians, the scheme would work. Most nations thus far have not shown themselves so. The Polynesians themselves did not apply the principle on a large scale, although I understand that at times they did divide lands by agreement, instead of fighting for them. But theirs was essentially a society of small units, among which a national consciousness arose late and only in certain places. Their reasonableness is exercised mainly between individuals and between family groups.

We, too, began as family groups. A little later we became tribes of related or associated families, still later, nations, which were, at first, of more or less kindred groups, and more recently, as in the United States, voluntary associations of people of diverse origins. The trite comparison of the forty-eight sovereign states, subject, in matters affecting the whole country, to a federal authority, with the many nations of the world subjecting themselves in like manner to a world community authority, follows naturally. Something of the kind will develop, unless the nations destroy civilization first. It must develop, or civilization eventually will be destroyed.

Unfortunately, all the means proposed for implementing such an authority increase the complexity of organization. When the inevitable question arises: who is to enforce judgments among nations? the practical man of our race replies: a world court armed with a world police, an international army. Whereupon he gets into difficulty in explaining how such a force would

function, under whose command, how it would be kept impartial, indeed, how the stronger nations could be restrained from dominating inequitably the machinery for conciliation and arbitration.

A world state is the logical answer. But what nation will first give up its sovereignty? And many abuses in a world state would be more dangerous, more difficult to correct, than in our present divided national organizations.

The Polynesians of Tepuka and many other islands operate with a minimum of social machinery. Their agreements and judgments are maintained by moral, rather than physical, force. In our present stage of culture, we probably could not do that. Does that mean that we are less advanced, morally, than the Polynesians?

Perhaps it would not be fair to say that. We are organized on a larger scale, and we are victims of a system that we have created. Nor have Polynesians always or everywhere been reasonable. They have fought wars—although the people of Tepuka told me their ancestors had never done so. In some islands they developed feudal social pyramids and sustained corrupt dynasties. Nor did they succeed in extending community consciousness over a wide territory, although their capacity for enlightened human relations is shown by the kindness with which they often, if not always, received strangers—in many cases, to their own detriment.

We have the advantage of a wider knowledge of the world, if a shallower knowledge of any part of it. We have vastly superior natural resources, a greater number of skilled techniques, a richer material culture. Yet they are, in their way, apparently more successful in the art of living than we. Human life should be happy, and it is in this respect that much of "civilized" life fails. The people of Tepuka, or of almost any Polynesian island, have less material comfort than we, but I think they have more happiness.

It is impossible for us to imitate their material life, even if that were wholly desirable. Most of us would not care to live a life that is, from our point of view, so restricted. But we can cultivate, as they do, the inner resources that give them their reasonableness, their serenity and poise.

You and I, individually, can do little to influence the destinies of nations, or even of our own communities. But we can cultivate reasonableness in our immediate relationships, serenity within ourselves. This is worth while in itself, for the happiness and health it will create for us individually. And its influence will spread. The more individuals make that effort, the nearer cities and nations and the world will approach the reasonable life.

3. *"No One Hungers"*

"COME with us," invited Tauria, "to harvest papayas." It was his turn, with a number of other young men, to make the weekly voyage across the lagoon to the community plantation on the windward rim of the atoll, where the soil is deeper and the rainfall less scanty than on the lee side, where the village stands.

We hoisted the large seagoing canoes to our shoulders and carried them, four or six men to a canoe, across the strip of land from the sea beach to the lagoon. I took a little food with me, although Tauria said it was not necessary. We would live off the land. Those who made the excursion, he explained, had the right to partake freely of the products of the windward region while they were there, but not to bring anything away with them except for community use.

We paddled, against the wind, across the lagoon, pausing here and there at the edge of a reef to spear a fish or to capture a small and tasty octopus. My companions expressed surprise when I took a paddle and wielded it almost as efficiently as they. They were accustomed to consider white men awkward in the operations to which the Polynesian is trained from childhood. It had not occurred to them that their visitor had had years of experience in outrigger canoes not much unlike theirs, in Hawaii, and they could not know of the earlier summers in an Indian canoe on the waters of Wisconsin.

As we glided over the water, Tauria recited the names of the

land divisions we passed, for each few square rods of territory has its name and history. On one islet that he pointed out had stood in ancient times the temple of those of his ancestors who had lived on that side of the island; on another, Mokio-Ariki, who was to become, by adoption, my spiritual ancestor, and whose formal namesake I was to be, had hunted birds on the excursion that eventually took him to the world of the spirits, the only man to go there in his living body and return.

Early in the afternoon we arrived at the heavily forested windward land. Tupu and Tohu took up spades of turtle bone and began digging a cooking-pit. Others stripped down coconut fronds and wove large baskets in which to carry fruit. Some gathered drinking-coconuts and husked them on pointed stakes. The rest of us scattered through the grove, plucking big, juicy papayas and laying them in heaps. Like other community undertakings on the island, the whole proceeding was informal, but well ordered. Every man knew just what to do. The work went forward merrily, with jest and laughter and song.

Toward evening, we opened the cooking-pit, and enjoyed baked fish and octopus tentacles, along with pungent drinking-nuts and the sweet meat of the ripe coconut. Some of the men had gathered dry pandanus leaves for cigarette wrappers, and we lay on a mat near the shore, smoking and talking, singing, telling tales. The men asked questions about my own country. Living all their lives on an atoll, only a few feet above the sea, they had never seen high land.

"Is it true," one asked, "that in the white men's country there are mountains higher than the coconut trees?"

"*Parau mau,*" I replied. "It is a true word. I have walked on those mountains and looked down upon the clouds."

"A strange thing," they marveled. And one commented, "It must be a grievous toil to do so much climbing, and a dangerous country that stands tilted up on end."

They asked the purpose of the museum's expedition, why

we had come so far and did no trading, except for a little food and for antique artifacts, and very little hunting or fishing. Emory, who had tramped overland and forded the passages through the reef to join us, explained how the museum gathered and stored knowledge of the Pacific—of its trees and plants, its shells and insects, its people and their customs and traditions—against the time when this knowledge might no longer be available. The purposes of this work were both theoretical and practical. Useful plants could be found. Insect parasites might be taken home to prey upon harmful insects that destroyed crops. But there was also the love of knowledge for itself—and the need to assemble and classify information before it vanished. The "land shells"—snail-like terrestrial mollusks—that we had gathered in great numbers on the high islands, would help to determine the ancient geography of the Pacific. These little creatures do not swim, and no one would carry them about, except by improbable accident. Yet they are found on almost every island. Perhaps that means that very long ago land lay where now is sea. The distribution of animals and plants would shed light on the migrations of the Polynesians, who had carried many of those plants and animals with them on their ancient voyages—for there is no thought in scientific circles that the Polynesians arrived where they are otherwise than in ships. If the Pacific was once land, it was so long before man entered that area, scientific men believe. "Lemuria" and the "lost continent of Mu" are still relegated to fiction. Study of native customs and traditions, we continued, would help us to understand better the nature of man everywhere. And besides, it was a satisfaction to know these things, for their own sake.

The men agreed. "It is a deep study," they said.

They asked if it was true that the white men made machines that flew like birds, and how was this possible? How did the machine leave the ground, how sustain itself in the insubstantial air, and how descend safely to earth? We explained as best we

could, and the men showed that they could grasp principles that were outside their experience and that one would not have expected them to comprehend. They have time for thought, on the coral islands.

Later, we stretched out in a row on the mats in a thatched house, with our heads on a small log, and slept. We didn't sleep uninterruptedly. A chilly wind blew from the sea, and a light rain sifted through the interstices in the panels of coconut leaves of which the house was built. At intervals one or another of the men would get up and go outside, perhaps stepping on the hands or faces of his neighbors in the darkness. Yet in the morning, after a draught of coconut water and a breakfast of papayas, we felt vigorous and refreshed.

We carried the fruit in coconut-leaf baskets to the canoes. Fishing spears were set up as masts, and sleeping mats were hung from them as sails. Corners of the mats were folded over sticks, to which lines were attached by which the sails could be manipulated. And so we sailed back over the lagoon. The heavily loaded canoes rode low in the water; waves spilled over the sides, and we bailed the water out with coconut shells.

Arriving at the lagoon shore of the village islet, we moored the canoes to stakes in the shallows and waded ashore with the fruit, piling it in equal heaps, one mound of papayas for each family. The people stood in groups, awaiting the distribution. When the last papaya had been unloaded, the last mound completed, they lifted the fruit into their baskets and trudged home.

Kararo, as our landlord, set aside a part of his family's share for Emory and me, whom he considered his wards. Maono the chief did likewise, in token that we were guests of the community. Later, after our formal adoption, we would share in the portion of the family of Tehau.

"At Tepuka," said Tauria, "no one hungers."

That was so, not because of the papayas alone, although these

are important, being the only fruit that is available in quantity, but because of a social-economic system in which every citizen has his share. With the exception of the papayas, livelihood is a family, rather than a community matter. Each family group looks after its own members. But the Polynesian conception of the family is more extended than ours. The remotest relative, if he can prove his relationship by reciting the genealogy, is entitled to his subsistence from the family land and the family activities. If he is too old or feeble to fish for himself, he partakes of the fish caught by more vigorous members of the family.

The flaw in this system, from an Occidental point of view, is that it could enable the lazy or improvident to live on the industry of other members of the family or community. I did not observe any evidence of this, however, at Tepuka. True, such young men as Tupu and Tauria did not do enough work to make a living, although they did perform certain light duties. They belonged to a recognized age group, known as *taurearea*, who had not yet acquired full family responsibilities and were not expected to do a mature man's share of contributing to family support. Polynesian customs recognize the right and necessity for the playtime of youth. It is probable that the system works best where it has been relatively undisturbed by foreign contact, as at Tepuka. The supposed laziness of Polynesians, which will be discussed later in this book, is largely a white man's notion, derived from misunderstanding of differences in custom between their people and ours.

Temae, who was old enough to retire and be supported by younger relatives, maintained a sturdy independence, trudging with his spear and basket every day to the sea or the lagoon. But Te Po, old and blind, received food every day from Maukiri's family, of whom she was a remote relative.

Maukiri was a widow, with a houseful of daughters. There were no men in her immediate family, save the Chinese husband

of one of the daughters, who kept a meager little general store that could not have been profitable, since the potential customers had so few needs and so seldom any money. But the family lived comfortably. I seldom passed their home without being invited to partake of food. The grown daughters provided some of the living by fishing and gathering shellfish in the lagoon, for it is not customary for women to fish in the open sea. But their relatives, the families of Maono and of Paunu, shared their catch with their kinfolk. Ah Kui, the merchant, sold the copra from the lands of the family, and provided a few things occasionally from his scanty stock. Ah Kui, who had not acquired a taste for Tuamotuan food, kept himself in a little rice, flour, and *pia*, the flour of the manioc root, and cooked his own meals in a shack behind his store. His wife, Turina, ate with her mother and sisters.

None of Maukiri's daughters had children of their own, although one of them, Pakiuma, had adopted a baby. I seldom saw the child at Maukiri's house. It was cared for most of the time by Teingo, the chief's wife, in whose home Pakiuma lived part of the time, as was Teroroirangi, the little daughter of Tauhoa and Pine, the chief's son. Every one, old or young, had family ties. So every one shared in whatever produce there was. If one outlived all one's relatives—a situation unusual in Polynesia—I suppose his case would be handled by adoption. Certainly no one at Tepuka was allowed to suffer.

That is how the system is extended to people from other islands who settle at Tepuka. They can not acquire land, because the land is inalienable from the family groups that own it. But they can become members of a family, either by adoption or by marriage.

There is family loyalty among us, too, although we do not carry it as far as Polynesians do. Under our economic system it would impose too heavy a burden on the breadwinner, as

Polynesians themselves have found, in such places as Hawaii and Tahiti, when they have attempted to enter into the white man's system. For a time a "coffee shop" in Papeete was operated by a Tahitian. Relatives flocked into town from the countryside, even from other islands. They had no comprehension of business. Their kinsman had plenty of food, and by Polynesian custom they were entitled to share in it. They never thought of paying for it. Anyhow, they had no money. By Polynesian custom, he could not refuse them. The result was that he sold out to a Chinese to escape bankruptcy. An American whom we met at Mangareva had a similar experience when he produced more on his farm than he and his native wife could consume. His solution of the problem was to stop producing so much. These difficulties, however, are the result of the overlapping of two social-economic systems. Where the Polynesian system is uncomplicated by foreign intrusions, it works.

We have made a beginning toward recognizing responsibility, not on a direct kinship theory, but on a community and national scale, even a world scale. We are beginning to feel responsibility for the human family, the obligation of the fortunate to share with those in need. Lazy and improvident persons take advantage of it, but there are many more who are really needy. All good things are subject to abuse, but are not less good because of it. Among our larger numbers and in our wider territory, the family unit no longer can undertake this function, and it is performed by larger, more powerful units of organization—ultimately, one must expect, by the community as a whole, through its government. The social-security organization, with all its faults and perils, is a step in that direction. As mankind progresses, perhaps such systems will become worldwide, in the growing realization that "between the four seas, all men are brothers." Then we too could say—had we not permitted the world to become so full of people that there is not enough food to go around—that no one hungers.

4. *The Quiet Stream*

ONE evening we heard sounds of disturbance in that village of loosely woven houses. Busy with transcribing and classifying our notes of the day, we gave no particular heed to it, until the explanation walked in at our doorway.

Tauhoa, daughter of our friend Paunu, appeared, shaken out of her usual placid composure and in tears, obviously in search of sympathy.

The story is significant here because it points up an exception to the general rule of family life on the island.

A couple named Rangina and Tepongi were neighbors of Tauhoa's family. Rangina, the biggest man, physically, on the island, was the only henpecked husband. He was almost a giant, as the compactly built Tepuka men go. I had seen him, only the day before, striding easily across the islet with a sack of copra on his shoulder that must have weighed around three hundred pounds. Stopping to chat with me and to accept a cigarette, he had not even troubled to set down the load. But with all his prodigious strength, coupled with a gentle disposition, he was unable to cope with his wife, who was little more than half his size. Tepongi not only scolded her husband; she beat him.

On this occasion, Tepongi had suspected him of straying from the marital path, which, although unusual at Tepuka, is not impossible. Since Tauhoa's husband, one of the chief's sons, was absent from the island, and Tauhoa was one of the more

comely of the young women, suspicion fell upon her. So Tepongi had beaten not only Rangina, but Tauhoa as well.

Tauhoa was shocked by such violence and resentful of the accusation, which she contended was unjust. She had come to us to recover her composure in quiet and in a sympathetic atmosphere, since her parents were then on the neighboring island of Tepoto, and since we, who were friends of her father, held a privileged position in the community, as its guests and as Americans—a position of some prestige and, on occasion, of a degree of authority, functioning somewhat as advisory chiefs.

The matter could have been brought before a community meeting for discussion and adjustment, but evidently even community opinion couldn't control Tepongi. Or perhaps Tauhoa feared she could not prove an alibi. At all events, she was satisfied with sympathy and counsel.

The point is that, normally, such things did not happen at Tepuka. If family quarrels had been frequent, we could not have avoided knowing of them. Walls woven of coconut leaves are far from soundproof. The voices we heard through those walls were soft and good-humored. Family life, like community life, flowed along in a quiet stream. Only Tepongi, of all the wives and husbands on the two islands, disturbed that stream.

Nor did we hear of other cases there of marital jealousy. For the most part, there was no occasion for it. When the period of youthful experimentation was over and couples settled down to housekeeping together, they wandered abroad no more of nights to dance the erotic *bivinau* under the moon. I heard gossip that Ah Kui, the Chinese husband of Turina, was something of a Don Juan among the young unmarried women, but Turina herself seemed unperturbed by these rumors.

It is likely that, having experienced full freedom in youth, most husbands and wives in that community feel no further inclination to wander. It is also true that if they did, it would be difficult to obtain privacy in that village of porous houses.

Among the free young people, every one knew, the next day, with whom one or another had spent the night, although it was a convention to arrive at the home of one's sweetheart after dark and leave before sunrise, so as not to make the adventure conspicuous. It would have been even more difficult to keep the wanderings of a wife or husband secret. Still, ways could have been found, if one were determined.

Marital jealousy, as far as our observation could determine, was rare, although there were instances of it in the legend lore that passes for literature and history. The culture hero, Maui, changed Rii, seventh in the generations from Tiki, the first man, into a dog because of jealousy. But this was jealousy in a different sense from ours. Maui and Rii shared the same wives; Maui became jealous only because the women apparently preferred Rii to him.

While the whole matter was not entirely clear, it appeared that marital rights were modified by circumstance. In ancient times, the obligations of hospitality included the offer of the host's wife to the guest. There is a story that the chiefship of Meketika (in modern Tahitian spelling, Meetia) was lost in that manner. A chief of that island lent his wife to a visiting chief from Tahiti, and the offspring of that hospitable union inherited the sovereignty of the island.

Friendship, too, could involve a relaxation of marital rights, at least according to some traditions. A native of the Marquesas expressed this concept when he told Frederick O'Brien, "If my friend sleeps with my wife, that is all right. If some one I don't like sleeps with her, that is different." At Tepuka the thought was crystallized in a popular song:

"My friend, take for yourself the woman who belongs to both of us. There need be no trouble about it."

It appeared also that if a couple were separated by distance for a considerable time, as happened when one of the men joined the crew of a visiting ship, or when a man or a woman

made a prolonged visit to another island, no blame attached to consoling oneself with available partners.

On the other hand, we were told that a husband had the right to beat his wife, or a young man the right to beat the girl with whom he was keeping company, if she consorted with another. Our informants added, however, that this right was seldom exercised. It was apparently an old tradition that had been largely discarded in modern times. We did not learn of contemporary instances of it during our sojourn on the island.

There was, however, no conspicuous exhibition of marital affection. Married life there seemed one of intimate friendship, mutual tolerance, and quiet reasonableness.

Demonstrations of affection were of a rather formal nature, and occurred among blood relatives rather than between man and wife. Especially after an absence, it was customary to greet one another with the *hongi*, the Polynesian embrace. They would place their arms, not very tightly, around each other, and put their noses together, one nose alongside the other. Or, often, one would stoop and place his nose to the other's hand or neck. This had a certain ceremonial aspect, like the wailing of Hawaiian women at funerals. By inquiry we learned that such caresses as are known to our own generation as "necking," "petting," or whatever the latest word for it may be, were regarded in poor taste, even between husband and wife or between sweethearts. The kiss with the lips, although now not unknown, is seldom practiced, being a foreign custom.

Marriage thus seemed a rather sedate affair, running an even course, without extremes of emotion. It was no less devoted, for all that. Most marriages were permanent. I heard of only one case of the equivalent of divorce and remarriage. This is contrary to what has been reported of Polynesians in ancient Hawaii, either because customs differed, or because these reports came mostly from a time when Polynesian customs in Hawaii were being disrupted, or had already been disrupted,

by foreign contact. There is nothing, in theory, to prevent a couple from separating and forming new alliances. In practice, at Tepuka, they usually stayed together.

Although many couples among us live together harmoniously, everyone knows that mutual kindness and mutual tolerance are less prevalent among us than my companion and I observed among the Tuamotuans. We have greater need of these qualities than they, for our more complex life brings about more occasions for dispute.

I believe these qualities can be developed by remembering that most causes of dispute are trivial. Serious discord is usually a result of accumulation of these trivialities. We should beware of the irritation of the moment. The chances are that it isn't worth quarreling about and can profitably be forgotten.

Jealousy appears to be more prevalent in our married life than in that of the Polynesians. With our superior advantages of education and environment, we should be too intelligent to admit jealousy, which is one of the most futile and illogical of our emotions. It has been interpreted as a survival from the period in the history of our race when the wife was a chattel. In our country this is often reversed; among us it is often the husband who is the chattel. At any rate, there is a lingering element of possessiveness, on both sides of many marriages, which can do much harm.

We are supposed to believe in the emotion we call love. That emotion is notoriously not subject to control. It can not be arbitrarily created or maintained. It develops naturally, in response to instinct. It can not be forced; it can not be held by force. It comes, or it goes, and no one can rightly be held to blame.

We, nourished in the romantic tradition, probably attach too much importance to that emotion, for our own peace of mind. Since we have accepted the tradition, however, we should face the fact that love is not a tangible object which we can

grasp and hold by any strength. It is delicate and elusive, like a sun-ray falling into the cup of the hand. Between people who live together, kindness and mutual tolerance are more essential. But if we believe in love, we must have faith in it, and place it above trivial irritations and selfish considerations. Love, if it means anything, places the happiness of the loved one above all other things. Possessiveness is an insult to love. It degrades what can be, at its best, a noble emotion. If one partner to a marriage loves some one else, it is only possessiveness that would seek to hinder that partner from the happiness he or she expects to find. It is only blind obstinacy that tries to hold what already is gone.

At the same time, as most mature persons know, love, in the sense of overwhelming passion, is rarely as permanent as youth often imagines it to be. People succumb to it, as to measles, and get over it. This does not mean that mutual affection between two people who are harmonious can not grow and deepen through the years. It can and does. The violent emotion of youth is the introduction to the quieter and deeper mutual regard that often follows.

From a biological point of view, that stormy emotion is a snare which Nature sets for us in youth, that we may be led to perpetuate the race. Beyond that, it is a mystery. We have dressed it up with romantic notions, endowed it with spiritual attributes—not altogether without reason. We have made it a prime subject of literature, and thereby, perhaps, evolved a false notion of it.

Polynesians, who, in their natural state, have not been exposed to romantic literature, are franker about it. They have no word that includes all we mean by "love." They have three words that may be so translated. In their language, as spoken at Tepuka, *binangaro* is biological love—literally, desire. One can *binangaro* a member of the opposite sex, or a dress, a knife, a meal, a new house. *Arofa* is what might be called Christian

love, equivalent to the Latin *caritas*. It connotes pity, compassion, tenderness, filial devotion, kindness, charitableness, regard for humanity. *Here* comes nearest to our romantic notion, and is the word commonly used in love songs. It is a feeling of dear and tender friendship, of sentimental regard. *Ta'u here,* usually translated "my beloved," has the linguistic flavor of the West-of-England idiom, "my dear acquaintance."

Those who are happily married have all three kinds of love. "And the greatest of these is *caritas*." For the most important, the most essential factor in marriage, as in all relationships, is that mingling of mutual kindness and mutual respect for human dignity.

As to lapses from what is called, in our tradition, marital fidelity, one may, in most cases, consider them as a passing phase, brought about, perhaps, by lack of a playtime in youth. It is likely to be a transitory dazzling of the eyes, an interlude soon ended. One is wiser not to cast a chosen life companion aside because of a temporary wandering. It is more sensible and more truly dignified to forgive. Jealousy is mostly wounded pride, and selfish pride is one of the least dignified of our emotions.

If, on the other hand, the diversion is not temporary, but a deep attachment, then dignity and respect for the other's personality, as well as for one's own, call for free release.

Thus would sensible men and women behave. Alas, most of us are not sensible. We are beset with false self-importance, which is very different from true inner dignity. We are obsessed with possessive notions. We make much trouble for ourselves and others, as does Tepongi.

5. *Free and Self-Reliant*

IT was early morning at Tepuka. Already, in the blue-gray light of dawn, the men had gone, silently, carrying their lines and spears, to the sea for the day's fishing on which the livelihood of their families depended. The sun was now well up, although the shadows of the palms were still long on the sanded street and the expanse of broken coral around the dwellings.

Riua, the little daughter of our landlord, emerged from the doorway of her father's house, carrying her sleeping mat, which she shook in the breeze to clear it of dust. With a long pole that stood beside the doorway, she dislodged a young coconut from the palm that leaned overhead. With a huge knife that she drew from its place near the door, she chopped off the top of the nut. Then she rinsed her mouth with a little of the tangy, naturally carbonated liquid that fills the cavity of the immature nut, and drank the rest. Using a fragment of the husk as a spoon, she scooped out and ate the tender, jellylike meat which had not yet hardened with the ripening of the nut. That was her breakfast, unless there happened to be a papaya left over from the last communal distribution. For a real meal, she must wait until late in the afternoon, when her father, Kararo, and her brother, Tangihia, return from the sea, carrying, slung by the gills from a pole that rested on their shoulders, a tuna whose tail dragged on the ground. Meanwhile, she might gather and eat small shellfish in the lagoon, the fibrous fruit of the

pandanus or the bitter fruit of the morinda in the forest, or catch small fish in the shallows with her hands, eating them as she ran.

Riua was seven or eight years old. Her niece, Maruia, who was a couple of years younger, followed about the same routine. Later in the day we would see Riua and her playmate, Tiare, daughter of the chief, sweeping their families' dooryards with flower stalks of the coconut palm, tending younger children, or sitting on the curbstone, searching each other's hair for lice. The Tuamotuans are a cleanly people, but they have not the kerosene and vinegar—to say nothing of chemical insecticides, to eliminate these small parasites, but must capture and destroy them by hand—and teeth. In the circumstances, they do very well.

The children of Tepuka were engagingly self-reliant, cooperative, doing their part willingly in family and community tasks, with little or no apparent direction from their parents. As Emory commented, they were "little adults." But they were not little sobersides, for all that. Their tasks were light and soon performed. Much of the day they spent in play, and when they were gathered in sizable groups, they could be quite as noisy as our own young.

Their games were not unlike those of children elsewhere: making "cat's-cradle" figures with a bit of coconut fiber or a strip of bark, sailing toy boats made of leaves or of coconut leaf sheaths on the lagoon, juggling little balls of pandanus leaf. They even had a game of hopping from square to square drawn in the sand, similar to hopscotch. A favorite ensemble sport was tug of war—two groups pulling against each other on a rope of twisted coconut fronds. And always they were learning the songs and dance movements of their elder brothers and sisters against the time when they themselves would become *taurearea*—participants in the playtime of adolescence—and would mate, casually, among the palms under the tropic stars.

Life flowed as calmly and smoothly among them as it did among their elders, and between them and their elders. There appeared no conflict, no dissension. I never saw a child punished at Tepuka. I never saw one child strike another, or heard one speak harsh words to another. Among them, there appeared none of that cruelty that often crops out among our own children.

Parents seemed to feel no need for discipline. The only approach to it was a perfunctory reminder of "quiet!" when the children were more than ordinarily noisy in their play. These admonitions had no lasting effect; the children were soon as noisy as before. But they were not actively mischievous. No obvious discipline needed to be imposed from without, because there was self-discipline from within. The child, as a member of the community in his own right, felt his duties and responsibilities toward the community, as the community discharged its duties and responsibilities toward him. Among themselves, they carried out the same principles of kindness that they observed in the adult world around them, knowing nothing else.

Younger children learned mainly from elder children, in whose care they were a good deal of the time. The community at some time, long ago, had started juvenile relations in the right way, and that way had perpetuated itself by natural processes. I do not know why this is not so among us. I know only that my own childhood, among the little barbarians that our civilization produces, was much less happy than that of the "little adults" who played around me at Tepuka.

Children reflect the actions and attitudes of their elders. It was customary for adults there to be kind and gentle and reasonable, hence customary for children to be likewise. It was also customary for children to be noisy in proportion to the number of them gathered together, whereas it was customary for

adults to be quiet and sedate. They knew where to draw the line.

Apparently it was customary, too, for children to be hungry, for they were always eating, whenever they could find anything edible. There was not one that looked undernourished, but they raided our garbage can, begged used tins that had contained food, to lick out the last crumbs, and kept a sharp lookout for edible or near-edible fruits in the forest or small fish and shellfish in the lagoon.

I do not recall hearing a child at Tepuka, other than small babies, cry. When little Maruia was brought to us with an earache, for such simple treatment as we could muster to relieve the pain, she did not even whimper. One afternoon a boy of about ten was carried up from the beach to have a broken leg set by Toriu, the native medicine man. In careless play, he had fallen over a canoe. He was silent, without a moan. I do not believe these people are less sensitive to pain than we. The nerves that carry the messages of warning to the brain can be no different from ours. I think the difference is in mental reaction. They realize that pain is not relieved by making a fuss about it, and this realization is fortified by a sense of dignity that helps them to retain self-possession.

The attitude toward children seemed an eminently intelligent one. Children grew naturally into the family and community organization, learning by observation and practicing what they saw. There was seldom any interference with them. Children were free, and in freedom they had a sense of responsibility.

Non-interference sometimes seemed to go to extremes. One evening as we were sitting on the coral curbstones with the people, while the song was being rehearsed that would welcome the chief on his return from a long voyage, little Maruia ran to the embers of a fire. She plucked a smoldering piece of coconut frond from the ashes, whirled it around her head until

it blazed, and danced with it, while the flames swirled closer to her flimsy garment than was comfortable for me to watch.

No one seemed alarmed. No one ran to take the burning brand from her; no one commanded, "Stop that, this minute!" Maruia continued her impromptu fire dance until the brand burned out or she tired of the pastime.

Children were so self-reliant that it was assumed they could take care of themselves, in normal circumstances. On the way back to the village from the papaya harvest, we picked up a small boy, far out in the lagoon, where he probably had been prospecting for shellfish. He rode with us in the canoe until he sighted another likely-looking hunting ground, then stepped out into the water, although still at a considerable distance from the village. No one worried about him, either.

If there sometimes appeared to be less protective watchfulness than most parents in our own country would consider wise, the underlying principle was sound. Some parents among us go too far in the opposite direction. It is all very well to restrain children from overventuresome projects, or at least warn them of hazards. We should give them the benefit of our longer experience of life. But a child who is continually forbidden to take the slightest risk—often an imagined one—and who is continually having fear instilled into his mind, becomes overcautious and may never outgrow his timidity. It handicaps him, not only in childhood, but also in adult life, besides depriving him of many childish pleasures. It deprives him, too, of the rough-and-tumble experience he needs. When the protective watchfulness is removed, he has not yet learned to cope with life. Children should be led to "walk gently," but unafraid.

The old error, which still lingers among us, though it is, happily, passing, was that children must be controlled through fear. Discipline was imposed from without, rather than cultivated from within. When a parent finds it necessary to "cor-

rect" a child by physical punishment, he is confessing moral weakness or mental laziness. He hasn't been willing or able to study the causes of misbehavior and how to remove those causes, most of which resolve themselves into ignorance, or bad examples. I believe lasting harm is often done by bringing children up under the "discipline" of fear. It often robs them of independence and initiative, creates in them a sense of injustice, and makes either for weakness of character, or for crabbedness and rebellion. It should be possible to penetrate the motives of children and to deal with them reasonably, calmly, never in anger. A parent who does not keep his dignity tempts the child to despise him secretly.

An old notion among our own people was that children were inherently vicious, "little savages" who had to be treated like animals before they could become fully human. If that were true, I thought, as I looked around me at the tranquil home life of the island people, why are the children of these folk whom we are prone to call "savages" so much better behaved than our own, although without the kind of discipline we think we must enforce?

It is gradually coming to be realized among us that children's personalities are entitled to respect. In their formative years, they tend to imitate their parents. It is for the parents to guide them by setting a wholesome example and, as the child grows in ability to reason, by reasoning and instruction, informing them in aspects of life that they do not yet understand, and leading them to feel their responsibilities as members of the family, the community, the nation, the populated world. Children commonly grow up to be much like their parents or, in revolt against the parent, they develop opposite tendencies. It is for parents to be moderate, reasonable, to win the child's confidence by respecting his personality, and to keep that confidence by not violating it. Much "naughtiness" among children results from inexperience and misunderstanding. Parents and teachers—although the latter seldom have time—should search beneath the outward act, for the motive. Children often are not articulate about their motives; they often are not able to give a clear account that would reveal the misconception under which a "naughty" act was committed. Inexhaustible patience is needed. Impatience, lack of understanding, attempts to interpret a child's actions in terms of adult psychology, often cause the child to feel that his elders are hostile. Unable to make them understand, he gives up, concluding that they are unreasonable.

I have mentioned, casually, the sexual freedom of Polynesian youth, which has been misunderstood and misinterpreted among those to whom it is strange, and often abhorrent, as a recognized social custom. As was explained to us at Tepuka, it is believed that this playtime of youth is necessary for wholesome physical development. It is considered wholly normal and proper, despite efforts of the church, in many islands, to discourage it. Parents encourage their sons and daughters in this freedom; indeed, it is regarded as a matter for concern if a young person delays in acquiring sexual experience.

The period of experimentation begins at puberty, or soon after. It continues only a few years, until young people find their permanent mates and settle down together in a house of their own.

From what I hear and read, the main difference between our attitude and that of the Polynesians, in this matter, is that they are less hypocritical than we. Among them, society openly recognizes the amorous propensities of youth and imposes no social or economic penalties upon them. Among our own young people, while our outwardly accepted code of morals acts as a check upon these propensities to some extent, it is evident that these tendencies are far from being entirely inhibited either by this code of morals or by the hazards that our social and economic system imposes.

Polynesians assume that youth must have its freedom. In

their social system, there is no such thing as illegitimacy of birth, and no question of the support of children. The extended family system takes care of that. After a couple are married, or have begun living together, any children the wife may have borne earlier are regarded, by custom, as children of the couple. There are exceptions in history, when the child was that of an important chief and dynastic succession was involved. There are stories in which the son of a chief, begotten by some casual amour, appears at court, when grown to maturity, to claim his rights, usually by producing some such relic as the loincloth of his father, which was left with his mother at the time of the affair. Among the mass of people, however, marriage was informal and purity of the line of descent was less important.

Polynesians have their customs of tabu in sexual life, and strict ones, but the restrictions differ from ours. The most rigid tabu of this kind, at Tepuka, was on consanguinity. Cousins, to a more remote degree than among us, were forbidden to have sexual relations. Some young people on the island were so related to all the eligible persons of the opposite sex that they could not have mates, except by visiting other islands or by having affairs with visitors from away.

At Vahitahi and some other islands, a daughter of a chief's family was supposed to consort only with young men of high lineage. At Tepuka, this tabu did not seem to operate, at the time we were there.

Free as the young people were, their amours were supposed to be conducted according to certain traditional customs. As described to us, the procedure of forming a temporary alliance was rather formal. The two young people slept together three nights without intercourse, a procedure that recalls the old New England custom of "bundling." This was their period of courtship; it was called, literally, "becoming accustomed" to each

other. By the fourth night, they were considered sufficiently "accustomed" to have their affair.

At Vahitahi we were told this was the custom only among those of noble birth. Young commoners, it was said, mated without such formality. Groups of them met, of evenings, in secluded places, and danced the *hivinau*, an erotic dance accompanied by erotic chants. As desire was aroused by the dance and the chanting, they coupled off in the seclusion of the forest.

At Tepuka, the two customs seemed to have coalesced. Girls of chiefly families took part in the *hivinau* and at the same time, we were told, couples who were attracted to each other in the dance often observed the formality of the three nights of "becoming accustomed."

It sometimes happened that a girl just emerging from childhood was shy, and slow to engage in the familiarities of "becoming accustomed." We were told of cases in which such a girl had been forcibly initiated, for her own good. While this was not regarded with the same severity, in community opinion, as is the case among us, it was considered rude behavior, showing ill breeding on the part of the young men who committed this violence. Shy girls, it was felt, should be led more gently to the fulfillment of their young womanhood.

There was at least one woman at Tepuka who had not participated in the amorous sport of the *taurearea* when she was of an age to be included in that group. And she regretted it. Fangu, one of the unmarried daughters of Maukiri, had no breasts. She had only large nipples protruding from a chest as flat as that of a man. Aware that I had noticed this, one afternoon as she went about her household duties bare from the waist, she explained, "I did not fall down in the street when I was young."

"Fall down in the street" is an idiom meaning sexual promiscuity. Fangu's diagnosis was not necessarily correct. It is

likely, rather, that she had shunned the usual youthful sexual experimentation because of whatever chemical deficiency had prevented her breasts from developing. But it was a universal belief at Tepuka that girls who did not have this experience would not develop normally.

Fangu did the best she could, when she grew older. While, being less attractive, physically, than others, she had no mate among residents of the island, as far as we knew, she consorted occasionally with sailors from copra schooners that called there, and formed a temporary alliance with a Tahitian seaman from our own cutter, the *Tiare Tahiti*.

I have no comment on this aspect of Polynesian custom, except that the system works out smoothly, for them, within their own social and economic environment. Dr. Margaret Mead, the distinguished anthropologist who studied it in Samoa, attributed to it, in part, the comparative absence of social maladjustment and of psychological conflict she found there. She would have reached the same conclusions at Tepuka, where conflict and maladjustment are also rare. Sexual freedom in youth, however, is only one factor. The complex of Polynesian life as a whole seems to promote poise and balance and wholesome mental and social attitudes. It is equally true that fear of being found out, fear of incurring social penalties, causes a great deal of suffering, mental disturbance, and social maladjustment among those of our own people who transgress our traditional code of sexual morality.

The wrong in our social system is in the harshness of the social penalties, in the discipline of fear. Our traditions grew up in the experience of our race, and are as legitimate, for us, as the traditions of other peoples are for them. If we believe in our moral code, it is proper to do what we can, by reasonable means, to maintain it. The young should be taught to do what is believed to be right, because of its rightness, not because of fear

of consequences. Even so, much psychological harm is done by excessive feeling of guilt. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that our conception of this aspect of life is affected by a distorted sense of proportion and that conformity to our code of sexual morality has been overemphasized with reference to morality in general. It has been so to the extent that "morality" has come to mean, in ordinary speech, just one aspect of morality. After all, by our own traditions, God placed that aspect seventh out of ten. Who are we to put it first?

Sexual transgressions, among us, are social errors, as are any violations of traditional behavior. They should be avoided, like other social errors, by instruction and guidance, but not penalized disproportionately. As long as the penalties exist in the structure of our society, it is only fair to warn youth of them. But we should remember that fear is an unworthy motive, an unsatisfactory method of control. The most dominant fear of all—that of death—has not materially reduced the incidence of capital crimes.

Our social customs regarding sex may change, in time, as some of our other social customs have changed. We no longer honor, for example, the injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." While our customs are still operative, it should be possible to ameliorate some of their harsher aspects. Social error, in any society, should be avoided, but when once made, it should not be penalized disproportionately. It should not be made to cause excessive suffering, humiliation, and the psychological ills that arise from fear and from excessive condemnation.

Humanity grows in wisdom, if slowly. There are already signs of a more enlightened attitude in this respect. Tolerance, in all fields, grows slowly, but it grows. It is for us to remember that, in human relations, the worst sin is cruelty, and that cruelty is no less a sin when it is "righteous." We shall not be truly civilized until we get rid of fear in human relations.

In our relations with both children and youth, we need more will to understand, more vision, more patience and tolerance, to guide wisely and not harshly, to criticize constructively, to walk gently among the tender petals of budding and blossoming life.

6. The Core of Courtesy

As I walked down the streets of Tepuka, voices would call softly from thatched doorways: *"Haere mai! Haere mai tamaa!"*

"Come! Come and eat!"

Perhaps they did not really mean the invitation. But it was customary to offer it.

I would reply, as is also customary, *"Paia,"* signifying that I had already eaten—for the friends who invited me might not have sufficient food for themselves and for a guest as well.

Usually, however, they repeated the invitation, with a note of kind insistence in their voices. Then I knew that this was more than mere formality, and that they would think me rude, perhaps contemptuous of their plain food, if I persisted in declining. So I would estimate, unobtrusively, the amount of food in sight and eat heartily or sparingly, as the circumstances indicated. If the supply was scanty, I would accept only a token portion. This, too, was Polynesian courtesy.

For hospitality, in the Polynesian mind, is one of the prime virtues and obligations. In Hawaii, when a volcanic eruption is imminent, the goddess Pele is believed to walk abroad in the guise of an old woman. Houses where she is received hospitably are spared in the ensuing eruption; any from which she is turned away are destroyed. But the offer of hospitality is in itself sufficient. The guest has his obligation not to abuse it.

Many a beachcomber in the South Pacific has learned he can not live indefinitely off native generosity.

I have seldom, if ever, found such universal courtesy as among Polynesians. Perhaps this is partly because of their more leisurely, if still industrious, life. They take time to be pleasant. Convention prescribes their forms of courtesy, as among us, but the forms are not hollow; they have meaning.

The Polynesian greeting in itself is eloquent of kindliness of character. The Hawaiian says *"aloha"*; the Samoan, *"talofa"*; the Marquesan, *"kaoha"*—all of which are forms of a word meaning love, in the sense of friendliness, sympathy, good will. The Maori, the Tahitian, the Tuamotuan, say, in their various dialects, *kia ora na koe*—"may you have life, health, well-being," or, in more stately phraseology, *kia ora na koe i te Atua*—"may you have life (or health) in (the) God (s)." Some of my Christianized island friends amend the phrase, conscientiously, *kia ora na koe i te Atua mau*—the True God. Their distant cousins, the Micronesians of the Gilbert Islands, say the same thing: *ko na mauri*—"may you have life." To me, all these are warmer, more full-blooded expressions than the Europeans' colorless "how do you carry yourself?" "how goes it?" or the most ridiculous of all, our own "how do you do?" What can be more eloquent of human kindness and fellowship than to wish one's fellow human life and health? The Chinese, to whom the Polynesians may be distantly related, have a similar point of view.

It has been asserted that Polynesians have no words for "thank you," and it has been inferred that they have no idea of gratitude. I think the expression I heard in the Tuamotu, *Tei koa hoki*—"There is indeed joy"—is as expressive of sincere gratitude as any I have heard anywhere. The Tahitian word *maururu* is almost as rich. In its full form it means, literally, "I am happy, or contented (with what you have done for me)."

This is what we mean when we say "thank you," if we are really grateful. We mean to give the benefactor the satisfaction of knowing that he has pleased us. Hawaiians, I am told, formerly expressed gratitude by that word of many uses, *aloha*, but in later times, feeling the need of a phrase to match the "thank you" of the foreigners with whom they had come into contact, they coined or adapted the word *mahalo*.

My Tuamotuan friends, when they write to me, always say, "Great is our joy for the news you have given us," and, "Great is our joy that you have not forgotten us, for strong is the love of all of us here for you." They always begin and end with "may you have life." They write, too, that "there is no news," after which they recite all the births, deaths, and marriages they can remember since they wrote last, and any important events, such as the building of a storage cistern for rainwater, or the migration of a group of their number to another island.

I learned early at Tepuka that one leaving a house is expected, as a matter of courtesy, to say where he is going, and why. This has been reduced to the formula, "Stay you, I go," with the reply, "Go; I remain." The host may still inquire further, if he chooses. Lest revealing one's destination and purpose may be embarrassing, Polynesian tact has found a way out of that difficulty. It suffices to say: *Haere ori*, which means, substantially, "I am going for a stroll, with no particular purpose." The host presses the inquiry no further.

At those meals to which I was invited so often, I observed one striking variance from our own notions of courtesy. At Tepuka, one didn't talk to one's dinner partner. Meals were commonly cooked and served out of doors, under the palms around the houses. Members of a family, and guests, if any, gathered together around the platters of leaves, but they didn't make it a social gathering, while the food lasted. Instead, each

one turned his back, or turned aside from the others, sat on his own log or coconut, and ate silently.

Apparently it was considered discourteous to watch another eat, or to appear to do so. That would imply that you were observing how much he ate, as if you grudged it to him. And in any case, eating is considered, at Tepuka, a rather private function.

It is obvious that one can't very well converse with a dinner partner without looking at him. Aside from that, however, the custom might be interpreted as sensible in itself. Where the food supply is exhausted each day, to be replenished only by the fortunes of the morrow's fishing, eating is a serious activity. There won't be any more food that day, and unless the ancestral spirits are favorably disposed and efficient in helping their descendants, there won't be any tomorrow. So it behooves one to devote his attention to the day's fish, and not distract his mind with table conversation which, among us, is indeed often pointless and perfunctory, and a waste of the ingenuity required to compose remarks and the attention to listen and reply. After the meal is over, the Tuamotuans recline on their mats and talk, and the conversation, with nothing to distract the mind from it, is much better than it would be if it were confused with eating.

Emory and I made use of this convention to clear our house of visitors when we wanted to be undisturbed at compiling our notes. In the first few days of our sojourn, we usually had a houseful of natives, whenever we were at home. They came to chat, to receive cigarettes, but mostly to stare at us and our possessions. We had only to begin to prepare a meal, and they would all leave. Strictly speaking, we should have invited them to share our meal, but it was obvious that we couldn't feed half a village. If we had invited them, they should have declined, according to custom, unless we pressed the invitation. But the

boxes of emergency canned goods that were stacked along our walls looked like immense wealth to these Tuamotuans, who live from day to day, and we feared they would consider our supply inexhaustible, and accept.

Incidentally, the tabu on watching people eat appeared not to apply to some activities more intimate. Our rite of brushing the teeth was a community attraction—doubtless because the islanders, although most of them had sound and apparently clean teeth, had never seen a toothbrush.

Polynesians have a reputation for generosity, and that reputation is deserved, but often misunderstood. A gift, among them, implies a gift in return. This applies to a gift of any nature. The old men, who knew the chants in which the learning of their people was imparted, gave us these chants. So we gave them cans of corned beef or of salmon, and bags of rice. The chief gave us a daily supply of fresh drinking-nuts. We gave him a knife and a flashlight, and helped finance his trip to Tahiti. When Toriu the *tabunga* treated me for a tropical infection, he asked no fee, and I paid him none. But I made him a present. These Tuamotuans do a little buying and selling, with foreigners, and they sometimes go to sea or to some island where there is industry, for wages, but among themselves, they adhere to the custom of free exchange of gifts.

We had ample opportunity to observe that island courtesy was no mere matter of form. The people there were continually doing little things for our comfort—trying to make an easier place for us to sit, finding for us a softer pillow than the tree trunk they themselves used, bringing fresh drinking-nuts for our thirst. The thought in their minds was that we were not accustomed to the simplicity of their life, with its relative paucity of comfort. The hard life was all right for them, since they were accustomed to it, but they felt that we deserved something easier. Maukiri and her family were disappointed by our

refusal to occupy the big brass bed that stood in their one-room house. They never slept in it themselves, nor did any one else. They preferred their mats on the floor. The brass bed was for ostentation. It was the only one on the island. It represented wealth. Probably it had been the gift of Ah Kui, the Chinese merchant, to his wife Turina, who was Maukiti's daughter, but Ah Kui and Turina never slept in it. They lay of nights on a mat under an upturned canoe.

This was wise enough, in that climate. I learned to prefer mats while we were in those islands, after I became accustomed to their hardness. Once, out of courtesy, we did sleep in a bed offered by Fariua and Reva, our hosts at the island of Fangatau, and nearly smothered. It was a feather bed—in latitude 15° 51′ 20″ south.

A kindness that I deeply appreciated was the thoughtfulness of many of our friends at Tepuka in using simple language in speaking to me—trying to make it easy for me, as for a child, to understand. This was real courtesy to a "dumb foreigner."

A basic idea of courtesy seems involved in Polynesians' frequent use of the word *paba*, which means "perhaps." It occurs not only in questions, where it functions as one of the interrogative forms, but in statements where we would never think of using its equivalent. It has the effect of softening a remark, so as not to seem dictatorial or argumentative, admitting the right of the one addressed to differ in opinion.

In general, there was a high regard for the rights of others and consideration of their comfort and happiness—which is true courtesy. They lacked some of the conventions of courtesy that we have, mainly those that no longer have much meaning. They might remove their hats when entering a house, because a hat was no longer needed to protect them from the sun. But men would not think of taking off their hats when meeting one another, or even a woman, in the street. The circumstances in

which that custom arose in Europe—the wearing of visored helmets in the age of chivalry—had not existed in their country.

They did shake hands with us, at first, because they knew that this was the foreign custom. It is a custom which has persisted among us after its origin has been largely forgotten. We shake hands upon meeting, because our ancestors extended the right hand, with no sword in it, in token of friendship or peaceful intention. This must have given unfair opportunities to left-handed swordsmen, but apparently the right-handed were sufficiently in the majority to survive and perpetuate the custom. The Polynesians, not being a sword-toting people, never developed this custom.

Before we left, those who knew us best had abandoned the foreign practice, and were greeting us according to their own tradition, with the half-embrace, like the Latins, or, among those who considered us relatives because of our formal adoption, with the *hongi*. Then we knew we had really been accepted.

The *hongi*, often imprecisely described as "rubbing noses," is the Polynesian equivalent of a kiss. As I observed it, noses were not rubbed together, but one nose was laid alongside the other, or to the hand or neck of the one who was being greeted. It seems to imply inhaling of the subtle fragrance of the loved one's skin—as delicately complimentary an expression as any the human race has ever devised. The skin you not only love to touch, but also to smell—what deeper tribute could there be?

Some customs were as much folklore as etiquette. For instance, it was improper to mention fishing. A man who wanted to let us know he was going fishing would say he was going "to the back of the island." That meant the sea, since the island is considered to front on the inner lagoon, rather than on the open Pacific. If any one had been so tactless as to wish a fisherman luck, or mention fishing at all, the fisherman probably would have given up fishing for the day. The spirits of the sea might

have overheard the incautious remark, and would warn the fish, or stir up a storm. Since the natives believed this, the forbidden remark might actually have spoiled their fishing, by undermining their confidence. So it was tactful and considerate, as well as prudent, to refrain from mentioning the forbidden subject.

I was reminded of the Hawaiian agricultural tradition that enjoined a farmer to set his banana plants toward the center of his land, well away from the boundary of his neighbor's field —that it might not wither. The thought, I believe, was that the spirits who preside over growing things would punish one who robbed his neighbor's soil, after the same principle as drilling near the edge of some one else's oil field. It was a practical application of the principle that "honesty is the best policy."

One of the most commendable of these observances was regard for another person's sleep. If it was necessary to awaken some one, there was care not to shock him suddenly out of slumber. To do so would be considered not only rude, but dangerous. In sleep, one of the three souls or spirits that resides in the human body is supposed to go traveling, sometimes to distant lands—in what we call dreams. If the sleeper is awakened suddenly, his spirit may not have time to get back into his body. As I understand it, this would not necessarily cause death, but it would cause an incomplete consciousness, amounting to insanity or at least stupidity.

We express respect for elders or superiors by standing; the Polynesians, when they adhere to tradition, by sitting. Both methods have their reasons. Ours implies regard for the comfort of the one who is being honored. The Polynesian custom is founded upon their idea of the sacredness of the person. The most sacred part of the anatomy is the head. Hence it is improper for the head of an inferior to be held higher than that of his superior. This rule was strictly observed in ancient times. When a Hawaiian chief went abroad, commoners prostrated

themselves, or even remained indoors, lest their shadows defile the person of the exalted one. If a chief, in visiting a ship in port, went below decks, any of his subjects who might be on deck dived into the water, lest they occupy a higher level than the chief. Some Hawaiians, even today, are reluctant to occupy a house of more than one floor.

The forms of courtesy differ from country to country, but they are meaningless unless the spirit of courtesy informs them. Innumerable incidents illustrated that spirit for me at Tepuka. A band of shells had been made for me, as an ornament that every man wore on his hat. A few days after it had been given me, I realized that the maker had used shells that had not been cleaned, and the shellfish within them had decomposed. I should have realized that I was expected to leave the string of shells on the ground for a few days, that the ants might clean it. Maukiri's family, seeing me wearing my hat without the band, inquired what had happened to it. This was on a Saturday, when they were busy with preparations for Sunday—washing and ironing clothes, tidying the house, preparing an extra supply of the less perishable kinds of food available, as some provident people did, to tide them over Sunday, when no fishing would be done. In the midst of all this, they stopped everything and set to gathering clean shells and making me a hatband, so that I might have it to wear to church the next day. I was not concerned about the hatband, or the lack of it, although such an accessory has a practical use in that country, besides its esteem as an ornament. It holds the hat, by its weight, from being blown away in the winds that sweep over the low island. But I was touched by their spirit of friendly helpfulness, the very core of courtesy in its truest sense.

As in most other aspects of the life of that community, courtesy was founded on recognition of the dignity of the in-

dividual, and on brotherly interdependence. Only when so founded, do the forms have meaning.

They practiced little of the formal gallantry toward women that is a fetish among us. Women seemed rather to resent our offers to carry their burdens, such as the heavy containers of water they bore daily from the village well, as if our helpfulness implied contempt by casting doubt upon their strength. A woman did not necessarily precede a man, or a man precede a woman. Nor, in a country without chairs, did a man rise when a woman entered, or stand until she was seated. As I have already reported, it is considered more respectful to sit, anyway. In practice, in a country where the mats on the floor are free to every one, each person sat or reclined as his or her mood indicated.

Courtesy should not be a matter of sex, but of individual need. The essential principle is that the strong should help the weak. That principle should be observed with discretion. I once saw a well-meaning woman leading a blind man across a busy street in San Francisco—against a red traffic light.

Courtesy among us should take account of the complexities of our environment which impose a degree of regimentation. At Tepuka it does not matter whether you walk on the right-hand or left-hand side of a passageway. Here, it does. For convenience and protection, we have established certain traffic rules, for pedestrians as well as for vehicles. I have observed that women tend to be less cognizant of these than are men. I see more women than men walking on the wrong side of sidewalks and of stairways; entering by exits and leaving by entrances; fighting their way through the crowd boarding a bus or streetcar so as to leave by the wrong door; delaying passengers behind them while fumbling for coins or tokens, instead of having the fare ready as they enter; blocking doorways or aisles while gossiping.

Already signs are appearing in elevators urging those nearest the door to go out first, whether men or women, so as to avoid the confusion and delay occasioned by an outmoded formality. In this and some other respects there are indications that our "chivalry" is being revised, gradually, in the interest of practical sense and modern conditions, and thus coming nearer to carrying out its original purpose.

It is a tradition among us that man is the pursuer and woman the pursued. Certain discerning dramatists have exposed this as a fiction, but men and women, by and large, feel constrained to maintain the appearance of a one-sided chase. Polynesians are not so conditioned. If a woman wants a man she tells him so, usually in very plain words. I have not observed that men are less interested in women because of this. In any case, it greatly simplifies "dating."

They also do not share our tradition of the impropriety of using certain words, relating to biological processes, in the presence of women. They do not feel that there is anything improper in these words, in the first place. The inconsistency of our tradition is in supposing that if the words are improper at all, it is more improper to use them in the presence of one sex than in the presence of another. In Polynesia the terms are used by men and women alike.

The same consideration applies to profanity, which is not a problem in the Polynesian language, since it has no equivalents for our "cuss words." If a Polynesian wants to be abusive, he advises his opponent to go and violate some tabu.

In point of fact, most of the four-letter words, which arise from the very roots of the English language, are less indecent than the prudish euphemisms and circumlocutions that have been devised to avoid them. As for profanity, it is an excrescence, except as it may give emotional relief, thus serving as a safety-valve. If it is wrong, it is wrong for men and women alike.

The forms of courtesy are all very well, as long as they mean something. When they mean nothing, they are, like profanity, an excrescence, and often an obstruction. True courtesy is not a form imposed from without, by custom and tradition. It is a spontaneous expression from within, of the helpful friendliness that should exist among all people of good will. Our neighbors at Tepuka had, for the most part, that inward spirit.

7. *The Food of the Land Is Good*

"EAT!" Te Uru Po urged me. "Eat until you are round with fullness!"

We were gathered, Te Uru Po and his family and I, at the late-afternoon meal under the coconut palms near his house. The platters of leaves were heaped with the daily food of the island—fish, baked octopus tentacles, coconuts, papaya, a few of the fibrous, insipid fruits of the edible pandanus.

My host at first was a little doubtful as to how his foreign guest would relish this simple fare. We visitors, out of our fabulous abundance, could have such luxuries as canned corned beef and canned salmon at every meal, if we chose.

"Was the food good, or bad?" Te Uru Po inquired, after I had eaten heartily.

"It was good," I replied.

Te Uru Po beamed with pleasure. "The food of the land," he said, "is good food."

The health and vigor of Te Uru Po and his fellow citizens testified that the food of the land, although monotonous and restricted in range, was wholesome.

At about the same time, Dr. N. P. Larsen and his associates, in Hawaii, were coming to the same conclusion. They had been experimenting with the effect of various diets on "control groups" of plantation workers, using the condition of teeth as a criterion of results. They found that root starches, such as taro and sweet potatoes, indigenous to the islands and formerly the

main staple foods of Hawaiians, were more healthful, in that climate, than grain starches, such as rice and wheat, which are imported or have been introduced.

Along the same line of thought, a San Francisco physician advised me that honey produced in the neighborhood where one lives tends to prevent allergies. If I understood him correctly, he thought the bee-processed pollens in the honey immunized the consumer to the raw pollens in the air. I heard, too, of a newcomer to California who suffered from hives, for the first time, after he came west. Tests revealed that he was allergic to butter. As he had been eating butter with impunity all his life hitherto, he sent for some butter from his old home in Iowa, and he had no more hives.

Arctic explorers have reported thriving for months on fresh meat and fish alone, without vegetables, and have commented on the excellent health of the inhabitants who subsisted all the time on such a diet.

These and other findings seem to indicate that the food of the land is good for the people who live in that land. I would not willingly give up such items as chocolate, coffee, bananas, none of which is produced in my present immediate habitat, but both we and Polynesians need to learn that an article is not necessarily better merely because it is imported, and that if our own country produces a comparable article, the chances are that it is better for us.

In any case, Te Uru Po's remark pointed up the results of our own observation. We had visited a number of islands in the Tuamotu and elsewhere in the southeast Pacific, and we had noted that the farther we got from contact with European and American civilization, the farther from frequented lines of communication, the better the health of the natives appeared to be.

The people of Tepuka and Tepoto were the healthiest and happiest Polynesians we had seen. We felt that this was so because to a greater extent they were living a natural life, eating

the fruits of their own land and sea, and behaving, in most respects, in harmony with their natural environment. In a sense, poverty had been their salvation. They had lacked the means to become dependent upon imports of food unnatural to them, to acquire too much foreign clothing, or to build foreign-style houses unsuited to the climate. Poverty and remoteness, too, had spared them the frequency of foreign contact that had introduced disease and nearly depopulated such islands as Fangatau.

Probably the primary factor of enjoyment of life is health. We have more medical care than probably any other people, and apparently we have more ills for the physicians and surgeons to treat. We have more facilities for sanitation than any other people; we live probably the most nearly germ-free life that has been devised for practical purposes. Yet I am intrigued by the aspect of such communities as Tepuka, which had no such medical science, no such sanitary facilities, yet where disease was so rare that it was considered unnatural—the result of witchcraft or of invasion by evil spirits.

These people, like others, succumb to epidemics introduced from outside, such as the worldwide influenza outbreak of 1919. Even while we were there, virtually the entire population was disabled for a time by the common cold, which was brought in from outside with the arrival of a ship. But as long as they were left to themselves, there was little illness among them.

On the whole, I believe they do not live longer than we do; probably, on the average, not as long, because they have not the means we have of fighting epidemics and of prolonging the lives of invalids. While they do live, they seem healthier and more vigorous, as a group, than we, as long as they do not contract foreign disease. Those who had reached old age mostly remained healthy. This may have been because they did not "retire" until they became too feeble to support themselves by the usual occupations. They eased their work somewhat, but they kept com-

fortably busy, thus avoiding the shock of sudden change that often harms our own retired men.

We heard of only one serious illness of a native, when smoke signals summoned relatives from Tepuka to the sick man's mat at Tepoto. The patient recovered, with no more complicated treatment than I myself received—a mixture of herb lore and sympathetic magic—when suffering from an infection at Tepuka.

The Hawaii conclusions as to the wholesomeness of the food of the land were borne out by the condition of teeth at Tepuka. Those whose teeth were not sound had come there from other islands whose life had been more affected by foreign influence. In Tahiti, even young people's teeth were decaying. At Tepuka, even the old people had enough dentition left to chew their daily fish and coconuts. In the islands between, conditions varied with the extent of departure from the natural life of the islands.

Once while we were there, the Tepukans traded copra to a visiting schooner for wheat flour, and had a big community baking. They mixed the flour with water, or with coconut juice, wrapped the paste in leaves, and baked it underground, without yeast. As guests of the community, we received our share of the soggy product—and, after dark, fed it to our landlord's pigs. The pigs survived. So did the people, but with stomachaches, and they were constipated for a few days. As we administered simple first aid, we took occasion to remind them that "the food of the land is good."

I learned later that a fairly harmless bread could be made, even without yeast. It was made of tapioca flour—not indigenous, but a tropical product—mixed with coconut juice, chopped coconut and bits of papaya, patted thin and roasted in leaves on hot stones over an open fire. It was heavy, but not indigestible, and had a not unpalatable nutty flavor. The fruit in it, and the crisp baking, apparently counteracted the gluey consistency of the flour. Such a bread, if raised a little, would be acceptable

even in our own country. In pre-import times, a kind of bread was made from pandanus.

This does not mean that fish and coconuts are intrinsically a better diet than our varied fare, any more than that health would be conserved throughout the world by living in houses of coconut leaves and wearing loincloths. These people lived a life adapted to their geographical and climatic situation, and to which they had been conditioned by long experience. Foreign influence, in so far as it upset the balance thus achieved, was pernicious.

Meals, although not enlivened by conversation, were leisurely. An ancient Hawaiian prayer for forgiveness contains the phrase, "If I have eaten standing—" Those who conceived that prayer were wiser than they knew. To eat hurriedly, or in a strained posture, is an offense against nature.

When foreign contact brought foreign disease, they were helpless to combat it, and suffered from it more than we do. Most of our ills have been with our people a long time. We have developed resistance to them. The Polynesian, in centuries of isolation, escaped many diseases and thus built up no immunity to them. He could treat successfully most of the few diseases he had always had with him, but his wise men could not cope with ills with which they had had little or no experience. That is why measles killed a third of the population of the Hawaiian Islands in a few years of foreign contact, why the common cold is a serious, even deadly, malady when it strikes hitherto isolated communities, and why other diseases have done so much harm in many islands.

Advantages of their life that might be beneficial elsewhere are abundant outdoor exercise, plenty of ventilation, and freedom of the body within loose clothing. The Tepuka diet would seem, at first thought, inadequate—fish, shellfish, coconuts, papayas, day after day; rarely pork, fowl or eggs; no vegetables. Yet these people, not concerned with classifying carbohy-

drates, fats, and proteins, thrived on it. Nature looked after their need of vitamins. It had given them a taste for fish livers. They ate them raw. They said they liked them that way. Probably fish liver oil did them as much good that way as it would in capsules.

It seemed odd to us that with the ocean around them, and opportunity to get salt by evaporating sea water in rock pools, they never salted their food, or ate salt as a side dish, as did the Hawaiians. Nor did many of them make the sauce of coconut cream and sea water that is used in Tahiti. Perhaps they got enough salt by frequent immersion in the sea or in the lagoon while fishing, or from the slightly brackish water of the village well. They did relish the heightened flavors of our canned meat and canned fish. Some of them liked our sweet chocolate and hard candy; others did not. They had no sweets of their own, save the sprouted coconut and the insipid flesh of the pandanus. They disliked our pickles, or anything of sharp taste. One guest of ours was revolted by crackers spread with jam.

They would not eat food very hot, nor would they have liked it chilled. Hawaiians, too, have told me they consider both hot and cold foods unwholesome, and prefer food baked, rather than fried or boiled. This was, of course, merely the result of long habit, but it was a healthful habit.

Monotonous as their diet would seem to people in this country, the Tepukans relished it, day after day. They had never lost appreciation of the natural flavors of food. The bishop we met at Vahitahi, who had been a missionary priest at Tepuka, went a step further. "Never cook fish, or salt it, or put sauce on it," he told us. "The Lord made each fish with its own subtle flavor. When you cook it, or add condiments, you destroy that natural, God-given flavor." The bishop had lived so long among Tuamotuans that in taste for food he had become more Tuamotuan than the natives.

Polynesians of the high islands have more variety in food,

and have evolved more ways of preparing it and combining it. But, on the whole, their tastes are simpler than ours. There was a grain of rightness in the bishop's extreme statement. It is all very well to have educated palates, appreciative of culinary artistry. But we miss something if we lose appreciation of the honest flavors of food in, or close to, its natural state. We need to keep a zest for all simple, natural enjoyment. That is one of the encouraging things about Americans. I think there is a fundamental soundness in a people who have never lost the taste for ham and eggs.

Our eclectic diet has the advantage of variety. It is natural that, having the resources to do so, we import articles we can not produce at home. Polynesians would do the same if they had the means. In so far as they have the means, many of them do. The results have been unfortunate, but that may be because the variety has been insufficient and the diet, thus changed, has been unbalanced.

The Tuamotuan diet being mostly protein, people do not get fat on it, as do Hawaiians and Tahitians, who eat starchy vegetables. The people of Tepuka and Tepoto are small, compact, powerful, and of extraordinary endurance. Although most of them are shorter in stature than our people, our clothes were too small for them. They are heavy in proportion to their height, because they are so solid.

The dairy industry will be disappointed to hear that these people thrive in health without milk, butter, or cheese. Polynesians developed their tastes before cattle and goats were brought to the islands, and in most islands where they now have them, they still don't like milk. Even the Pitcairn Islanders, who are of British, as well as Tahitian, descent, have no taste for it. This is partly because Polynesians were not accustomed to it in olden times, and partly because milk, to their minds, is only for babies. I knew a benevolent woman landowner in Hawaii who used to make the rounds of Hawaiian families in the neighbor-

hood with a truckload of milk, and stand by to see that they drank it. She was, in their minds, the chief of the district and they had to take it and like it, as we had to take the castor oil our grandmothers ladled down our throats in the kerosene-lamp era.

On the other hand, the creamy liquid squeezed from ripe coconut meat is a substitute for milk on which I have seen babies fed when the mother's breasts failed, and I have found it quite acceptable cream for coffee. Adults don't drink it, as such, but it is widely used in Polynesia in cooking, or as a sauce. Hawaiians cook chicken in it. Samoans mix it with chopped taro tops, wrap the mixture in leaves and bake it, to make a delicious dish called *palu sami*. Tahitians use it in three kinds of sauce—sweet, fermented, and salted—in one or another of which they dip most foods.

They had no stimulants. No alcoholic drinks, which was probably just as well, for they have not developed our age-old tolerance for alcohol. Men of Tepuka asked me once whether grapes would grow in their soil, that they might make wine. I had to tell them that it was unlikely the sand and coral and sea-level climate of Tepuka would nourish the vine whose product maketh glad the heart of man. No coffee or tea. No coca. The only beverage was the cool, refreshing liquor of the coconut. This, or even the pulp of the pandanus, could have been fermented and distilled, but they did not know how, and thus saved themselves much trouble, while going without whatever degree of euphoria such a drink would induce. They did not even have kava, the ancient beverage of chiefs on the high islands where the Piper methysticum grows. Kava is a mild narcotic, rather than a stimulant, anyhow.

Indeed, healthy and unhurried and unharassed as they were, they needed neither stimulants to spur them to effort nor narcotics to soothe them. They did smoke tobacco, when they could get it, but in moderation. A few puffs, and then the

cigarette was allowed to go out and deposited behind an ear, to be taken out and relit later. Or a single cigarette was passed from hand to hand and mouth to mouth.

In our own feverish way of life, doubtless stimulants serve a purpose. Our fault is in abuse of them, as our fault in general is immoderacy in nearly all things.

Diet was only one of several factors making up a natural life. One reason for island health was absence of tension, along with clean and simple habits and an unhurried flow of living. People got up at dawn, when it was time to start the day's fishing. They went to bed—or, more precisely, to mat—shortly after dark, except on moonlight nights, when they stayed up later. Perhaps that, too, was a provision of nature. Too much regularity may be as bad as too little.

There was commonly not much breakfast, since few saved food overnight. But there were always coconuts, and there were papayas as long as the week's harvest lasted. I think the men took coconuts with them on which to nibble in the long hours of fishing, and they could eat a part of their catch, raw, while fishing for more. Women did the same while gathering shellfish, which are better raw, anyway. The tridacna clam toughens with cooking. But the big meal of the day was in late afternoon, when the men came home from the sea. Every one ate all he could hold. There was seldom any food left over. Physicians in this country tell me it is better to eat little at a time and often, and in this country we can do so, but as our neighbor Kararo replied when we asked him about meal times, "We eat when there is food." And they eat it while it is fresh. It won't keep.

Although some Polynesian personal habits might seem uncouth, those of our acquaintance were fastidious in cleanliness. Frequency of bathing, from country to country, is largely a matter of climate and of water supply. People in warm climates bathe oftener than people in cold climates, because bathing in a warm atmosphere is a pleasure as well as a duty. That is, they

normally do if there is plenty of water. Our Tuamotuans didn't have plenty of water suitable for bathing, but they didn't let that scarcity interfere. They do not consider sea water fit for bathing. Even the Hawaiians, who swim in the sea for pleasure, as adult Tuamotuans do not, bathe in fresh water afterward. This is easy for them; they have streams. In the Tuamotu there are no streams. Some islands have cisterns built above ground, and collect water in them as it runs off roofs of corrugated iron. At Tepuka and Tepoto, islands of thatched roofs, there were only wells, with a few inches of water at the bottom. A native had earned his bath when he had carried the water a quarter or half mile from the well to his home.

Nevertheless, they bathed more frequently than do many of us who have only to turn a tap. Twice a day was usual. Some got up in the middle of the night for an extra bath. There were no tubs, no shower apparatus. Water was dipped up with the hand and dashed on the body. Soap, if they had any, was then applied, and rinsed off with more handfuls of water. The Tuamotuan word for bathing means literally, "to splash."

Methods of washing clothes were equally primitive, but gentle. There was no beating with paddles, such as we had seen in Tahiti, where it probably is a result of French influence; no scrubbing with a brush, as we did when aboard ship; no rubbing on a corrugated board. Garments were slapped and squeezed on a stone or a smooth old canoe plank. Dip, soap, squeeze, was the formula, and it got them clean. Garments at Tepuka are few, and they have to last. When clean, they were not hung on a line, to be torn or blown away. They were laid out on the coral pebbles that cover the island, and weighed down at the corners with stones. There were a few old-fashioned irons, fired with charcoal. Garments were laid on a mat and ironed with these.

This, of course, is contemporary practice. In the old days, they had no such fabrics as they now acquire in trade from the copra schooners. They wore wrap-around skirts of pandanus leaf,

really mats, woven more finely than sleeping mats. These could have been scrubbed with sea water and a brush made of coconut fiber, but I have no information that they were. Te Uru Po said not much washing was done in the "heathen time."

Tapa, the paper cloth of the high islands, beaten from bark, is not washable, although it could be mended by soaking it in water and beating the torn parts together. A rough and ready G string can be plucked at any time from the base of a palm frond, which is sheathed in a burlaplike material. This wouldn't stand washing, either, but when it got dirty it could be thrown away and a new one gathered.

In the absence of toothbrushes, teeth were rinsed with water or with the liquor of a drinking-coconut. Although this was all the care teeth got, they mostly looked clean.

We had no way of knowing what was inside those bodies that looked so healthy, but while we were there no one had a heart attack or complained of gastric ulcers. No one seemed to be wasting away. Mokio the Elder was reputed to be tubercular, but he was past seventy and still fairly vigorous.

I think the general high level of health was supported mainly by calmness, by an unhurried, unworried life, a life of habitual relaxation.

I think they do not sleep as soundly as we, because their mats, laid on a floor of pebbles, are less comfortable than our beds, but if they wake up, they don't lie awake or count sheep. Our neighbors could be asleep within a few minutes after lying down, by day or night. Those who were ashore took a nap in the afternoon. Even the flies crawling on their faces—one of the less attractive features of Tuamotuan life—didn't seem to bother them. I was not quite sure what the fishermen did about the afternoon nap, but I thought I detected them dozing as they sat in their narrow one-man canoes, each with a wide-brimmed, tall-crowned, homemade hat of pandanus leaf shading his face.

Books have been written on the subject of getting to sleep.

They boil down to relaxation. The Polynesian goes to sleep easily and naturally because he is at nearly all times relaxed. Most of us are not so. We lie awake because we won't "let go." Not having had sufficient leisure during the day to think, our minds make a confused effort to think at the time when we should be resting. Our bodies remain taut. Relax the body, and the mind will relax with it. Tension, far more than Macbeth, hath murdered sleep.

Anything that makes for physical comfort—the right temperature, the right weight of covering, fresh air or lack of it, food or wine or neither—helps, although it is possible to be entirely comfortable physically and still not be able to relax sufficiently to sleep. Probably the most important of these physical factors is the position of the body. Every one should determine for himself the position in which he can most easily relax and remain relaxed. This differs with the individual. If any general rule can be suggested, it is that the position should be such that only a slight movement is sufficient to shift the balance of one's weight, so as not to awaken oneself by the effort of moving, and such that no part of the body is likely to become cramped or its circulation impeded.

It helps, too, to put problems aside, recognizing that one can't do anything about them at the moment and that they can better be taken up in the morning when the mind is fresh. Some people get good results by thinking of something monotonous, and thus boring themselves to sleep. This is the basis of most of the old-fashioned formulas. Sometimes it works, sometimes not.

A variation of this method is to think of some quiet pastime remembered from childhood. This puts the mind back into a childhood mood, into a time when, as a child, one went to sleep naturally.

Contemporary advice on the subject is mostly directed to conscious relaxation, which I have practiced for years. The usual procedure is to begin with the fingers or toes and consciously,

deliberately, slowly, and quietly will all the parts of the body to relax, one by one. The conscious thought of this piecemeal relaxation is timed to the slow rise and fall of breathing. In my own experience, about as far as I have usually been able to go with this was the knees or shoulders. The next thing of which I am conscious is the light coming in at the window in the morning, or, in emergency, the peal of the alarm clock, that bane of civilization.

Alarm clocks, incidentally, should be avoided when possible. The Polynesians were right, if for the wrong reasons, when they evolved their tabu on waking a sleeper suddenly. It is a shock to which no one should subject himself if he can avoid it. I suspect it shortens life. It is possible to train the mind to wake up at a given time, by thinking of that time just before going to sleep. Living by the clock, as we do, our natural time sense, based on the rhythms of the heart and lungs, is more or less co-ordinated in the subconscious with the artificial intervals of measured hours. But in this unnatural life of imperative appointments, one hesitates to trust natural processes. It is better to depend on the alarm clock than to lie awake worrying about the possibility of forgetting to wake up in time.

The Tuamotuan, without clocks, has no such difficulty. His one important appointment is with the sea. When the tide turns on the reef, he hears the change in its chanting, awakes, picks up his line and spear, and goes silently to his canoe.

No one method of relaxation might be useful for all people. Each one may have to develop his own. But when the process is once developed and mastered, it works. I have relaxed myself into sleep on the counter of a plantation store, in a chair in a hotel lobby or at a reading table in a public library, in a hollow in the sand of a beach, in long grass under a sifting rain on a mountaintop, or sitting in a jolting train.

In so far as one can achieve it, relaxation is beneficial if carried into the waking life as well. Most of us have too many jobs,

too many activities, too much routine. But we can learn to relax within the conditions environment has given us, learn not to take minor annoyances too seriously, to do our work as well as our talents permit, but not to be driven by it, be masters of the job and not let the job be master of us, to have our fun, too, in whatever way may be congenial, and to take time to think.

8. *"Take Your Place among the Chiefs"*

WE were gathered in Tehau's house, the members of the family and I, who was to be received into that family by symbolic adoption. Tehau the peace officer, his wife Teroro and her mother Teuringa, their married daughters Tekava and Teuringa the Younger, their near relatives Tauria—my guide and teacher—and his little sister the blond-haired Etera, sat or reclined on the mats that were spread over the rough fragments of coral that formed the floor of the house.

Teuringa told me the family history—its descent from one of the four founding chiefs of the community, and the story of the chief, Mokio-Ariki, whose name I was to bear and whose spirit was to be my personal guardian through the perplexities of life, whose spirit, indeed, as I understood her, was to enter, in some mystical way, into mine, so that I was henceforth to be regarded as in some sense his reincarnation.

They had chosen his name for me with thought, they said, for Mokio had been "a blond, like yourself" and moreover a practitioner of the arts, for it was he who, through his spiritual power, had entered the spirit world and there learned the chants and dances that he had brought back to his people and that were still performed on the island.

They chanted for me the genealogy by which I might prove

my right, if it ever were questioned, to be received as a member of the family and to share in its possessions.

The land, Tepuka;
the well, Tefano Maruia;
the temple, Rangihoa;
the assembly ground, Hirioro;
the man, Mokio-Ariki . . .

Henceforth, in the minds of Tehau and his kinfolk, Tepuka was to be my land, Tefano Maruia my well, Rangihoa my temple, although that sacred enclosure of low stone walls, with its courts and platforms and altar, existed now only in memory. I was entitled to a carved wooden bench within that vanished temple and, after death, to a stone backrest where my spirit might take its ease as it partook of ceremonial feasts. I might meet with the other citizens upon the ground of Hirioro, and gather coconuts from all the lands of the descendants of Mokio-Ariki. In a symbolic, spiritual sense, I was to be Mokio-Ariki.

To the disappointment of those to whom I have told this story, no mixing of physical blood was involved in this ceremony. It was not conceived in such crude terms, being based on a spiritual philosophy. I was not even sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed turtle on the site of the former temple, although that might have followed had the adoption occurred at a time when a turtle had just been caught.

One after another, they pressed noses alongside mine in the *hongi,* the token of family affection, and we drank together the juice of fresh young coconuts in token of my right henceforth to share in the family's simple goods. Coconut water is a substitute for kava in these islands where the kava plant does not grow.

As we raised the brown, husked nuts to drink, the family chanted the welcoming song of my adopted ancestor:

Mokio-Ariki, dip your paddle in the surging sea.
Guide your canoe over the reef to the harbor before Rangihoa.
Set your foot upon the land Tepuka Maruia.
Enter into the hall of council
And take your place among the chiefs.

As they chanted, I felt a new sense of dignity flowing into me, such as I had observed in the demeanor of Tehau and Paunu and others of that calm and poised people. Into my mind flashed a picture of the original Mokio-Ariki entering council. He would have conducted himself, I felt, much as I had seen Chief Maono and my new foster father, Tehau, do on similar occasions. Although his record indicates that in emergency he was more impulsive than they, and his story indicates that at least once he forgot to "walk gently," in general he must have maintained an unassailable dignity and poise—without swagger, for he had no need of it, but with a calm, sure sense of inner power.

Surely Mokio-Ariki stood erect, walked unhurriedly but firmly, with an easy motion, and looked about him level eyed. No doubt as he entered the place of council, he paused a moment, taking in the scene and gathering his inner strength for whatever decision was to be made, whatever debate waged.

When he spoke, on such occasions, it must have been calmly and with conviction fortified by reflection, yet with due regard for the value of the opinions of his colleagues. For so did his descendants act and speak, and their words and presence carried weight with their fellow citizens.

Their voices, too, were pleasant. Some of the older people enunciated lazily, but their tones were not shrill or gruff or harsh, or louder than necessary. Even the children, although they shouted at play, spoke melodiously to their elders and among themselves. A pleasing quality of voice is probably natural to Polynesians; their throats are "open," their whole

physique habitually relaxed. It is tension that shrills and hardens our voices—and tires them.

That is why Polynesians can sing all day or all night—as at those interminable ceremonial feasts in Samoa—without tiring or becoming hoarse. They are relaxed, there is no strain.

I remembered Kuluwaimaka, in Hawaii. He was nearly ninety years old when I met him first. In his youth he had been a court bard—the last survivor, it was said, of those learned men. He had been taught by masters who themselves had been trained in "the heathen time," and his words and intonations were precious to the ethnologists who recorded more than a hundred of his chants lest knowledge of them die with him.

Kuluwaimaka at first was unwilling. "Why," he inquired, "should I chant into a box?" But they wheedled or bribed him into making the first recording. When they played it back to him: "This is a strange thing," he said. "The white man's box speaks with a Hawaiian voice."

He still protested that the experiment was useless, although interesting. "My breath is now in the box. But when I die, my breath will go out of the box."

So they played to him recordings of voices whose "breath" had remained in the "box" after the singers had gone to join their ancestors under the kou * trees of the spirit world. Perhaps they played the recording that King Kalakaua, his old master, made on his death bed in what was then to him the foreign city of San Francisco, speaking to the crude recording apparatus of those times as if it were an animate being: "Go to my people in Hawaii; give them my love."

Thus Kuluwaimaka was convinced, and eventually developed considerable interest in transferring the learning hoarded in his memory to the white man's "box."

One evening Alexandre Tansman, the composer, and I sat for hours with Kuluwaimaka in the grass house in which he

* Kou—Cordia subcordata.

lived—one of the last to stand, in his country, outside a museum —while he chanted, illustrating and classifying the various types of composition. Untiring, the voice, smooth and easy and melodious despite his age, flowed on, until at last, thinking the hour must be far past the old man's bedtime, we arose to go.

He halted us at the door. "No man shall leave my house without a blessing." And he chanted again in words that must have been old when the first white man set foot on Hawaiian soil, commending us to the care of his people's gods. His voice was as fresh and strong and smooth as when he had begun. For Kuluwaimaka was calm, unhurried, relaxed, with the quiet dignity of a nobleman of his race.

Temiro, who had been the last high priest of the main temple at Fangatau in the Tuamotu, was even older than Kuluwaimaka, and could no longer remember the chants consecutively, but would intone them in disordered fragments. Those he had taught, however—his daughter Reva, her husband Fariua, and their associates—would chant all night, never losing the calm, relaxed quality of their voices.

When I was learning a dance at Tepuka, my native friends kept telling me, "Relax! Let go! You can't dance if you are tense." It was difficult to do, for the movements were unfamiliar and I felt ill at ease under critical observation. And yet I already knew the value of relaxation in physical movement. I had learned it, with the aid of Duke Kahanamoku and other Hawaiian advisers, in the warm sea that rolls over the reefs of Oahu. The body lies limp in the water, confidently given into the keeping of the sea, which will bear it up, even if one lies in it without motion. While one arm pulls back with a steady stroke at the side, the other, relaxed, is being drawn forward and up and over, to dip and pull, in turn, while the first arm is relaxed. The head turns for breath, but rests between turns. The ankles flutter swiftly, in time with the throb of the heart, as the arms move in time with the breathing, but they are not

rigid; the entire leg hangs loosely, cradled in the water. So one can swim for hours without tiring.

As a child, I did not grasp this principle, and my father and his friends despaired of teaching me to swim, for I held my body rigid, and it sank. I did learn to keep afloat, but with an awkward stroke and slight endurance, until Hawaii taught me to relax in the water.

It is so with almost any physical movement. The experienced workman knows how to relax between strokes of pick or hammer, between lifts of the shovel. He finds his own natural rhythm between tension and relaxation, and it carries him through the day.

Indeed, we could take a lesson from our own hearts, which rest between beats. That's why they last as long as they do.

It was recognition of the need of relaxation that impelled the Bank of Hawaii to emulate Chinese business houses in Honolulu by instituting a break in the routine of working hours, for light refreshments. The Chinese take time off for a cup of tea. At the bank, it was orange or pineapple juice. The bankers found employees' efficiency picked up noticeably.

When I learned to set type, as a boy, I was told, "You have to get your motion." The "motion" was a natural rhythm which one developed with experience. It became more rapid, with time, but if one tried to hurry it, one made errors, grew tired, and lost time. It was a relaxed rhythm. Hurrying brought tension, and with it, awkwardness.

There is a natural rhythm for each person, in all his activities. It is based, probably, on the rhythms of the heart and breath and more obscure processes within the body. Every one has his natural speed; if he tries to force himself beyond it, he induces tension and strain. Even the engine of the *Islander*, which took us over thousands of miles of the Pacific, had its "economical cruising speed," at which it produced the most power for the least fuel and the least wear on the parts.

Every one should find his own economical cruising speed and stick to it, except in emergency. And break the routine occasionally.

Sitting on the mat in Tehau's house, I thought, why can't we all feel and behave as chiefs in council? It is a matter of remembering our own integrity, our inner worth as human beings. This doesn't mean posing, or assuming superiority. It involves recognition of other people's integrity as well as our own. Barring physical disability, all of us can stand erect, move with quiet assurance, radiate an atmosphere of calm and confidence and relaxed alertness.

We can relax our throats and modulate our voices. Many of us don't realize how we sound. Make a recording of your own speaking voice and listen to yourself. You may be shocked. I hear more shrill and nasal and rasping and growling speech in one trip on a bus or street car than I heard in many months in the southeast Pacific. Climate is a factor, but not the only one. Tension has a good deal to do with it.

Polynesians didn't always and everywhere remember their own precepts, nor do we, but a basic concept is traceable in their thought that all humankind is descended from the gods and that all personalities are, to a degree, sacred. Indeed, the minds that conceived the ancient creation chants seem to have extended the principle to all forms of life, in an account of the ordering of the universe in which every organism had its recognized place of usefulness, and God, as with us, was mindful of the sparrows.

"The lizard, the wood bee, and the lowly beetles shall stand before the face of the Shining One."

9. *Communion with the Night*

THE breeze had fallen, and the night, in latitude approximately fourteen degrees, nine minutes, south, was warm. So I had laid my mat of pandanus leaf on the sand and coral pebbles under the palms. The air, out there in the open, was not quite still. The fronds overhead rustled softly, with that dry, brushing sound so familiar to those who have lived on the atolls. A touch of coolness crept up from the nearby sea.

I slept, in the relaxed, usually dreamless sleep that I knew on those coral islands. Some time in the night, however, I was awakened by one of the razorback pigs that ranged the island, stumbling over me as he foraged for fallen coconuts. As I lay looking up at the stars, the sound of low chanting came to my ears from a neighboring house, and I recognized the voice, buzzing slightly with age, of Temae.

"Purutia te tama, riro i te tere . . ."

"My child is a wanderer, fated to voyaging . . .
He goes to the Night, the last home of repose."

It was a fragment of an ancient epic, the lament of Huauri for her son Tahaki when he embarked upon his last voyage.

And I knew that Temae, wakeful as old people often are, was soothing a lingering hurt by chanting this lament, in memory of his own son, who had been killed some years earlier by falling from a tree while netting birds.

The lost son had been much in Temae's mind of late, for he fancied that Emory resembled the dead youth. The old man was fond of us for that reason, as well as for our gifts of canned corned beef and salmon and rice in return for his instruction in the chants and in the ancient ways of his people.

I knew, too, that his midnight chanting had a dual purpose. It not only soothed his own sorrow, but, more important in his mind, he believed it comforted the spirit of the dead in the Night World to which both the legendary hero Tahaki and Temae's own son had gone.

For the terrestrial night is but the shadow of the *Po*, the vast cosmic darkness where the creator of the universe sleeps "at the crossing of the roads of space," and where the spirits of the dead dwell. In that shadow, they come close to the living, who can communicate with them and comfort them by the chanted evidence of remembrance.

Temae outwardly repudiated the old beliefs, saying, when we pressed him for details of the ancient temple ceremonies, "These are things of Satan." But secretly he clung to them, as did others of his generation. The Night World, and its spirits, were very real to him.

Indeed, the chanting for the spirits of the dead had its practical aspect. In the season when the huge sea turtles frequent the waters around the island, the men of Tepuka intone these solemn chants, in the night hours, believing that the ancestral spirits cluster around to hear and in gratitude will watch over the next day's hunt.

The ancestors of Temae and Paunu and the rest had been expert fishermen, skilled hunters of turtle. When Temae was young, a row of boxlike structures, "god houses," stood on the temple platform. They contained tokens of the dead, such as locks of hair, corresponding, as objects of veneration, to relics of the saints in European churches. Offerings of food were laid before them, and when a turtle was sacrificed there with solemn

ceremony, a portion of the meat was offered to the ancestral spirits. This was thought to increase their power, as well as to dispose them to take a favorable interest in the enterprises of their descendants.

The temples are no longer in use, although when a turtle is caught, a remnant of the ancient ceremony is still performed on the land adjoining the chief's house, not far from the site of the vanished temple Rangihoa. Not a stone of that historic place remains, but Temae and others led us to the ruins, overgrown with vegetation, of other temples that had escaped destruction by man or hurricane.

Temae told us that in his youth, with the zeal of a young convert, he was one of those who threw down the god houses from their supports at the front of the open air temple. They have vanished, with most of the formal tokens of the old faith, although a few survive in the collections of museums.

The visible symbols are no more, but the old faith in the ancestral spirits was too vital an element in the life of that people to perish. To those people, the ancestral spirits have always seemed nearer, more accessible, and more likely to be mindful of human needs, than the vast, remote, major gods who created and, theoretically, ruled the universe, just as the saints seem closer and more accessible and more concerned with humanity, to communicants of some of our own religious faiths. The spirits still have power to help, and even Temae, blowing in his old age on the embers of his youthful zeal, would scarcely defame the spirits of his own forefathers as "things of Satan."

Temae and Paunu and the rest are pillars of the Church of the Sacred Heart; they attend services every Sunday. Paunu admonished me to attend church on the Sunday when we left Tepuka, saying, "It is well to pay one's respects to God before embarking on a voyage." But this does not deter them from chanting to their ancestral spirits in the belief that those spirits

will guide them to good hunting and fishing grounds the next day.

They told us that after such an evening of chanting, an ancestor will appear to his descendant in a dream, and in that dream guide him to the spot where his hunt for turtle will be successful. All this is explicable in psychological terms—Paunu, for instance, has his ancestors, and turtles, in his mind, although he does not mention turtles in his chant. Falling asleep, the dream, expression of his subconscious mental processes, builds, out of his own experience of past hunting, the image of the likely spot for turtle. Perhaps an ancestor enters the dream, but the ancestor would not have to be visible; the finding of the lucky hunting area would still be attributed to the guardian spirit.

Next day the man goes out in his canoe to hunt turtle. He would know pretty well the likely places to go, in any case, but the advice of his ancestor has given him confidence and made him more mindful of his heritage of that ancestor's strength and skill.

He paddles to the place he has seen in his dream. Likely enough, a turtle is there, perhaps sleeping on the water. The hunter slips into the water and stealthily swims toward his prey. Before the turtle is fully aware of him, he is on the reptile's back, grasping the shell with both hands, just behind the neck. One has to be quick and at the same time careful. Taking hold at the wrong place may be fatal. One of Paunu's sons had miscalculated, and had been carried under water by a turtle and drowned. A turtle has to come up for air, but he can stay under longer than a man.

For this reason Paunu had given up the old barehanded method and had provided himself with a stout hook attached to a short line. He would catch the hook, instead of his hands, under the edge of the shell, and rear back, exerting the leverage of the rope.

In either case, the principle is to control the turtle's movements and to wear him out. A four-hundred-pound sea turtle is no mean opponent in a wrestling match, but the hunters of Tepuka are tough and enduring. The man guides the turtle, by pulling back and throwing his weight from side to side, as a Hawaiian steers a surfboard on a wave. The turtle is bewildered and in a panic. The hunter maneuvers its frantic flight until he tires it out and runs it aground or near a canoe where it can be hoisted aboard.

Arm signals announce to watchers on the shore the number and kind of turtles captured, and shouts and chants publish the news in the village.

In the old days, the turtle was carried to the temple, while the people danced around it, shouting and chanting. Paunu showed us this dance, turning his knees outward, then inward, clapping his hands, finger-points down, from out-turned elbows, and hopping with both feet off the ground, in time to the chant.

Others whipped the turtle with branches as it was being taken to the temple, and on arrival there, stuck the branches in the ground. Paunu said this was supposed to insure capture of more turtles.

The reptile was laid on a coconut-leaf mat, and the priest twined consecrated strips of pandanus or coconut leaves around its neck or flippers. An extensive and solemn ceremony followed. The gods were invoked, including the ancestral spirits of those present, whose names occur in the genealogies and are repeated in the names of their descendants there today.

The turtle was cooked, whole, in an earth-oven, offered to the gods, and a portion eaten by the chief and his officers. Then it was cut up and cooked again in a second earth-oven, while those present chanted. The chief and old men, after inviting the ancestors to the feast, ate the head, heart, and other selected portions, within the temple enclosure, and the rest of

the meat was served to the other men on adjoining ground. Te Ufi told us what was left was placed on a rack at the rear of the temple court, where men and boys returned to it as long as it lasted. All the old men at Tepuka who remembered the "heathen time" said they had thus eaten turtle at the temple in their youth.

If a turtle is taken late in the day, it is kept alive, all night, sprawled helpless on its back, while the old people chant. They told us that if they neglected to do this, the ancestor who was responsible for the capture of the turtle would turn it over and let it get away. The ancestors want to be assured that their help is appreciated.

This is an instance of the shrewd compromises Polynesians make with an alien culture. They have accepted the white man's God, and venerate Him. But what does the white man's God know about turtle? His representatives in the Tuamotu are not notably interested in turtles, nor are the other white men whom the Tuamotuans know. The ancestors caught turtles themselves. Moreover, the Polynesian, like communicants of some of our faiths, can not quite rid himself of the feeling that the Supreme God is too exalted to be approached directly, or to concern Himself with details of individual human needs and desires. The ancestors were human themselves; they are minor gods, who can be approached and who are disposed to take an active interest. It is only natural to trust to them. This belief is a symptom of the simple humanity of that people. They would not slight the white man's God, Who is also theirs, but they hesitate to burden Him with their little concerns when, in their belief, there are spirit-beings of their own families who can take care of these matters.

Psychologically, the ancestor ceremonies give them confidence, as does faith of any kind; as does prayer, for the devout of any faith. Man has a longing to commit his problems to some power in which he trusts; thus he lays them aside from

his conscious mind, and God, or the subconscious, works them out while the trusting mortal sleeps. The ritual—ancestor-chant, or whatever—takes the mind off its worries and induces sleep, permitting the subconscious to function.

How often an appropriate dream followed the chanting, and how often the dream came true, I could not determine. As usual, the natives remembered the instances in which such phenomena occurred, and forgot those in which nothing happened. If an ancestor failed to inspire the dream, no doubt his absence might be explained by his descendant's previous neglect, or by some error in the chanting, or by the spirit's being occupied somewhere else, perhaps with the turtle hunting of another descendant on another island. In any case, the principle usually worked, for practical purposes. Paunu went to sea with his mind refreshed and keen and confident, and caught his turtle.

One night Emory and I sat with Kararo and his family, in their house of coconut leaves, while they chanted for a special purpose. The hour was late; the children lay asleep on their mats in the shadowy corners. In the center of the one room, around a dim light, the elder members of the family reclined on the floor mat. A light rain dripped on the thatched roof; the palm fronds rustled with a ghostly sound.

Kararo began, slowly, solemnly, with measured syllables, to intone a chant. The others took it up: *"E ringoringo ki tonga ra te ringoringo; e ringoringo mate, ringoringo ora hoki, ho mai aro-i-a e!"*

They were invoking the *ringoringo,* a spirit which has a special function, a messenger of the gods. No one could describe the *ringoringo,* because it is an invisible spirit, a voice in the night. The voice, they said, was somewhat like the voice of a bird.

The *ringoringo* brings news from far places. It does not speak in words, but only in that birdlike, ghostly cry. The direction from which the sound comes determines the import. If it comes

from the south, the omen is good; if from the north, it is bad news. So they chanted, "Is it the bird of life, or the bird of death? Come, ghost bird, from the south!"

One of Kararo's daughters was on a distant island. Communications in the Tuamotu are infrequent, and separated kinfolk may go for months or years without news of one another. How fared Teroto-Tu on that far island? Was she well or ill? living or dead? Only the *ringoringo* could give them a clue.

"Ghost bird, come to us on the southern wind!"

I seem to remember that Kararo told me later the voice of the spirit had indeed sounded from the south, giving assurance that Teroto-Tu was alive and well. In any case, I felt, as I listened to the chanting, how peace and comfort flowed into the spirits of the chanters while the slow, monotonous syllables droned on. The rugged, normally rather dour features of Kararo were transfigured; a gentleness I had not seen there before crept into his eyes; the stern lines of his face relaxed. "My spirit wanders in a cloud, seeking my lost canoe—my child." The curmudgeon of Tepuka became for those moments a gentle old man, groping for comfort and assurance. The ritual eased him, restored his strength of spirit, renewed his faith.

Indeed, that session of chanting produced an unexpected result in my own dream life. On my mat, in what remained of the night, I dreamed of my father and my son, both of whom had died a few years before. Psychic suggestion, of course. But to the Polynesians, a dream is as real as waking life. In their minds, it is the real ancestor who appears, the real scene which the spirit of the sleeper visits. It is possible that this is how the concept of immortality originated in mankind. Primitive man would reason, "I saw my father; he came to me when I was asleep. Therefore, he is still living. But I do not see him in my waking life. Hence he must be living in a spirit world. If he still lives, so, no doubt, shall I. When my body dies and is laid in the ground, as was his, my spirit, too, will live on."

I experimented, later, in an attempt to find out how regularly such a psychic association would operate, to what extent chanting would induce dreams. The experiments were not well controlled, and results were inconclusive. I seldom dreamed, or seldom remembered the dreams, if there were any. The most interesting dreams followed a non-Polynesian chant that suits the purpose admirably, since it has comparatively little obvious meaning. It was Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky." This bit of near-nonsense verse led my dream-freed spirit not to "slithy toves" and "mome raths," but to that very island of Tepuka, then some thousands of miles away, where it conversed with the spirits of Tauria and other comrades of my visit there. But it took me there only twice. Perhaps only a Polynesian can dream at will.

With us, dreams seem to go by contraries, and to be seldom related to whatever thoughts we have just before going to sleep. They are more likely to be traceable to some obscure incident that occurred in the course of the day, or some memory from the past. This principle operates with the Polynesians, too. They don't chant about turtle to induce a turtle dream. And the chants I heard that were supposed to comfort the ancestors did not mention the ancestors by name. The temple chants, however, those which offered the turtle to the ancestors, did.

The principles involved are three: the familiar one of "sleeping on" a problem, letting the subconscious work it out; the indirect approach, concentrating the conscious thought on a subject that may be allied to, but not identical with, the problem; and, most important, the power of faith.

All of us are continually pursuing turtles of one kind or another. It may be a job, a contract, a sweetheart, the solution of some perplexing problem that may be large or small but that is often less than it seems at the time. If we worry over it, we weary ourselves to no purpose and actually hinder ourselves from seeing the problem clearly and from attaining our objective. Constructive thought should, of course, be undertaken. But when it ceases to be constructive, when it enters the squirrel-cage whirl of worry, the problem should be put aside. If it can be committed to some power outside ourselves, very well. If we are unable to credit such a power, we can still commit our perplexities to that force within ourselves that remains obscure but that often accomplishes amazing results. In any case, by consciously dropping the problem for the time being, we rest and awaken refreshed, with new strength to meet it.

A failing of too many of us is that we are unwilling to let go of a worry. We nourish it and wrestle with it. Some people take a perverse pleasure in doing so. Worry is a habit-forming drug; there are few more saddening spectacles than an anxiety addict on a worry jag.

We need to learn to take the uncertainties of life in our stride, to view them with a sense of proportion; above all, to relax. If any of us is to catch his particular turtle, he will do so only by walking gently in the approach and striking quickly and decisively at the proper time. It will help us to do so if we dismiss our worries by relaxing through contemplation on unrelated subjects and then allowing our subconscious to do its work.

10. *Land of Song*

ON a sun-drenched morning, the people of Tepuka had assembled on the dazzling sand near the groove in the reef that was the "harbor," not far from the site of the vanished temple, Rangihoa. Dressed in such finery as they could muster, they had gathered to bid farewell, for a time, to their chief, who had been summoned to Tahiti to give evidence in the appeal of a criminal case that had originated on his island, where crime was rare.

The copra schooner wallowed in the swell, standing off the island in the channel between Tepuka and Tepoto. Behind it, the dim, jagged outline of Tepoto's palms notched the horizon. The ship's boat was drawn up on the beach of broken coral and shells and sand; the Tahitian sailors stood by to row the chief to the schooner.

There were songs and prayers, there was weeping; Teingo, the chief's wife, threw herself upon the sand, sobbing. I suspect there was an element of convention in this, for Teingo resumed her usual cheerfulness in the months that followed. A sea voyage in those parts is hazardous enough, but, barring accident, Maono would return.

Maono, chief of Tepuka and Tepoto, standing erect and solid, looked about him at the gleaming sand, the surf crashing over the dull-red reef, the tawny and green fronds swaying in the wind, the rippled blue-green surface where a shallow channel ran from the sea to the inner lagoon, the thatched roofs peeping

here and there through the inland foliage; he looked into the unwontedly solemn faces of his people, and he spoke, in a low, soft, vibrant tone, while the surf chanted a deep obbligato on the coral shore.

"Torikiriki, marororo, te tika o taku henua . . ."

"Sparkling in sunlight, crystal clear," he said, "the face of my country." As he went on, in few but eloquent words, to take leave of his people, I thought: Here is a man, here is a people, who speak in poetry.

Maono could neither speak nor read any language but his own. He had little of what passes, in our world, for education. But his words showed culture in the purest sense—appreciation of beauty in the world around him. Like the American Indians who conceived chants of like loftiness of spirit to those of the Polynesians, he walked in beauty.

That very night began the making of a community chant to welcome his return, months hence. Tuata and Hei, his kinfolk, were the initial authors. But the chant was to be revised and polished, in the course of rehearsal, by community effort, and would emerge as a folk product. A farewell chant had, indeed, been composed by a group of citizens for the ceremony attending his departure, but there had been little time to prepare or rehearse it, since he was sailing by the same copra schooner that had brought the summons, so it was a hasty and crude affair.

The new chant was intended to be as fine as the community could produce. Tuata and Hei worked out the rough first version together, with suggestions from neighbors who dropped in while the couple sang the tentative stanzas. Nothing was put into writing; composition of melody and text was oral and fluid, the product committed to memory by repetition. After a time, a meeting was called in one of the largest houses of the village, and the people began to learn it. The chant continued

to take form as they did so; new suggestions were incorporated; new variations found their way into the work.

This process went on after rehearsals were moved to a more comfortable out-of-door location, at the main crossroads of the village. There the people would assemble, particularly on moonlight nights, some sitting on the curbstones of coral slabs, some reclining on the sand and pebbles under the palms.

Teroro, wife of Tehau the peace officer, led the singing, since she had the most penetrating soprano voice on the island. She would start a stanza, and the rest would join in, shaping the crude harmony according to their vocal equipment and their feeling for the words. Women and some of the men carried the air; other men chanted in counter-rhythm, with repetitions and embellishments, but always coming out even. A few, leaning forward, with elbows resting on their knees and cupping their hands over their mouths, played a rumbling, grunting bass upon their hollowed fingers.

Thus sung, the chant had a noble ring and sweep, rich and moving. Except by the great dance chants of the Samoans, I have seldom been so stirred by choral music as by this crude but genuine folk chorale that I heard in its formation.

Although it was composed for a special occasion, its life undoubtedly did not end with that occasion. It was sung, with pomp of marching and ceremony, when Maono returned after months of voyaging, and laid aside for a while. But I am confident that it was not lost. The thrifty Tuamotuans would not so waste time and effort or give up a good song. The melody, and such of the text as may be suitable, will be used again and again, adapted to new occasions, long after Tuata and Hei have become merely names in a genealogy, and when it will no longer be remembered that they conceived the first version of the music and the words. Such is the history of folk song everywhere—some one with an ache in his heart or a story to tell or an event to celebrate, made a song; and as it passed from

mouth to mouth, changing and developing as each singer made it his own, it became a community expression; there was no thought of authorship.

It is that way at Tepuka. Songs and chants may be considered family property, but not individual property. No one knows who hammered them out first on the anvil of his creative thought. Some of the oldest and most sacred of them are attributed to Mokio-Ariki, the chief who by magic power entered the world of the spirits. But he is not said to have composed them, although he may well have done so. He "learned them from the spirits in the world of the Night."

Although the chant for Maono's return had the dignity of simplicity and sincerity, and the strength of the archaic diction of the "root speech," it was inferior in poetic quality to the ancient epics and sacred invocations we heard intoned at night, when the children were asleep on the mats in the shadows, and the spirits of the Night, which is the world of the gods and of the mortal dead, hovered near. The creative imagination of Tuata and Hei did not equal that of the ancient priestly bards and had not the challenge of the lofty subject matter that stirred those poets to represent the Creator chanting of his own greatness in such powerful direct imagery as, "I lean upon the winds, that they may blow." But their chant had a direct human appeal.

The great heroic and sacred poetry is composed no more. Nominal acceptance of Christianity, with the decay of the old temple cults, and contact, though slight, with the white men's world, have cut off the roots of that noble literature. It is considered old fashioned, now, to speak of the ancient major gods. The old and learned men of Tepuka at first disclaimed knowledge of such things, although as they came to know us better and realized our sincere interest in the ancient chants and our respect for the culture they represented, the old folk opened up their store of learning and poured it forth freely for us.

Many a night, at Tepuka or at Vahitahi or at Fangatau, we reclined on the mats and listened as the old people chanted of gods and heroes or invoked their ancestral spirits, while the sea breeze, filtering through the plaited walls of coconut leaves, fluttered the dim flame of a wedge of coconut burning, propped upon a stone. We learned of the Great Foundation and the Lesser Foundation, on which the universe stood, of the creation of the world by Tumu, the Root of Life, when he awoke from his sleep at the Crossways of the Roads of Space. We heard the noble tales of Maui, the son of Ataranga, who fished up islands from the depths, and who, in the story best known to the outside world, captured the sun with a rope of hair, and made it go more slowly, that the day might be longer and his mother have time to cook her fish and plait her mats. And of the wanderings of Tahaki, and his mighty deeds, and the lament of his mother, Huauri, when he embarked upon his last voyage.

My son is a wanderer, fated to voyaging.
Far, far he goes, on strongly beating wings—
And I an aged woman, muttering in my grief . . .
He will not know the time of his mother's death . . .
He goes to the Darkness,
The ultimate land of rest.

And many more—the ancient unwritten text books of that people. In the old days, lacking a written language, they had incorporated what they knew of history, geography, and natural science in these chants. Once, when the learned men of many islands had died in an epidemic, the chiefs of all those islands made a pilgrimage to Fangatau to learn anew from the priests of that island the "lost wisdom" that had perished in their own lands. We heard, there, the chant that enumerates those chiefs and the names of the canoes in which they came.

That ancient wisdom is all but lost again, as the last of the

sages die with no sons to whom to impart it, and as those who know the last fragments are reluctant to divulge it, both because it is sacred and not to be imparted lightly, and because they have been taught by missionaries to consider it improper. My friends from the Bishop Museum have preserved much of it that in a few more years would have vanished irrecoverably.

But the popular songs continue, and grow in number. The young people at Tepuka were continually "making" songs. One could scarcely call this composing, for the texts were often borrowed or adapted from older chants, and the melodies from those that had come in from the outside world by way of Tahiti, or else the words were sung to the single standard melody that serves for all songs of the type known as *ute*. They corresponded in function to our own popular songs, and, like them, used certain stock phrases over and over. But it was a rich literature, in its humble way. The essential thing was that these people were singing, and constructing their own songs.

Tahitians seemed the most fertile of all in concocting these popular ditties. They would write new words, in their own language, to Hawaiian, American, or French songs they heard on recordings. Of the songs I heard most often there, one was a farewell song of those islands that know so many farewells, set to the tune of a French popular song whose original text began, *"Sous le soleil Marocain je pense à toi, o ma jolie."* The other was a love song, phrased with characteristic Polynesian frankness, to the hymn tune, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

The orchestra at the "Cinema" in Papeete played this tune to accompany a Western "horse opera." A pictorial life of Christ, on the same bill, was accompanied by "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."

Third in the hit parade at the time was the Hawaiian *"Hui E,"* in part picked up bodily and in part supplied with new and uninhibited Tahitian stanzas.

It might take months or years, however, for a new song to filter into the Tuamotu. Our party hastened the process, in the islands we visited, as we traded such songs from Tahiti and Hawaii for the local repertoire.

This practice sometimes led to amusing results. Although the people of Tepuka and some other islands were not much interested in songs in English, whose texts they could not understand, the Vahitahi people apparently welcomed anything that had a tune. The very first night we spent on that island, we danced to accompaniment of guitars and voices, singing, *"Ena gona re no mo, no mo,"* which they had picked up either from Earl Schenck, who was already on the island, or from an earlier expedition.

The people of Tepuka, isolated as they were, showed themselves even more eager for new songs. Whenever a group gathered around us, some one would ask for a song; and often, spending the night among a family or among a group of men on an excursion to the other side of the island, I would find that they preferred my Hawaiian songs to sleep.

This was solely for the songs themselves, not for any flattery of my delivery of them. An audience relationship existed in this respect; they listened, over and over, because they wanted to acquire the songs, and considered it only fair to have the opportunity of learning them, in exchange for their own songs.

Thus Emory and I became, in a way, concert performers, although not in the same sense as the term is understood in this country. We got applause, too, of a sort. If a song was particularly liked, there were approbative expressions of *"mea tano,"* equivalent to "bravo." A song that did not please the fancy was frankly denominated *"kiro,"* which means, literally, "it stinks."

Although the Tuamotuans, in their own chants, are fond of lamenting, they did not enjoy, for the most part, the slow, wailing type of Hawaiian song. Such pieces were likely to be

considered *kiro*. They liked the brisk, lively ones. "King's Serenade," a moderately slow love song, was something of an exception. It was immensely popular, perhaps because of its ready intelligibility and its tender sentiment, partaking somewhat of the nature of their own *ute*.

They listened to our instrumental records, other than Hawaiian, with more curiosity than appreciation. One of them remarked that these sounded like Chinese music, of which they had heard examples from the Chinese merchant. Songs in languages other than Polynesian usually bored them, as is natural enough in a people whose music depends so much on the texts. An exception to this was a recording of the "St. Louis Blues," but I think this was popular only because the first time we played it, Emory and I improvised a dance that caught the Tepukans' fancy. As long as we remained on the island, they continually urged us to repeat that dance.

Once, too, I scored a hit with the lively revival song, "If Jesus Keeps You Polished," accompanied briskly by Emory on the harmonica. This, too, was an exception.

The young people, however, took with avidity to our version of social dancing. In the first few weeks of our sojourn at Tepuka, the soles of my feet were worn to a painful tenderness, replaced later by formidable callosity, from teaching Tuamotuans to fox-trot on the pebble-strewn sand of that pleasant section of land called "Poutoto," that looks serenely out upon the evening sea. Emory would twang his guitar, we would sing Hawaiian or Tahitian songs, the sooty terns flew over the shore, uttering cries that sounded oddly soft against the immensity of the sea, while I guided barefoot partners, barefoot myself lest I tread upon their toes. Before we left, some of the women could fox-trot quite passably. They never did learn to waltz.

In return, they taught us their own dances. The very first evening, a group of young people demonstrated the *hivinau*, in the sand of the road in front of our house, chanting swift

erotic verses as they shook their hips in the rapid rhythm of the chant, and contesting as to which partner could crouch the lower while keeping up the staccato yet sinuous dance movement. Later we learned some of the vigorous dances of the young men, and their elders demonstrated the stiff, formal movements of the more ancient choreography.

A Tuamotuan's idea of a concert is not a set, formal program by an isolated artist or ensemble. It is a free-for-all expression, in which all take part according to their ability. If some one sings alone, as I often did, it is to enable others to learn the song. It would not occur to them to charge admission, or to pay it. These are natural activities, in which all share. Entertainment is an active, not a passive enjoyment.

Our own people have largely reversed this view. Our entertainment consists mainly of watching other people play games or enact drama, or of hearing other people play instruments or sing. Not that there is anything wrong in this, except in so far as it tends to inhibit our own expression. Certain people can sing or dance or play games or act in drama better than the rest of us, and we can admire their artistry. But we are missing something of the pleasure of entertainment, something of the essence of art, if we do not take something home with us and practice the arts, within such capacities as we may have, ourselves. We should look upon professional artists as models whom we may not hope to equal but who inspire us to express our own aesthetic urges in song or whatever the medium may be, for our own enjoyment and the enrichment of our lives.

We are too much given to second-hand entertainment. We tend too much to buy recreation ready made instead of creating it for ourselves. This is both a result and a contributing factor to our generally second-hand lives. In this matter we show a depressing poverty of spirit, compared with the simple islanders who, in that sense, have more culture than we.

Not that I would advocate inflicting more amateur performance upon a public that has too much of it already. But within the home circle, the school, the club, the group of friends, we can gain physical and spiritual benefit by practicing the arts and sports as Tuamotuans do—in the group spirit of active participation. The "community sings," that flourished during the First World War to keep up morale on the home front, were a wholesome development that should have been continued. The revival of folk dancing in recent years is even better, for those who are sufficiently agile to participate.

I hope the people of Tepuka, and of other islands, will compose new poems, new songs. I hope they will recover from the shock of knowledge of the existence of our so different and so powerful world, and create new epics, new chants praising the land and its chiefs, love songs that are new and original. A chant should be composed in memory of Tainui-Kararo, a mighty warrior of our own time who died for what most of us believe to have been the cause of freedom for ourselves and for the world.

Tainui-Kararo, of Tepuka, was one of the Tuamotuans who, along with comrades from Tahiti, New Caledonia, and other islands of French Oceania, became members of the Pacific Battalion of Fighting French, serving in North Africa, which won high awards both from France and from Britain for valor in various engagements, notably at the siege of Bir-Hakkeim in 1942.

Tainui-Kararo was manning a machine gun at an advanced position. A squadron of German planes came over, flying low. He shot down one of them as they passed over him the first time. Other planes flew over again and again, "strafing" his position. Tainui-Kararo stayed where he was and kept on firing, damaging another German plane. Three machine gun bullets pierced him, one through the jaw. And still Tainui-Kararo continued his one-man attack on the German squadron. It was

ended only when a dive-bomber dropped a bomb close beside him.

Tainui-Kararo and many of his comrades were decorated posthumously. But a more lasting and appropriate memorial would be a chant, in the language of their islands, such as those that recount the deeds of Moeava the conqueror; of Mokio-Ariki, the Orpheus of his race and time; of Tahaki the voyager; and Hiro of the Crimson Girdle, and of Rata, who overcame the monsters of the sea and the demons of the Vanishing Island.

We too should make our own chants, crude as they may be, and sing them for ourselves. We should set our limbs free, and dance. We should play physical outdoor games together. Creative activity, however unskilled, will give us back, or preserve, something of that integrity of spirit that has been vitiated by too much passive spectatorship, a life too much at second hand.

11. How Rich His Life

WE had just returned from a visit to Temae and a walk with him through the forest to the site of an abandoned temple.

"How rich and full his life is!" Emory remarked.

Temae had never heard a radio or seen a movie; he did not know Shakespeare existed. But he knew every foot of the island, its name and history, every plant that grew there, and its uses, the great unwritten books that had been the poetry and drama and text books of his people. He knew the ancient handicrafts that had made existence possible before the advent of imported tools and fabrics.

"I can make," he once told us, "everything that was made. I can do everything that was done."

As we walked among the sparse shrubbery beneath the coconut palms he stooped to gather a plant of the nettle family, the *ongaonga*. From this plant, he said, the strongest cordage was made. Later he scraped and combed and cured its fibers and with them bound an eel's jawbone to a hand-whittled wooden handle, making a knife of the ancient pattern, which went into the collections of the Bishop Museum.

He indicated a certain fern whose roots, when dried, were fragrant and were hung in the ears of women as an ornament. It was such ornaments, among others, that Fangu the wife of Mokio-Ariki wore when she danced the prideful, provocative