Clifford Gessler the Reasonable Life John Day

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

Subjects on which w
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Among "self-help" or "peace-of-mind" books, this one is perhaps unique. It has been suggested, half in earnest, half in rony, 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 ouched by western "civilization", there is no hurry, no strain, no frenzied striving for uccess; and people are kind, tolerant, and alm, at peace with themselves and one nother. Our confused world, gnawed by loubt and fear, cannot copy their way of ife. But as individuals we can learn much rom 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, relaxa-ion, sleep, music, dance, and much, too, bout hard useful work and the importance f handicrafts. The Polynesians have no ingle word for "love", for in their warm-earted living there are different ways of oving different persons. Their sexual prac-ices would not be approved by our mora-ists, but they have their reasons, and sex s not troublesome among them.

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

'HE 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.

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

dance on the isle of Tepoto that caused her husband's legendary journey to the spirit-world and back.

Pointing out another plant, he told us its roots were edible. Here, too, spread the succulent-leaved portulaca, which could be eaten raw or cooked, although it was no longer esteemed by the people, and was mostly considered food for pigs. Here grew the *nau*, the "scurvy grass" of the whalers, whom it relieved of illness after the vitamin-poor diet of months at sea. There was the *putarau*, the prickly-leaved plant that is mentioned in the climax of the dance-chant of the Frigate Bird. Here was a shrub whose leaves and fruit, mashed and bound upon a wound, reduced swelling and aided in the knitting of bones. There was one that served as a laxative, although the people now, thanks to their abundant supply of papayas, had little need for such a medicine.

I have come upon Temae at night, sitting in the doorway of the house he had built with his own hands, chanting softly an ancient epic, or silent in meditation. Old age was for him a time of contentment. He lived in poverty, by Western standards, as far as material possessions were concerned, but that poverty was not squalid. He had his inner resources, his inner tranquillity.

Calling on Mokio the Elder one day, we found him making a fishing line. He had drawn fibers from a green coconut husk, and was rolling them deftly, but unhurriedly, into strands across his thigh. A few fibers spun together thus into strands; a few strands rolled together to make larger strands; these spliced—it would take him a long time to complete the line, but it would be all his, in a way it would not have been if he had bought a manufactured one, and it would be a better line. It would be his own creation, out of the materials Nature had furnished.

Mokio greeted us warmly, chatted as he worked, and at length put his task aside to explain to us the religious ceremonies of the ancient faith in which he had taken part in his

youth, drawing a diagram in the sand beside his door to illustrate his exposition. As he spoke of his memories, we could visualize the open-air temple, with its low walls, its two courts, picked clean of every leaf and twig, its stone platform where prayers were said, the upright slabs of stone before which stood the stools on which the leading men of the community sat, the rack of god-houses containing the relics of the ancestors. Marking a circle in the sand, "Here stood the priest, and he chanted thus . . . Here stood the chief, and he responded . . ." And so the turtle was slain, and cooked in the earth, and its meat distributed to the men and offered to the primal gods and to the ancestral spirits.

But even these memories of a vanished time were not more interesting than his immediate practical occupation of that day, and the happiness that shone in his eyes as he manipulated the fibers for his line.

Another day I found Tuata making a fish hook. I would have been still more interested if he had been making it as his ancestors had done and as he still could if he chose—chipping a round shell into the smooth, barbless hook that curved around within itself somewhat like the formation of a human ear. He was making his hook in the same pattern, out of a material foreign to his country, but more quickly worked. Using a stone as an anvil and a smaller stone as a hammer, he was bending a nail into the curving shape he needed. It would not be as beautiful as the ancient hooks of shell, some of which still existed on the island; it would not be quite as thoroughly his own creation as Mokio's line, but he, too, was happy as he worked.

The eel-jaw knife, the shell hooks, the garment of pandanus leaves that was woven for us by Temae's wife, Ngohe, were museum exhibits, which would take their places under glass with the god-house and the carved ceremonial spears, and the low four-legged stools of the chiefs. The people of Tepuka have

long been able to exchange copra for steel knives and cotton cloth, and the Church of the Sacred Heart has replaced the ancient temple Rangihoa. They are no more inclined than we to unnecessary exertion, and few would take the trouble to make, in the slow, laborious ancient ways, things they can get more easily in trade. But I thought what satisfaction it would be to catch a fish with a hook and line I had made myself, and to cut it up with a knife produced as Temae had produced it. That would be a hobby worth while.

Some of these primitive crafts, which Emory learned on that and other expeditions, later came into an unforeseen use in defending our own way of life. In a measure, they helped win the war. At least, they saved the lives of many of the service men to whom Emory taught these things in his course of training for survival when lost in the jungle or adrift at sea.

We have come a long way from the immediate, direct life. The Tepukans themselves have abandoned a few of its most drastic features. Our more artificial environment gives us some advantages that they lack. There is value, however, in restoring contact with fundamental things. That is the real reason for camping trips, hunting, fishing excursions, mountain climbing, boating, and the like. We undergo the inconveniences and discomforts of these pursuits, to get back, for a little distance, at least, toward our origins. In modern conditions, it amounts to a kind of play-acting, like small boys "playing Indian." We can't go all the way back, and wouldn't like it if we had to. We haven't the knowledge, the skill, or, for the most part, the opportunity. But these approaches take us closer to the earth, the streams, the sea, from which—although, for most of us, through many intermediaries—the living of all of us is derived.

Thus for a few days or a few weeks in the year, we remember our ultimate dependence upon Nature. But something of the spirit of these outings may be carried into daily life. Even in those deserts of brick and stone, of steel and cement, of which

we are so proud, the great cities, there are open spaces, with grass upon which to relax, trees to contemplate, often lakes or streams or ocean beaches. In smaller cities, and in suburbs, there is open ground where one may dig and plant. The real value of the wartime home gardening was not so much in the food produced—which often cost more than its market price—as in its deeper function in taking so many Americans back, in a measure, to the soil.

A physician whom I once consulted prescribed only one "treatment." It was gardening. Doubtless he was thinking primarily of the benefits of mild exercise. But he must have had in mind, too, the influence of contact with earth and open air, the glow of creative consciousness that comes from the planting and nursing of crops, and the mental relaxation that accompanies it. Digging in the earth, pulling weeds, watering the crop, you forget about the office.

Consider, for a moment, the radish. It is one of the most co-operative of vegetables. It will grow in almost any soil, and with comparatively little care. It develops almost as rapidly as a weed.

There is an intimate pleasure in turning over the soil, still moist in early spring, in breaking the clods, in drawing the shallow furrows, a quiet delight in placing the small, rounded seeds and drawing the soil over them and pressing it down.

Natural as the process is, it is always a marvel to me how the seed stirs and expands in the earth, and a thrill of delight when the first sprout pushes up toward the sun and the first delicate leaves appear. There is pleasure to the eye in the green of its growing, and to the obscure inner mathematical sense in the measuring of its development day by day. Nature takes its time in all things—as we should learn to do—but the time of the radish is fairly swift.

There is a wholesome satisfaction in drawing the first plump root from the soil, apart from its refreshment of the body

through whatever vitamins or minerals it may contribute, and
its sharp, tingling caress to the taste buds in the mouth. Nature,
not you, produced the radish. Yet you feel a sense of creation.
After all, it was you who brought the forces of Nature to-
gether. That is man's function, from the Polynesian taking
fish from the sea and plucking coconuts from the palm, to the
builder of bridges and highways and the maker of dynamos.
We create by putting together the materials of Nature and by
giving the forces of Nature something on which to work.

For the radish, and all living things—and we in our own
way with them—follow the urge to grow and replenish our
kind, believing that God doubtless is served by it, or going
our way unheeding the great mystery.

Contemplating my radishes, I thought, too, how when the
world is shaken with turmoil and the life of our civilization
is balanced on the turn of battles halfway around the world,
or on the words spoken in council by perplexed men, we go
on, each absorbed in his petty concerns and his trifling pleasures,
even as the bird and the bee and the small round seed in the
loam. This, perhaps, is the greatest mystery.

To be sure, the farmer, who spends his days in contact with
the soil, is not necessarily happy. He, too, is a cog in the huge
economic machine, and he feels its pressure. Contentment
comes more from within than from without, and if he hasn't
it within him, the life of the earth and of green things can
turn as sour to him as to the man who treads the asphalt and
cement. But on the whole, the man of the country lives the
saner life.

Temae and Mokio and the rest didn't do much farming, at
least not in the sense we understand the word. The soil of their
island is not favorable to crops other than those that grow
mainly of themselves, requiring little assistance. But they lived
in close relation to those trees and plants that grew, and shaped
them to their uses.

Those among us who tinker with toy trains, or practice archery, or carve wood, are not wasting their time in futile pursuits. They are merely going back toward Nature in perhaps the only way that remains open to them. We can not make with our own hands everything we use, as primitive men of our own race did and as the Polynesian, to a large extent, still does. Even if we had the skill and the materials, it would take too much time. Our life moves at a swifter pace. But every one should make something with his hands, using as simple tools as will do the job. Here again is the creative feeling, here the relaxation from whatever problems occupy one's necessary working hours. Most business is the better for being forgotten occasionally. One comes back to it refreshed, with replenished energy and heightened keenness.

In any effort to establish for ourselves a more reasonable life, we start with a handicap. That handicap is one of our most prized achievements—our complex civilization. Life, for us, is crowded and hurried. Its noise and haste and confusion, its multitude of stimuli, beat upon our nerves. Its tensions draw us psychically out of shape. It has given us unprecedented physical comfort, which most of us would not willingly forgo, but it has separated us from reality. Few of us have any direct contact with the sources of life. We subsist by specialized occupations, which depend for success, or even for continuation, upon many other specialized occupations and upon the functioning of an intricate economic system.

The element of insecurity that this entails has been felt increasingly in recent years. With this burden upon us, it is difficult for us to be calm and poised. Since most of us are obscure parts of a vast machine, individuality tends to depreciate. It is difficult for us to maintain consciousness of our own individual inner integrity. Our world is too big for us, our life too complicated.

Polynesians are motivated primarily by the same human needs

as we—food, shelter, companionship, sexual fulfillment. Like us, they seek security in the maintenance of their lives. That was the urge that drove them, centuries ago, to explore the Pacific, occupying new lands, when the old home countries in southern Asia, or wherever they were, became overcrowded or disrupted by strife. Like us, they have developed the need of aesthetic expression. They enjoy a concert as much as we do, although it is a different kind of concert. Their fundamental problems are similar to ours—meeting basic human needs, achieving equilibrium among basic human emotions, solving whatever conflicts arise from these emotions and these needs.

But, although their origin is believed to have been akin to our own, their experience in the time that has intervened has been different from ours. They have lived in a different kind of country, they have been more isolated, and less numerous. Hence their means of meeting their needs and of solving their problems have been shaped to some extent by the conditions of their world.

The main difference between their physical world and ours is that theirs has fewer material resources. The main difference between their social and economic organization and ours is that theirs is simpler and in more direct contact with the sources of life. Poverty of resources has limited their material culture. Without metals, it was impossible for them to develop such a civilization as ours. Their world will not support such large and concentrated populations as ours. Polynesian culture did not develop cities. It was a village civilization, and remains so where it survives today.

Human living varies in detail with diverse conditions on islands of different formation, and distance and prolonged isolation have brought about some diversity of custom among Polynesians in widely separated islands. But in general, the qualities I found at Tepuka run like a golden thread throughout Polynesian life.

These distant cousins of ours did what they could, with the means they had, to make a comfortable life for themselves in their environment, as we have built our life in the environment we know. Like us, they brought with them to new countries the most essential plants that gave food or clothing or other useful things, and adapted to their needs the few species they found in the islands. They also brought the few domestic animals they knew—pigs, dogs, poultry. They used the material that land and sea gave them. Whatever tools or utensils they had could be made only of wood, stone, bone, shell, or the leaves of the forest. They used these as ingeniously as we use the materials we have, but those materials did not furnish a foundation for the kind of civilization we have built.

They had, to sustain them, as we had in the beginning, the sea and the land. Without the metals that have built our civilization, they have remained fishermen and subsistence farmers. Industry and trade have crowded us in cities. Fishing and small farming have perpetuated Polynesian village life. With us, the state assumes increasing importance. In our larger areas and populations, we would be in chaos without it. Among the Polynesians, where they continued in their simpler circumstances as in the Tuamotu, the family remained the basic unit, geographical divisions small, and government essentially tribal. Where areas and populations were relatively large, as in Hawaii and Tahiti, the family-tribal organization developed into a feudal system, much like that of a certain period in Europe, and subject to much the same abuses. Where Polynesian life moved furthest from family-tribal simplicity, the worst social evils arose and the harder was the lot of the less fortunate members of society.

The feudal systems disintegrated under contact with European and American influences. In Hawaii, Western civilization submerged native life. In Tahiti, native life has been vitiated by these influences, and is being bankrupted by Chinese mercantile enterprise, but vestiges linger on the fringes. In such islands as

the Tuamotu, smaller and less attractive to foreigners, and with little to tempt foreign acquisitiveness, life has changed relatively little. Polynesian ways have been preserved there by distance and poverty.

The copra trade has changed the scenery of Tepuka; there are more coconut trees, fewer pandanus and puka trees, than there were before the trade began. But a citizen of that island still lives mostly on fish; he still weaves his house of coconut leaves and roofs it with pandanus leaves; he still makes most of the things he uses.

He does not work for wages, since there is no one to employ him. He doesn't engage in business, except for the marketing of his copra, which is handled through a co-operative association. When foreign contacts are interrupted by war or economic depression, he grumbles over the lack of some things he has become accustomed to obtain, but his basic life is little affected. Fundamentally, he need not concern himself about the rest of the world. He lives a naturally integrated life. It is no soft life, it affords little luxury, little even of what most of us esteem as comfort, but it is an independent life.

Contrast our own situation. Most of us have no direct contact with earth or sea. The food we eat, the clothing we wear, the materials of our houses, virtually all the things we use, come from remote sources. In many cases we do not even know where they were made, or by whom. We obtain them by exchanging certain hours of our time, in some specific and limited occupation, for metal or paper tokens, which we exchange in turn for goods of remote and obscure origin.

Most of us produce none of the things we use. Indeed, millions of us produce nothing at all. We trade in things others have produced, or perform unnecessary services for those who do. Some, like myself, obtain the metal or paper tokens by striking certain keys to produce certain marks on paper, which, through the efforts of several other kinds of specialists, are transferred to

metal and again to paper, as symbols of speech, which in turn is a symbol of thought. Such an occupation would be incomprehensible to a citizen of Tepuka. However, such an occupation is not without esteem in our society, and we who live by it like to consider it valuable and necessary in our civilization. Fundamentally, it has little relation to reality. My existence, like that of millions of others, depends upon the work of millions of persons I have never seen, and upon the smooth operation of a vast and intricate system of production and exchange. That system is delicately balanced; if it fails, ever so slightly, somewhere among its mazes of complexity, you and I feel that lapse, in some hardship. If it breaks down completely, we can no longer exist.

Perhaps, I thought, as I lay on my mat in the house of leaves, that is the most logical reason for the contentment of these islanders. Anchored to the roots of life, they are secure, as we are not. And without security, how can we be tranquil? Only by cultivating our inner resources, since the outward, material resources are so precarious. It is more difficult for us to do so, because we are hurried and harassed and fevered with the tempo of our complex life. We can not change this life much. But if we took thought for these inward matters, if we took time to consider them, could we not attain something of that serenity, even in our circumstances?

The Tuamotuan has his disasters, too. A hurricane is as deadly to him as a war or an economic depression to us. It may come this year, or next, or in the next generation. When it comes, the island virtually ceases to exist, for the duration of the storm, as water and wind rage over it. When the storm has gone, not a house is left, perhaps not a tree. His crops and his domestic animals are gone; the lagoon is fouled with the dead; he may not have a canoe left from which to fish. He may have survived by clinging to a sawed-off treetop, if the tree has with-

stood the storm, but he will be bruised and hungry and half dead and with very little, for a while, on which to subsist.

The shark and the eel and the turtle are enemies with which he can contend. They may get him, but they rarely do. There is little he can do about a hurricane. Yet he doesn't worry about it. In his daily life, it does not oppress him with a sense of insecurity. The insecurity is there, but he is too wise and self-contained to vex himself about things for which he is not responsible and which he can not prevent. When the hurricane comes, he is terrified, as we would be, and he does what he can to save himself and his companions, but between times he is unperturbed.

I have heard white men say the Tuamotuans should do something about hurricanes. On some islands, there are large trenches, which strangers who do not know their history have interpreted as channels dug to lead the hurricane water away. They may serve this purpose to some extent, although a hurricane flood is bigger and more furious than any man-dug channel can contain. Those ditches, however, were dug originally as fields. A kind of taro, a root crop, formerly was planted in them. The purpose of the trench was to get down to the water in the soil. Hurricanes have washed the soil out of the trenches. Perhaps that is why taro has been given up on many low islands.

One visitor thought a concrete platform could be built on each island, on which people could take refuge. Having seen the ruins of stone buildings that had been battered down by hurricanes, I doubt whether such a platform would be as safe as my friend assumed, even if the Tuamotuans had the resources to build it. If it did stand, the more people survived, the more would starve while awaiting rescue. To make a Tuamotuan atoll really safe, you would have to rebuild it into an artificial *makatea* or "raised" island, and a full-size hurricane even then might well tear it down.

The Tuamotuan does not worry about dangers that are not

immediate, or against which there is nothing he can do. He lives with Nature, and when Nature turns against him, he endures it as best he can. Ordinary hazards, and little annoyances, he takes in his stride, not permitting himself to be harassed by them.

We have come too far from the immediate life to go back to it. But we are healthier and happier when we maintain some contact with it. Earth, sunlight, the sea and streams, the clean air away from factories—and their spiritual counterpart in cultural interests and calm contemplation—are available to us if we seek them out. Perhaps we do not have to be remote from the machine world or poor in material comforts, to be happy and serene; perhaps we don't have to throw away the cake to get the bread of life. By refusing to worry or to let ourselves be harassed by the turmoil around us, by cultivating our inner poise and remembering our human dignity, we can be as fortunate in our abundance as the Polynesian is in his poverty.

The living waters of Tane and Tangaroa are for all mankind. They flow from within, mirroring the living waters that flow without in the blessed sunlight of Tane and the life-giving rain of Rongo of the Broad Leaf. Of them, the ancient Polynesian poets chanted: "Those who are dead, and their bodies ashes, by those waters they shall have life."

12. *The Integral Life*

Mere-Ariki was not "bright," but the attitude of her fellow citizens did not call attention to her handicap. Rather, her condition was accepted as a phenomenon of Nature, and she occupied her place in the community without provoking comment, performing such simple tasks as her dull intelligence permitted. She was not subjected to ridicule or to "practical" jokes, or accused of witchcraft. She lived a tranquil and reasonably useful life within her capacity and was accepted as a member of the community in what might be called a limited service classification.

She was the only definitely stupid inhabitant of the two islands. Her mental defect was obviously a congenital one, such as occurs among all peoples, often from no readily assignable cause. Other people varied in keenness of intelligence and in temperament, as people do everywhere, but they seemed, in general, free from neuroses, psychoses, and social maladjustments.

Ngohe, wife of Temae, was said not to have been the same mentally since she had been struck on the head by a falling coconut. She was one of the oldest inhabitants, and her condition appeared to us no more than the amiable childishness of old age.

Tepongi, the wife of Rangina, whose case I have mentioned in another connection, was maladjusted, in that she was quarrelsome. She, too, was unique among the island's people.

The rest of the inhabitants, with all their variety of temperament and mood, seemed thoroughly "normal." Studies of other Polynesian communities, such as Margaret Mead's survey in Samoa, tend to show that nervous and mental disorders are relatively rare among Polynesians living a Polynesian life. They are more frequent among those who are under the strain of close contact with the European-American social, economic, and political complex, as in Hawaii.

Such troubles must increase with complexity of culture and of social and economic organization, with its pressures and stresses, and might especially be expected to occur where there is an element of conflict between two social-economic systems. Adjustment becomes more difficult as life is removed from its natural bases and as the individual comes less into contact with the roots of existence.

On the other hand, in a small and isolated community such as Tepuka, one might expect inbreeding to have had an adverse effect on mentality. In that area, this factor had been checked by a strict consanguinity tabu. But Harry Shapiro, the anthropologist, found no adverse effects of inbreeding at Pitcairn, where a good deal of it must have occurred. Tepuka people were limited, by their isolation, in knowledge of the rest of the world, but within their own environment they were as "smart" as any people I know.

Simplicity of life undoubtedly contributed to this mental health. But environment isn't everything. There are peoples living in primitive circumstances who lack the inner tranquillity, the poise and balance, of Polynesians. One's attitude toward life may be as powerful a force as the circumstances of life themselves.

To say that these people were calm does not mean that they were impassive. There was ready expression of emotion—not only the wailing at funerals, which was of a ceremonial nature, but daily expression of all the feelings we consider normal. For

the most part they were a contented and often merry people, with the tranquillity that comes from inward peace.

They didn't worry. We didn't see them nervously tapping with fingers or toes, or striding up and down, or swinging their feet. Vigorously active when there was reason for action, in repose their attitude was one of composure and relaxation. They were a restful people.

It is true that, compared with inhabitants of more "advanced" countries, they had little to worry about. But a worrier will always find cause for worry, and a habitually discontented person will always find cause to complain. They seemed to have an inherent sensibleness that realized the futility of anxiety over things that had not happened or of lamenting things which had already occurred.

It is sensible to anticipate possible contingencies and to prepare to circumvent or ameliorate them, and to study one's misfortunes so as to draw lessons from them for future guidance. It is not sensible to fret unproductively about uncertainties, or to waste time and energy in regretting misfortunes about which nothing can be done. We may be able to modify our fortunes somewhat, by taking thought and following it with appropriate action, but for the most part we have to accept life as it is, with regard for our personal limitations—both those with which we were born or which grew from our early environment, and those which proceed from the social-economic complex in which we live.

Our lives and those of the Polynesians alike are conditioned to some extent by environment. It is not the only influence, but it is obviously a potent one. The principal determining factor is occupation. The Polynesian, in his natural state, is a fisherman and a subsistence farmer, living his life in terms of those occupations. Your life and mine are also shaped by our jobs. These are more various than is possible in Polynesia, and theoretically we have more freedom of choice among them. In practice, however, we are less free to choose than we like to think. Your job or mine is determined by factors not all of which are subject to our control. Ability, training, experience, all determined by inheritance and by early environment, with its attendant social and economic circumstances, are the basic factors. In the operation of these factors, there is a large element of chance.

Where we are born, and in what circumstances, the kind of early education and home training we receive, are a matter of chance, as far as we ourselves are concerned. We can not alter them. And, to a large extent, they shape our whole lives.

The kind of education one receives is usually determined by economic circumstances, and influenced by the tastes and inclinations of parents, teachers, friends. A boy becomes a tradesman or a laborer at an early age because his earnings are needed to support the family. His is an honorable occupation, but with different opportunity he might have become a physician, with a quite different experience and a different outlook on life.

People do change their occupations, and often successfully, but most people do not find it practicable to do so. In most cases, the courses of our maturity are largely laid by the time we are twenty. Much is left to chance in our early preparation, and much to individual inclination, which, at the time, may or may not be reliable, but in general, even by this haphazard course of events, most of us fall into occupations to which we are reasonably well suited. It remains for us to perfect and broaden our skills in these occupations, and to be alert to grasp such opportunities as may appear.

Success stories of the Horatio Alger type occasionally occur in real life, but they have received wide publicity precisely because they are exceptional. In most cases there is an element of folklore about them. Habits of industry obviously are indispensable, but the American tradition that industry necessarily leads to success is proved all around us to be a fallacy.

Chance pursues us throughout life. A man loses his job in

an economic depression, and in the emergency he enters another occupation, or migrates to another part of the country. He may find himself worse off than before, or the change may reveal hitherto unrealized capacities in himself, or bring him into contact with new opportunities. In either case, it is pure accident or, more accurately, the operation of forces outside his control. In either case, the change affects the remaining course of his life.

The Tuamotuan's vocational problem is simpler than ours. In most cases he hasn't even the fiction of a choice. His economic success may vary, if in less degree than ours. Even in the group-ownership economy of such islands as Tepuka, some families are "richer" than others, holding larger areas of land. One land holding may be more productive than another, one fisherman more skilled or more fortunate. There as here, some are more industrious than others. Or one may have been luckier than another, in the days when pearling was still profitable, in finding pearls.

The Tuamotuan has no risk of losing his job, for he is his own employer. He may reasonably expect that there will always be fish in the sea and that the land will continue to produce coconuts and its other and more meager yields. World economic conditions affect only his dispensable margin; if he gets a lower price for his copra, or can't sell it at all, he goes without his few and simple imported luxuries.

His occupations have their hazards, nevertheless. Productiveness of land is subject to weather, and fishing is not a matter of skill and industry alone, being affected by the forces of Nature and such imponderables as the caprices of fishes. Fishermen sometimes drown, are crushed against coral, trapped by tridacna shellfish, bitten by eels, eaten by sharks. On days most of us would consider too stormy for fishing, our neighbors at Tepuka paddled their frail canoes out to sea as usual. Their families would be as hungry on a stormy day as on a calm one.

There were days when some cut coconuts to make copra, or

turned the pieces of nut meat over as they lay drying under the sun. There were days when some were building a house or occupied in community projects. But always some were fishing, providing food for themselves and for those who were doing other work—except on Sunday, when the day of "rest," as learned from missionaries, was observed.

To whatever extent the peacefulness and easy rhythm of life at Tepuka reflected simplicity of environment and of organization, that peace and ease proceeded in large part from within. People there took things calmly "in their stride." They avoided hurry and worry. They considered one thing at a time. For the most part, they kept in mind that most vexations are trivial and that most disagreeable situations do not last. They refused to waste energy in brooding over things about which they could do nothing or in anticipating troubles that were not certain to occur. When not working or playing, they rested with a deep and full relaxation. Rather than allowing their peace of mind to be disturbed by concern with petty annoyances, small disappointments, insignificant details of all kinds, they saved their energies for necessary tasks and to meet and overcome real troubles when such occurred.

An easy rhythm of life is more difficult for us to achieve, because our lives are full of cross-rhythms, few of which can be eliminated. But we can approach it more nearly than many of us do, by making it a habit to remember a few simple principles: that the things that irritate us or cause tension are usually of too slight real importance to bother about; that fretting won't make the bus come sooner; that hurry seldom gets us to our destination any earlier; that worry won't change the situation we are worrying about; that in perspective the present annoyance or embarrassment will fade away. We can even ease the tyranny of time by organizing our lives so that we don't have to hurry.

The world is much more with us than it was when William Wordsworth wrote his impatient sonnet. True leisure is rare.

Much of what passes for leisure is used emptily. We are so ridden by measured time, so involved in petty affairs—business, social, the search of easy, second-hand entertainment—that we lose the capacity for that productive loafing which "invites the soul." The multitude of our little concerns gnaws at our peace; our spirits atrophy for want of cultivation.

The Oriental peoples learned long ago the value of contemplation. Some of them go to excess in it, as we go to excess in shallow activity. Somewhere there must be a balance between these extremes, and I think the Polynesians, at their best, have found it. Paunu and Maono and old men such as Temae live an active life. They match their strength and skill each day against the sea for that day's food. But it is also a contemplative life, despite the relative lack of privacy in a Polynesian village. I have often seen one or another of them sitting quietly alone, absorbed in meditation or submerged in what John Cowper Powys has called "the unthinking level"—that state of being in which man is most in tune with Nature. This is true repose, and it must immeasurably refresh the spirit and renew strength.

It is easier for them, in their simpler environment, to take time to think, or to relax to that deeper plane of consciousness where the spirit merges with earth and air and sunlight and sea and growing things. We are a restless folk, and we have made around us a restless world. In this feverish world of ours, it is difficult, even when rare circumstances permit me for a time, to free myself from the impulsion to be doing something. Under a flowering tournefortia tree overlooking the red reef of Tepuka and the expanse of sea, or on a vine-tangled mountaintop in the Isles Under the Wind, I could do it. But those lands, and their atmosphere of relaxation, are far away in both time and space. I never did achieve quite the complete relaxation of my Polynesian friends; heredity and past experience and long habit interfered. But to a degree I was able to step out from under the sense of pressure, and even to let go and drift on the stream of

natural life, like a mote of dust floating in the sunlight that the poets of that people called the water of life of the gods.

All that is long ago and far, but still, when I remember it, in times of stress or anxiety and in moods of unease, I can catch glimpses that "make me less forlorn." With effort I can still call back something of the feeling of those countries where peace flows softly with the tranquil current of daily life.

Somewhat as the Polynesians need, or think they need, a chant or spell to put them in tune with their ancestral spirits, so I have found certain verbal formulae useful in restoring calm of mood. In a groping way, I had stumbled upon this principle even before I knew the peace of the southern islands. In my years in Honolulu, where life was only slightly less crowded than here, when troubled of body or spirit, I used to repeat to myself the ancient name of a certain stretch of Hawaiian beach which—alas—has long been too populous and littered to be worthy of such trust. The name was Apuakehau, and the very syllables were soothing, bringing images of curving fronds and interlacing hau branches bearing blossoms that glowed rich yellow in the sun and deepened to smoldering red before they fell with the falling of the day, and the blessed sunlight of Tane flooding sands where, even in a crowd, one might lie asleep or in a waking dream while cares drifted away as if washed from the mind by sun and sea and wind.

Apuakehau served at the time, but now certain place-names from farther south have a stronger magic. Rimatara, Rangihoa, Poutoto, Temehani, Tapuairangi, call up visions of what I felt when, on a mountaintop in Raiatea, these lines emerged from the subconscious and flowed together in my mind:

The cool mist rolls against the ridge; we stand,
walkers in cloud, and feel upon our faces
the breath of heaven and heartbeat of the land,
the cleanness of the high and wind-washed places.

Upon the mountain, here there is no fear;
we are set free from worries of the town,
tasting the joy of standing on the sheer,
sharp cliff where the wild water hurtles down.
Thus must the gods feel, as in wreaths of cloud
they stride above the vast disordered world,
throw back their tawny heads and laugh aloud,
looking below to where the hills are furled.
To this bare height we come to find release;
on the high trails, and here alone, is peace.

That was how it felt, when we came to that seldom-trodden summit, from the soiled beauty of the seaport town a few islands away. And the name calls up a shadow of that feeling now.

Every one can find some such shrine in his memory—a childhood association, a vacation scene, any concept that sets the mind on a trail of quietness and peace.

From the stern old times of our own race comes one of the keys I have used to unlock the gate of consolation. It is a line from an early English poem, a chant of our ancestors, that Polynesians would call a *fangu tutangi*, a lament. The poet's name was Déor, and he was stout of spirit. Many winters had he served as a bard dear to his feudal lord, until a rival, a "song-crafty man," usurped his position and his land grants. In the Exeter Book is preserved the chant he composed when old and jobless and poor, his life shattered about him. Each stanza recounts the misfortunes of some person celebrated in the history or legend of the past, and ends with this strong comment: "*Thaes ofereode, thisses swa maeg.*" That is to say, in the English of our own time, "He endured (or overcame) that sorrow; I can endure and overcome this."

Nothing lasts. Sorrow, as well as joy, fades. The immediate causes of both are mostly trivial. The things that harass us today may be forgotten tomorrow, or shrink as they are viewed in

perspective. It would save us much suffering, and many unfortunate impulsive acts, if we could be mindful of this at the time. We should rise above petty vexations and avoid petty reactions to them. Serious troubles, too, come to every one. He who has the wisdom of poise, instead of worrying and lamenting, considers calmly how he may ameliorate them. If there is nothing he can do about them, he considers that they can't last forever, and that others have endured as much. "*Thaes ofereode, thisses swa maeg.*"

For the devout, prayer serves the same purpose. There is no greater comfort, for those whose faith is sufficient, in a world that is less believing than it once was, than prayer. It restores the sense of security remembered from childhood, by transferring responsibility to a superior being whom one trusts to take care of all worries and assume all burdens. This brings about relaxation. It is, again, a letting go of the things of daily life so as to reach a state of quietude.

As the human race gets farther away from the simple, direct life, fewer people are able to project themselves into that childlike mood of faith. It is notorious, however, that in emergency most people resort to prayer. It is rather ungracious behavior to remember God only in time of trouble, but this appears to be human nature. While most people still feel, if vaguely, the necessity of some superhuman power in the universe, it is more difficult for many of them to feel sure that such a power is concerned with our trivial and conflicting personal needs and desires. The devout, faced with the realization that not all prayers could possibly be granted, long ago decided that the ways of the Lord were inscrutable and that He would carry out His purposes in His own way, disregarding individual human needs and desires that conflicted with divine purpose.

This is an eminently logical view, although it inevitably undermines confidence in the practical efficacy of prayer. It also reminds us of the triviality of many of our troubles.

Not only in times of sorrow and stress, but in the midst of daily routine, there is strength to be found in moments of withdrawal from hurry and pressure and the frenzied whirl of "civilized" life. A very few minutes of daily meditation, or of as near an approach to complete relaxation as one can achieve, will refresh the spirit and fortify it to re-enter the active world. It helps solve the problems of that world, too, for the subconscious keeps on working while the conscious mind relaxes. But its greatest value is in renewal of spiritual strength and poise.

Most of us are not often enough alone. We wear out our nervous energy in contact with noise and bustle and the many small irritations and compromises of our crowded lives. Yet even in a crowd one can be alone. One can withdraw, sink beneath the confused conscious surface, take refuge briefly in calm thought or in the calmer contemplation that is beyond thought. One can create one's own pool of quietness, from which one will emerge rested and refreshed.

Most people do find some means of relaxation, in the many second-hand diversions our life provides. Motion pictures, fiction, the radio, and so on, are beneficial, in moderation, in that they take the mind off other things and thus afford a kind of rest. They are better than no relief at all, but they are a makeshift. Use of one's own resources to achieve relaxation, without external stimuli, is more constructive.

Our failing is that we seek relief from noise and activity, in other activity and noise. This serves the purpose, after a fashion, but is not true rest or complete relaxation. One of our greatest needs is to disabuse ourselves of the notion that we must always be doing something. We are too much slaves to the tyranny of time. We are afraid of wasting time, and in avoiding waste of time we waste energy. We depend too much on stimulation from outside and neglect our own inner resources. We read too much and think too little. I am convinced of the value of loafing —in discreet amount. There should be times for every one when

he can slip out from under the load of work and care and even of entertainment, cultivate his inner self, let his spirit stretch itself and expand.

Time in quiet is not wasted.

We used to sing, in my student days, an ode of Horace, to a fine old hymn tune whose cadences were as soothing as the words. Its sentiment is worthy of a Polynesian chief, conceived in something of the spirit of that proud and self-contained people. Time was when every schoolboy knew the lines that begin:

Integer vitae, scelerisque purus . . .

They are words that comfort the spirit when oppressed by injustices or any of the large or small meannesses that intrude into every life. He who is—I prefer the literal translation—integral of life, has no need of javelin or bow. . . .

Integral—that is the key word. To be integral of life, not diffused, or warped with stresses. He who is integral within himself goes forward with confidence in himself and with respect—tempered as it may be by a suitable degree of prudence —for others. He is open of spirit and of countenance; he is unafraid. He is upright, as the usual translation of the ode has it —upright, because he is integral. Most Polynesians I have known have been so. That is the source of their spiritual strength, of their repose.

Gather the strength of your spirit within you; be integral, and walk as a chief through the storms and calms of life.

We hasty, impatient, feverish Occidentals—can we not take thought for these things; can we not train ourselves to remember the futility of haste and of worry, the triviality of most things that "upset" us? Can we not learn to relax, stop driving ourselves and others; take joy in simple pleasures and accept life in contentment as it flows in us and around us? Can we not heed the words of a poet of another race who chanted, centuries ago:

"Not with a heap of treasure shall you enliven your vassalage, for treasures are but smoke. Cherish rather the songs, and the flowers that cover the earth, for they will intoxicate your soul." *

* Attributed to Nezahualcoyotl, King of Texcoco, 1402-1472.

13. *"The Spears Were for Fish"*

"THE spears were for fish," said Temae. "There never was war at Tepuka. We did not waste the blood of the land."

Mindful of the saying, "How would you like to be shipwrecked on an island where missionaries hadn't been?" and of the circumstance that when Commodore John Byron, the first recorded European to have sighted Tepuka and Tepoto, approached the islands, in 1765, he was frightened away by the sight of men running to the shore with spears, we had asked Temae whether his people had always been as peaceful as we found them.

Temae, who had lived close to eighty years and had been taught the traditions of his people in his youth, believed they had. He neglected to add that, if this was true, it was partly because they were favored by circumstance. These islands are remote, difficult to reach from the more populous lands, against prevailing winds. Their poverty of resources offers little temptation to aggression.

In any case, Temae was at least half right. If they escaped war because no enemy attacked them, it is equally true that they did not attack other people. They did not raid other islands. Tepuka is mentioned only twice in legends of ancient warfare. One story tells of an ambush laid there by Honokura, a chief from the west, for enemies pursuing him. According to this legend, Tepuka at that time was uninhabited. The other story

is that of Moeava, chief of another group of islands, who married at Tepuka and remained there for a time. When he returned to his own islands to suppress an uprising, a number of men of Tepuka accompanied him.

There was once an abortive clash, Temae told us in another conversation, within the Tepuka community. It came about, like conflict on a number of other islands, from the shock of impact of foreign contact and the introduction of Christianity.

Father Montiton, an early missionary, had enlisted a number of converts there. One of them became the missionary's assistant and accompanied him to other islands. But eventually he relapsed into paganism, returned to Tepuka, and attempted to instigate a revival of the old faith.

Temae's father, a prominent citizen, was a leader in support of Christianity. A violent quarrel developed. The father of the apostate raised an ax to strike Temae's father, but Temae's father caught the threatening arm and stopped the blow.

Temae's father won his point, and the islands today are nominally Christian, although they have not abandoned all pre-Christian beliefs and customs. Only old Te Uru Po voiced any regret for "the heathen time."

"The heathen time was good," he told us, on one of those tedious Sunday afternoons, when the people, enjoined from all their customary activities, sit about idly, in an excess of leisure, waiting for the day to end. "The heathen time was good. There was no Sunday then."

There is reason to believe that Temae's information was fairly accurate, and that life at Tepuka and Tepoto, except for the nominal change of religion and the introduction of a few foreign tools and garments, had always been pretty much as we found it.

In reporting this, I am cognizant that Polynesian life was not always or everywhere so peaceful or so sensible. The important

fact is that it is now largely so. Polynesians have outgrown many of the less admirable of their ancient ways.

Then, too, our knowledge of pre-discovery Polynesian life is incomplete; reports of it are contradictory and described mainly by untrained observers, whose views were conditioned by their own experience of a very different world and its different customs. Some of them exaggerated the favorable aspects of what they saw, others, the unfavorable. Those who were reasonably accurate in describing the physical scene, seldom understood the motives and traditions that made it tick.

It was a long time before Europeans and Polynesians fully understood each other's ideas of property ownership. But that alone is scarcely an adequate explanation of the Polynesians' taking ways on the arrival of the first Europeans.

There was, of course, in many parts of the world, an ancient primitive notion that it was right and proper to plunder a stranger, and this may have had some currency in the islands at the time, although there are instances of pre-discovery castaways who must have been kindly received, since they prospered in the islands and have descendants there to this day.

If we try to reconstruct the circumstances, it appears that other factors must have been involved. When the first European ship approached an island, the event was comparable to a visitation from another planet—as indeed it was from another world. A ship such as the people had never seen, manned by strange beings, strangely clad and equipped, speaking an unintelligible language. Incomprehensible behavior, wonders that could be attributed only to magic. There must have been intense excitement, confusion, consternation, mingled with intense curiosity.

Were the strangers men, or gods? How strong was their magic? Test it, and find out.

Or, if they were gods or magicians, they could produce these precious objects at will; doubtless they would scarcely miss a few of them.

Then, too, here was such abundance as the natives had never seen; this, together with their curiosity, was too much temptation.

At all events, they respect visitors' property today. Curiosity lingers, in the less frequented islands; the greater part of the population of Tepuka spent at least three days crowding into and around our house to stare at us and our possessions. But we kept those possessions, at Tepuka and other islands, in houses that could not be locked, and from which we were often absent. And we never missed anything. Once we thought we did, and made inquiry in the village, only to discover later that we had mislaid the "missing" article ourselves.

Later, in Papeete, a number of things were stolen from our ship while our party was ashore, but Papeete is a mixed town, a center of foreign influence, where native standards no longer altogether apply.

It would, of course, be difficult to use a stolen tool, or any article of permanent value, on a small island, but such loot could have been concealed until we had left the island. Our greatest wealth, however, from a Tuamotuan point of view, was in food. We had cases of corned beef and of salmon, both prime luxuries in the islands. Tepuka people could have helped themselves to these, eaten the food, buried the tins or thrown them into the sea, and we could not have traced them. Those who knew us best would ask for an article as a gift—to be recognized by a gift in return—but they would not steal it.

Early missionaries inveighed against "nakedness," which would not distress us so much today, and, as was to be expected, against "idolatry." The nakedness was a bit exaggerated; most Polynesians had no true textile fabrics, but they wore garments of tapa, which is a kind of heavy paper, or of matting plaited from strips of pandanus leaf or other materials. There is an intriguing commentary on this subject in the ancient legend of

Ataranga's courtship of Huahenga, who became the mother of the culture-hero Maui.

Ataranga found her bathing in a fresh-water pool, climbed a tree overlooking the pool, and revealed his presence by dropping flowers from the tree. "Ataranga climbed down from the tree and called to Huahenga to come to him. 'No,' replied Huahenga, 'a shameless thing.' Ataranga picked up Huahenga's *pareu* and gave it to her; Huahenga wrapped it around her and gathered up all her garments, and the two of them went to Huahenga's land."

Considering Polynesians' love of dress, it could not have been difficult to get them into "civilized" clothes, which was one of the missionaries' first endeavors, in the belief that Christianity was somehow incompatible with other than European garments. All that prevents most Polynesians today from acquiring elaborate wardrobes is lack of means.

Drunkenness and use of tobacco—both foreign importations—also evoked missionary denunciation—so much so, that some converts in Hawaii derived the impression that "Thou shalt not smoke" was one of the Ten Commandments. It is said a Catholic mission obtained considerable advantage by receiving into its fold Hawaiians who had been expelled from a Protestant congregation for smoking. As for drink, one missionary historian reported, with a fine genius for anticlimax, "Hewahewa (the former high priest) confessed that he had been guilty not only of murder, but also of drunkenness!"

"Immorality," of course, greatly perturbed the apostles to the islands, who did not understand the customs of freedom of youth and of hospitality to visitors, any better than did the early voyagers who took liberal advantage of those customs. The customs, too, had degenerated by the time the missionaries arrived. The lust of ships' companies, in seaport towns, had perverted the Polynesian idea of exchange of gifts into something resembling the European practice of prostitution. The old cus-

toms have not died out, in most islands, after many years of missionary pressure. They represent a different viewpoint, a different sexual code.

Laziness, another missionary phobia, was largely a matter of the difference between European and Polynesian social and economic organization, and the pastoral conviction that Satan finds work for idle hands. A New England Congregationalist thought the Lord wanted the natives to become as much like New England Congregationalists as possible.

The notion that Polynesians are lazy still lingers among go-getting Caucasians. It is based largely on misunderstanding. In his own kind of life, and on his own terms, a Polynesian works as hard as we. He always had to. Primitive life is hard work. Our race of button-pushers and switch-turners can have no conception of the infinite labor involved in even so simple an operation as cooking a meal in a Polynesian dooryard.

First, of course, you have to catch your fish, with a line and hook you made by hand, from a canoe you also made by hand—and, in the old days, with stone tools. If you have any vegetables to go with it, they were planted and cultivated in back-breaking labor with crude implements. At Tepuka, digging is still done with a pointed stick, and shoveling with a turtle-shell lashed to a pole.

But suppose you have already produced the food, and gathered the leaves in which to wrap it, and the stones on which to cook it. With your dull and awkward tools, you dig a hole. You find and cut the fuel. In the Tuamotu, this is no problem; there are plenty of dry coconut husks. But making a fire, before the white man began to trade matches for copra, was a husky man's job, and it still is when matches are scarce.

You rub a pointed stick of a certain kind of wood up and down the flat side of another piece of wood that you have split through the center. You must keep up an even pressure and a rhythmic, steadily accelerating stroke. It takes considerable time

and much elbow grease to maintain the friction until the dry pith in the groove of the under stick sends up a tiny thread of smoke and a thin, fragile flame. You nurse it, shielding it from the wind and blowing or fanning it gently, until you can light a coconut husk from it. All this while, you chant. It helps maintain the rhythm, and it invokes the spirits who bring the fire.

Then you heat the stones. They are heavy, and you have to handle them while they are hot. If you dip your hands in water and grasp the stones lightly and quickly, they are supposed not to burn you. When they are hot enough, you lay the wrapped food on them, and shovel the earth back over them. In a few hours, you can dig up the food, and it is delicious. But no wonder that cooking, in Polynesia, is considered men's work. Or that the Tuamotuans, when too hungry to wait, eat their fish raw.

When you consider that every operation in primitive daily life is similarly slow and arduous, it is obvious that there could not have been much time for loafing and that only an industrious people could have survived. Every article that was used had to be made by hand, of the materials at hand. A canoe represents a job of felling a tree, hollowing it out and shaping it, making an outrigger and binding it on, hewing out the paddles. With the resources they had, it is surprising that the Polynesians got as far in material culture as they did.

We turn a tap, and water flows. The Tuamotuan hauls it up by hand from a hand-dug well. We turn a switch, and light floods the room. The pre-discovery Polynesian gathered candle-nuts in the forest and strung them on a coconut leaf midrib, or, as some Tuamotuans do today, he whittled out a wedge of dried coconut meat and propped it on a stone, to burn as a lamp.

With a history of fishing and small farming, living directly from land and sea, the Polynesian is not accustomed to working for wages or on a fixed schedule of hours. He has not usually been found to make a good factory hand or a field worker on

the large, corporate-owned sugar plantations. Both occupations are alien to the experience of his race. In such areas as Hawaii, he has often been forced by circumstance to compromise with the white men's system, but he is rarely successful in business, although he may be so in politics. In Hawaii, he often becomes a fireman, a policeman, or a government clerk. The two foregoing jobs suit him well, for he is capable of tremendous exertion in emergency.

The Polynesian works at his own pace, and works best at his own occupations and as his own employer. One of his faults, in the minds of some European and American observers, is apparent lack of ambition. His people have been accustomed, for centuries, to live from day to day, in a system of family rather than individual ownership of resources, in a climate where it was not profitable to produce a surplus, and difficult to keep accumulated food supplies from spoiling. He is content with a modest living. He has no such driving impulsion toward material "success" as we have.

"It is useless to urge them to work," Father Fierens reported of the Tepukans, in 1877. "They stir no more than statues."

I do not question the good priest's veracity, although his observation may have been incomplete, like that of a missionary in Hawaii who cited as a deplorable example his finding of an able-bodied Hawaiian sleeping in the middle of the day—as many people who are not Polynesians still do in many parts of the world. I asked Hawaiians about this, and they replied that obviously the man had been out all night torch-fishing to provide food for his family, while the missionary was sleeping.

Another missionary to Tepuka reported, "Their sole occupation is to fish for the few clams necessary to sustain life. The women do all the work."

All this suggests to me that Father Fierens and later visitors may have been deceived by a temporary condition caused by the sudden irruption of strangers into a community still unused to

Europeans. Father Fierens was one of the first foreigners they had seen. Even in our time, it took the Tepukans about a week to settle down to their normal rhythm of life after our arrival. We were so strange to them at first, such objects of curiosity, that they neglected their usual occupations until they had begun to get accustomed to our presence.

How much more disruptive of normal activity must have been the arrival of the pioneer missionaries, bringing a message destined to overturn the formal observances of their ancient faith and thus cause a major upheaval in their lives.

There must have been great excitement, much discussion of the stranger's message, eagerness of some to learn, skepticism on the part of others. It is not surprising that the men suspended their daily work of deep-sea fishing and that in the emergency they subsisted temporarily on shellfish, the gathering of which, in the lagoon, is still done by women.

"With unlimited energy, patience, and self-denial the Reverend Father Germain succeeded in evangelizing the natives and in inducing them to conform to the law of labor," wrote the Reverend Father Hervé Audran. "He even had a fine stone church built, but this was unfortunately destroyed in the hurricane of 1903."

When we were there, the people of Tepuka had built another stone church, which stood unused, awaiting dedication, while they observed the formalities of worship in a thatched house nearby. They also built, co-operatively, a new house of coconut-leaf panels for the next priest who should arrive, there being none resident at the time.

The pre-missionary Tepukans did not go in for stone work to the extent represented by their descendants' Church of the Sacred Heart, but they constructed its equivalent, in social terms, and in labor, in the numerous open air temples, walled and terraced with stone cut with stone tools, in which they kept the rites of their ancient faith. They built more of these

than would seem necessary, because worship was a family matter, and each distinct family group had its temple, and because disputes impelled secessions, such as occur in our Protestant churches.

When we were at Tepuka and Tepoto and other islands, the task of making a living occupied a substantial working day for the natives. Men with family responsibilities went fishing at dawn and returned fairly late in the afternoon with the food for the day. Meanwhile the women performed their household tasks and filled in their spare time weaving mats and hats, or making clothes.

Young unmarried men did not do much fishing or other work, being members of a recognized age group called *taurearea*, literally "those who have a good time," without full adult responsibilities. This may have been a further source of misunderstanding for early visitors. The *taurearea* are not expected to work, since they are not heads of households. Theirs is the brief period of carefree youth, of casual lovemaking, of dance and song. It will be time enough for them to work, in the long years after they marry and settle down to rearing families.

In practice they did have some community duties. They went to the windward side of the atoll for the weekly papaya harvest; on occasion they cleaned up the debris of fallen vegetation on their family lands, or weeded and sanded the streets. They were tacitly assigned as our guides and instructors, while their elders were busy providing the family living.

There were much more serious evils in the old days, particularly in the larger islands. Temples of certain special kinds were dedicated with human sacrifice. So were certain important seagoing ships, which were rolled into the water over human bodies. Captives in war, or people who had become criminals, in the Polynesian sense, by violating tabu, or those who had incurred the displeasure of a chief, were sacrificed.

At any rate, Polynesians no longer fight one another and hence no longer eat their enemies, as some did; they no longer offer human sacrifices (which functioned as a means of preserving public order and discipline in the absence of a more fully evolved legal system); and infanticide, to whatever extent it may have been practiced in certain times and places as reported by early missionaries, is now probably more rare, in the parts of Polynesia with which I am acquainted, than among our own people. Even in the times and places from which the reports of a century or two ago came, it existed side by side with intense love of children that impelled frequent adoptions even by families who had children of their own.

The social abuses of the feudal system that formerly existed in such large and populous islands as those of Hawaii have disappeared. Accounts of it are contradictory; Hawaiians have assured me that chiefs were like fathers to their people, while some native historians, writing under missionary influence, stressed the hardships visited upon the commoners in the "heathen time." The truth probably is that there were good and bad chiefs, and that the wiser ones realized it was to their own advantage to keep the producers in reasonable health and contentment.

From what I could learn at Tepuka, its people had adhered to the simple family-group system, in which the head of the family was priest for his family group, and a chief was often a priest as well. There was a distinction between nobles and commoners, but it seemed to have been less extreme than in such places as Hawaii, and the ceremonial restrictions less numerous and less drastic. What survives of the old faith today, alongside the new, is the propitiation of the ancestral spirits, which must have been important in pre-Christian observances. I have the impression that the element of democracy at Tepuka represents an old first-migration tradition. The present chief is sacred—so sacred that the heavens hang out banners of cloud

to announce his journeying—but his sacredness does not require humiliation or oppression of his fellow citizens.

The Polynesian feudal system, of course, was wrong, from our point of view, in subjecting one group of people to the whims of another and in branding one as inferior, thus violating human dignity. We need not be too complacent, however, about our own democracy. We do the same thing, in various ways. We too have classes of society, if not as rigidly fixed as those of feudalism—except where our distinctions are drawn along color lines. Many among us are essentially as much at the mercy of employers as the Polynesian commoners were at the mercy of their chiefs, except that in our larger country there is somewhat more freedom of choice.

Whatever our historic documents say about it, all men are not equal, nor are they born so, and none are entirely free. The important thing is that this is an ideal toward which we strive, although we may never attain it, and that we do try to correct abuses within our way of life.

A minor foible, which the missionaries deplored and were unable to eradicate, is superstition. The Polynesian is as fearful of evil spirits as he is trustful of favorable spirits—a natural corollary which has its counterpart in some of our own creeds. Darkness being the abode of evil spirits as well as good, many a Tuamotuan will not go out alone at night, and some keep a light burning while they sleep.

Polynesians attribute illness to evil spirits, as we attribute it to bacteria. Show a Tuamotuan disease germs under a microscope, and his theory is confirmed; there are the evil spirits in plain sight. Treatment, however, is not confined to spells and incantations. The native wise men have a shrewd knowledge of herbs, and often use them successfully, along with invocations to the spirits, in treating ailments with which they are familiar, as my own experience proved.

Hawaiians went to excess in this matter, as in many others.

At one time, any illness was thought to have been caused by an enemy who had set the evil spirits on to attack the victim. So treatment involved a counterspell to find out the enemy and punish him. This belief became so fixed in the Hawaiian mind that today the word *kahuna*, which originally meant a member of any of the ancient learned professions, now connotes one of a single class of professionals, the sorcerers who "pray to death" their enemies or, for a fee, the enemies of others.

Often, one who was being "prayed to death" actually died, because he believed in the sorcerer's power. It was murder by psychological suggestion. Doubtless in emergency cruder methods were used, but as I have heard the practice described, it was enough to send the victim word, and perform certain ceremonies over such a token as a lock of the victim's hair, or a nail paring. Hawaiian chiefs used to have special attendants whose duty was to gather up all such things, even the chief's spittle, lest some enemy use them as means of sorcery.

Doctor LeApsley, of London, an investigator in psychical research, told me, not many years ago, of observing a *kahuna* at work. LeApsley went to see the victim, and found him wasting away, from no recognizable physical cause. The investigator took a hand in the case himself, representing himself as a more powerful *kahuna* than the other, and inventing some mumbo-jumbo as a counterspell. As I recall the story, he recited something in Latin—an ode of Horace, perhaps—gave the patient a crushed aspirin tablet in water, and marked some Greek letters in Mercurochrome on the victim's chest. The man recovered.

Ask a Hawaiian, and he may say he doesn't believe in such things. But usually he will take no chances with them. There is a temple site on the island of Hawaii that is said to be so haunted that no horse will pass it at night. I asked a Hawaiian whether he believed this, and he replied, "I don't believe it—

but my horse believes it." At Tepuka, people said malign sorcery was possible, but was not practiced there. Evil spirits got into you, if you walked too near a grave, but it was not believed that any living enemy had cast a spell upon you. The sorcery of Tepuka was directed to benign purposes, such as driving away the evil spirits.

I have observed that few people in our own country walk under a ladder rather than around it.

The principal fault modern investigators find in Polynesians is jealousy of one another's prestige. In Hawaii, almost any Hawaiian likes to think he is of higher lineage than another Hawaiian, and some will tamper with genealogies to prove it. Rival societies of descendants of chiefs strive for social prestige. It is the old story of the secessions from the temple when the turtle was divided.

Emory turned this to account at Tepuka, by playing one native informant off against another in the quest of lore that at first they were unwilling to impart, partly because it was family property and partly because, as Temae said, "these are things of Satan." Emory went with Temae to that old man's temple site, but could get little information from him until two other old men appeared. Each was eager to show that he was more learned in the ancient lore than the others, and the result was that Emory obtained all that the three old men could remember of the turtle ceremony.

This method, like any dealing with native informants, must be used with discretion. In his eagerness to outshine the others, an informant may invent information. There was an earnest amateur in Hawaii who offered a dollar for every legend brought to him. He got enough to make several books, but many of them were open to suspicion, and most of them even more childish than the average run of legends. Our Tuamotuans, however, served as a check on one another; if one was tempted to fabricate, the others were only too glad to expose him. And

I think most of them, as long as too lavish rewards were not offered, were honest. There was one old chap, on another island, who was supported for a long time by an ethnologist, as a mine of information, and who naturally wanted to prolong this easy and profitable employment. When his material ran thin, I understand he began to fake it.

Cruelty to animals, which has been reported from some islands, did not come under my observation. At Tepuka, which I know best, animals were left largely to forage for themselves, and thrived on it, but were not ill treated. The chief's dogs—lean black hounds with one eye brown and one blue—did their own fishing, on the reef at low tide. They were peculiarly silent beasts. I never heard them bark or howl. Pigs got what little garbage there was in the frugal island economy, and lived mainly on fallen coconuts. Very young pigs were treated as pets, carried about in women's arms like babies. The Tepuka pigs had a peculiarity, too—they were less odorous than ours. Perhaps that was because of their clean diet and lack of mud in which to wallow. Bits of coconut were sometimes fed to ducks and chickens, but mostly these fowl scratched about among the vegetation and gobbled insects.

Polynesians are improvident, by Occidental standards, because few of them have adjusted to our pressure-ridden economic system. If by any chance they acquire wealth, they are likely to squander it. I once served as publicity counselor for a group of Samoans who were giving a concert of Samoan chants and dances in Honolulu to finance a projected tour of the American mainland. The concert was a success. They played to a packed house. But the tour did not follow. They told me they had spent the profits "riding around in taxicabs." Some of them did get to the mainland later; I recognized them in a Hollywood motion picture, but they didn't get there on the proceeds of that Honolulu concert.

This apparent lack of thrift grows out of imperfect adjust-

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ment to a money-measured economic system, after centuries of living in a direct subsistence economy administered by family groups.

The Polynesians' historic social abuses arose from excess. Where chiefs were excessively venerated, purity of lineage valued out of proportion to human life, belief in spirits carried to the extreme of attributing every ill to human witchcraft, where the gods became so exalted that they could be appeased only by human blood, society went wrong through losing perspective and proportion. When our own society goes wrong, it does so from the same underlying causes. American history has a parallel to at least one Polynesian error, in the Salem witchcraft craze. European history has parallels to most of the others. Where one value is stressed disproportionately, trouble ensues. Perhaps our most conspicuous contemporary error is disproportionate emphasis upon material gain.

Polynesians today have outgrown the worst of their ancient errors. Although few of them have accepted our civilization completely, in the islands where they have lost their own, they have made their compromises with it, to greater or less degree according to the amount of contact and pressure. Where they have been left largely to themselves, life is much as I have described it as of Tepuka and Tepoto. Most visitors today find them gentle and kindly, as we did. Their life may be dull, from our point of view, but it is, on the whole, an eminently sane and reasonable one. How much more we could enjoy our superior material advantages, if we could temper our use of them with something of that reasonableness.

14. *The Gentle Speech*

"COME, learn a word!" Teroro called to me as I passed. "*Pape*"—pointing to the water she had just brought from the well. "*Vai*"—pointing to the water again. "Or, in the root-speech, *komo.*" Drinking a little, "*Te inu nei vau i te komo.*" Offering water to me, "'*A inu!*'" Then, going through the motions of bathing, "*Hopu i te pape.* In the root-speech, *kapukapu i te komo.*"

Thus I learned, from day to day. Each walk abroad was an adventure in language. I took as much delight in learning a new word and tracing its ramifications of meaning and relations as in putting words of my own language together to make a poem.

Unlike some volunteer instructors in other languages, these Tuamotuans never misled me as to the meaning of a word. It was not their kind of humor, as it was of some of the Welsh neighbors of my Wisconsin boyhood, to teach the innocent inquirer some grossly improper phrase, telling him it meant "good morning." The Polynesian sense of humor is often bawdy enough, but straightforward. It was with keen relish that Pakiuma gravely instructed me in the numerous Polynesian synonyms for the equivalent of one of the most four-letterish of our four-letter words. I noted that in that leisurely language, they took more than four letters.

It has occurred to me that the words people use, and the ways in which they use them—the shape of a language—must

reflect, to some extent, habits of mind. A language is shaped by the physical environment in which it originated, modified by other environments in which it is used, and shaped also by the processes of thought of the people who speak it. The words used, and the way they are put together, must reflect habitual preferences among paths of thought. They seem to indicate, roughly, what is important in the viewpoint of the people who evolved and speak the language. A language itself, especially after it has become standardized by printing, in turn shapes thought, although even then the language remains to some degree fluid, and fashions of speech change. Although even Tuamotuans nowadays are able to read and write, if not very fluently, their own language, and the various Polynesian dialects have had some printed literature since the time when the missionaries printed translations of the Bible, Polynesian is still, for the most part, essentially a spoken rather than a written language. While I do not claim to have more than a crude working vocabulary, certain aspects of the language did stand out, in my experience with it, as reflecting the way the Polynesian mind proceeds.

While such matters as the fluidity of "parts of speech" in that tongue intrigue any student of language, I confine myself here to features of Polynesian speech that seem to have some bearing on the above thesis.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the language is its rich and precise equipment of pronouns. Our own pronouns stand either for one person or for more than one, without specifying how many. Polynesian pronouns distinguish between one person, two persons, and more than two. They also make it clear whether the person speaking, the person addressed, or both, are included in the statement.

Thus, where our own language has only one pronoun "we," the Polynesian has four, to express these distinctions, and there is provision in pronouns for still other shades of meaning too

complicated to discuss here, but leading toward the same conclusion.

There must be some reason why a Polynesian thinks it important to have a precise understanding of just who and how many are included in a statement. It suggests to me a basic feeling of the importance of the individual personality. It can scarcely arise from a craving for mathematical accuracy, since other aspects of the language show Polynesians less mathematical minded than we.

In one respect, however, Polynesian pronouns are simpler and less precise than ours. They are not inflected for gender: there is no difference between he, she, and it. Evidently the personality, not the sex, was considered important enough to impel creation of forms to express it.

Nor are nouns afflicted with gender. There is no such nonsense, as in German and some other languages, as calling a knife, fork, and spoon masculine, feminine, and neuter.

Emory, who has studied them for years, says the popular notion, in our country, of Polynesians as being preoccupied with sex, is erroneous, a misunderstanding arising from casual contact with certain Polynesian customs and from the reaction of some Polynesians to visitors' interest in those customs. He contends that they are less so preoccupied than our own people, who have shown their preoccupation by surrounding sex with so many inhibitions, difficulties, and romantic notions. Polynesians have a more natural attitude; they take sex for granted and make no such to-do over it. Perhaps that is why their language has fewer sex distinctions.

In the language as I heard it at Tepuka, the same word was commonly used for both "sister" and "brother." Indeed, it was less definite than that. What I heard was "elder" and "younger," designating a close relative of either sex, without specifying the degree of relationship. The important elements were neither

sex nor the precise degree of consanguinity, but relationship itself and seniority.

Children did not address their parents, or speak of them, as "Father" and "Mother," but called them by name. Officials, too, normally were addressed by name, rather than by title. The personality, rather than the rank, was the important factor.

Nor did I hear anything resembling the "polite form of address" that complicates most European languages. Some Polynesians do have such a form, and perhaps more of them did in ancient times. Samoans, who are notoriously ceremonious, have honorific forms of address and a special "language" for chiefs, and those chiefs are known by title rather than by name. But in the forms of language as I heard it in southeastern Polynesia, chiefs and commoners were equal. If those people had ever had an obsequious form of address, they had forgotten it. This indicates, to me, recognition of the dignity of the individual human being, of whatever estate in society. However wide the chasm that may once have separated chief and commoner, they are mindful, now, that if the chiefs are descendants of the gods, so, too, in some degree, is all mankind.

One thing that puzzled me was the lack of terms to express comparison. When our friends at Tepuka, who at the time had seen only one of the two ships used by the Museum expedition, asked which was the larger, they put it this way: "*Islander* big; *Tiare Tahiti* small?" While, in this instance, the idea of comparison did arise, the fact that it had to be expressed in so clumsy a way seemed to indicate that Polynesians had been concerned more with actual objects, actions, and states of being than with comparisons among such things.

When Tauria was teaching me the local numerals, which differ from those I had learned in Hawaii and in Tahiti, I asked him about fractions. There is no such word in his language, but I managed to convey to him the notion of an object or quantity less than a single unit. Tauria looked at me with an

expression that seemed to mingle surprise and pity, and replied, with a touch of scorn, "*Mea korereka.*" That expression, in current common usage, means "something very small," but its literal significance is "something in which one can take no pleasure." Tauria's reply meant, "A fraction is a thing of no value, no importance, something beneath notice."

I was reminded of the messboy in the officers' wardroom of the U.S.S. *Langley* who inquired, on the first morning at sea, how I wanted my breakfast eggs.

"Boiled, medium," I replied.

" 'Mejum'? What's 'at?"

"Boiled three and a half minutes."

The youth looked at me severely and said sternly, "Four minutes is hard and three minutes is soft; how does you want your eggs?"

He, too, couldn't be bothered with fractions.

Tauria's answer recalls an instance of similar impatience not with fractions, but with high numbers, in another part of Polynesia. An early visitor in Tonga was compiling a set of Tongan numerals. When he got into the higher brackets, his native informants gave him the most obscene words they could think of—which the visitor later published, as numerals, in his Tongan vocabulary.

Residing in small communities, dealing in limited quantities, and living from day to day rather than from year to year, the island people had little necessity for either higher or lower distinctions of time or number, when their language was evolved. But something in their attitude suggests that they are not keenly interested in numbers, as such. A friend of mine once asked a rural Hawaiian woman how many children she had, and the woman replied, expansively, "Oh, about eight, I guess."

Polynesian numerals tabulated by natives at the request of mathematical-minded foreigners run up into the millions. But these numerals do not agree from island to island. Many of

these words given for specific high numbers strongly suggest the idea of "innumerable." The Tahitian word for one hundred and the Hawaiian for four hundred mean, literally, "leaves." The concept seems to be "as numerous as leaves." The Tahitian for one hundred thousand and Hawaiian for four hundred thousand means, literally, "ashes." In Hawaii, an investigator got up to ten-times ashes, or four million. The word for that number means, literally, "utterly lost," as the enumerator probably was by the time he got that far. It looks as if these informants were straining themselves to oblige or, like those in Tonga, spoofing.

I suspect this indicates a certain expansiveness of view. Enough is plenty; who would be interested in accumulating, or counting, more than a few "twenties" or a few "forties," of anything. Conversely, who would be so small minded as to haggle over halves, quarters, or tenths?

They were similarly unconcerned with both small and large divisions of time. The day, for them, was not composed of hours and minutes and seconds, nor did years build up into centuries. I have seen a list of a hundred times of day and night, such as "high tide," "the opening of the gardenias," "the rising of the great star," and have heard some of them used. They are mostly only approximate, but they serve their purpose. At Tepuka I heard most frequently *avatea*, a period of a few hours around the middle of the day, *pongipongi roa*, early morning, and *te ao*, dawn.

They do not live by the clock, and I fancy that our slavery to a metal pointer moving around a numbered dial would seem, to them, a pitiful degradation. Time, for their purposes, is determined in a larger way, by the tides and the stars, the songs of birds, the opening of flowers. There is no need—O blessed country!—for punctuality to the minute.

Precise as they are as to who is the elder and the younger in a family, they are not concerned with an accurate account

of age by years. There had been an attempt, at the instigation either of missionaries or of the French colonial authorities, to record vital statistics at Tepuka, but the records were hopelessly garbled. Kumea, a grown woman, when asked how old she was, replied, "Nine years." "How do you know you are nine?" "The missionary told me." As it turned out, the missionary who had estimated her age had not been on the island since some nine years earlier. Kumea was at least eighteen. These people are satisfied to know who is the elder, and thus in a position of authority. It is not important, in their minds, to keep track of the years. It is important, however, to remember who is the son or daughter of whom; the right to share in family property is determined by ability to chant the genealogy. Relationship and relative age are again the significant factors. Polynesian history, before European discovery of the islands, can be computed only in terms of generations.

They are as particular about geography as they are unparticular about time. Every few square rods of land has its name. So do areas of sea. This reflects a pronounced localism in Polynesian thought. A native tends to think in terms of his own island, or his own district of an island. Hence there is seldom an inclusive native name for a group of islands, and not always one for a single large island. This is probably the result of the family-group system of social organization. Before the coming of the white man, with European notions of kingdoms, a Polynesian political unit rarely extended over more than a single island, and often over only a part of an island.

But their experience as a seafaring people has made their language rich in words of direction and words of weather-wisdom—innumerable words for winds, for aspects of sea and sky, shapes and appearances of clouds, kinds of rain. I have heard Polynesian or part-Polynesian sea captains say they could tell where they were at sea by the color of the water, the shape of the waves, even by "the smell." It was by such knowledge,

based on keen observation, that their ancestors, without compass, chronometer, or other instruments of precision, made voyages that a European of the time of the Polynesian migrations would not have attempted. They were able to sail to distant islands, return, and repeat the voyage, long before the time when Spanish explorers lost their way in that same ocean, discovering islands and sometimes not finding them again in a hundred years.

The Western world is still learning from the sea wisdom out of which this vocabulary arose. It was long regarded as a fable that Polynesians drank sea water on their long voyages. Only recently a party of Danish scientists, sailing from South America on a Peruvian raft, demonstrated that sea water, mixed with fresh, is potable without ill effect and that it is possible to subsist for a long time, in tropical waters, on food obtained from the sea.

With regard to words of direction, I recall the perplexity of San Francisco attorneys when a case came up from Hawaii on appeal. They called on me to explain for them the meaning of the "*ewa-makai* corner" of two streets in Honolulu—a local term designating the side of the street toward the sea and the side of the intersecting street toward the district of Ewa, a location that, in a city laid out irregularly to conform to the contour of an island coast, would be difficult to describe in terms of north, south, east, and west. The native terms remain in use in English-speaking Hawaii, since no satisfactory substitutes for them have been found. At Tepuka, besides the cardinal points of the compass, there were words for the direction of the sea, of the lagoon, of the "end" or "back" of the village, and many others—even a word for the end of a house toward which one's head lies in sleeping and another word for the end of the house toward which the feet extend.

This sense of direction extends to verbs, which in other respects are strictly "regular," conjugated by using other parts

of speech to indicate tense, mood, or voice. Polynesians are concerned with the direction in which the action occurs. Motion toward the speaker is indicated by adding *mai;* motion away from the speaker, by adding *atu*. We say "come here" and "go away," but Polynesians make this distinction in circumstances where we would not think of it.

A patriotic chant of Tepuka and Tepoto begins, if translated literally, "I chant away-from-myself the praise of the name of my country." Such a construction would not occur to us. We might say, "I chant aloud the praise." To buy is to "trade hither"; to sell is to "trade away." *Hoki* means to return to a place, but is almost always followed by *mai*—hither. With equal logic, one could *hoki atu*—return away from this place to the place whence he came.

There is no verb "to be," as such—a circumstance that must have been a sore trial to the earnest ecclesiastical grammarians who first labored to translate and codify the language. Existence is taken for granted. If a thing never existed, one would not be talking about it. Nor is there a verb "to have." Its place is taken by possessive pronouns. Perhaps this is because the Polynesian idea of property is not of individual, but of group ownership, in which there is less emphasis upon having than upon using. Not the fact of possession, but the personality of the possessors, is the important factor. Human values count for more than property values.

I have mentioned, in another connection, the frequent use of "perhaps," which I interpreted as a mark of courtesy, avoiding too positive a statement and allowing latitude for other opinions. It is possible that it also reflects a philosophical recognition of the uncertainty of most things in life. "I go tomorrow—perhaps." It is like our old-fashioned "God willing."

Writers of travelogues of the islands have indulged in hilarity over native adaptations of foreign words, such as *bulamakau* for "beef" in certain islands where Captain Cook left a pair of

cattle, informing the natives that these were "a bull and a cow," or *pisupo*, the word for canned beef in Samoa, where the first canned goods with which the natives came in contact must have been pea soup. The list could be extended indefinitely, from *pua'a boro fenua*, "pig that runs over the ground," which is Tahitian for horse, to *punu* (spoon) for metal in the Tuamotu, and *tipoti* (teapot) for metal in the Marquesas.

Such words for objects new to the islanders are no more ridiculous than many of our own borrowings from foreign languages. In enlarging their vocabularies to include unfamiliar things, the Polynesians often showed keen observation and lively humor. Hawaiians, in early post-discovery times, were particularly ingenious in word coinage. The ribald humor which christened a corkscrew "pig's penis" and described rubber as "horse's testicles" may be indelicate, by our standards, but it has a racy colorfulness that should recommend it to any student of language.

At Tepuka a doubly appropriate word was applied to my typewriter. The word is *patapata*, obviously derived from *pata*, to press with the fingers, but also imitating the sound of the machine in operation.

A similarly apt, if unflattering, word describes those ridiculous garments, men's trousers. Trousers are called *piripou*—that which sticks to the posts. The word calls up a vision of trousers blown hard against the legs in the wind that nearly always blows across those islands.

Acquaintance with the southeast Polynesian vocabulary, incidentally, shook my faith in a piece of etymology that is standard in Hawaii, where a cat is *popoki*. The usual explanation is that this word is an imitation of "Poor Pussy." I had never questioned this, until I learned that *popoti*—the Tahitian form of the same word—means "cockroach." Now, when I hear "*popoki*," I imagine a cat scuttling across the floor, or

stretching, belly close to the ground, or arching its back, and suggesting, to the Hawaiian mind, the lowly Blattus.

A cat, in the southeast Pacific, is known by two of those devastatingly appropriate words for which the Polynesian, at his best, has such a genius. The more innocent word is *pi'ifare*, the animal that climbs up the house. As often, however, we heard them called *mimifare*, that which urinates in the house, and still oftener, plain *mimi*, that which urinates, period.

One of these pungently descriptive words that has become fairly well known in this country is the Hawaiian *okolehao*, the name of a distilled beverage. It is often overdelicately translated "iron bottom" or "hard bottom," and a deceptively plausible ex post facto etymology has attempted to derive it from "alcohol." Seeing the liquor trickling from the opening of the crude still with which an ex-convict from Australia distilled the first alcoholic beverage in the islands, from the roots of the ti plant, Hawaiians called the still "*okole hao*"—the iron anus—and the liquor was named after the still. This is purely a descriptive term. It does not mean that you have to have an iron constitution to drink *okolehao*, although the taste of the legal but gustatorily unconscionable beverage that goes by that name, since repeal of prohibition wiped out the honest and expert bootleggers of my Honolulu years, might warrant that conclusion.

Ladies who struggle with their weight may be cheered to hear that *monamona*, in the language of Tepuka, means both "fat" and "sweet," the two descriptions being apparently similar in the Polynesian mind. The flaw in this, however, is that the word is strictly literal, applicable to food rather than to human beauty. Our nearest equivalent, in that sense, is "rich." As a personal compliment, it is ambiguous, for it also connotes "greasy." You can tell a girl she is pretty, or good. If you want to be poetic about it, you can say her skin is smooth and "shade-cool," her hair fragrant, and her voice soft as that of a pigeon.

But she won't be pleased if you call her *monamona*, even though that is the word for so sweet a thing as the white man's candy. It is, however, no disgrace, in Polynesia, to be fat. "The big-bellied chiefs" is an epithet of honor. The idea apparently is that the more powerful a chief was, the better nourished he could afford to be. *Poria*, the word for physical fatness at Tepuka, is not considered opprobrious. From a Polynesian viewpoint with regard to beauty, it is better to be plump than skinny. But Polynesian women, in any case, seem not much concerned with verbal compliments. The Polynesian approach is direct.

It has been observed that the Polynesian languages are poor in abstract terms, and it has been inferred from this that Polynesians did not have an aptitude for philosophical thought. It is true that they are primarily concerned with the things of day-to-day life, the shapes and colors and textures of concrete reality. But the poetic, figurative language of the ancient chants conceals abstract speculation within concrete terms, probably to a greater extent than is realized today. It is possible, too, that some of the obsolete words we heard in such chants, no longer understood by the people who chant them, may have been abstract terms. The ancient sages were philosophers, in their way, but when their occupation as priests was gone, with the advent of Christianity, their brand of wisdom deteriorated. The shock of adjustment to new ways disrupted the most searching Polynesian thought. Even today, however, it is possible to use existing Polynesian words in abstract meanings.

Although our language contains a great many more words than theirs, it is possible to express in Polynesian almost any thought that occurs in ours. Emory did so continually, in the course of his ethnological investigations. I did, too, in so far as the extent of my Polynesian vocabulary permitted.

Polynesians express their thoughts with a smaller number of sounds than we use. That is, Polynesian languages can be

written with fewer letters of the alphabet—in some cases as few as twelve. It is consonants that are avoided. All the vowels are there. But Polynesians on different islands avoid different consonants—indicating that the language originally must have had more consonants in it than occur in any one dialect of that language today. They wore away, were dropped from speech, some on one island or in one group of islands, others in another. Prolonged illiteracy and economy of effort seem scarcely enough to account for this attrition, which is more marked in Polynesian than in any other language I have encountered. May it not have come about, rather, in a subconscious quest for a gentler speech? May not the beauty-loving Polynesians have shied away instinctively from the harsher consonant sounds, retaining only a minimum to link the soft and fluent vowels? However that may be, there are few languages whose sound is so caressing to the ear.

15. *When Two Worlds Clashed*

I *HAVE* often wondered what would have happened had ethnologists, rather than naval officers, whalers, miscellaneous explorers and traders, been the first of our race to visit the islands of Polynesia. They would have had the same difficulty of communication, at first, and might have come to grief before they could make their peaceful intentions known. If they could get over that first hurdle—as the tact requisite to their profession might well have enabled them to do—their tolerance, disposition to study and understand motives and customs, would have brought about amicable relations more quickly than actually occurred in many instances of early contact between Polynesians and Europeans.

Some will say that an ethnologist landing on a newly discovered island would probably have been killed, and possibly eaten, before he could make his friendly intentions known. If so, a true ethnologist, like a true missionary, probably would consider it worth while to be killed and eaten in a good cause. But even missionaries, who are commonly less tactful and open minded than ethnologists, at times landed on "untamed" islands, and when those islands were Polynesian, they usually survived. Melanesia and Papua are another story, but most of them persisted, even there.

While I am concerned primarily with Polynesia as it is today, rather than in the past, some recognition is necessary of the Polynesian temper as the early European voyagers found it.

Many of them got into trouble, and some lost their lives. Tactlessness and aggressive actions on the part of the visitors were to some degree responsible, but the difficulty was mainly due to mutual misunderstanding, leading to mutual distrust. There were instances, too, where the natives were the aggressors, and if they could have foreseen how the foreigners would eventually overrun many of the islands, these instances might have been more numerous.

There had been earlier arrivals on some islands, but they had been castaways, in small boats or on floating wreckage. Those of whom a memory survives in legend were received more hospitably than discoverers' accounts of their own experiences would lead one to expect. It is one thing to see a large armed party disembarking on your shore, and another to find weak and starving victims of shipwreck or piracy cast up there. Perhaps not all were so kindly treated. No doubt much depended, as in later times, upon the circumstances and upon the mood of the chief in whose territory the strangers arrived.

Some of the first explorers' contacts, however, were amicable. When Pedro Fernandez de Queirós arrived at Anaa, in the Tuamotu, in 1606, "the natives, putting down their lances, all at one time bowed heads and arms and saluted three times. When one of my men was knocked down by a wave, they embraced him and kissed his cheeks."

Anaa, in later times, came to be considered one of the most "savage" of the Tuamotu Islands, although it is peaceful enough now.

At the island now called Swain's, Queirós was welcomed by a woman "with very red hair, and in color very white," who gave him "the kiss of peace on the cheek." Tonga, early in the history of exploration, earned the name of "the Friendly Islands," although Captain Bligh, in his open boat after the *Bounty* mutiny, did not find them so. By that time, the Ton-

gans probably had had too much experience of rapacious sea captains and traders.

How the first strangers fared was probably largely a matter of luck and of degree of understanding or misunderstanding, and also a matter of omens and of moods. Islanders soon learned that foreigners brought new diseases, and some communities tried to enforce a drastic method of quarantine by attacking later comers. Only a few years ago, a party of ethnologists landing on Rennell Island was swept with coconut fronds to remove disease-bearing evil spirits. At Mangaia, visitors used to be required to pass through the smoke of a sacred fire, for the same purpose.

On the whole, a reasonable degree of adjustment was reached fairly soon. Vancouver was beloved by natives of many islands. Bougainville described Tahiti in terms of an earthly Paradise. As time went on, trouble still arose over brutal acts by sailors and by some of their captains, or by obstreperous chiefs, but relations came to be mostly friendly.

Whether friendly or otherwise, Polynesians soon had cause to regret that they had not sunk without trace the first Europeans who found their islands. Disease, the rapacity of traders, blackbirders, and some sea captains, the shock of necessity of adjustment to new ways, excesses of missionary zeal, and general disruption of native life, sent most island populations into a decline, from which some are only now recovering. The Samoans had a prayer to send "the sailing gods" somewhere else, not to land in Samoa.

Where disposed to resist, Polynesians usually found the strangers' magic too powerful for them. They learned, too, that the ships were a source of gifts of strange and wonderful things, some useful as well as some pernicious. And with something of the hospitality and good humor that we find among them today, they made friends among the newcomers, often becoming deeply attached to them.

European and American occupation of Polynesian islands came about by infiltration, rather than by conquest. Here and there, resistance developed as the newcomers became numerous enough to crowd the aborigines. There was determined fighting in New Zealand, and at one time the Tahitians, with mats as armor against bullets, briefly resisted the French. But occupation was mostly a gradual, insidious encroachment. That was how "the sea overcame the land" in Hawaii, fulfilling an ancient prophecy. Settlers increased in numbers; trade grew up; white men acquired land through chiefs and established plantations. Missionaries with well-meant New England ideas of democracy induced the king and chiefs to divide the land, giving the commoners freeholds, most of which were soon lost because the Hawaiians were not accustomed to the idea of private property, and it was easy for covetous Americans and Europeans to take advantage of their inexperience. Annexation to the United States eventually became a historical necessity to avoid annexation by some other power, although other factors were involved. Hawaii has prospered under the American flag, perhaps more than any other Polynesian island, but it is no longer predominantly a Polynesian country but, rather, an extremely interesting experiment in racial mixtures and in solution of problems growing out of them.

Today, only Tonga remains nominally independent, as a ward of Britain. Most Polynesian islands are under British or French mandate or administration. In most places, Polynesian life goes on, modified to greater or less degree by the extent of foreign contact and the character of the administration. The French, with whose part of Polynesia I am most familiar, seem to have interfered relatively little with native life, on the whole, especially in the remote islands, such as the Tuamotu. The chiefs are subject to the French colonial government, and are, nominally, elected magistrates of their people. Maono, at Tepuka, was addressed in dispatches from Papeete—which he

could not read, since they were in French—as "President of the District Council." Once a year or so, the colonial governor tried to get around to these outlying "districts" on a tour of inspection. But the districts largely governed themselves.

"Election" of the chief is a native compromise with the democratic forms of the French Republic. People at Tepuka were rather vague about it. I heard elsewhere that such officers were elected for a term of three years. In practice, it appears the people go through the form of an election and choose the man who is entitled by their own customs to be chief. When a chief dies, or retires, his eldest son usually is elected to succeed him. But the French-inspired "election" provides an opportunity for getting rid of an incompetent or unpopular chief, or of by-passing an unpromising heir. We knew, too, a former chief of Vahitahi who had become disgusted with the office and resigned.

On the whole, it seemed to us that the natives had fared best where they had been most let alone. Such a course is no longer practical everywhere; Polynesians in most places need protection from loss of their land to foreigners, and from their own inability to cope with shrewd traders. On some islands of French Oceania, we found the natives almost universally in debt to Chinese merchants. The natives grumbled about it, but seemed to cherish no active animosity.

The most useful gift our civilization could make to them would be medical aid, particularly in islands that have had much foreign contact. Polynesians, in pre-discovery times, had comparatively few diseases, and while some of their medical methods were effective with such ills as they then had, these methods are seldom adequate to treat diseases introduced by foreigners.

In many islands, the problem is to salvage what is left. Some ethnologists would like to see all Polynesians let alone, that the islands might serve as an exhibit and laboratory of Polynesian life. In most cases, it is already too late for that. Through

contact with our world, and partial adjustment to it, many island dwellers have acquired new needs for some of the products of our world. Having become accustomed to steel tools, for example, most Polynesians would be distressed to have to revert to stone, bone, and shell. In some islands, so much of the old techniques has been lost that it would be difficult to get along without the imports on which the people have come to depend.

Some islands, as populations grow, will need help in agricultural methods, organization of handicraft industries, and in marketing, so as to have means to get the things they need and do not produce. The needs for importations should be kept as few as possible, and the natives encouraged to maintain their own social, economic, and political organization in so far as is practicable. Whatever transition to new ways may be inevitable should be as gradual as possible. Much deterioration of native life is traceable to too sudden and poorly balanced attempts to adjust to the outside world.

Where interference has already affected native life to a large degree, as on islands that were occupied during the war, guardianship will have to continue. Let us hope it will be wise and tolerant and not too heavily loaded with Western doctrines that confuse and unbalance the people they are meant to help. We can't turn the clock back, but we can let it run slow.

Emory once said, half in jest but half seriously, that the Polynesians should send missionaries to the white man's world, to convert it to reasonable living. It would be a pity if we destroyed that reasonable life by trying to impose on it standards of our own which are not suited to it. Contemplation of it will encourage each of us to create within himself his own island of peace.

16. This Crowded World

THE doors of my friend's automobile are opened and closed by pressing buttons. He is rather proud of this. He admits, however, that an awkward situation arose recently when the button connections failed and he was unable to get into or out of his car. This was a small illustration of the hazards of a push-button civilization.

The rented car that took me from the railway station to the hotel at Ixtlán del Río, in the Mexican state of Nayarit, had no push buttons. As the driver started the motor, the doors flew open. "See, they open automatically," he said, laughing, as he tied them shut with twine. This illustrates the disabilities of advanced material culture when its possessors lack the resources for ready replacements.

If there had been an automobile at Tepuka, and fuel to operate it, it would have been even more decrepit. But with the exception of Tauria, who had been in Tahiti, and perhaps one or two other traveled citizens, the people of Tepuka had never seen an automobile. Few of them had seen even a wheelbarrow. Their contemporaries at Vahitahi had a hand cart that conveyed copra to the boat landing and corpses to the cemetery—a use upon which my friend Earl Schenck commented with some irony when that same vehicle bore him, weak with long and well-nigh desperate illness, to the shore for transfer to Tahiti. But at Tepuka, transportation was strictly by leg power, and freight was carried on human shoulders.

The same dependence upon the most simple and direct relation between the human body and its natural environment persisted throughout life on the island. Its people were free of both the comforts and the harassments of Western civilization.

During the war, when unaccustomed habits of thrift were imposed suddenly on a national economy built upon waste, I remembered Tepuka, whose economy is built upon thrift. As I cut off the tops of tin cans and pressed the cylinders flat that the metal might be reclaimed, I thought of Kararo, our landlord at Tepuka, who exacted, as part of our rent, all used tins from our commissary.

There was no means, there, of salvaging the metal, but Kararo buried the tins around his coconut trees, in the belief that as the metal rusted away into the soil it would strengthen the trees.

Tins with removable tight covers, such as contain coffee, were more valuable. When Kararo wasn't looking we gave them to other natives, who brought us eggs in return. Later we would see the coffee cans lowered on cords into the well to draw up water. They saved labor; a two-pound can would bring up a good deal more water at one dipping than the coconut shell that it replaced, although it would not last as long. To this day I throw away such a tin only with a secret qualm, remembering that at Tepuka it would be an article of wealth.

Larger metal containers, such as the rectangular tins in which gasoline was stored for the motor boats auxiliary to the *Islander*, had a definite trade value. One of them, in good condition, was worth a chicken at almost any island in the Tuamotu. Water dipped from the well was poured into these containers and carried, two of them slung on a pole balanced across the shoulders, to the coral bathing enclosures near the homes.

Troughs hollowed out of logs, which were used for this purpose before gasoline cans became available, were more pictur-

esque and more durable, but heavier to carry and laborious to make.

Kararo also stipulated, when we occupied his son's house, that all nails we might drive into the frame of poles should be left there. Nails were scarce at Tepuka. They were less useful for building purposes than among us, for they rusted away quickly in the tropical, oceanic climate. A house lashed together with cords of sennit, or with the pliable bark of certain trees, would fall apart less quickly than one in which nails were used. But a nail made a useful tool. And a nail driven into a coconut tree was believed to give the tree the strength of its iron.

Early in our sojourn on the island, Kararo was dismayed to see me toss away a drinking-coconut after I had drained its juice. "Don't throw away food," he admonished. "If you can't eat the pulp, give it to my pigs." Coconuts are the most plentiful commodity at Tepuka, but their profusion is not wasted.

There was no place, in that economy, for a garbage collector. The few scraps that remained from a meal nourished fowl or swine. Clothes were mended, remended, and worn until they fell apart irreparably. Luxuries were few and prized according to their rarity; necessities were at a minimum.

While on a visit to Tepoto, we invited Tauhoa, our hostess at that island, to dinner aboard ship. As the Tahitian cook scraped up the leavings to throw them into the sea, Tauhoa, shocked by such wastefulness, stopped him. Gathering the scraps into an empty tin, she explained, "I'll take them home for the children."

This horror of waste permeated Tepukan life. Another day at Tepoto I found Tauhoa's brother, Pahoa, skinning a cat that had been killed by a dog. "Are you going to stuff it?" I asked, stupidly. "I'm going to cook it," he replied. "It would be a shame to waste the meat."

Such is the economy of a land where nothing usable is thrown

away. The shell of the turtle becomes a container for food or water or a vehicle for hauling sand; its bones are made into tools. The husk of the coconut is a source of cordage; dried, it is tinder and fuel; the shell becomes a cup, or a source of charcoal. The leaves are building material. Fish bones are used as surgical instruments, needles, awls. Having little, the Tuamotuans make the most of what they have.

A woman of Tepuka has, at most, two dresses of cheap cotton, in gaudy patterns. More often, she has only one, and wears a wrap-around *pareu* while she washes the dress. She has never worn shoes. She would like to have a pair, to wear to church, as a matter of vanity, although they would hurt her feet. She can have as many hats as she wants, for she makes them of strips of cured pandanus leaf. There is no incentive, however, to have more than one at a time, for the style never changes and all hats are alike. At least, they look alike to the casual observer, although I understand there are subtle differences in the detail of weaving that distinguish one maker's hats from another. In Tahiti a man who had lived at Tepuka glanced at the hat I wore and remarked, "Tauhoa made it." He was right. If she wants a handbag, she makes a fairly durable one of the same material. Or she can make a temporary one of coconut leaves in less than three minutes.

As for jewelry, she thinks herself fortunate if she has a pair of earrings. We did a thriving business in exchange of gifts at Tepuka, while our stock of dime-store jewelry lasted, receiving food, or hats, or baskets, washing of our clothes, teaching of chants, dances, and traditions. Tepuka differed from most of the Tuamotu in that jewelry of any style was accepted. At conservative Vahitahi, only large round ear ornaments, looking like curtain rings, satisfied the local taste.

Most popular of all our gifts were scented soap and perfume. The latter was especially prized, because it was unobtainable in the Tuamotu. The French colonial authorities had prohibited

it, as a sequel to prohibition of alcoholic liquor. It seemed the men, when they couldn't get rum, had taken to drinking perfume. For cosmetics, a Tepuka woman gets along with coconut oil, diluted with sea water and scented by steeping flower petals in it. I never learned how they prevented their hair from seeming greasy when anointed with this preparation. The effect, however, was agreeable. At Vahitahi some women used a sandalwood-scented talcum powder, obtained from a Chinese store.

Earrings were not merely clipped on, but worn through holes in the ear lobes. The piercing of a girl's ears formerly was accompanied by a ceremony corresponding to that which accompanies the slitting of a boy's foreskin when he reaches puberty. The ceremony for the girls is now neglected, but we collected some of the chants associated with it. Tuamotuan men whom we knew were not, however, tattooed as are the Samoans in their manhood rite, although there had been some tattooing in the Tuamotu in ancient times.

Household furnishings consist of mats that the housewife herself has made—a large floor mat, either of coconut leaves, or the finer and more durable product of pandanus, and any number of smaller pandanus mats on which to sleep, or on which to sit or recline in waking hours. There are no chairs, no table, no bed. The only piece of wooden furniture is the family chest in which the written copy of the genealogy and any other valuables are kept.

There is no stove. Cooking is done, usually by men, in the yard, and the meal is eaten there, unless rain drives the family indoors. The Tepukan housewife has never seen a refrigerator, likely never heard of one. She knows nothing of ice. Food is commonly eaten the same day it is obtained. It is possible to keep a little of it overnight, hanging it in a basket from a bough or placing it, in a tight container—another use for our coffee cans—on a platform of stones. At some islands, tridacna shellfish are strung and dried in the sun, then worn around the neck

as both an ornament and a food supply on which to nibble. The women of Reao are particularly addicted to this practical, if unaesthetic, device. The dried shellfish send forth a powerful odor; you can smell a Reao woman clear across the rim of the atoll, if the wind is right. But, on the whole, there is no storage problem, because in general practice food is seldom stored.

Dishes are rare. Food is usually served on platters of green leaves, which are thrown away after the meal. Food is eaten with the hands; there are no forks or spoons. Meat and fish are usually cooked until ready to fall apart, but if necessary they can be cut with the men's copra knives. Soft foods, such as the jellylike meat of the immature coconut, are scooped up with a chip cut from the shell or husk of the nut. Nowadays there are a few pots for boiling, but Polynesian cooking is traditionally a matter of wrapping the food in leaves and burying it with hot stones. Or, in the case of small fish or flat, thin loaves of bread, the leaf-wrapped food is laid on a slab of stone over an open fire.

A Tuamotuan woman would like to have more clothes, for feminine vanity knows no geographical or racial boundaries. But it might be difficult for her to understand, although she might envy, the American woman's numerous complete outfits, matching in color and style and continually replaced with our frequent changes of mode. In our country, vanity is fostered and exploited by manufacturers and dealers who spend huge sums to create demand for their products. This is one of the factors that keeps workmen employed and our lavish economy operating.

Every so often the inherent falsity of our economy becomes apparent, when something goes wrong and large numbers of people no longer can buy with the requisite prodigality. Lack of demand closes factories; banks fail; stores go out of business; millions of people are unable to get work. This disaster thus

far has been temporary. At least a partial recovery has always come. We can not be sure that it always will.

Tepuka suffers from the economic depressions of the "civilized" world only in so far as it has come to depend on that world for a very few things, without which they could get along but which are more useful or less laborious to use than those they can produce themselves.

During the war, they complained that they were running out of clothes. In the infrequent letters that came through to me, they wrote that could not even get *pareu*—those two-meter-length strips of brightly flowered cotton cloth that have replaced the ancient *reu* woven of pandanus leaves.

This should have been no hardship in that climate, but they are accustomed to clothes, few and scanty as these may be, and the shortage disturbed them somewhat. I could have reminded them that their ancestors got along without imported garments for many generations. The Bishop Museum has among its exhibits a *reu* from Tepuka, so finely woven that it might be worn without discomfort. The ancient crafts have deteriorated, but they could be revived.

They were short of matches, too. But they still knew the use of the fire-plow, the wedge of wood in the pith groove of a split branch, although, as Tuata said when he demonstrated the process to me, "It's a lot of grief."

We tend to be too much concerned with having the latest gadget; with having a more elaborate house and car than our neighbors. We tend to read too many books superficially rather than a few books thoroughly, or to read reviews of books rather than the books themselves. Of late, we scan picture magazines, too much in a hurry to read at all. We get a broad, but superficial and garbled, view of the world around us. What we lack most is leisure for thought.

Few of us would willingly give up the comparative ease and plenty of our way of life, even though that ease is precarious and that plenty a burden, and both unevenly distributed. We could not if we would, for primitive simplicity would support only a small fraction of our population. And most of us are no longer fit for such a life, even if it were necessary or wholly desirable. Our problem is to make the best of the kind of life we have. With courage, we can sweep away some of its clutter.

Some of us are already realizing that a few possessions, rightly used, are more precious than many. The trend is already to comparative simplicity—smaller houses, less furniture in them, less lavish decoration. Gadgetry, however, is more rampant then ever. Button-pressing, to be sure, has its benefits, as long as the buttons continue to work. The question is, how we use the time and energy they are supposed to save us. It profits us little to have machines to wash dishes and clothes and feed the furnace, if we spend the leisure thus gained in listening to soap operas, or to have power-driven wheels to transport us, if we use them merely in aimless gadding about. We are too much concerned with speed, anyway; we spend too much of our lives in a hurry. Ants are always in a hurry, too, and where does it get them? Observing the amount of waste motion in an ant-run, I am forced to conclude that the Biblical sage overestimated the efficiency, if not the industry, of the species.

Our wasteful civilization has thus far justified itself, in a material way, although it may not always continue to do so. It has twice in recent years justified itself in a military sense, although its military victories were basically due to our having greater resources than our opponents. Japan was able to challenge us, and with a fair degree of success for a time, solely by virtue of that country's practice of the thrifty economy that we had rejected.

That struggle, at the same time, produced the first revival of thrift, on a national scale, of which we had been capable in a long time. We salvaged metal, paper, rubber; we made old

clothes, old household appliances, carry us through a period of scarcity; we accepted restrictions, if relatively mild ones, in diet. These were emergency expedients, contrary to the usual course of our economy. They were good for us, if only as a reminder that not all of the world lives on our lavish scale.

To the thoughtful, that brief revival of thrift could also be a reminder that we ourselves may not be able to keep up the pace forever. It is questionable whether we can continue to waste and not eventually run out of resources. Just now, it is cheaper to use new metal than to reclaim the old. It is quite possible that some time there will be no more new metal. Paper is salvaged, to some extent, for re-use, but most of it is burned. Forests are cut down faster than they can grow up. The very soil wears out, is blown away in dust or washed into the sea by erosion. Some remedial measures are being undertaken, but on the whole we are probably luxuriating in a false prosperity, living on our capital resources more than conserving them.

None of this is new information. It has been known for a long time, and every so often some writer reminds us of it. But to a tremendous extent, waste goes on.

To an observer with no claim to learning in social science, this is how the situation looks: the people of the United States have been fortunately situated, and they have formed the habit of imagining that their fortunate situation would continue forever. Some three centuries and a half ago, which is a short time in history, they began to occupy a large and sparsely populated continent, which had vast and hitherto largely unused resources. Many of them being enterprising people, they used these resources lavishly, if not always wisely, to build the richest material culture the world has known.

For a time, abundance was real. As the country fills up with people, and the resources become depleted, it begins to be illusory. Already we can not sustain ourselves in the style to which we have become accustomed, without selling large quanti-

ties of goods to people in other countries who become progressively less able to buy from us.

Thus one factor in our periodic depressions is the lack of equilibrium between American riches and the poverty of other countries. There is something artificial about this proud American prosperity. There was once in our history a question whether the nation could exist half slave and half free. There remains the question whether the world can exist less than one half rich and more than one half poor.

To what does this lead? The late Ignaz Friedman summed up one view of it in a conversation with me in Honolulu many years ago. "The rest of the world," he said, "can not raise its standard of living. The American standard of living will inevitably come down."

The American standard is even higher now than it was when he spoke those words. But that is no guarantee that it will always remain so.

We continue to exhaust our soil, destroy our forests, drain our oil, use up our minerals and throw them away, and to fill the land with more and more people to consume the dwindling resources. Science continually finds new ways of postponing disaster, but the limit is bound to be reached some time.

The fundamental trouble of the world today is one to which many writers have called attention, but about which very little is being done. It is simply that there are too many people.

The real cause of most wars and most depressions, the real cause of most poverty, is that the world is becoming overcrowded, in proportion to its available resources. This is not a new problem, but it is a larger one than it was. In the past, nature tended to preserve a rough balance. With the growth of civilization, we interfere more and more with nature, and the balance tends to be uncorrected. Nature will see to it that it is corrected, eventually, and that correction is going to be very painful for all concerned.

It is obvious that no more people can live in a country than that country can feed, unless by encroaching on their neighbors. That encroachment is only a temporary solution, for it is equally obvious that no more people can live in the world than the world can feed. So what? They starve, or die in epidemics, or kill one another in wars and riots. And for every one that dies, two more are born, to starve, or fight, or sicken.

Populations have always tended to approach the greatest number the resources of the area could support at a minimum subsistence level. Originally this was confined to support by direct relation of the human being with soil and sea, as it still is at Tepuka. Later, industry and trade made it possible for larger populations to exist, and improved techniques made it possible to produce enough so that many people who produced nothing could subsist by nonproductive occupations. The basic formula is still valid. The limits have been extended, but there are still limits, although no one now can say definitely what those limits are.

In ancient times, populations increased less rapidly than now. Life was harsher. The unfit dropped out early, and the survivors did not live as long as now. When populations increased beyond the capacity of the resources of one area, there was still room elsewhere in the world. People moved on to exploit the resources of new areas. That is the way the Polynesians solved the problem, in pre-discovery times when their rate of natural increase had not been reduced by such factors as disease from foreign sources and the shock of the clash between their own and foreign cultures.

Our people did likewise, for a long time. The history of the United States, as every one knows, has been one of moving on, pushing back the frontiers and occupying new areas. That method worked very well as long as there was room to expand.

But our continent, and the world in general, continue to fill up with inhabitants. While there are still considerable areas

unoccupied or sparsely settled, most of them are unsuitable for human occupation. Some of them can be made so. That also is only a postponement. Some time all the areas possible for human occupation will be occupied.

On a national basis, some areas have long been overcrowded. Even in early times, when the world was less populated, those who had more abundant resources than others had to fight to keep them. It is obvious that the United States, having greater resources—while they last—and a more abundant material life, for the time being, than any other nation, occupies a hazardous position, in the light of history.

This situation becomes more acute as population on a world scale approaches the saturation point. In our state of humane enlightenment, we keep people alive longer, save a greater number of weakly endowed babies, preserve more weaklings and misfits, than was formerly possible. This is a dangerous procedure, from a eugenic point of view, but few humane persons would advocate abandoning it. Even in countries where the natural checks to population continue to operate, such as China and India, there is still a huge surplus of humanity. Millions starve, although we, in our relative abundance, seldom think of this.

There is only one logical and sensible solution, and that is to cut back at the source—produce fewer people. It is obvious that limitation of births, on a world scale, is the only long-range solution. It would have to be on a world scale, eventually at least, because of the jealousies and suspicions among nations.

Opposition to limitation of births, however such opposition may be imbedded in religious doctrine or rationalized as defense of human liberties, is essentially a survival from primitive times, when the tribe needed man power to defend itself against other tribes, or to use efficiently the resources of its territory. The last survivor of an Indian tribe in California went to live with the whites, explaining that without a sizable group of tribesmen to work together on such a project, for example, as the utilization

of a slain deer, he could not subsist in Indian fashion. Similarly, each nation wants its population to increase, as a basis of industrial and military strength. But what does it profit to have a large population, if you can't feed it?

Nature has its own way of controlling population, whether human or animal: famine and pestilence, to which man added war, which in turn fosters nature's methods. We do what we can to circumvent the first two. As for war, we make it more and more destructive, more and more conducive to pestilence and famine.

When society consisted of scattered tribes emerging from an animal-like existence, it was to man's advantage to increase, for strength of numbers. That was long ago, and the world has narrowed. We can still push back the frontiers for a while—those of geography and climate, those of science and industry. But the world and its history turn back upon themselves, and so, eventually, must even science and technology come the full circle. Man must either limit his numbers, or suffer in aggravated form the harsh methods of nature. In the long run, no more people will live than the world can feed.

The flaw in voluntary limitation, as students of eugenics persistently point out, is that it is practiced by the wrong people. It is mainly the more intelligent citizens who limit their families, while those less endowed with intellect and ability recklessly continue to reproduce in quantity. Heredity isn't everything, but it is probably true, as the eugenic alarmists insist, that, by and large, this disparity does tend to vitiate the race. If civilization is to survive, this matter will have to be taken in hand from the viewpoint of community and world welfare.

Education makes headway, if slowly, in this matter, although it has to contend with doctrinal tabu and a tremendous amount of ignorance and improvidence. Economic conditions are perhaps having more effect than anything else. But progress is pitifully slow.

Voluntary limitation is, of course, preferable. On a sufficiently large scale to be effective, it seems impossible of fulfillment. On the other hand, compulsory restrictions, of any kind, are notoriously subject to abuse. Who is to say who shall have children, and how many? The world is not yet ready for either voluntary or compulsory limitation, but it will have to come to one or the other, eventually.

Encouragement of limitation of population should be one of the first concerns of any federation of nations covering a large area. World federation is another ideal, unattainable at present, to which humanity eventually will have to come. The most logical objection to it, from an American point of view, is that if it meant anything it would involve world sharing of resources. We would have to give up some of the relative luxury we now have; a world average standard of living would be lower than that which we now enjoy. If population were adjusted to available resources, all could live comfortably, but humanity has a long way to go before it will be capable of such an adjustment.

This is a problem that at present concerns us more than it does Polynesians, who, in many islands, have not recovered from the depopulation that followed contact with the European-American world. Where population is growing, as at Tepuka, there are, in most cases, still unoccupied islands to which a surplus can migrate. Polynesian women assert that they can control conception, and that they can have as few children as they wish. Their methods, however, are not such as would be recognized by our medical profession as effective.

We are not yet through with wars and economic depressions. It is fairly obvious that civilization, as we know it, is heading for a smash from which it will take a long time to recover. This has been said before, and the great smash has not come. But, in historical perspective, it is likely that the major wars and major depressions of recent history can be viewed as manifestations of a single process, a series of convulsions, each more severe than

the preceding one, and a series which is not yet completed. On the physical side, it proceeds from overcrowding with respect to available resources; on the spiritual side, from excessive preoccupation with material gain.

As far as our own country is concerned, our relatively fortunate economic position constitutes an increasing hazard as we lose some of the military advantage we have had in the past. Hitherto there has been time, when we were threatened, to bring our superior resources into military use while relatively undisturbed on our home grounds. In the two recent major wars, it took a year or more for the United States to get going. Our allies stood the enemy off while we geared our ponderous war machine and set it in motion. From now on, there is going to be less time for this. While direction of defense will have to be left to the experts in that field, to a lay observer it looks as if the United States will have to be permanently more nearly ready than it has been before, more able to act quickly.

Meanwhile, as long as our precarious civilization endures, we, as individuals, can make the best of it by living within our means and by refusing to drive ourselves beyond the limits of safety in an effort to keep up with our neighbors or surpass them. We need to develop more capacity for contentment. It has been asserted that contentment is incompatible with ambition. One could reply that ambition has been overpraised. There is, however, more than one kind of ambition. Much of our boasted material progress was made possible by the researches of men and women of inquiring mind, who were absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, rather than for material gain, people who, if their talents had turned in another direction for fulfillment, might have been poets or philosophers. It is probable, too, that some of the rumors are true that potentially far-reaching discoveries have been suppressed by another kind of ambition, because they conflicted with established interests. It is doubtful that discontent fosters progress as much as some

authorities contend. It should be possible to temper the aggressiveness of our race with a capacity to enjoy what we have.

In our own pattern of culture, economic competition is the dominant motive, and success is defined, for us, largely in terms of that motive. It will be helpful to us to remember that this is not the only possible or "normal" dominant motive, that other satisfactions, other expressions, are possible.

Our tendency is to overemphasize this feature of our culture, as some societies have overemphasized war, or religion, or some other element of their culture. Attitudes being subject to change with the generations, it is conceivable that our present preoccupation with material "success" may come to be regarded, at some future time, as an aberration, much as we now regard medieval Europe's preoccupation with religion, or the Aztecs' obsession with human sacrifice.

Success should mean, for a reasonable human being, the living of a useful and contented life. It should include capacity to enjoy simple beauty. It should include an element of helpfulness to others. It should mean an integrated, not a confused and driven, life. Success in an occupation should mean doing the work the best you know how, with the old-fashioned craftsman's pride in doing a good job. Social success should mean being liked and respected as a human being, not for one's authority or possessions. It should mean being tolerant and kindly and calm, not prone to worry and irritability. We should beware of too much ambition, lest it degenerate into greed. True success is the capacity to enjoy life. Many a man who is accounted "successful" in business or industry is a pitiful failure, in human terms—driving and driven, ulcerated, arteriosclerotic, leisureless, feared by his employees and hated with the hate that grows from fear. All any one should ask is a reasonably comfortable living, in conditions of maximum freedom compatible with the rights of others, and moderate leisure. Anything beyond that is superfluous. Pursuit of material "success" is habit forming and destructive of

body and spirit. In the midst of making a living, we need to take time to live. It is so soon too late.

Material progress is double edged. It gives us comforts and luxuries, swifter and easier ways of doing things—and it makes most of us work harder at routine jobs to keep up with it. Few of us are our own masters in the working hours that absorb the greater part of our waking lives. The most we can do is to use wisely such leisure as remains—in the widening of our mental horizons, the deepening of our insight, in cultivation of the capacities within ourselves for simple enjoyment.

Polynesians, in their own environment, have the advantage of us in this respect. Remembering their ways, it is clear what our own aim should be—toward a more tranquil, less competitive life, cultivating contentment rather than aggrandizement, shifting the emphasis to spiritual and intellectual, rather than material values, establishing kindness and reasonableness as the major qualities to be honored and emulated for fulfillment of our being and for the dignity of our common humanity.

17. *Rumor in the Sky*

As we walked out in the streets of Tepuka one morning, early in the course of our sojourn on the island, our neighbors pointed to the sky, which was clouded all around the horizon, and most thickly clouded over Tepoto, the smaller island across the channel to the west.

This did not mean rain, they said. And indeed, rain did not fall that day, or any day for some time. "It is the *ruma*," they explained. Maono Arai, chief of the two islands, was about to embark in his canoe for a visit to Tepoto; the *ruma* was a sign in the sky that the people of Tepoto might know their chief was on his way to them.

Maono's major movements, they said, were usually accompanied by some such heavenly symbol. For Maono, being a chief, was sacred—partly by virtue of his office and partly by the chiefly quality residing in him as a person. He was considered to be in closer rapport with the divine powers than an ordinary man, and those powers thus took note of his activities.

This is a common Polynesian concept. In Hawaii, the rainbow was the heavenly sign of royalty. It arched over the birth and death of chiefs, and often signaled their whereabouts during life. It was on the lunar rainbow, "the path of the gods," that the twin deities, Iolani and Iwalani, descended to earth. The death of a royal personage was recognized by "the rain of the chiefs," in which the gods wept at the passing of their kin. As late as 1921, I saw the red fish swarm into Honolulu harbor,

presaging the death of Prince Kuhio, and a few days later, followed his catafalque through rain and saw the rainbow glow above the tomb in Nuuanu Valley where he was laid.

These signs and portents are accepted as visible manifestations, or symbols, of the spiritual force that Polynesians—and ethnologists after them—call mana. The word has been adopted into the English language because there is no other single word which expresses its meaning. Its definitions, indeed, run to length and some confusion.

The concept of mana has been defined in terms of "immanence," the in-dwelling spirit, "the influence of psychic rapport," "the principle of procreative power derived from an ultimate source and diffused, transmitted, and manifested through the universe," and so on. Most of the definitions are as elusive as mana itself, although they follow, in general, what appears to have been the interpretation by the Polynesians themselves.

For the purposes of this discussion, there need be nothing mysterious about mana, except in the sense that life itself is a mystery. Probably all of us have potentialities far in advance of our actual accomplishment, and the manifestations of mana that are difficult to understand may be only stirrings toward those wider potentialities. For the purposes of this discussion, mana is simply a consciousness of personal integrity.

Both Polynesian and non-Polynesian scholars have spoken of mana as being both inborn and acquired. Inborn mana may be understood as a quality of character proceeding from heredity. Acquired mana is the result of study and practice. Both may be lost by improper conduct or by neglect of ceremonies.

People at Tepuka told us that in recent years the *ruma* had not invariably accompanied their chief's voyagings. They attributed this to a degree of loss of mana—not on the part of the chief himself, but through neglect of "the ancient wisdom" by the community of which he was the head and symbol. Mana resides not only in individuals, but also in the community made up of

those individuals. The old people said the community mana had depreciated somewhat, as the "smart" young people aped foreign ways derived from Tahiti and neglected and despised the traditional lore as old-fashioned.

They intimated that the appearance of the *ruma* shortly after our arrival on the island was a sign of a revival of mana, brought about by our interest in the traditions and observances of the island people and our stimulation of those who still knew these things, to recall them. Under our gentle prodding, the old men chanted ancient sacred epics, invoked the ancient gods, and the old women danced stiff, awkward old-time dances that the young people had not learned. Moreover, we were recording, on crude apparatus, the chants of both young and old, to be preserved in the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, which the Tepuka people understood, from our description, to be a *fare vananga*—a House of Wisdom—a great storehouse of such knowledge from all Polynesia, as indeed it is. When Maono departed on a longer voyage, to Tahiti, he urged his countrymen, in his farewell address, to give us freely all they knew of the ancient learning, that it might be so preserved, for at Tepuka, he observed sadly, it was "sinking away, as water sinks in sand."

The gods were pleased, and hung their sign in the sky over Maono's going and coming; we ourselves were in a sense the heirs of those chiefs and priests of antiquity who had composed the chants we collected, or who had received them, as Mokio-Ariki did, from "the spirits in the Great Darkness."

I define mana, in the Polynesian sense, as the bit of God that is in every human being. That interpretation will do very well in a non-Polynesian sense, too, but it is literally appropriate in Polynesia. For, as I understand the concept, all mankind—or at least all who amount to anything—are descended from the gods. The genealogies commonly begin with primal forces—Chaos, the Night, the Great Foundation, the Expanse of Sky, the Light—pass through the names of more personal gods, and

gradually come down to identifiable legendary or historical human beings. It follows that if all men are descended from the gods, something of godhead remains in them. This is so, even in view of certain creation myths that represent man as having been moulded by Tangaroa from sand. For Tangaroa breathed the breath of his life into Heap of Sand, the first man, and that divine breath continues to pass in and out of the lungs of his descendants to this day. Maono himself had received the dying breath of his father into his own lungs, thus absorbing his heritage of mana, and he had slept on his father's grave for a week, communing in dreams with his father's spirit.

If some individuals have more mana—stronger character, we might say—than others, it is doubtless because their descent from the gods is more direct, and through a more illustrious line of chiefs and priests. Mana is obviously partly real and partly fictitious. A chief, like Maono, has a good heredity to start with; he is trained in his youth to believe in his mana, and he is instructed in the wisdom and the ceremonies that preserve it. The mere fact of his noble lineage makes him conscious of his spiritual strength, and at the same time makes the community conscious of it, and leads his fellow citizens to expect him to live up to his heritage. Maono is a chief because he has a powerful mana, and he has a powerful mana because he is a chief. Maono is actually an able man, but it is fairly obvious that a good deal of his mana is a matter of confidence—Maono's confidence in himself, and his people's confidence in him. It is a matter of belief. In that sense you or I or any one of a reasonable degree of character can develop mana, even though we can not expect it to be recognized by signs and portents in the sky.

The practices that our own world would regard as superstitious, surrounding mana in Polynesia, serve their purpose psychologically, by strengthening the individual's faith in himself. They are outward symbols of an inner truth. When Maono drew into his lungs his father's last breath, and when he slept

upon the grave, he was confirming, in his mind, the training he had received from his father since childhood.

We, too, surround important events in our lives with symbol and ceremony. Our christenings, weddings, funerals partake of the same linking of human affairs with something conceived to be above and beyond them, and their importance is thereby exalted and confirmed in our minds.

In the Polynesian mind, mana is inextricably associated with the supernatural. From a broader view, it is not necessarily so, any more than a marriage is necessarily more valid, in a human sense, when it is solemnized with religious rites. There is a value in the ritual observance, but it is not the essence of the event. There is a value in the supernatural associations of mana, for those who believe in them, but these are not the essence of mana.

I regard mana as essentially strength of personality, strength of character, manifested and maintained by self-confidence and by a strong consciousness of one's own inner worth and integrity of spirit. Conversely, it is balanced by recognition of the inner worth and integrity of spirit of others.

In a larger sense, mana is a state of harmony—harmony of the forces within oneself and harmony with natural forces. In our own language, it is approximately what is meant by integration of personality.

Belief in the immanence of the Divine within the human, belief in the power to tap the accumulated wisdom and personal magnetism of one's ancestors, and belief in the feasibility of communing with them and receiving their advice and help, strengthen this confidence and promote this harmony, in the Polynesian mind. Our own minds, having largely rejected the supernatural, should not need these props to maintain confidence and integrity.

From a naturalistic point of view, mana is a consciousness of inner dignity, presupposing and fostering both self-confidence and self-control. On that foundation is built a structure of what

may be called personal magnetism and there follows a degree of control over others. Maono governs his people not by arbitrary physical power, but by influence of will and by the respect that is promoted by his own self-confidence and self-control. His influence is augmented, of course, by his people's belief in his mana. Probably they imagine him to be a stronger character than he is. But if he were incompetent, or corrupt, unjust, or lacked confidence in himself, they would no longer believe in his mana. Chiefs have been deposed for such reasons. If a chief's mana deteriorates, that of the community decays with it; the gods are displeased.

Under the French colonial government, Maono was nominally an elected official. His title was "president of the district council." But the "election" was a formality, to satisfy the representatives of the French Republic in Tahiti. As long as Maono kept his mana, or until he chose to retire, he would continue to be re-elected, and after his death or retirement his son Maono the Younger, who was already in training for the office, would be elected to succeed him. Maono the Younger, who was twenty or less at the time of our visit, had mana, palpable in his dignified and confident bearing and an aura of character that we could sense at once.

Under French colonial law, Maono presided over the council, and the council was supposed to govern the "district." As a matter of fact, that was approximately what happened. The council met, usually together with the entire adult citizenry, talked over whatever problem came before it, and informally decided the matter. Maono, however, was a major influence in arriving at those decisions. What he wanted done was usually done. Such was the people's confidence in him, that if he had been disposed to give orders arbitrarily, it is quite likely that as long as they were not obviously inequitable or extreme, they would have been obeyed.

Teuri, the "second chief," or what might be described as

Maono's adjutant, tried to exert some such authority in Maono's absence. Teuri was an immigrant from Raiatea who had acquired citizenship at Tepuka by marriage. Because of his wider experience, acquired through travel and through having grown up closer to foreign influence, he had acquired a position in the community disproportionate to his actual ability and to his degree of mana. He was something of an orator, and, in the absence of a priest, conducted lay readings in the thatched house that adjoined the unused Church of the Sacred Heart. Teuri was ambitious. He borrowed my typewriter and nearly ruined it by leaving it uncovered for weeks where the dust blew into his house from the street. He tried to learn French from a Tahitian-French phrase book he borrowed from Emory.

Shortly after Maono left for Tahiti, Teuri drew up a series of regulations for the use of the community well, and typed them out on my long-suffering portable. This was a remarkable document, each clause of which began with the words *Eiaha roa*—the Polynesian equivalent of *streng verboten*. It was "strictly forbidden," among other things, for pigs to approach within so many yards of the well, for children to climb on the coping, or for any one to go to the well for water after six o'clock in the evening. These restrictions were quite unrealistic—pigs, which ranged the island freely as they foraged for food, were notoriously unamenable to human control; children rarely went near the well in any case but no one would have thought of restraining them if they did, and there was no way any one on the island except Emory, whose watch was still running, could determine when the hour of six arrived. The first day the regulations were in effect, Teuri, himself, arriving home late from fishing, violated the six o'clock rule. After the first few days, no one paid any further attention to any of Teuri's laws for the use of the well. Teuri was ambitious and "smart"; he thought he had advanced ideas, but he did not have the real prestige to exert authority unless it coincided with community sentiment.

His mana was not of the quality of Maono's. If it had been, he would not have thought of promulgating those unworkable *verbotens*.

The real authority on the island, during Maono's absence in Tahiti, was my foster father, Tehau. His title was *mutoi*, or peace officer. To the French colonial authorities, he was the district gendarme. He had no police force under him, but was actually a kind of sheriff, who could deputize a posse. Tehau, himself a descendant of illustrious chiefs, was a man of considerable mana, and his advice carried as much weight as that of any one, next to Maono and Maono's father-in-law, the aged Temae, and possibly Maono's brother Toriu, whose specialty, however, was medicine rather than administration.

Paunu, one of our closest friends in the two islands, had mana that I estimated to be the equal of that of Maono himself, but Paunu spent most of his time on Tepoto, where I think he served as a sort of deputy for Maono. It is likely enough that before the consolidation of the four clans into the modern district of Napuka, his ancestors may have been chiefs or priests of one of the divisions.

All these men—Maono, Temae, Tehau, Toriu in his special way, Maono the Younger in potential—radiated mana. None of them was ostentatious, aggressive, self-important; all of them were rather quiet and unassuming. But when one met them, one felt in them large and potentially commanding personality, with deep reserves of dignity and self-confidence, proceeding from an active consciousness of their own worth and of integrity of spirit.

This must have been true of Polynesian chiefs in general. Even where social organization had become more complex, developing a feudal system, with royal power based partly on military force, the imponderables still exerted influence. Even in the old days of absolute authority, in such islands as Hawaii and Tahiti, a chief who lacked mana would not last long. He

would be overcome by some chief of stronger character, or, on occasion, liquidated by his own subjects.

Even in Hawaii, after prolonged attrition of Polynesian ways, mana still operates. Certain descendants of chiefs, who no longer have any military power and who have no political authority, still exert a great deal of influence and are regarded with respect approaching reverence. This is partly a lingering vestige of the old-time veneration of chiefs, partly recognition of ability, and probably mostly a reflection of their own consciousness of worth. They respect themselves, hence they command respect from others.

If mana can be likened, for the sake of exposition, to a kind of electric energy, such people as Maono and Paunu may be said to be highly charged with it, and their less impressive fellow citizens, carriers of the same force but in lower voltage. The outstanding personalities may be compared to an example of superior mana in our own legendry, that of Sir Galahad, who had "the strength of ten" because his "heart was pure." All of King Arthur's knights were supposed to be brave and resourceful and mighty in combat, in varying degree. The mana departed from the Round Table community when Sir Lancelot, one of the most powerful among them, proved untrue to his trust—an example, in our own ancient world, of loss of mana through misconduct.

It is consciousness of mana, to whatever degree they believe they have that quality, that gives Polynesians that dignity that so many observers have remarked. Not that they are a solemn people; on the contrary, they are predominantly merry. Their dignity is of the kind that can sustain itself in gaiety as well as in gravity. They can be, by our standards, downright bawdy, and still be dignified.

It is this consciousness of inner worth and spiritual power that enables them to "walk gently" and also to act quickly at the proper time. And it is this that gives them their serenity.

Mana was associated, at Tepuka and elsewhere, with some rather puzzling manifestations of what was called, in this country, a few years ago, extra-sensory perception. Mana, in the Polynesian mind, kept people more or less in touch with the spirit world, and was sustained, to some extent, by this association. That was how people often could make a pretty accurate guess as to what was happening a long way off.

For instance, when the cutter *Tiare Tahiti*, on which I was to return from Tepuka to Papeete, was several weeks overdue at Tepuka, and we had had no word from her, people told me, with as much confidence as if they had just read it in a newspaper, "Your ship has been delayed by storm. It is lying off Amanu. It will be here in another week."

A few days later, as I was reclining on a mat in a neighbor's house, after a hearty meal of roasted bread and earth-baked octopus tentacles, a large spider moved deliberately toward me. I moved to brush it aside, for I had not yet learned that spiders are the shadows of the god Tu, but my host stopped me. "Do not hurt the *pungaviri*. It is trying to tell you that your ship is near. With good luck the *Tiare Tahiti* will arrive tomorrow."

As I left my neighbor's house, I met Temae, who was returning from fishing. "The sky has been overcast, without rain, for three days," he pointed out. "This means that Maono is on his way home."

While neither the spider nor the clouds could know anything about the whereabouts of our ship, or of Maono, in some way the natives knew, or guessed right. The very next day after the spider brought its "message," the *Tiare Tahiti* arrived. The natives' mysterious information regarding her course, and the cause of her delay, was approximately correct. Maono was not aboard, but he was indeed on his way home; the schooner *Vaite*, on which he was a passenger, had called at Makemo a day or two before the *Tiare Tahiti*. Delay in his arrival was explained by another resident of Tepuka who said the *Vaite* had skipped

Tepuka on this voyage, leaving Maono at Raroia, to be picked up by the next schooner coming our way. This information, too, proved later to be correct.

Some of this may have been only Polynesian weather-wisdom, with experience of what an island-wise skipper would do in the circumstances, although I can not explain how they could know what the weather was at a distance of several hundreds of miles.

I have mentioned the *ringoringo*, the bird-spirit that, when summoned by chanting, brings news of dear ones far away, and the invocation of the ancestral spirits to show, in dreams, where the next day's turtle will be found. Observance of these ceremonies maintains individual and community mana, and at the same time is a reflection and result of it. The real function of both the turtle dream and the summoning of the *ringoringo* is to give comfort and confidence to those who practice these rites. The fisherman, having had his dream, goes forth confident of a catch, and he is more alert and efficient because of it. Those who invoke the *ringoringo* are visibly solaced, not only by the supposed message, but by the act of chanting in itself. And when they chant the *fangu tutangi* to comfort the spirits of the dead, they are comforting their own minds as well. Believing that the ancestral spirits, thus solaced, will be watchful over the living and help them in their need, the chanters go about their tasks with heightened confidence, and thus perform them more successfully.

When Toriu, the medicine man, treated me for a blood infection (whether streptococcus, staphylococcus, or some other dangerous organism, he could not say, for he had never heard of them), he used herbs—the root and bark of Morinda citrifolia, the sap of the karauri, and other things—to drive the evil spirit back down my shoulder and arm to the point on the little finger where it had entered, and he removed that evil spirit, with the "core" of the infection, by noosing it with a thread of coconut fiber. Toriu didn't know about bacteria; he told me I had

walked too near a grave and an evil spirit had entered my finger. The herbs, the small coconut he told me to hold under my arm, the poultice, the noose of coconut fiber, were material means to drive the evil spirit back to the point of entry and expel it. The charcoal of burned coconut shells, with which he afterward closed the wound, was to prevent this or other evil spirits from entering me anew. But all these *materia medica,* he believed, would have been useless had he not communed with the ancestral spirits, who could endow the material medicines with spiritual power. And I knew that as he did so, Toriu was renewing, in contemplation, his own strength of spirit. His faith in that spiritual help gave him faith in his own treatment of me, faith in himself. It fortified his mana.

Even the feather with which he applied the sacred, secret, dark-red liquid that localized the infection and reduced the swelling had to be a white feather. A black feather, he believed, would have been fatal. The medicine itself must be red. Red and white are colors pleasing to the spirits. The discarded dressings must not be burned, lest my fever increase. They must not be thrown away, lest evil spirits escape to enter other people. They must be buried, or sunk in the sea.

The treatment, thus composed of equal parts of empirical herb-lore, sympathetic magic, and what may be called either faith or superstition, was successful. Without it, I probably would not have lived to write these lines, for it was the only treatment available in a land that had no communication with the outside world save the irregular and infrequent visits of copra schooners. And that treatment was closely bound up with mana. Toriu had confidence in his powers and in the power of the ancestral spirits —although when first consulted he was not sure that I myself had sufficient confidence in these to enable them to prevail over the powers of evil. As he expressed it, he was sure he could cure this ailment in a native, but he did not know whether he could cure me, for he had never before treated a white man. I could

read, in his mind, the thought that a white man could not be expected to have much faith in spirits, or in his treatment. And without faith, how can the physician cure, or the patient recover?

After Toriu went to work on me, he was visibly reassured by my grave acceptance of his treatment and my keen curiosity as to his methods. The fact was that in the beginning I had no idea whether his treatment was any good or not, but the home treatment Emory and I had attempted was certainly doing no good, and I was willing to let Toriu try. Besides, both Emory and I were curious, from an ethnological viewpoint, to see a medical *tabunga* in action. Toriu's first application of the principal medicine, however, brought such relief that I realized he had something, and by the next morning the improvement in my condition was such that both Toriu and I were sure I would recover. From the first I treated Toriu and his methods with respect—at first out of courtesy and ethnological curiosity, and later out of gratitude for relief from pain and a realization that he was actually bringing about a cure. I took the sympathetic magic, and the ancestral spirits, in my stride, along with the herbs. Toriu was delighted—if, on the nominally Christian side of his consciousness, a little shocked—when I told him, the first night, that if I died I wanted him to set up a god-house for my spirit on the site of his marae. I think that from that moment he had no further doubt of my recovery. He was convinced, then, that my heart was in the right place, although I was a foreigner and of a race that usually has small regard for spirits, other than the kind that come in bottles. He reasoned that if I was willing to go as far as this in the ancient ways of Tepuka, surely the spirits wouldn't let me down. And they didn't. Within a week, the particular evil spirit that had caused my trouble had been exorcized and gently drawn out of my finger by Toriu's silky little noose.

Perhaps all this would not have ended so happily if I had

not had a feeling, from the first, that I would recover. Toriu was right in believing that the patient, as well as the physician, must have confidence. But Toriu was the kind of physician who inspires confidence.

Like most of my race, I am not naturally calm. But from the time Toriu entered the house to diagnose my case and to expel the "evil spirit," I was calm, as seldom in my life, and remained so throughout the period of his treatment. I think this was partly the result of extreme weakness and fatigue, partly from the relief of giving up and letting some one else take over the case after unsuccessful efforts to treat it myself, partly the luxury of lying back, relaxed, on a mat and having every one within reach waiting on me. Despite the seriousness of my condition, it was a serene and, in a way, happy experience. Whatever the cause, this tranquil attitude on my part led Toriu to feel that I was a responsive patient, and at the same time, the quick efficacy of his treatment led me to have confidence in him. For the time being, at least, I developed a degree of mana.

The key word, for us, in considering mana, is confidence or, if you choose, faith. It apparently is necessary for man to have faith in something—whether in a deity, or ancestral spirits, or science, or in himself. It may be no accident that the people of Tepuka, who have preserved some of the more significant features of their indigenous faith, are healthier and happier than those in islands more favored by nature but more infested with foreigners. Although their relatively more natural physical life is beneficial, spiritual factors undoubtedly have a bearing. One can but recall how the people of Mangareva died away when their old observances were taken from them, and how, in many other islands, where missionary zeal went too far in interfering with native customs, the people sickened and died. The mana departed from the land.

Tepuka apparently had been fortunate in its missionaries, or

in its ability to compromise the new with the old. Church services take the social place of the old temple gatherings, and give an outlet for expression. Thus the forms of Christianity are accepted and somehow harmonized with continued consultation with ancestral spirits and with maintenance of certain social customs that the church can not countenance. I can not say how deep the doctrines of the missionary fathers go in the people's minds. Some of them seemed devout. Yet there was no apparent conflict in their minds. Paunu could chant of ancient gods, perform spells and incantations, invoke ancestral spirits to guide him to a turtle, and he could also urge me to go to church before embarking on a voyage. Almost the entire population attended church services early Sunday morning. These services, as conducted by Teuri, were not very inspiring, although the people probably experienced a certain exaltation when they sang hymns. It might have been different when they had an actual missionary father among them. But I suspect that most of them derived their real spiritual sustenance from their belief in the ancestral spirits.

It is, I am convinced, a harmless faith, unorthodox as it may be from a Western point of view. The people who practice it are gentle and kindly to one another and to strangers. They practice brotherly love to a degree that many of our church members might well emulate. True Christianity, practiced rather than merely professed, would have the same result. All religious observances are helpful to man in so far as they renew his inner strength and confidence. If one has faith in some power outside himself, by all means let him keep it. If he can't, he still needs faith in something. If not in God, or nature, or ancestral spirits, at least let him have faith in himself as a human being.

One of the disturbing symptoms in our own world is the decline of faith. Religious faith began to decline a long time ago. Some have replaced it by faith in science, or in material

civilization, or in political or economic doctrine—about which some have become as fanatical as any medieval saint or any grand inquisitor. There is a certain barrenness in some of these substitute faiths, although among men of science there is often discernible a devotion to humanity comparable to that of some of the more benevolent saints. There is probably no entirely satisfactory substitute for spiritual faith, which becomes detrimental only when perverted or carried to extremes. The child in man needs a Father in whom to trust. Perhaps the decline of that kind of faith is a symptom of adulthood of the human race. Thus far, it is a dismaying adulthood. It may become more reasonable in time.

Perhaps what is most needed, in the world at large, is faith in humanity. It is upon this faith that our own commonwealth is founded. Our coins are stamped with the motto, "In God we trust," but our political system is an expression of faith in the long-range reasonableness and rightness of thought of human beings. It has its ups and downs; electorates make mistakes, and those elected prove unworthy at times, but the presumption of our political philosophy is that, in the long run, the mistakes will be corrected, extremes somehow cancel out, and the people's affairs conducted, in general, in a reasonable approximation to fairness. We have muddled along, on this basis, for more than a century and a half, and while we continue to make mistakes, it has yet to be shown that any other system yet devised for a large and populous country makes fewer, or keeps its people, on the whole, so prosperous and so free. Our faith in our democratic institutions functions as a kind of national mana. If we ever lose that faith, we perish.

The most disturbing factor in contemporary life, aside from excessive and one-sided faith in certain political dogmas, is a widespread loss of faith in anything whatever, a sort of creeping palsy of hopelessness. It arises primarily from the complexity of civilization, which gives the individual a feeling of futility, of

powerlessness to cope with the vast impersonal forces that so largely determine his destiny. It is aggravated by the confused condition of the political world and by the release of new and terrifying physical forces that are not fully understood. The individual feels dwarfed, confused; he knows not whither to turn for salvation. His mana withers away. He needs faith. From a human point of view, it is less important what that faith may be, than that there be faith at all. He needs something to give him confidence.

Maono with his spirits, and the devout Christian of our own people with his trust in God, are fortunate in that they have a faith ready made that they have found no reason to reject. Maono probably never formulated the thought in words, but I am sure that his inner consciousness could be expressed thus:

"I am a chief. I include within my mind and body the accumulated strength and wisdom of all my ancestors. No man can insult or humiliate me. I am above insult, for insult can issue only from a debased mind and can injure only a weak mind. Words can not touch the integrity of my spirit."

Maono must have felt something of the sort on the day when he bade farewell to us, on the site of the temple of his ancestors, and boarded the copra schooner to answer his summons to Tahiti.

The summons was harmless enough, on the surface. Maono was being called only as a witness. Some time before, a man from another island, residing at Tepuka, had been found guilty of stealing from the Chinese store, and had been fined. In revenge, he had set fire to the store. Turned over to the French authorities in Tahiti and imprisoned there, this man had appealed the case. The testimony of Maono, as president of the district council, was required at the hearing of the appeal.

But it was rumored about the village that this was not the sole reason for calling Maono over a thousand miles of ocean. Some anxiety was expressed lest the chief might face charges

himself. The reason for this lay in the disparity between the Polynesian and the Occidental views of conduct of public office. The chief, as nominal representative of the far-off, shadowy white men's government that had so little real contact with this dot on the chart of French Oceania, had custody of whatever public funds were derived from fines or taxes. As chief, he was also the representative of the people of his two islands—"the father," as they put it, "of the land." By ancient Polynesian custom, the entire country under his administration, and all its products, were vested in him as the administrative head, or, in a Polynesian sense, the head of the community family. As such, he had administered the funds, whatever they were, in such manner as seemed wise to him, and it had not occurred to him to keep a record. The store-burner, from his jail in Tahiti, might take it into his head to accuse Maono of embezzling the amount of the fine. If so, the chief would be hard put to it to render an accounting. He had actually done nothing wrong, at least from a Polynesian point of view; even by Occidental standards, the most with which he could justly be charged was carelessness. But the authorities in Tahiti might not see it that way.

Maono's people saw no fault in his conduct. If he had spent the money for the pith helmet he wore on his voyage, that was his badge of office; if it had gone to buy the French flag that flapped over the site of Rangihoa as he took his leave, that was a community symbol. As a matter of fact, I don't know how he could have spent the money; there was so little for which it could be spent.

But, it was whispered in the village, the white men in Tahiti would not understand that whatever Maono did was for the good of his people. The white man's mind is, to a degree, unfathomable to a Polynesian. White men have strange, harsh notions of accountability. What was good and proper at Tepuka might not seem so to the French governor in Papeete.

The chief, who had never before set foot off the coral and

sand of his two islands and the fragile bottoms of his canoes, would be bewildered and helpless in the French colonial town that was to them the metropolis, the very core of the white men's incomprehensible world, since all they knew of that world came to them through Tahiti. Would he be able to answer the searching, mathematical-minded questions of the officials? They might, some feared, even put him in jail.

There was talk of levying a voluntary tax upon the population to make good any shortage that might be charged to the chief. The difficulty was that the tax would have had to be paid in promissory notes, as were the contributions to the church that Tehau collected on Sunday at the crossroads of the village. People at Tepuka seldom had money. There was doubt, too, whether the French authorities would consider restitution sufficient to atone for lack of bookkeeping. I think Emory gave Maono a bundle of French francs sufficient to cover the putative shortage, which must have been, in any case, an insignificant amount.

Tears trickled down the tawny cheeks of the women who stood, in ordered ranks, to sing the hastily composed farewell song. Men's faces were grave. Maono alone was unperturbed. Smiling, he stood beneath the great tricolor banner of the white men's republic, that streamed in the wind above the glaring sand. Beside him stood Tehau, the peace officer, at his other side, Teuri, his deputy.

Maono Arai, father of the land, took off the battered sun helmet. His ragged khaki coat, the only one on the island, flapped in the wind above equally unique striped trousers, rolled to the knees for wading to the whaleboat that waited on the wave-washed reef. He was dressed for the journey in the island's best.

Tehau removed his red-striped blue gendarme cap, his own badge of authority. The stiff black hair of Teuri stood erect in the wind. Bowing heads, they prayed. It was the only prayer

I ever heard at Tepuka. In most emergencies, they consulted their ancestral spirits, leaving prayer to the missionary.

Then, turning to his people, the chief spoke, in a low, even voice, and we felt the power of the man as he stood there, his bare, hard-soled feet planted firmly in the sand:

"My children, I stand here at Rangihoa, the temple place of our forefathers. I behold my country.

"Sparkling in sunlight, crystal clear, is the face of my country.

"That face is unchanged, although time changes in a whirl about us. Already the ancient learning trickles away, as water seeps through sand. Keep, my children, such of the old knowledge as remains, as I and my councilors have kept what we could of it, that the mana may not depart from the land.

"Behold these two foreign men who have come among us to learn of our ancient traditions. They are foreigners no longer. I regard them as my sons. Give them freely all you know of the ancient wisdom, that they may preserve it forever in the great House of Learning in the Land of the Burning Mountains. Then, if ever the time comes when the ancient lore is forgotten here at Tepuka, our people may go to that house and learn it anew, as the chiefs of all the islands recovered it when it had been lost in their lands, sitting at the feet of the priests of Apaapa-i-te-rangi at Fangatau.

"My bowels * are heavy, not for the perils of the voyage, nor for whatever may await me in the white men's court. I grieve only that I must be absent from my country and my people.

"For the present, I say to you only, keep on in the good way.

"Life be to all of us in God! Stay you. I go."

He put on the faded helmet and waded over the brick-

* In the Polynesian language, the bowels, rather than the heart, are considered the seat of the emotions.

colored reef-rim to the waiting boat. The Tahitian sailors put their shoulders to the gunwales, heaved the craft into the outgoing wave.

The song of the women wailed out over the widening path of water. The boat diminished swiftly; we watched as Maono climbed over the schooner's side, as the sails filled and the ship glided away toward the blue curving wall of the horizon.

And I knew Maono was thinking, "I am Maono Arai. Men may misunderstand me, may condemn me, but they can not hurt me within. They may even lock me in the 'iron house,' but they can not touch the integrity that is myself."

That very night the villagers began the composition of the song that was to greet him on his return. A phrase in that song was significant: "After you have been judged . . ."

It was months later, a week or so after we had left Tepuka, that we learned the result. A copra schooner, wallowing in the swell off the island of Fangatau, brought us the news—of the feasts that had honored Maono as he passed from island to island, of the court hearing in Tahiti, where he had answered all questions with imperturbable calm and where his testimony had been received as befitted his rank, of the sum—a fabulous amount, to him and his people—that he had received in witness fees and transportation allowance, of the song and rejoicing that had welcomed him when he returned to his own land a few days after we had left it. Far from being incarcerated or even fined, Maono had been rewarded with more money than he probably ever had seen in his life.

All this reminded me of the "shortage" that was once reported in a department of the City and County of Honolulu. The official who was responsible for the funds said he kept the money in a cigar box in his desk, and he had no idea what had become of the missing amount. A scandal threatened—until some one, browsing through various desk drawers and cabinets, probably searching for something else, turned up a sum of

money several thousand dollars larger than the reported shortage. The official couldn't account for that, either. Heaven knows how they finally balanced the books.

At another time a sizable shortage was reported in the office of the sheriff of one of the counties in the Territory of Hawaii. It developed that the sheriff had to be out of the office often, and for convenience in carrying on its affairs, he left a book of signed vouchers in his desk, which any one could fill in and cash. I don't remember how this tangle was straightened out. But in neither case was there any real suspicion of the honesty of the officials involved. The incidents were merely symptomatic of a certain Polynesian casualness in regard to money. They go a long way toward explaining why the Hawaiians lost their land holdings, after a portion of the land formerly held by the crown was divided up among them, and why many Tahitians and some Tuamotuans owe more than they can pay to Chinese merchants.

Maono, it appeared, had walked gently in Tahiti, his grave but smiling dignity meeting cheerfully whatever came, his simplicity uncontaminated by the tawdry semi-civilization of the colonial capital. Without his inner confidence, his reserve of inner strength, the outcome might have been different. A lesser character might have become confused, appeared nervous, have said too much, aroused suspicion. Maono, serene in his consciousness of his own integrity, was free of anxiety.

And I wondered, if I should ever appear on a witness stand, whether I would be able to conduct myself with as much dignity and poise and calm as had this man of relatively primitive background and experience, and whether I would come off as well.

True mana involves respect for one's own integrity, together with respect for the integrity of others. True success is a result of achieving a working balance between these two factors. There is no reason why any intelligent person can not develop these qualities, either with or without supernatural beliefs or ritual

observances to fortify them. Any one can have mana, in some degree. Any one can be a chief, within the realm of his own inner consciousness. All he has to do is to keep remembering his spiritual integrity; and refrain from doing anything to let that integrity down.

Polynesians are sustained in this by the belief that they are descendants of the gods, and thus obliged to be worthy of that descent. For that matter, we too, by the definition of some of their own most discerning minds in antiquity, are also descended from the gods. Did not Vaita, the Tahitian prophet, when he predicted the coming of the first Europeans, tell his people that "those who are to come are equally children of the Source?" Whatever we may believe of our origin—whether that the Creator blew the breath of life into the red clay and thus instilled into us forever something of His essence, or whether that we evolved by chance and slow growth and inexplicable mutations from the jelly of the primordial life-cell (and if it was by chance, that perhaps is the greater miracle)—in any case there is a certain spark of something within us that makes us human, that differentiates us from the comparatively unthinking beasts, the instinct-motivated insects, and the cool, dreamlike half-consciousness of the plants. We alone, as far as we know, have notions of right and wrong. Those notions vary from place to place and from time to time, but they are valid while we believe in them, and most of us make at least some effort to live up to them. If we fail to do so, we feel guilt and loss and trouble of spirit.

We alone, of all created things, as far as we know, have a consciousness of our own identities, of personality. The dog answers to his name, but is he conscious of an integral self? We too are creatures of instinct and of environment and of early experience, but we are something more than that. We are persons, each individual and unique, each responsible for his own acts, in so far as we have freedom of action.

Let us accept that responsibility. Let us keep in mind each his own uniqueness, his integrity, and that of his fellow men. Let us remember our dignity as humankind. It will help us to live more successful, more integrated lives. It will help us to attain something of the poise, the calm, the strength in quietness, that makes Maono and Paunu and Toriu and Tehau men mighty in mana.

18. *Fragrance of Life*

THE foregoing chapters have discussed some significant aspects of contemporary Polynesian life as observed in a community where that life is comparatively little disturbed by influences from the non-Polynesian world. This discussion has led to some tentative comparisons with our own way of life and to some rudimentary speculations on human life in general. It does not claim to be a profound study. It is presented merely as the observations of a reporter nurtured in our own traditions but sympathetic to those of the people of the islands, with a few conclusions that seem, to him, reasonable after reflection upon what he saw and heard and experienced among those people.

It remains to summarize these conclusions, drawing together the threads of thought from a series of more or less detached essays into some kind of unity, and to recapitulate their suggestions as to what you and I can do to bring a little more of peace into our lives and to acquire something of the serenity and poise of the people whose lives suggested this discussion.

In chapter after chapter, similar relevant thoughts inevitably emerged. From whatever incident or situation the discussion proceeded, it led to a very few and simple principles of conduct.

These principles are gentleness, relaxation, and reasonableness. The underlying principle from which all of these proceed is a sense of human dignity, a consciousness of the worth of human personality in oneself and in others. This is the true

meaning of integrity of life. Kindness, composure, and a sense of leisure flow from it.

For us, the problem is largely one of remembering to be conscious of our integrity, in the midst of a hurried and distracting life. We need to take time to think. We need to keep reminding ourselves of that human dignity. We need to train ourselves to be always conscious of it.

Dignity, in the sense used here, does not mean solemn, ponderous gravity. True dignity is thoroughly compatible with merriment. Nor does it mean self-importance. It is really the antithesis of that. True dignity does not have to assert itself. It shines from within. Self-importance and aggressiveness proceed from inner lack of confidence in oneself. The unsure personality feels a need to impose itself, to try to create a false dignity.

It is apparent that the cultivation of a consciousness of personal integrity is a spiritual exercise. That consciousness is inherent in the Polynesian, because he believes he is descended from the gods and has inherited something of the essence of divinity, however diluted it may be. It is inherent also because he believes he has within himself the accumulated wisdom, strength, and spiritual power of his ancestors, and that he can renew and fortify this inheritance by communing with the spirits of those ancestors. We must get along largely without this kind of moral support. We too believe, if we are true to our traditions, that all men were created by God and have something of Godhood in them, or that we were created by Nature through the process of evolution, and have something of the creative force of Nature within us. God and Nature are two different names for the same power. But the relation can not appear as immediate to us as to the Polynesian. For most of us, maintenance of a consciousness of the spark of divinity in man must be an act of will. Whatever name we give to the source of human dignity is less pertinent than that dignity itself.

A Polynesian chief is powerful largely because he believes

he is powerful. His communion with the ancestral spirits is a rationalization of this principle in terms of his racial culture. What he has is confidence in his ability to meet any situation. He calls that confidence mana. It is supported by his own belief in it, and by the belief of others. But if he becomes corrupt, if his sense of human worth deteriorates, his tradition teaches that he loses that confidence; he loses mana. True mana presupposes a balanced mindfulness of one's own integrity and that of one's fellow men.

The ideal toward which we should strive is consistent practice of the principle discussed in the first chapter: to "walk gently," being at the same time prepared to act with decision and strength and speed in an actual crisis. We should "study to be calm," avoid unnecessary disputes, but be firm and at the same time reasonable, when disputes are unavoidable. We should try to remember that true self-respect implies respect for others.

Most of our errors are made in haste. We need to cultivate an unhurried habit of life. Most of the acts and words that we regret can be avoided by taking time to consider. Our sins of commission are mostly made by forgetting to walk gently. On the other hand, the omissions we regret are mostly caused by inhibitions, indecision, lack of alertness, or fear. Like the sins of commission, they are products and symptoms of lack of integration in our personalities, our lives.

We need to cultivate a sense of proportion. We need to keep reminding ourselves that most annoyances, most perplexities, are trivial and most of them transient. It is beneath human dignity to become upset by trifles. It is futile to brood over losses that are irreparable; the man of integrity will lay thought of them aside after pondering whatever lesson they may yield, and go on to something constructive. It is harmful to cherish grievances; the man of integrity will dismiss them as beneath dignity, while preserving whatever constructive thought or in-

formation may be available in the experience from which the grievance grew.

The integral life is an unworried life. The reasonable man will not harass himself with fretting over things that have already happened or over things that may happen. He will plan constructively to correct his errors, in so far as they can be corrected, to salvage what can be saved out of a loss, to meet situations that are foreseen. But he will not waste energy in futile worry.

The reasonable man will find his natural rhythms of work and play, his natural speeds, and not force himself beyond them. He will cultivate relaxation of body and of mind. He will avoid tension, which is the great enemy, in our world today, of health of body and of peace of mind. It is the great destroyer.

He will cease frenzied straining for material "success" and aim, rather, toward that true success that is a balanced and wholesome enjoyment of living.

In general, he will find more satisfaction in simple pleasures than in elaborate ones, in self-made rather than in second-hand entertainment. He will cherish not possessions, but the use that can be made of possessions to enrich his inner life. He will be mindful, too, that the inner life is enriched by helping others.

Such a man or woman will go forth day by day like a chief in council, confident and calm and strong with the strength that lies within. He will do right because he believes in the right, not through fear, but because he knows that only right conduct will satisfy and maintain his sense of inner worth. It is true enough that right and wrong, in their specific applications, vary with time and place—they are one thing among one people and something else in a different environment—that "truth is this to me, and that to thee." But in most human relations, right and truth are fairly clear. Each of us knows pretty well what is decent and honorable, what is worthy of the integral spirit.

How shall you and I, as individuals, cultivate that integrality? For each of us, again, it is largely a matter of remembering, of keeping the thought in our minds; of creating an island of calm contentment within the turbulent sea of the complex, confusing life around us.

As we arise in the morning, as we go to work, let us think to ourselves, "Today I will be calm, unhurried, relaxed. I will not be distressed by trivialities. I will work at my natural pace. I will be kind and reasonable toward those with whom I come in contact. I will remember that I am I—a personality, inviolable in my inner essence. No one, nothing, can harm or defeat my inner self, the spark of divinity that is I. I myself will keep that inner spark undimmed by behaving honestly and decently and kindly toward others and by refusing to be disturbed by anything that unreasonable or unkind persons say or do to me."

Let us renew that pledge from time to time through the day. Let us try to remember its thought, strive to maintain that attitude when things go wrong and when our hasty, impulsive, restless habits tend to assert themselves.

Let us so organize our days, our lives, as to avoid hurry. Some one, writing of nature study, expressed a significant distinction when he said, "Animals know the difference between a swift step and a hurried one." Promptness, swiftness, are not achieved by hurry, but by co-ordination with one's natural rhythms. Emergencies will occur, of course. Then the other half of the principle comes into play—the quick and decisive action. We are better prepared to exert such action if we have not wasted our energies in hurry and bustle and futile anxiety.

The interaction of the twin aspects of the principle is illustrated aptly by the procedure of a Polynesian throw-net fisherman. He stands motionless, intent but not tense, his net in position for the cast, watching the sea. To the approaching school of fish, he looks like a rock. He can hold this pose a long

time, because he is relaxed. When the fish come within range, he casts the net with a smooth, quick, rhythmic movement. The weighted rim flies out; the net settles over the school of fish, and he draws it in. He has walked gently, and he has acted swiftly when the time came.

Keeping it in mind is the main requisite for us, to whom the relaxed life is not yet habitual. Certain disciplines, certain formulae to encourage this consciousness will occur to any reader. He should adopt those that seem most natural to him. Most people will find it helpful to maintain some contact with the earth, with nature—even if it is only a pot of geranium on a window sill, or the sky through a garret pane. Most of us will be strengthened and refreshed by some constructive hobby—gardening, or making things with the hands—by some reminder of the direct life.

Every one should take some time alone each day to renew his inner strength in calmness. "Meditation" is rather too pretentious a word for this. "Communion with Nature" sounds too trite and "soulful." What I have in mind is, rather, a brief retreat into restfulness, a kind of salutary loafing. At some time in every day, one should practice doing nothing. If he can, he should at such a time refrain even from conscious thought. At least, he can think of quiet and wholesome things. It is like letting oneself float on a stream—for the time being, inactive, superbly indolent. It is a kind of letting go, of cutting adrift from thought and action, from responsibilities and anxieties, the state of being to which I referred in an earlier chapter, described by Powys as "the unthinking level." It is difficult to define this without seeming "mystic." Mysticism is all right if you believe in it. If you can believe some mysterious force flows into you from God, or the earth, or the stars, or the grass, let that belief fortify you. The essential is the letting go. A short period of this, whether you call it meditation, contemplation, or

just loafing, is immeasurably restful and strengthening. It counteracts that exhausting impulsion to be always doing something.

If it helps to believe in a supernatural power, then by all means believe in it, and make the most of it. Such belief, if sustained, is a source of comfort and an incentive to right living. If one can not so believe, let him believe in his own divinity as an expression of the universal divinity of man in relation with Nature. One must have confidence in something, if not in a power outside oneself, then in whatever is within. One must have faith in something: if not faith in a Divine Father or in ancestral spirits, then faith in humanity—the humanity in ourselves and in others.

Realizing that we can not be fully our own masters in our outward lives, being subject in varying degree to the wills of others and subject universally to chance, let us resolve to be our own masters in our inner lives. The spirit within us can not be defiled by anything any one else says or does. Only we ourselves can defile it, by words or actions unworthy of it. That spirit, that spark, that core of consciousness can not be insulted by any one but ourselves. The outward man is the victim of circumstance; he was born in circumstance and every day of his life is conditioned by it. But the inner man is above circumstance; he creates his own mental or spiritual climate. He can be at peace within himself.

Man is equipped with intelligence unique among the organisms of this planet. It is his obligation to his Creator and to himself to use that intelligence to make life as happy as possible for himself and for those around him. Each human being is unique among his kind. There are similarities, but no exact duplicates. Perhaps that is the basis for consciousness of individual personality, of selfhood. A right realization of that selfhood should impel each human being to try to be the most complete, most integral self he knows how.

Let us learn from our errors but not waste time lamenting

them. Let us learn from the errors of others and not waste time condemning them. Let us so live that we can look back upon our lives and say, "We have endured like men; we have enjoyed like gods."

We should be without fear, realizing that fear of disaster does not prevent disaster, and may even bring it about. We should prepare to meet foreseen hazards, but avoid anxiety about them. The most futile of our fears is the fear of death. If we believe in the faith that is traditional among us, death is only the doorway to a larger life. If we reject that faith, then death is a release from the responsibilities, the burdens, the suffering inevitable in life. When a Polynesian becomes old and feeble, and feels that he has lived long enough, often he sets a day, summons his relatives, and on that day simply lets go of life, by no external means, but solely by an act of will. I have heard of cases where, the day having arrived but some of the relatives having been delayed, the to-be-deceased postponed the date and, after the missing ones arrived proceeded to relinquish life according to the revised schedule. Few of us have such command over our vital processes, but the spirit behind such a final relaxation seems eminently sensible. The Polynesian whose mana is sufficient to the occasion meets death without fear and on his own terms.

Fear of pain is more understandable. But pain hurts worse in proportion to our fear. One can only resolve to endure as manfully as possible, realizing that no pain lasts forever, that much of it can be dulled by relaxation, and that, in any case, it is not relieved by making a fuss about it.

The Polynesian mind, as I have pointed out, recognizes three distinct aspects of what we denominate by a single word, "love." Of these three, *binangaro*—desire—does not need much encouragement in normal human beings. In most cases, it probably needs, rather, tempering with discretion and with respect for whatever traditions of morality may be current in our own

time and place. *Here*—friendly affection—is not subject to human will; it comes and goes; it can not be held or coerced. It is a gift to be cherished in gentleness; it ennobles those between whom it is shared. *Arofa*—regard for humanity, is the noblest love of all. It is our sacred obligation, whether as offspring of Divinity or as products of evolution from the primal parent cell.

Life forces us to compromises, batters our ideals. It hurries us, against our will; it confuses and distracts us. It confronts us with men and women who are not of good will, with whom we can not reason, and to some of whom the gentle walk may seem weakness—although, in the long run, it commands respect. Human existence is full of disappointments; it is not possible to live a completely integrated life. Let us admit the difficulties, and yet keep the vision intact before us, looking upon the unattainable ideal as a challenge, to be approached as nearly as possible within the limits imposed by human frailty. After all, there is a great deal each of us can do about his own life. Let us not be discouraged by imperfection. There is much harshness in life, and much beauty as well. Let us seek the beauty, and ameliorate the harshness to such degree as we can. The first step is to ameliorate it in ourselves. More people will like you, if you do. It is one way, and a good one, of "making friends and influencing people."

It is difficult to prevent such an exposition as this from sounding goody-goody. It is not intended so. I have tried not to be "inspirational," but simply to present what seems to me sound sense about living. I don't practice it any more consistently than you do, but that need not deter you and me from trying. Gradually, by taking thought for it, we can progress toward a more serene life, toward acquiring the strength of quietness.

When the world was new and fresh from its creation and the gods were establishing order in it, Tane (literally, Man), son

of the All-Source; Tane, of whom it is chanted, "All things that Tane made are beautiful," inquired:

"O Tumu, what shrubs of the land shall stand before the Shining One?"

And Tumu replied:

"O Tane, the fragrant pandanus, the pandanus of the yellow and of the red fruit, the pandanus of white blossoms, shall stand before the Shining One. The guardian of Paradise shall dwell in its fragrant branches."

The people whose poets of old conceived the chant of which those words are a part have somehow kept the fragrance of life. Something of that fragrance is for us, too, if we will take it.

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CLIFFORD GESSLER

JOHN DAY

SCANNED
9/2024 GHB

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