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THE CRUISE OF THE KAWA

WANDERINGS IN THE SOUTH SEAS

By Walter E. Traprock, F.R.S.S.E.U.

With Seventeen Illustrations And A Map

1921

The Author and His Island Bride

DEDICATION

TO THE GIRLS WE LEFT BEHIND—

KIPPIPUTUONA (DAUGHTER OF PEARL AND CORAL)

LUPOBA-TILAANA (MIST ON THE MOUNTAIN)

BABAI-ALOVA-BABAI (ESSENCE OF ALOVA)

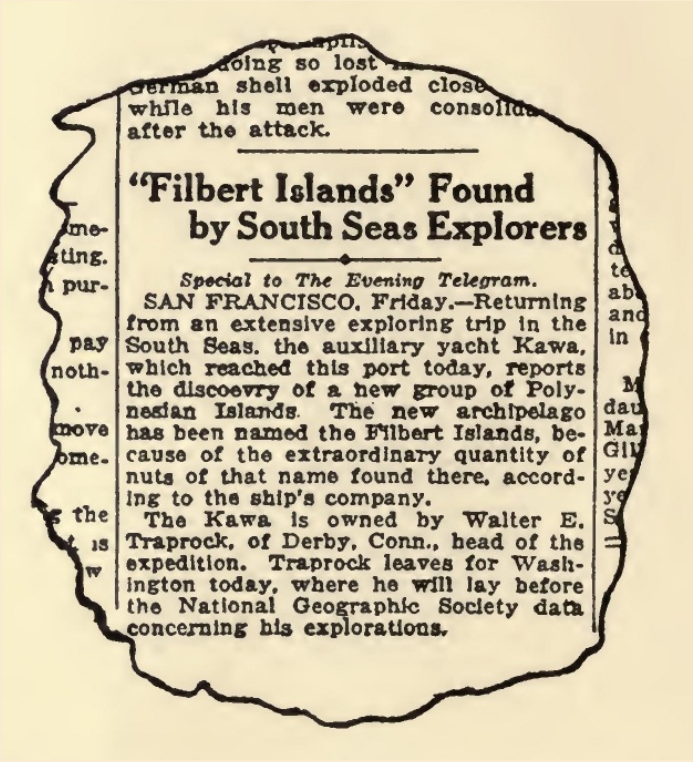
THIS VOLUME IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Of late the lure of the South Seas has laid its gentle spell rather overwhelmingly upon American readers. To be unread in Polynesiana is to be intellectually *declasse*.... In the face of this avid appetite for tropic-scented literature, one may well imagine the satisfaction of a publisher when offered opportunity of association with such an expedition as that of the Kawa, an association involving the exclusive privilege of publishing the

manuscript of Walter E. Traprock himself.

The public, we feel, is entitled to a frank word regarding the inception of this volume. Now at last it is possible to withdraw the veil of secrecy which has shrouded the undertaking almost until the date of publication. *Almost*, we say, because some inklings of information found their way into the newspapers early this summer. The leak, we have reason to be believe, is traceable to a Marquesan valet who was shipped at Papeete to fill the place left vacant by William Henry Thomas, the strange facts surrounding whose desertion are recorded in the pages which follow:



doing so lost
German shell exploded close
while his men were consolida
after the attack.

"Filbert Islands" Found by South Seas Explorers

Special to The Evening Telegram.

SAN FRANCISCO, Friday.—Returning from an extensive exploring trip in the South Seas, the auxiliary yacht Kawa, which reached this port today, reports the discoevry of a new group of Polynesian Islands. The new archipelago has been named the Filbert Islands, because of the extraordinary quantity of nuts of that name found there, according to the ship's company.

The Kawa is owned by Walter E. Traprock, of Derby, Conn., head of the expedition. Traprock leaves for Washington today, where he will lay before the National Geographic Society data concerning his explorations.

The telltale newspaper item, reproduced above, outlines the story behind this volume. What is not made clear is the fact that the entire expedition was painstakingly planned many months ago, the publishers themselves making it financially possible by contracting with Dr. Traprock for his literary output. Provision was also made for recording every phase of experience and discovery. With this in view, Dr. Traprock's literary attainments were complemented by securing as his companions the distinguished American artist, Herman Swank, and Reginald K. Whinney, the scientist. By this characteristic bit of foresight was the inclusive and authoritative character of the expedition's findings assured.

How well we recall our parting with Traprock.

"Any further instructions?" queried the intrepid explorer from the shadow of that ingenious yardarm.

"None," I replied. "You understand perfectly. Get the goods. See South Sea life as it actually is. Write of it without restraint. Paint it. Photograph it. Spare nothing. Record your scientific discoveries faithfully. Be frank, be full...."

"Trust us!" came back Traprock's cheery cry, as the sturdy little Kawa bore them toward their great adventures.

Herein are recorded many of their experiences and discoveries, contributions of far-reaching significance and appeal.

Uninfluenced by professional self-interest, unshaken by our genuine admiration for its predecessors, and despite our inherent inclination toward modest conservatism, we unhesitatingly record the conviction that "The Cruise of the Kawa" stands preeminent in the literature of modern exploration—a supreme, superlative epic of the South Seas.

G.P.P.

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CHAPTER I

We get under way. Polynesia's busiest corner. Our ship's company. A patriotic celebration rudely interrupted. In the grip of the elements. Necessary repairs. A night vigil. Land ho!

"Is she tight?" asked Captain Ezra Triplett. (We were speaking of my yawl, the Kawa).

"As tight as a corset," was my reply.

"Good. I'll go."

In this short interview I obtained my captain for what was to prove the most momentous voyage of my life.

The papers were signed forthwith in the parlor of Hop Long's Pearl-of-the-Orient Cafeteria and dawn of the following day saw us beyond the Golden Gate.

I will omit the narration of the eventful but ordinary occurrences which enlivened the first six months of our trip and ask my reader to transport himself with me to a corner with which he is doubtless already familiar, namely, that formed by the intersection of the equator with the 180th meridian.

This particular angle bears the same relation to the Southern Pacific that the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue does to the Atlantic Seaboard. More explorers pass a given point in a given time at this corner than at any other on the globe. [Footnote: See L. Kluck. *Traffic Conditions in the South Seas*, Chap. IV., pp. 83-92.]

It was precisely noon, daylight-saving time, on July 4th, 1921, when I stood on the corner referred to and, strange to say, found it practically deserted. To be more accurate, I stood on the deck of my auxiliary yawl, the Kawa, and she, the Kawa, wallowed on the corner mentioned. To all intents and purposes our ship's company was alone. We had the comforting knowledge that on our right, as one faced the bow, were the Gilbert and Marshall groups (including the Sandwiches), on our left the Society, Friendly and Loyalty Archipelagoes, back of us the Marquesas and Paumotus and, directly on our course, the Carolines and Solomons, celebrated for their beautiful women. [Footnote: See "Song of Solomon," King James Version.] But we were becalmed and the geographic items mentioned were, for the time being, hull-down. Thus we were free to proceed with the business at hand, namely, the celebration of our national holiday.

This we had been doing for several hours, with frequent toasts, speeches, firecrackers and an occasional rocket aimed directly at the eye of the tropical sun. Captain Triplett, being a stickler for marine etiquette, had conditioned that there should be no liquor consumed except when the sun was over the yard-arm. To this end he had fitted a yard-arm to our cross-trees with a universal joint, thus enabling us to keep the spar directly under the sun at any hour of the day or night. Consequently our celebration was proceeding merrily.

While in this happy and isolated condition let me say a few words of our ship's company. Having already mentioned the Captain I will dispose of him first. Captain Ezra Triplett was a hard-bitten mariner. In fact, he was, I think, the hardest-bitten mariner I have ever seen. He had been bitten, according to his own tell, man-and-boy, for fifty-two years, by every sort of insect, rodent and crustacean in existence. He had had smallpox and three touches of scurvy, each of these blights leaving its autograph. He had lost one eye in the Australian bush where, naturally, it was impossible to find it. This had been replaced by a blue marble of the size known, technically, as an eighteen-er, giving him an alert appearance which had first attracted me. By nature taciturn, he was always willing to sit up all night as long as the gin was handy, an excellent trait in a navigator. About his neck he wore a felt bag containing ten or a dozen assorted marbles with which he furnished his vacant socket according to his fancy, and the effect of his frequent changes was both unusual and diverting.

Captain Ezra Triplett

The annals of maritime history will never be complete until the name of Captain Ezra Triplett of New Bedford, Massachusetts, receives the recognition which is justly its. For more than ten generations the forebears of this hard-bitten mariner have followed the sea in its various ramifications.

The first Triplett was one of the companions of Goswold who, in 1609, wintered on Cuttyhunk Island in Buzzard's Bay. From then on the members of this hardy New England family have earned positions of trust and honor. By courage and perseverance the subject of this portrait has worked himself up from cabin boy on the sound steamer *Puritan* (wrecked on Bartlett's Reef, 1898) to his present position of commander of the Kawa.

Of his important part in connection with the historic cruise described in these pages, the Kawa's owner, Dr. Traprock, has no hesitancy in saying, "Frankly, without Triplett the thing never could have been done." The accompanying photograph was taken just after the captain had been hauled out of the surf in Papeete. It will be remarked that he still maintains an indomitable front and holds his trusty Colt in readiness for immediate action.]

But sail! Lord bless you, how Triplett could sail! It was wizardry, sheer wizardry; "devil-work," the natives used to call it. Triplett, blindfolded, could find the inlet to a hermetically sealed atoll. When there wasn't any inlet he would wait for a seventh wave—which is always extra large—and take her over on the crest, disregarding the ragged coral below. The Kawa was a tight little craft, built for rough work. She stood up nobly under the punishment her skipper gave her.

Triplett's assistant was an individual named William Henry Thomas, a retired Connecticut farmer who had chosen to end his days at sea. This, it should be remarked, is the reverse of the usual order. The back-lots of Connecticut are peopled by retired sea-captains who have gone back to the land, which accounts in large measure for the condition of agriculture in these communities. William Henry Thomas had appeared as Triplett's selection. Once aboard ship his land habits stood him in good stead in his various duties as cook, foremost-hand, butler and valet, for it must not be supposed that the Kawa, tight though she might be, was without a jaunty style of her own.

Our first-class cabin passengers were three, Reginald K. Whinney, scientific man, world wanderer, data-demon and a devil when roused; Herman Swank, bohemian, artist, and vagabond, forever in search of new sensations, and myself, Walter E. Traprock, of Derby, Connecticut, editor, war correspondent, and author,

jack-of-all-trades, mostly literary and none lucrative.

Our object? What, indeed, but life itself!

I had known my companions for years. We had been class-mates at New Haven when our fathers were working our way through college. How far away it all seemed on that torrid Fourth of July as we sat on the Kawa's deck singing "Oralee", to which we had taught Triplett the bass.

"Like a blackbird in the spring,
Chanting Ora-lee...."

"Very un-sanitary," said Whinney, "a blackbird ... in the spring ... very un-sanitary."

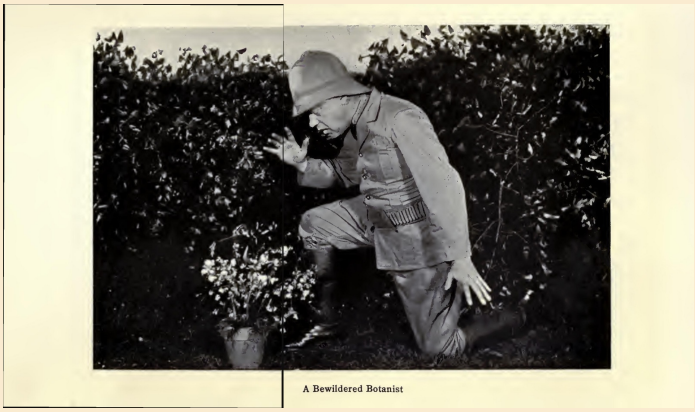
We laughed feebly.

Suddenly, as they do in the tropics, an extraordinary thing happened. A simoon, a monsoon and a typhoon met, head on, at the exact corner of the equator and the 180th meridian. We hadn't noticed one of them,—they had given us no warning or signal of any kind. Before we knew it they were upon us!

I have been in any one of the three separately many a time. In '95 off the Blue Canary Islands I was caught in an octoroon, one of those eight-sided storms, that spun our ship around like a top, and killed all the canaries for miles about—the sea was strewn with their bodies. But this!

"Below," bellowed Captain Triplett, and we made a dive for the hatch. William Henry Thomas was the last in, having been in the bow setting off a pinwheel, when the blow hit us. We dragged him in. My last memory is of Triplett driving a nail back of the hatch-cover to keep it from sliding.

How long we were whirled in that devil's grip of the elements I cannot say. It may have been a day—it may have been a week. We were all below, battened down ... tight. At times we lost consciousness—at times we were sick—at times, both. I remember standing on Triplett's face and peering out through a salt-glazed port-hole at a world of waterspouts, as thick as forest trees, dancing, melting, crashing upon us. I sank back. *This was the end* ...



A Bewildered Botanist

Here, against the background of a closely woven hedge of southern hornbeam (*Carpinus Tropicalis*), we see that eminent scientist, Reginald Whinney, in the act of discovering, for the first time in any country, a magnificent specimen of wild modesty (*Tiarella nuda*), which grows in great profusion throughout the Filbert Islands. This tiny floweret is distantly related, by marriage, to the European sensitive plant (*Plantus pudica*) but is infinitely more sensitive and reticent. An illustration of this amazing quality is found in the fact that its snowy blossoms blush a deep crimson under the gaze of the human eye. At the touch of the human hand the flowers turn inside-out and shrink to minute proportions. Dr. Whinney attempted in vain to transplant specimens of this fragile creation to our old-world botanical gardens but found the conditions of modern plant life an insuperable barrier. The seeds of wild modesty absolutely refuse to germinate in either Europe or America.]

Calm. Peace and sun! The beneficence of a warm, golden finger that reached gently through the port-hole and rested on my eye. What had happened? Oh—yes. "Like a blackbird in the spring." Slowly I fought my way back to consciousness. Triplett was sitting in a corner still clutching the hammer. On the floor lay Whinney and William Henry Thomas, their twisted legs horribly suggestive of death.

"Air," I gasped.

Triplett feebly wrenched out the nail and we managed to pull the hatch far enough back to squeeze through. Enlivened by the fresh air the others crawled slowly after, except poor William Henry Thomas who still lay inert.

"He's all right," said Whinney. "The gin bottle broke and dripped into his mouth. He'll come to presently." He added in an undertone, "The wages of gin..." Whinney was always quoting.

Minus our factotum we stood and silently surveyed what once had been the Kawa. The leathern features of Captain Triplett twisted into a grin. "Bald's a badger!" he murmured.

Everything had gone by the board. Mast, jigger, bow-sprit and running gear. Not a trace of block or tackle rested on the surrounding sea. We were clean-shaven. Of the chart, which had hung in a frame near the binnacle, not a line remained. All our navigating instruments, quadrant, sextant, and hydrant, with which we had amused ourselves making foolish observations during that morning of the glorious Fourth, our chronometer and speedometer,—all had absolutely disappeared.

"And there we are!" said Swank.

Triplett coughed apologetically and pulled his forelock.

"If you don't mind, sir, night'll be comin' on soon and I think we'd better make sail."

"Make sail?" I murmured blankly. "How?"

"The bedding, sir," said Triplett.

"Of course!" I cried. "All hands abaft to make sail."

How we knotted our sheets and blankets together to fashion a rough main-sail would be a tedious recital, for it was slow work. Our combined efforts made, I should say, about eight knots an hour but half of them pulled out at the least provocation. We persevered, however, and finally completed our task. Nor were we an instant too soon, for just as we had succeeded in getting the oars to stand upright and were anxiously watching our well-worn army blankets belly out with the steady trade wind, the sun, which for the last hour had hung above the horizon, suddenly fell into the sea and night was upon us.

"There's that," said Whinney quietly.

Thus we slid through the velvet night with the Double Cross hanging low, sou'west by south.

It must have been about an hour before dawn that a shiver of expectancy thrilled us unanimously.

"Did you hear that, sir?" said Captain Triplett in a low tone.

"No ... what was it?"

"A sea-robin ... we must be near land ... there it is again."

I heard it that time ... the faint, sweet note of the male sea-robin.

Shortly afterward we heard the mewing of a sea-puss, evidently chasing the robin.

"Sure enough, sir," said Triplett. "It'll be land." Somehow we felt sure of it.

In calm elation and tired expectancy we strained our eyes through the slow crescendo of the day's birth. Suddenly, the sun leaped over the horizon and the long crimson rays flashed forward to where, dead ahead, we could see a faint swelling on the skyline. "Land-ho!" we cried in voices of strangled joy.

"Boys," said Captain Triplett, apologetically ... "we ain't got no yard-arm, but the sun's up and there's land dead ahead, and I reckon..."

He paused. Through the hatchway came William Henry Thomas bearing a tray with four lily cups.

"Fair as a lily..." said Whinney (I knew he would).

Two minutes later we had fallen into heavy slumber while the Kawa steered by the faithful Triplett, moved steadily toward our unknown haven.

CHAPTER II

A real discovery. Polynesia analyzed. The astounding nature of the Filberts. Their curious sound, and its reason. We make a landing. Our first glimpse of the natives. The value of vaudeville.

There is nothing better, after a hurricane, than six hours' sleep. It was high noon when we were awakened by William Henry Thomas and the odor of coffee, which drew us to the quarter-deck. There, for the first time, we were able to make an accurate survey of our surroundings and realize the magnitude and importance of what had befallen us. While we slept Captain Triplett had warped the denuded Kawa through a labyrinth of coral and we now lay peacefully at anchor with the island lying close in-board.

Its appearance, to put it mildly, was astonishing. Let me remind the reader that for the previous four months we had been prowling through the Southern Pacific meeting everywhere with disappointment and

disillusionment. We had inspected every island in every group noted on every map from Mercator to Rand-McNally without finding any variation in type from, "A," the low lying coral-atoll of the well-known broken doughnut formation, to, "B," the high-browed, mansard design popularized by F. O'Brien. [Footnote: This is the type "E". of Melville's overrated classification—*Ed.*] In a few of the outlying suburbs of Melanesia and the lower half of Amnesia, we had found a few designs which showed sketchy promise of originality: coral reefs in quaint forms had been begun, outlining a scheme of decoration in contrast with the austere mountains and valleys. But everywhere these had been abandoned. Either the appropriation had given out, or the polyps had gotten to squabbling among themselves and left their work to be slowly worn away by the erosive action of sea and shipwrecked bottoms. [Footnote: In Micronesia it was even worse, the islands offering a dead-level of mediocrity which I have never seen equalled except in the workingmen's cottages of Ampere, New Jersey, the home of the General Electric Company.] Add to the geographic sameness the universal blight of white civilization with its picture post-cards, professional hula and ooh-la dancers, souvenir and gift shops, automat restaurants, movie-palaces, tourists, artists and explorers, and you have some idea of the boredom which had settled down over the Kawa and her inmates.

Only a few days before Whinney, usually so philosophical, had burst out petulantly with: "To hell with these islands. Give me a good mirage, any time." Swank and I had heartily agreed with him, and it was in that despondent spirit that we had begun our Fourth of July celebration.

As we sat cozily on deck, sipping our coffee, it slowly dawned on us that we had made the amazing discovery of an absolutely new type of island!—something so evidently virgin and unvisited that we could only gaze in awe-struck silence.

"Do you know," whispered Swank, "I think this is the first time I have ever seen a virgin"—he choked for an instant on a crumb—"island."

We could well believe it.

The islands lay before us in echelon formation. The one in our immediate foreground was typical of the others. Its ground-floor plan was that of a circle of beach and palm enclosing an inner sea from the center of which rose an elaborate mountain to a sheer height of two thousand, perhaps ten thousand, feet. The general effect was that of a pastry masterpiece on a gigantic scale. [Footnote: Oddly enough the scene struck me as strangely familiar but it was not until weeks afterward that I recalled its prototype in the memory of a decoration worn by General Grosdenovitch, Minister very-extraordinary to America from Montenegro just before the little mountain kingdom blew up with a faint pop and became absorbed by Jugo-Slovakia (sic).] We could only stare in open-mouthed amazement, thrilled with the thought that we were actually discoverers. A gorgeous feature of our find, in addition to its satisfactory shape, was its color. Sand and vegetation were of the conventional hues, but where the flanks of the rock rose from the enclosed pool we observed that they were of the pure elementary colors, red, blue and yellow, fresh and untarnished as in the latest masterpiece from the brush of the Master of All Painters. Here before our eyes was an unspoiled sample of what the world must have looked like on varnishing day.

Swank, who is ultra-modern in his tendencies, was in ecstasies over the naive simplicity of the color scheme. "Look at that red!" he shouted. "Look at that blue!! Look at that yaller!!!" He dove below and I heard rattling of tubes and brushes that told me he was about to commit landscape. This time I knew he couldn't possibly make the colors too violent.

Fringing the exquisitely tinted coral strand were outlying reefs, alternately concave and convex, which gave the shore edge a scalloped, almost rococo finish, which I have heard decorators call the Chinese-Chippendale "effect." Borne to our nostrils by an occasional reflex of the zooming trades came, ever and anon, entrancing whiffs of a brand new odor.

It is always embarrassing to attempt to describe a new smell, for, such is our inexperience in the nasal field, that a new smell must invariably be described in terms of *other* smells, and by reason of a curious, inherited prudery this province has been left severely alone by English writers. I know of but one man, M. Sentant, the governor of Battambang, Cambodia, who frankly makes a specialty of odors. [Footnote: See *Journal des Debats*, '09, "Le nez triomphant" de Lucien Sentant.]

"J'aime les odeurs!" he said to me one day as we sat sipping a siem-bok on the piazza, of the residency.

"Mais il y en a des mauvaises," I deprecated.

"*Meme* les mauvaises," he insisted, "Oui, *surtout les* mauvaises!"

But Sentant is unique. I can only say that as I sat sniffing on the deck of the Kawa there was about us a *soupcon* of the *je-ne-sais-quoi tropicale*, half nostalgie, half diablerie. It was ... but what's the use? You will have to go out there some time and smell it for yourself.

The W. E. Traprock Expedition

It is doubtful if a camera's eye ever recorded the presence of a more remarkable group than that presented on the opposite page. Here we see the ship's company of the yawl Kawa, assembled under the shade of the broad panjandrus leaves which fringe the Filbert Islands. They are, reading from left to right, William Henry Thomas, the crew; Herman Swank, Walter E. Traprock, Reginald Whinney. At their feet lies Kippiputuona (Daughter of Pearl and Coral). The black and white of photography can give no idea of the magnificent tropical coloring, nor of the exquisite sounds and odors which permeate every inch of the island paradise. At the moment of taking this picture, which was obligingly snapped by Captain Triplett, the entire party was listening to the thrilling cry of the fatu-liva bird. Captain Triplett had just requested the group to "listen to the little birdie" when the distant wood-notes were heard, the coincidence falling in most happily with the photographer's attempts to secure the absolute attention of his subjects.]

I have mentioned the contour, color and fragrance of our island. I now come to the strangest feature of all. I refer to its sound. I had for some time noticed a queer, dripping noise which I had foreborne to mention fearing it might be inside my own head—a devilish legacy of our recent buffeting. You can imagine my relief when Whinney asked apologetically, "Do you fellows hear anything?"

"I do!" was my rejoinder, seconded by Swank who had come up for air.

We all listened intently.

Though the sky was cloudless, a distinct pattering sound as of a light rain reached us.

"Nuts..." said Captain Triplett suddenly, spitting on the nose of a fish that had made a face at him. A glance through our mercifully preserved field-glasses corroborated the Captain's vision.

"For the love of Pete!" I gasped. "Take a squint at those trees." They were literally crawling with nuts and tropical fruits of every description. In the shadow of the broad panjandrus leaves we could see whole loaves of breadfruits falling unassisted to the ground while between the heavier thuds of cocoanuts and grapefruit we heard the incessant patter of light showers of thousands of assorted nutlets, singing the everlasting burden and refrain of these audible isles. It was this predominant feature—though I anticipate our actual decision—which ultimately settled our choice of a name for the new archipelago,—the Filbert Islands, now famous wherever the names of Whinney, Swank and Traprock are known.

It was now about half-past two bells and an excellent time to make a landing, preparations for which were forthwith set in motion. Now, if ever, we had occasion to bless the tightness of the Kawa, for in the confusion below, somewhat ameliorated by the labors of William Henry Thomas, we found most of our duffle in good order, an occasional stethoscope broken or a cork loose, but nothing to amount to much. Our rifles, side-arms, cartridges, camera and my bundles of rejected manuscript were as dry as ever. I was thankful as I had counted on writing on the other side of them. A tube of vermilion had run amuck among Swank's underclothes but, in the main, we were intact.

After some delay in getting our folding-dory stretched on its frame, due to Whinney's contention that the bow and stern sections belonged on the same end, we finally shoved off, leaving William Henry Thomas to answer the door in case of callers.

In the brief interval of our passage, I could not help noticing the remarkable submarine flora over which we passed. The water, perfectly clear to a depth of four-hundred and eighty-two feet, showed a remarkable picture of aquatic forestry. Under our keel spread limeaceous trees of myriad hues in whose branches perched variegated fish nibbling the coral buds or thoughtfully scratching their backs on the roseate bark. Pearls the size of onions rolled aimlessly on ocean's floor. But of these later; for the nonce our tale leads landward.

As our canvas scraped the shingle we leaped out, tossing the dory lightly beyond the reach of the waves, and fell into the agreed-upon formation. Triplett in the van, then Whinney, Swank and myself, in the order named. Beyond the beach was a luxuriant growth of *haro*. [Footnote: Similar to the photographer's grass; is used in the foreground of early Sarony full lengths. I have seen a similar form of vegetation just off the fairway of the third hole at Garden City.] Into this we proceeded gingerly, intrepid and alert, but ready to bolt at the slightest alarm.

The nut noises became constantly more ominous and menacing, but still we saw no sign of human life. Near

the edge of the forest we came to a halt. Plainly it would be unwise to venture within range of the arboreal hailstones without protection, for though our pith-helmets were of the best quality they were, after all, but pith, and a cocoanut is a cocoanut, the world over. While we were debating this point and seeking a possible way into the jungle which was not overarched by trees I heard a low bird-call, as I supposed, the even-song of the cross-billed cuttywink. On the instant a towering circle of dark forms sprang from the haro and at a glance I saw that we were completely surrounded by gigantic Filbertines!

Darting a look over my shoulder I noted to my dismay an enormous land-crab towing our dory seaward. It was a harrowing moment. As agreed upon, we waited for Triplett to take the initiative and in the interim I took a hasty inventory of our reception committee. The general impression was that of great beauty and physique entirely unadorned except for a narrow, beaded water-line and pendent apron (*rigolo* in the Filbertine language) consisting of a seven-year-old clam shell decorated with brightly colored papoo-reeds. The men's faces were calm, almost benign, and as far as I could see unarmed except for long, sharply pointed bundles of leaves which they carried under their arms. Their tattooing was the finest I have ever seen.

At this moment, however, my observations were concluded by Triplett's suddenly wheeling and saying sharply, "Traprock! ... target practice!" This was a stunt we had often performed for the amusement and mystification of kindly cannibals in the Solomons. I had seen it in vaudeville and taught it to Triplett. As was my custom, I had in the pocket of my singlet a number of ship biscuit. Plucking out one of these I placed it on my forehead and nose, holding it in place with the index finger. Triplett leveled his Colt a good yard above my head and fired, I on the instant pressing the biscuit so that it fell in pieces to the ground.

The effect on the Filbertines was marvelous.

They were too simple to be afraid. Their one emotion was wonder. Then Swank, grinning broadly, uttered the one word, "Cinch!"

To a nation which had never heard a word ending in a consonant, this was apparently intensely humorous. They burst into loud guffaws, supplemented with resounding slaps of their cupped hands on their stomachs, at the same time raising an imitative cry of "Sink-ka! Sink-ka!"

This was our welcome to the Filbert Islands, and also the beginning of the formation of that new tongue, Filbertese or nut-talk, which in the ensuing months was to mean so much to our small but absolutely intrepid band.

CHAPTER III

Our handsome hosts. En route to the interior. Native flora and fauna. We arrive at the capitol. A lecture on Filbertine architecture. A strange taboo. The serenade.

With the first burst of laughter it seemed that all embarrassment on the part of the natives had been dissipated. Those nearest us insisted on patting our stomachs gently, at the same time uttering a soft, crooning "soo-soo," [Footnote: This same sound is used by the natives of Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, when calming their horses.] which it was obviously the proper thing to return, which we did to the delight of the bronze warriors about us.

After a few moments of this friendly massage, the most ornamental of the savages, whom I judged to be the chief, uttered dissyllabic command of "Oo-a," and slapped his right thigh smartly with his left hand, a feat more easily described than accomplished. Coincident with this signal came a cheerful riffling sound as the Filbertines broke out their large umbrellas of panjandrus leaves which we had first mistaken for weapons. This implement, (known technically as a *naa-naa* or *taa-taa*, depending on whether it was open or closed), was in reality notonly a useful and necessary protection against the continuous nut-showers but also a weapon of both of- and de-fensive warfare. [Footnote: This primitive people we soon found to be profoundly pacifistic, a natural condition in a race who, since the dawn of time, had known no influence other than that of the Pacific Ocean. Warfare with its cruel attributes had never penetrated their isolation. With nations as with people, it takes two to make a quarrel. Here was but one.]

We stood thus, in open formation, among the luxurious haro until in response to another signal from the chief, a resounding slap on the left shank, they escorted us ceremoniously along a winding path which led toward the interior of the island. It was for all the world as if we were being taken out to dinner, a thought which suggested for an instant the reflection that we might turn out to be not *guests* but *courses* at the banquet, in which case I promised myself I should be a *piece-de-resistance* of the most violent character.

But these solemn thoughts were not proof against the gaiety of our surroundings, the soft patter of the constantly dropping nuts bounding from the protective *taa-taas*, and the squawks and screeches of countless cuttywinks and *fatu-liva* birds, those queens of the tropics whose gorgeous plumage swept across our path.

For Whinney and Swank as well as myself the promenade was a memorable one, the former feasting his cool eyes on the hundreds of new scientific items which he was later to classify, the bulbous *oo-pa*, a sort of vegetable cream-puff, the succulent *tuki-taki*, pale-green with red dots, a natural cross between the banana and the cocoanut, having the taste of neither, and the numerous crawling things, the whistling-ants and shy,

lamp-eyed lily-bugs (*anchoridae flamens*) who flashed their signals as we passed.

Swank revelled in the rainbow colors about us, the flaming nabiscus blossoms and the unearthly saffron of the *alova* blooms, one inhale of which, we were to learn, contained the kick of three old-fashioned mint-juleps. Only Triplett's hard-boiled countenance reflected no interest whatever in his surroundings.

It was doubtless this unintelligent dignity on our Captain's part, coupled with what was left of his brass buttons and visor cap on which the legend "Kawa" still glimmered faintly, which prompted the aborigines to select him as our chief, an error which I at first thought of correcting by some sort of dramatic tableau such as having Triplett lie down and letting me place my foot on his Adam's apple, of which he had a splendid specimen. On second thought, however, I decided that it would be more modest to allow him any honors he might receive together with the responsibilities attendant upon his position. It is the invariable habit of South Sea Islanders, in the event of trouble, to capture and hold as hostages the chief men of a tribe. Their heads, with or without the original bodies, seem to have a peculiar value.

Babai and Her Taa-Taa

In this picture the joyous island queen Babai-Alova-Babai is seen carrying her taa-taa, the curious implement which serves so many purposes in the Filbert Group. It is in turn a protection against the sun, the rain and the constant showers of falling nuts, and also, when occasion demands, a most effective weapon of defensive warfare. The taa-taa is made of closely laced panjandrus leaves on a frame of the tough eva-eva. When closed, which is seldom, it is known as a naa-naa. In addition to its other uses it is most evidently a charming background for a splendid example of Filbertine youth and beauty.]

Soon the trail widened, and we were called upon to hurdle several low barriers of *papoo-reeds*, designed to confine the activities of the countless Alice-blue wart-hogs which whined plaintively about our feet. At a majestic gesture from the chief the *taa-taas* were furled (becoming *naa-naas*), and we halted in a bright clearing about sixty feet in diameter, plainly the public square, or, to be exact, circle.

My first impression was that of complete isolation in an unbroken forest. Peer as I would, I could discern no sign of human habitation. We had arrived, but where? My question was soon answered. By most gracious gestures, soft sounds and a series of fluttering finger exercises on the abdominal walls we were led to one side of the circle where, as our guides pointed upward, white eyes for the first time in history rested on a Filbertine dwelling!

The houses were in the trees!

Architecture is said to express deeply the inner characteristics of a people, a statement I am glad to corroborate. But never had it struck me so forcibly as now. Gazing up at a dim picture of informal construction, interlaced and blended with the trunks, boughs and foliage of the overarching palms I saw at a glance the key-note of the life of this simple people—*absence of labor*.

The houses,—nests, were the better word—were formed by a most naive adaptation of natural surroundings to natural needs. The curving fronds of the towering coco-palms and panjandrus had been interlaced; and nature did the rest, the gigantic leaves interweaving, blending, over-lapping, meeting in a passionate and successful desire to form a roof, proof alike against sun and rain. Some ten feet below this and an equal distance from the ground the tendrils of the *eva-eva* vine had been led from tree to tree, the subordinate fibres and palpitating feelers quickly knitting themselves into a floor with all the hygienic properties and tensile strength of linen-mesh.

Access to these apartments was something of a puzzle until, to instruct us, a tall Filbert, who was evidently to be our neighbor, approached a nearby dwelling and, seizing a pendent halyard of *eva-eva*, gently but firmly pulled down the floor to a convenient level, vaulted into the hammock-like depression and was immediately snapped into privacy. From below we could see the imprint of his form rolling toward the center of his living-room and then the depressions of his feet as he proceeded to lurch about his dwelling.

It was now mid-afternoon; we were hot, tired, and, though we did not know it, mildly intoxicated by the inhalations of alova which we had absorbed during our journey. I looked forward eagerly to getting up-stairs, so to speak, and taking a sound nap. One thing only deterred me; I was thirsty.

Walter E. Traprock, F.R.S.S.E.U.

This striking likeness of Dr. Traprock, the author of the present volume, admirably expresses the intensity, alertness and intrepidity which have carried this remarkable personage through so many harrowing experiences. A certain bold defiance, which is one of Dr. Traprock's characteristics, has here been caught to the life. With just this matchless courage we know that he must have faced death a thousand times even though, as now, he had not a cartridge in his belt. That Dr. Traprock knows no fear is evidenced by the fact that he has not only explored every quarter of the globe, but that he has also written a number of books of travel, plays, musical comedies and one cook-book. The background of this picture shows the densely matted bush of the Filbert Islands in their interior portion, a jungle growth which might well baffle any but the most skillful threader of the trackless wilds. The gun carried by Dr. Traprock is a museum-piece, having been presented to the author's great-grandfather by Israel Putnam immediately after the Battle of Fort Ticonderoga. Thanks to constant upkeep it is in as good condition as ever. This is also true of Dr. Traprock.]

On the edge of the clearing I heard the tinkling of a brook. Walking to its edge, I knelt and dipped my hot wrists in the cold stream, wetting my hands, face and matted locks, while the natives eyed me solemnly but with, I thought, looks of anxiety. And then a strange thing happened. As I took off my duck's-back fishing hat, filled it to the brim and raised it to my lips, a cry of horror burst from the throats of those swarthy giants. The chief strode forward and dashed the cap from my hand, at the same time thundering the word "Bapoo!"

In an instant it flashed upon me that this was Filbertese for *tapu* or *taboo*, that strange, sacred kibosh which is laid on certain acts, objects or localities throughout these far-flung islands. Water it appeared was for drinking purposes—*bapoo*. I then did what I think was exactly the right thing under the circumstances, namely, to wring out the offending head-covering and throw it as far from me as possible, an act which was greeted with a hearty burst of applause.

It was not necessary for me to indicate further that I was thirsty. Two henchmen almost immediately appeared with a large nut-shell of unfamiliar appearance,—it was about the size of a half watermelon and bright red on the outside,—full of a pale pink liquid. The chief, one or two of the leading men, and the rest of my party were similarly equipped. Raising his shell the chief and nobles said simultaneously "Wha-e-a" and we drank.

Two minutes afterward I had a faint sensation of being borne away by the trade wind. Swank was beside

me and I heard him murmur, "I'm glad I don't have to sleep with Triplett."

The rest was silence, and the silence was rest....

We awoke many hours later. It was moonlight and we were lying in a complicated knot in the exact center of our domicile. Unraveling ourselves we tested our heads with gentle oscillations.

Suddenly, in the distance, we heard a sound which sent a chill thrill running up and down our spines, the sound of singing, a faint far-off chorus of the loveliest voices that ever fell on mortal ears. The tone had that marvelous silver clang of the woodland thrush with yet a deeper, human poignancy, a note of passionate longing and endearment, shy but assertive, wild, but oh! so alluring. We chinned ourselves expectantly on the edge of our floor and waited, panting.

"A serenade," whispered Swank, and Whinney shush-ed him savagely.

Through the forest glades we could see the choir approaching, the dusky flash of brown bodies swaying, palpitating to the intoxicating rhythm of the song. Slowly and with great dignity they entered the clearing and stood, a score of slender creatures, in the full blaze of the moon, their lithe-limbed bodies clad only in delicate mother-of-pearl *rigolos*.

Thus standing, they again burst into the melody of their national love-song. I transcribe the original words which for simple, primitive beauty are without rival.

A-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a
E-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e

I-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-i
O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o
U-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u

and sometimes

W-w-w-w-w-w-w-w-w

And

Y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y

The music is indescribable, I can only say that it is as beautiful as the words.[Footnote: "The peculiarly liquid quality of Polynesian phonetics is impossible for foreigners to acquire. Europeans who attempt a mastery of these sounds invariably suffer from what etymologists call metabelia, or vowel complaint."—*Prof. C.H. Towne, Nyack University*.]

On the third encore they turned and slowly but surely filed out of the clearing into the forest. Long after they had disappeared our eyes still hung over the edge of our apartment and we could hear in our memories the sweet refrain—

W-w-w-w-w-w-w-w-w
Y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y-y

As we lay there like men in a trance I saw a dull red glow on the horizon and then, far off a rocket split the velvet night, burst into stars and disappeared.

It was William Henry Thomas, aboard the Kawa—a signal of distress! Poor goof! We had completely forgotten him.

I had a vague sense, shared, I think, by the others, that I ought to worry a bit about him. But it was no use. One by one we lowered ourselves into the pit of our arboreal home and drifted into delicious languorous reveries, not of William Henry Thomas. We had other things to think about.

CHAPTER IV

A few of our native companions. Filbertine diet. Physiological observations. We make a tour of the island. A call on the ladies. Baahaabaa gives a feast. The embarrassments of hospitality. An alcoholic escape.

"We really must do something about William Henry Thomas," I said on the day following our serenade.

My companions agreed, and we really meant it. But alas, how easy it is to put things off. Day after day slipped by and we thought less and less of our boat-tending sailorman and more and more of what a magnificent time we were having.

The chief's name was Baahaabaa, meaning in Filbertese "Durable Drinker." Among his companions were several who soon became our intimates—Hitoia-Upa (Cocoanut That Never Falls) and Abluluti (Big Wind Constantly Blowing).

In every case reference in names was to simple, natural beauties. How much more interesting than our own

meaningless nomenclature.

We soon found that these simple folk had evolved an admirable standard day in which there was no labor whatever, no cooking, even. Imagine a civilization, and I use the word advisedly, in which the question of having or not having a cook is eliminated. We were two weeks on the island before any one of us realized that we had seen no fire. The matches which we used to light our pipes were thought to be marvelous flowers that blossomed and immediately disappeared.

Nature, all bountiful, supplied a menu of amazing variety. Fruits, vegetables, combinations of the two, edible flowers and, above all, the thousand and one kinds of nuts from which the islands receive their name, were at hand for the plucking. Our breakfast grew on the ceiling of our bedroom and dropped beside us with charming punctuality at the first shiver of the rising trade.

It must not be supposed that we were strict vegetarians. Many varieties of fish and crustacea, as well as certain insects and some of the smaller birds were eaten raw. European and American civilizations alike are hopelessly backward in this regard. True, we eat with avidity oysters and clams (except in the Bapoo-period), knowing that they are not only raw but also alive. In the Filberts it was but a slight step forward to pop into one's mouth a wriggling *limpataa* (a kind of marine lizard), whose antics after he is swallowed are both pleasant and novel. The hors d'oeuvre course of a Filbert Island banquet is one roar of laughter caused by the interior tickling of the agile food. This of course promotes good feeling and leads to many lasting friendships.

With one's meals thus always ready-to-serve, with no cook glowering at the clock, no cheese souffle ready to collapse, no dishes to wash or frying-pans to scour, life is one long gastronomic song.

In physical stature and beauty the Filbertines are far above the average. The men are six feet in height and upwards, and proportionately wide. By a combination of equable climatic and economic conditions this altitude has become standardized and there is little variation from it. A sort of rough control is exercised in this regard. When a young male Filbertine has got his growth he is measured with a bamboo yardstick to see if he comes up to requirements.

If not, he simply disappears. Little is said about it, but the fact is that the physical failures are moored at low tide to a lump of coral on one of the outer reefs. Sharks, octopi and the man-eating *Wak-waks* do the rest. This, as I say, is a rough sort of control but effective.

Gathering Dew-Fish on the Outer Reef

There is no pleasanter sight in the world than that of the stalwart young Filbertine youths gathering dew-fish in the early dawn of a perfect tropical day. It is only at this time that these edible little creatures can be caught. Just as the sun's rays flash across the horizon they rise to the surface of the water in vast numbers, turning the entire ocean to a pulsating mirror of silver. For five minutes they lie thus, then suddenly sink simultaneously. Their work for the day, so far as we know it, is done. The natives fill their cheeks—which are very elastic—with hundreds of these tiny fish which they afterwards eject on the shore. Here we see Hitoia-Upa and Ablutiluti gathering dew-fish for the great feast given in honor of Dr. Traprock and his companions.]

In facial character the tribe is regular and well proportioned, presenting no traces of negroid antecedents. Noses are slender and slightly retroussed, lips clean-cut, chins modestly assertive with lower jaws superbly adapted to cracking cocoanuts and oysters, foreheads low with sufficient projection at the eye-line for shade purposes. All in all, they are entitled to an A-plus in beauty and reminded me less of Polynesians than of a hand-picked selection of Caucasians who had been coated with a flat-bronze radiator paint.

Beards, moustaches, imperials, goatees, side-whiskers and Galways are unknown, a fact which was to me strange considering the luxuriance of other vegetation until I learned that, from infancy, it is the custom of the Filbertine mother to scour her offspring's face with powdered coral which discourages the facial follicles. These eventually give up and, turning inward and upward, result in a veritable crown of glory on the top of the head, the place, after all, where the hair ought to grow. Their teeth, as with most gramnivora, are sound, regular, brilliantly white and exceptionally large, the average size being that of the double-blank domino.

So much for the men, and far too much, if you ask me, when you think that we still have the adorable women to speak of.

Ever since our first nocturnal glimpse of the charming creatures you can imagine that my companions and I were most eager to see more of them. During the entire next day not one of "les belles sauvages" was visible. It was next to impossible to make inquiries, but Swank, the irrepressible, resolved to try and plied Baahaabaa with questions in French, English, German and beche-de-mer, which only resulted in loud laughter on the part of our host. Swank next tried pantomime, using the French gesture for beauty, a circular motion of the hands about his face accompanied by sickening smiles. Baahaabaa watched him intently, slapped his hip sharply, uttering a melodious command and shortly afterward Hitoia-Upa presented Swank with a beautifully made wreath of elecampane blossoms (*inula helenion*) exactly matching his beard. This was all very well but got us nowhere.

On the day following, however, our difficulties were unexpectedly solved. Abluluti and a companion of his, Moolitonu (Bull-lost-in-a-Thunder-Storm), indicated by certain large gestures that if we liked they would be glad to make a tour of the island, a proposition we gladly accepted. Moolitonu was our official map. On his broad back in the most exquisite azure tattooing was a diagram of the island showing all main-routes, good and bad trails and points of interest. Moolitonu was, in fact, a human Blue-book.

Equipped with individual *taa-taas* and quart cocoanut shells of *hoopa*, a delicious twenty-seven per cent. milk, we set out along a well-traveled trail, stopping ever and anon to enjoy the tranquil beauty of the outer sea or the more spectacular glimpses of the inner lagoon dominated by the mountain. We had made the circuit of approximately three-fourths of the island, when suddenly, without a word of warning, we stumbled into the *Hativa-faui*, or ladies' dressing-room. Instantly we were surrounded by a bevy of captivating beauties. Our guides had evidently counted on our surprise for they laughed uproariously, their mirth being joyously echoed by the graceful women who crowded about us, patting, petting and bidding us unmistakable welcome to their compound. I have never seen a more charming sylvan retreat.

Herman Swank

Since the exhibition of Herman Swank's South Sea Studies in the Graham Galleries, New York City, it is hardly necessary to introduce by name the illustrious artist who has justly earned the title of "Premier Painter of Polynesia." A whole school of painters have attempted to reproduce the exotic color and charm of these entrancing isles. It remained for Herman Swank, by his now famous method of diagrammatic symbolism, to

bring the truth fully home. This he accomplished by living, to the limit, the native life of the Filbertese. Clad only in the light lamitu, or afternoon wrap of the islands, it was the artist's custom to spend entire days inhaling the perfume of the fragment alova flower, a practice which undoubtedly accounts for the far-away, dreamy expression so evident in the photograph. He is also wearing the paloota, or wedding crown, the gift of his lovely island bride.]

Let me briefly outline the Filbertine domestic arrangements as they were gradually unfolded to us. To begin with, make no mistake, marriage in the Filbert Islands is a distinct success. This is accomplished by the almost complete separation of the husband from his wives. During the day these joyous maids and matrons lead their own lives in their own community, rehearsing their songs, weaving chaplets of flowers, stringing pearls for their simple costumes, playing games and exchanging the badinage and gossip which are the life-breath of womanhood the world over. They are inordinately proud of their hair, as well they may be, and spend hours at a time dressing and undressing it.

The men, on their side, are equally free. The result is that a meeting with their wives is an event. Happiness, love and the elation of celebration are the harmonious notes of this beautiful domestic diapason.

Feast-days, banquets, picnics, swimming parties—the Filbertines adore salt water, which is not potable but thirst-producing—these are the occasions of a frank and joyous mingling of the sexes.

Before we left the clearing we were treated to a most graceful spectacle, a performance of the *Ataboi*, a dance descriptive of the growth and blossoming of the *alova* flower. This was performed by seven beautiful girls to an accompaniment of song and clapping. The plaintive love-motif was unmistakably introduced by a deep-chested dame who played on the *bazoola*, a primitive instrument fashioned from the stalk of the figwort (*Scrophulariaceae*). It may interest music lovers to know that the Filbertines employ the diatetic scale exclusively, four notes in the ascent and five on the recoil.

At the close of the performance we were shown the nursery compound, an enclosure teeming with beautiful children, screened by hedges where the little ones could be heard but not seen.

Two days subsequent to our amble we were invited to a grand banquet which led to disturbing problems and momentous decision on our part. This feast was our formal welcome; the keys of the islands, so to speak, were presented to us. There were ladies present—and everything.

It was served in a special clearing lighted by the moon and countless *anchoridae* tied by their legs in festoons, a procedure which causes them to open and shut their lambent eyes very rapidly, and gave a quaint cinema effect to the scene. After counting the courses up to twenty-seven I lost as each was accompanied by a new brand of island potion. Fortunately we were seated on the ground.

Triplett was in his glory. If I have failed to mention recently our hard-bitten old navigator it is only because we had seen comparatively little of him. Resting on his titular dignity as chief he seldom appeared in public, spending most of his time up his tree snoozing or reading an old copy of the New Bedford "Argus," which he was never without. Tonight, however, he blazed forth in full regalia, wearing his best blue marble, his visor-cap wreathed with nabiscus blossoms, his case-hardened countenance lighted with conviviality. Following an interminable period of eating and drinking came a long speech by Baahaabaa which, like most after-dinner speeches, meant nothing to me. Captain Triplett replied. The gist of Triplett's remarks, memorized from the "Argus," were taken from the 1916 report of the New Bedford Board of Trade. When he proclaimed that "besides cotton goods, 100,000 pianos were turned out yearly and 8,500 derby hats every day," his audience, set off by Whinney, burst into uproarious applause. The climax was reached when he lowered his voice dramatically and said, "And keep always in mind, O Baahaabaa and friends, that the New England Fur Company uses daily 35,000 rabbit pelts! Gentlemen, I thank you."

Pandemonium broke loose. Triplett was showered with congratulations. Music and dancing followed, among others an amazing performance by a sturdy youth, Zambao-Zambino (Young-Man-Proud-of-His-Waist-Line) who rendered a solo by striking his distended anatomy with his clenched fist, varying the tone by relaxing or tightening the abdominal muscles. Whinney sang a very dreary arrangement of "Mandalay"—his one parlor trick; Swank did an imitation of Elsie Janis's imitation of Ethel Barrymore and I sang "The Wreck of the Julie Plante," an amusing ballad describing the loss by drowning of an entire ship's company.

But the climax was yet to come.

There was a vague sort of commotion among the banqueters and Baahaabaa rose with amazing steadiness and made another speech, short this time, but aimed point-blank at us, after which, through the center of a sort of kick-off formation I saw approaching four of the most exquisite women in the world. When ten feet away they fell on all fours and, using the Australian crawl-stroke, crept slowly toward us, exhaling sounds of passionate endearment mingled with the heart-stopping fragrance of *alova*. Beyond the glimmering lights, an unseen choir burst into the "a-a-a" of the national love-song.

It was a critical not to say embarrassing moment. These lovely ladies were very evidently presents, banquet-favors so to speak, which we were expected to take home with us. To refuse them meant certain offense, perhaps death. Triplett was plainly non-plussed. Swank and Whinney were too far gone to be of any assistance. Summoning all my reserve strength I rose and faced the whirling assembly.

"Gentlemen," I said solemnly, "one final toast, to the President of the United States,"—at the same time draining a huge shell of *hoopa*. My companions followed suit and we fell simultaneously.

For the next twenty-four hours we were safe. After that, who knew?

CHAPTER V

A frank statement. We vote on the question of matrimony. A triple wedding. An epithalmic verse. We remember the "Kawa." An interview with William Henry Thomas. Triplett's strategy. Safe within the atoll.

In most volumes on the South Seas the chapter which I am about to write would be omitted. I mean to say that we have reached a point in my narrative in which the status of our relations with the Filbertine women, as such, must either be discussed frankly and openly, or treated in the usual tongue-in-cheek fashion which seems to be the proper thing with English and American writers.

I have looked them all over carefully (the writers, I mean), and find them divided into two categories, those who take their wives along as a guarantee of virtue, or those who are by nature Galahads, Parsifals and St. Anthonys. This latter group is to me particularly trying. They revel in descriptions of desirous damsels with burning eyes who crave companionship, but when an artfully devised encounter throws one of these passionate persons across the path of the man behind the pen, does he falter or swerve or make a misstep? Never. Right there is where the blood of the Galahads tells. Supremely he rises above temptation! Gracefully he sidesteps! Innocently he falls asleep!

I don't believe a word of it. I think it's just a case of literary men sticking together.

Two days after the Grand Banquet described in the last chapter, Whinney, Swank and I awoke with a sigh of simultaneous satisfaction, completely rested and restored. Ten minutes later we were engaged in a brisk debate in which the question before the house was, stated boldly, Should we or should we not "go native?" In other words, should we hold ourselves aloof, live contrary to the customs of the country and mortally offend our hosts,—to say nothing of our hostesses,—or should we fulfil our destinies, take unto ourselves island brides and eat our equatorial fruit, core and all?

For the purpose of discussion Whinney was designated to uphold the negative, and for an hour we argued the matter pro and con. Whinney advanced a number of arguments, the difference in our nationalities, our standing in our home communities (which I thought an especially weak point), our lack of a common language, and several other trivial objections, all of which Swank and I demolished until Whinney got peevish and insisted that he and I change sides.

I spoke very seriously of the lack of precedent for the step which we were considering and of what my people in Derby, Conn., would say when they learned that a Traprock had married a Filbert. Swank replied with some heat that he didn't believe that anything could be said in Derby that hadn't been said already and Whinney was much more eloquent on the affirmative than he had been on the negative. Finally when I thought we had talked enough I said—

"Well, gentlemen, are you ready for a ballot?"

"We are," said Swank and Whinney.

"Remember," I warned, "The green nuts are for the affirmative,—the black ones for the negative. Secret ballots, of course."

Wrapping our votes in *metani* leaves we dropped them in the ballot shell. Whinney was teller. It was an anxious moment until he looked up and said with a hysterical quiver in his voice:

"Unanimously green."

"Let's go!" shouted Swank, but I stopped him.

"Hold on," I said. "Triplett is in on this. We agreed that it must be unanimous."

My companions' faces lengthened like barrel-staves.

"Damn," muttered Whinney. "I hadn't thought of him."

You can imagine our disgust when we interviewed the Captain.

"Not on your life!" he said decidedly. "Why, boys, I got two a 'em a-ready, one in Noo Bedford—she's my lawful,—and one—a sort of 'erdeependence, in Sausalito. But boys, I don't go for to commit trigonometry, no sir!"

Thunder rested on our brows but the Captain continued,—

"But you—you boys, you ain't married, leastways if you are I don't know about it, and if you ain't"—he looked at us severely,—"if you ain't, it's high time you was. And what's more, if you want to be, I kin do it for you." "What do you mean?" we gasped.

"Justice of the peace," he said proudly, "dooly signed and registered in Dartmouth County, Mass."

We were overwhelmed. This was more than we dared hope for,—more than we had even dreamed of!

"Now, boys," said the Captain in a fatherly tone, "lemme tell you something. While I've been a-roostin' up here in my perch, I've been a-watchin' you boys; a-watchin' an' a-worryin'. What have you been a-doin'?

You've been a-raisin' hell, you have. Son, you ain't a rote a word, have yer? An' you, Whinney—boy, you ain't ketched a bug nor a beetle, have yer? And you, ole Swanko-panko, you ain't drawed a line, have yer?"

We hung our heads like schoolboys before the master. Of course if Triplett put it that way, on moral grounds, so to speak, there was no more to be said.

"Well, what's the answer?" he continued. "It's time you got married an' settled down, ain't it? When is it to be?"

* * *

It was a triple wedding, the first and probably the last in the Filbert Islands, and one of the most charming affairs I have ever seen. We left the selection of our brides to Baahaabaa and, believe me, he showed himself a master-picker. The ceremony took place on the beach at high midnight, the fashionable island hour.

How happy we all were! Triplett's qualifications had completely cleared the atmosphere of any moral misgivings which might have clouded the beauty of the gorgeous tropical night. The Captain read a service of his own composition full of legal whereases and aforesaids and containing one reference to the laws of the Commonwealth of the State of Massachusetts which struck me as rather far-fetched but which under the circumstances I decided to let pass.

Mrs. Traprock, of whom I can even now write only with deep emotion, was an exquisite creature, constructed in accordance with the best South Sea specifications in every particular. Swank and Whinney were equally fortunate. We would not have traded wives for ten tons of copra though Moolitonu, who was my best man, explained that this was perfectly possible in case we were not satisfied.

The gayest of wedding breakfasts followed at which all the ushers behaved in the orthodox manner after which we were conducted to our individual trees with appropriate processional and epithalamic chorals. The ladies' singing society had composed for the occasion a special ode which ran as follows:

Hooio-hoaio uku kai unio,
Kipiputuonaa aaa titi huti,
O tefi tapu, O eio hoki
Hoio-hooio ona haasi tui.

This was set to a slow five-eighths rhythm. A crude translation of the words, lacking entirely the onomatopoetic quality of the original goes something like this:

Stay, O stay, Moon in your ascending!
Daughter of Pearl and Coral to the Moon up-goes,
Stay, O stay, Moon with light unending,
Coral, Pearl and Moonlight, guard them from falling cocoanuts.

I should stand convicted of ingratitude if I did not here and now pay tribute to the sound common-sense of Captain Triplett at whose instigation we had embarked upon this our great adventure. As Triplett had predicted, ere a few days had passed we found awakening within us the fires of ambition which had sunk lower and lower in our breasts during our two weeks of carousing. We were now responsible married men. We wanted to do something to take our places in the community.

I began to scribble furtively on the back of an old manuscript—the book of an operetta I had once written, a musical version of *Les Miserables* called "Jumping Jean," in reference to which one of the New York producers, Dillingham, I think, wrote me: "You have out-Hugo-ed Hugo; this is more miserable than *Les Miserables* itself!" I noticed also that Swank began to use his atelier jargon of "tonal values" and "integrity of line," while Whinney showed up one morning in the village circle with a splendid blossom of the bladder-campion (*Silene latifolia*) pinned to the center of his helmet.

It was doubtless this renaissance of mental activity that reminded us of the Kawa and of William Henry Thomas. Great heavens, what would he think of us? Here nearly a month had elapsed, we were mostly married and had never given him a thought. We were filled with compunction. On top of this Triplett came to us with the announcement that Baahaabaa had informed him that we might expect a big wind about this time. Remembering what we had been through the Captain was worried about our tight little craft.

"He allows," said Triplett, jerking his thumb at the chief, "that we orter git the Tree-with-Wings in out'er the wet. The question is, where be she?"

I explained our anxieties to Ablutiluti who, after a glance at Moolitonu's diagrammatic shoulder blades, immediately set out along a winding path to the shore. I was surprised at the shortness of the distance. A half-hour's walk brought us to the beach and there lay the Kawa as handy as you please. She had been considerably tidied up since our departure. Our blanket-sail had been stowed and between the dingey-oars, which were rigged fore-and-aft, stretched a rope of *eva-eva* from which, to our surprise, hung an undershirt and a dainty feminine *rigolo*. But no sign of William Henry Thomas. In vain we shouted, "Kawa ahoy!" and hurled lumps of coral. All was mysteriously quiet.

Triplett finally pulled out his Colt and, being a dead shot, drilled the undershirt through the second button. This had the desired effect. Our crew almost immediately appeared on deck and shouted peevishly, "Hey there, quit it."

I will not repeat what we said in reply as this is a book for the home, but it had a surprising result.

"Is *that* so?" yelled William Henry Thomas and proceeded to step jauntily over the rail and *walk* in our direction. I knew he couldn't swim a stroke and yet here he was, performing an apparent miracle right in our faces. Then it suddenly dawned on me—he was walking on the coral branches!

It was not a particularly pleasant interview.

Lupoba-Tilaana, Mist on the Mountain

Readers of the text may have noticed that animal life plays a very unimportant part in the life of the Filbertines. Exception must be made in the case of a magnificent ooka-snake, the only one on the islands, which was the proudest possession of lovely Lupoba, who later became the wife of Herman Swank. The ooka-snake lives entirely upon cocoanut milk which gives him a gentle disposition admirably adapted for petting. Mr. Swank has confessed that his wife's fondness for the creature stirred in him a very real jealousy which, in view of the charming testimony of her portrait, we can well understand. A painting of Mrs. Swank by her husband has recently been purchased by the Corcoran Art Gallery of Washington, D.C.]

After apologizing for our absence, which we attributed to illness, we broke the news as gently as possible that we were married.

"Well," said William Henry Thomas, "so be I ... the lady's on board."

"You old land-crab!" blazed Whinney. "Who married you?"

"She did," he replied.

"But who performed the ceremony?" asked Swank.

"Me," answered William Henry.

In vain we tried to explain the necessity of proper rites. His only rejoinder was, "You're too late."

But what made our sailor-man maddest was the information that the yawl had to be moved.

"Here I be as snug as a bug in a rug," he stormed, "an' you go gallivantin' round marrying an' what all, an' now you show up an boost me out. Its e-viction, that's what it is, e-viction."

This was a long speech for William Henry Thomas; fortunately it was his last. While he was delivering it I heard a slight splash and turned just in time to see a seal-like form slip over the Kawa's counter and disappear. I watched in vain for her reappearance. Doubtless like all Filbertines she could stay under water for hours at a time. After that Thomas sullenly did Triplett's bidding and half-heartedly assisted in the work of getting the Kawa into the atoll.

It was an arduous task. For four days we labored, working our vessel close in shore opposite a clearing in the forest, where the outer island was not more than quarter of a mile wide and free from trees. Instructed by Triplett, we paved the highway to the lagoon with cocoanuts. Our wives and friends thinking it was a game, assisted us. If they had known it was work they would, of course, have knocked off immediately. And then the promised storm broke and I saw Triplett's plan.

It was such a storm as this, undoubtedly, that had struck us on July 4th. This time, crouched in the shelter of the near-by trees, clinging to the matted *haro*, we were free to watch a stupendous spectacle. Triplett alone went aboard and lashed himself to the improvised steering post. Our sail had been stretched and rigged with hundreds of yards of *eva-eva*, in addition to which four large *taa-taas* were lashed along the scuppers.

In less time than it takes to tell, the wind had risen to super-hurricane force. Suddenly Baa-haabaa let out a yell of warning and pointed seaward. Rushing toward us at lightning speed was a wall of white water, sixty feet high! In a trice we were all in the treetops, my wife hauling me after her with praiseworthy devotion. All, did I say? All but Triplett. He was sublime. Then for the first time I knew that he was, in truth, our chief. Waving his free arm at the advancing maelstrom, he yelled defiance. Then this towering seawall hit him square in the stern.

I caught one fleeting glimpse of the Kawa gallantly riding the foam. An instant later she was flung with a tremendous crash far down the leafy lane. Fully half the distance she must have gone in that first onslaught. The last eighth-of-a-mile she ground her way through a torrent of sea and cocoanuts. The forest rang with the bellowing wind, the snapping coral branches and the screams of the whistling-trout fighting vainly against the current. What a plan was Triplett's! The cocoanuts, being movable, rolled with the flood and actually acted as ball bearings. Without them our craft must certainly have burst asunder.

The storm passed as quickly as it had come and by the time we had clambered to the ground and rushed across the atoll there lay our tight little darling, peacefully at anchor in the still waters of the lagoon, with Triplett on her quarter-deck immersed in the New Bedford "Argus."

CHAPTER VI

Marital memories. A pillow-fight on the beach. A deep-sea devil. The opening in the atoll. Swank paints a portrait. The fatu-liva bird and its curious gift. My adventure with the wak-wak. Saved!

I shall never forget a day when my bride and I sat on the edge of the lagoon after our matinal dip in its pellucid waters. It was a perfect September morn. So was she.

"My dear," I said suddenly, "Hatiaa Kappa eppe taue."

It sounds like a college fraternity but really means, "My woodlark, what is your name?"

I had been married over a week and I did not know my wife's name.

"Kippiputuonaa," she murmured musically.

"Taro ititi aa moieha ephaa lihaha?" I questioned, which, freely translated, is "What?"

"Kippiputuonaa."

Then, throwing back her head with its superb aureole of hair she softly crooned the words and music of the choral which the community chorus had sung on our wedding night.

Hooio-hooio uku hai unio
Kippiputunonaa aaa titi huti
O tefi tapu, O eio hoki
Hooio-hooio, one naani-tui

How it all came back to me! Leaning towards her, I gently pressed the lobe of her ear with my chin, the native method of expressing deep affection. Her dusky cheeks flushed and with infinite shyness she lifted her left foot and placed it on my knee. Tattooed the length of the roseleaf sole in the graceful ideographic lettering of the islands I read—

"Kippiputuonaa," (Daughter of Pearl and Coral).

"What an exquisite name!" I murmured, "and so unusual!"

I was awed. I felt as if this superb creature, my mate, had revealed to me the last, the most hidden of her secrets. I had heard of Mother of Pearl,—but of the Daughter—never...and I was married to her!

"And you," she whispered, "are Naani-Tui, Face-of-the-Moon!"

I liked that. Frankly I was a bit set up about it. It sounded so much better than Moon-face. I thrust out my left foot, bare of any inscription, and she tickled it playfully with a blade of *haro*. Radiant Kippiputuonaa—whom I soon called "Kippy" for short—your name shall ever remain a blessed memory, the deepest and dearest wound in my heart.

Kippy proposed that I should be marked for identification in the usual manner, but I shuddered at the thought. I was far too ticklish; I should have died under the needle!

What days of joyous romping we had! One morning a little crowd of us, just the Swanks, Whinneys and ourselves, met on the beach for a pillow-fight. It was a rare sport, and, as the pillows were eighteen-inch logs of *rapiti-wood*, not without its element of danger. A half-hour of this and we lay bruised and panting on the beach listening to the hoarse bellowing of the *wak-waks*.

The *wak-wak* is without exception the most outrageous creature that ploughs the deep in fishy guise. For man-eating qualities he had the shark skinned a nautical mile.

Whinney made a true remark to me one night,—one of the few he ever made. The ocean was particularly audible that evening.

Watchful Waiting

There was something about the unfamiliar appearance of Dr. Traprock's yawl, the Kawa, which filled the beautiful native women with a wonder not unmixed with apprehension. This was particularly true of the lovely creatures who married the three intrepid explorers. The strange object which had brought to the islands these wonderful white men might some day carry them away again! In view of the tragic subsequent events there is something infinitely pathetic in this charming beach-study where Kippiputuonaa is seen anxiously watching "the tree-with-wings" (as she naively called the yawl), where her husband, Dr. Traprock, is at work rigging a new yard-arm. The Kawa, unfortunately, is just out of the picture.]

"Listen to that surf," I remarked. "I never heard it grumble like that before."

"You'd grumble, if you were full of *wak-waks*," he said.

The *wak-wak* has a mouth like a subway entrance and I was told that so great was his appetite for human flesh that when, as occasionally happened, some unfortunate swimmer had been eaten by a shark, a *wak-wak* was sure to come rushing up and bolt shark, man and all. Consequently I did most of my swimming in the lagoon.

Speaking of the lagoon reminds me of an absurd bit of information I picked up from Kippy that made me feel as flat as a pressed fern. We were wandering along the shore one morning and she suddenly pointed to the Kawa and said laughingly.

"Why Tippi-litti (Triplett) bring Tree-with-Wings over *Hoopoi* (cocoanuts)?"

"Why not swim?" she asked. "Look see. Big hole."

I looked and saw. A whole section of the atoll near where we were standing was movable! Kippy jumped up and down on it and it rocked like a raft. At the edges I saw that it was lashed to the near-by trees with vines! Cheap? You could have bought me for a bad clam. As I thought of the days we had sweated over those damned cocoanuts, of Triplett's peril, of the danger to the yawl, while our very families looked on and laughed, thinking it was a game, and we might have slipped out the movable lock-gate and simply eased through—well, for the first time in my married life I was mad. Kippy was all tenderness in an instant.

"Face-of-Moon, no rain," she begged, "Daughter of Pearl and Coral eat clouds."

She chinned my ear passionately, and I was disarmed in an instant.

I hated to tell Triplett—it seemed to dim his glory, but I needn't have worried.

"Good business," he exclaimed. "We can get her out inter the open an' have some sailin' parties. I'd like to catch one of them *wak-waks*."

That was the sort Triplett was. He'd done his trick and there was an end of it. The next day he had William Henry Thomas busy re-rigging the Kawa. William Henry Thomas, by the way, insisted on living on board in happy but unholy wedlock, and Whinney, Swank and I felt that it was better so. Somehow we considered him the village scandal.

During these peaceful days I wrote a great deal, posting up my diary as far as we had gone and jotting down a lot of valuable material. Swank had got his impediments off the boat and began daubing furiously, landscapes, seascapes, monotypes, ideographs, everything. Most of them were hideously funny, but he did one thing,—inspired by love, I suppose—a portrait of his wife that was a hummer. She was a lovely little thing with a lovely name, Lupoba-Tilaana, "Mist-on-the-Mountain."

"Swank," I said, "that's a ten-strike. The mountain is a little out of focus but the mist is immense!"

He squirted me with yellow ochre.

Whinney was in his element. Ornithology, botany, ethulology, he took them all on single-handed.

"Listen to that," he said to me one night as we were strolling back from a friendly game of *Kahooti* with Baahaabaa and some of our friends.

I listened. It was the most unearthly and at the same time the most beautiful bird-song I have ever heard.

"What is it?" I asked, as the cry resounded again, a piercing screech of pain ending in a long yowl of joy.

"It is the motherhood cry of the *fatu-liva*," he said. "She has just laid an egg."

"But why the note of suffering?" I queried.

"The eggs of the *fatu-liva* are square," said Whinney, and I was silenced.

Motherhood is indeed the great mystery. Little did I realize that night how much I was to owe to the *fatu-liva* and her strange maternal gift which saved my life in one of the weirdest adventures that has ever befallen mortal man.

It was a placid day on the sea and Kippy and I were returning from a ten-mile swim to a neighboring island whither I had been taken to be shown off to some relatives.

"*Wak-wak,*" I had said when she first proposed the expedition, but she had laughed gaily and nodded her head to indicate that there was not the slightest danger, and, shamed into it, we had set forth and made an excellent crossing.

On the return trip, midway between the two islands, I was floating lazily, supported by a girdle of inflated dew-fish bladders and towed by Kippy. She had propped over my head her verdant *taa-taa* without which the natives never swim for fear of the tropical sun, and I think I must have dozed off for I was suddenly roused by a hoarse Klaxon-bellow "Kaaraschaa-gha!" which told me all too plainly that I was in the most hideous peril.

"Wak-wak!" I barked, and all my past life began to unfold before me.

It was a horrid sight—the *wak-wak,* I mean. He was swimming on the surface, and at ten feet I saw his great jaws open, lined with row upon row of teeth that stretched back into his interior as far as the eye could reach and farther. Mixed up with this dreadful reality were visions of my past. I seemed to be peering into one of those vast, empty auditoriums that had greeted my opera, "Jumping Jean," when it was finally produced, privately.

"Help! Help!" I screamed, reverting to English.

Suddenly Kippy seized the *taa-taa* from my nerveless grasp. Half closing it, she swam directly toward the monster into whose widening throat she thrust the sharp-pointed instrument, in, in, until I thought she herself would follow it. And then, as she had intended, the point pierced the *wak-wak's* tonsil.

With a shriek of pain his jaws began to close and, on the instant, Kippy yanked the handle with all her might, opening the *taa-taa* to its full extent in the beast's very narrows.

Choked though he was, unable for the moment to bite or expel the outer air and submerge, the brute was still dangerous. Kippy was towing me shoreward at a speed which caused the sea to foam about my bladders but the *wak-wak* still pursued us. A second time my dauntless mate rose to the occasion.

With amazing buoyancy she lifted herself to a half-seated position on the surface of the water and poured forth the most astounding imitation of the motherhood cry of the *fatu-liva*.

"Biloo-ow-ow-ow-ow-zing-aaa!"

Again, and yet again, it rang across the waters, and in the distance, flying at incredible speed, I saw the rainbow host of *fatu-livas* coming towards us!

Gallant fowl! Shall I ever forget how they circled about us. One of their clan, as they supposed, was in dire danger and they functioned as only a *fatu-liva* can. Flying at an immense height, in battle formation, they began laying eggs with marvelous precision. The first two struck the *wak-wak* square on the nose and he screamed with pain. The third, landing corner-wise, put out his right eye and he began to thrash in helpless circles. The fourth was a direct hit on my left temple. "Face-of-the-Moon" passed over the horizon into oblivion whence he emerged to find himself in a tree, his brow eased with an *alova-leaf* poultice, his heart comforted by Daughter of Pearl and Coral.

CHAPTER VII

Excursions beyond the outer reef. Our aquatic wives. Premonitions. A picnic on the mountain. Hearts and flowers. Whinney delivers a geological dissertation. Babai finds a fatu-liva nest. The strange flower in my wife's hair.

As I look back on the months which followed I can truthfully say that they were the happiest of my existence. The semi-detachment of our island domesticity was a charm against tedium; our family reunions were joys.

Often we organized picnics to distant points. With hold-alls of *panjandrus* leaves packed with a supply of breadfruit sandwiches, sun-baked cuttywink eggs and a gallon or two of *hoopa,* we would go to one of the lovely retreats with which our wives were familiar.

Occasionally we sailed in the Kawa, at which times the intrepid Triplett accompanied us. Remembering

those happy times I now realize that his presence cast the only shadow across the bright sunlight of our days. Why this was I could not have said,—indeed I should have probably denied that it was so, yet the fact remains that on some of our excursions to neighboring islands, when, having pulled back the terrestrial cork of the atoll, we had eased our tight little craft into the outer waters, I experienced a distinct dorsal chill.

Both Kippiputuonaa and Lupoba-Tilaana felt this to a marked degree, but most of all was it apparent in its affect on Mrs. Whinney whose maiden name, Babai-Alova-babai (Triple extract of Alova), only faintly describes the intoxicating fragrance of her beauty.

"Tiplette, naue aata b'nau boti!" she used to cry. "Do not let Triplett go in the boat."

The old man was insistent. He had worked William Henry Thomas to exhaustion rerigging the craft and then thrust him out, bag and baggage. But I must admit that between them they had done a good job. William Henry and his bride took up lodgings in a tall tree near the lagoon whence they used mournfully to regard the floating home in which they had spent their unhallowed honeymoon. When we actually began to sail her the William Henry Thomases disappeared from view as if the sight were too much for them, and we seldom saw them thereafter.

Triplett's ingenuity was responsible for the bamboo mast, woven *paa-paa* sail and the new yard-arm, which, in the absence of a universal joint was cleverly fashioned of braided *eva-eva*.

On our cruises our wives spent a large part of their time overboard, sporting about the ship like porpoises, ever and anon diving deep under our counter only to appear on the other side decked with polyp buds as if crowned by Neptune himself. At this game Babai-Alova-Babai excelled. Never shall I forget the day she suddenly popped up close alongside and playfully tossed a magnificent pearl into Triplett's lap.

But, as I say, I did not feel at ease. Perhaps it was my experience with the *wak-waks*,—perhaps,—however, I anticipate.

Our merriest jaunts were nearer home. Most memorable of all was our first trip to the mountain, that gorgeous pile on the center of the lagoon.

It was early morning when we set out, disdaining our trim "Tree-with-Wings" from the deck of which Triplett watched our short three-mile swim across the still water. At every stroke flocks of iridescent dew-fish rose about us uttering their brittle note, "Klicketty-inkle! Klicketty-inkle!" [Footnote: One of the pleasantest sights imaginable is that of the natives gathering these little creatures as they rise to the surface at dawn. The dew-fish or *kali-loa* are similar to our white-bait, but much whiter. W.E.T.]

Golden Harmonies

This was the sort of thing that greeted the intrepid explorers of the Kawa when they made their first tour of the island and were entertained by the entrancing inhabitants of the women's compound. The two performers are respectively Lupoba-Tilaana and Baibai-Alova-Baibai. It was only after much persuasion that they agreed to be photographed but, when finally posed to Mr. Whinney's satisfaction, they entered into the spirit of the occasion by bursting into the national anthem of Love, which is described in Chapter II. The instruments are the bombi, a hollow section of rapiti-wood covered with fish membrane, and the lonkila, a stringed instrument of most plaintive and persuasive tone. These two instruments, with the addition of the bazoota, a wood-wind affair made from papoo reeds, make up the simple orchestral equipment of the Filberts.]

We were all wearing the native costume and Swank, I remember, caught his *rigolo* on a coral branch and delayed us five minutes. But we were soon on the inner beach laughing over the incident while Babai made repairs.

The path up the mountain led through a paradise of tropical wonders. On this trip Whinney was easily the star, his scientific knowledge enabling him to point out countless marvels which we might not otherwise have seen. As he talked I made rapid notes.

"Look," he said, holding up an exquisite rose-colored reptile. "The *tritulus annularis* or pink garter snake! Almost unheard of in the tropics."

Kippy insisted on tying it around her shapely limb. Then, of course, Babai must have one, too, and great

were our exertions before we bagged an additional pair for our loved ones.

Thus sporting on our way, crowned with *alova* and girdled with *tontoni* (a gorgeous type of flannel-mouthed snapdragon which kept all manner of insects at bay), we wound toward the summit, stopping ever and anon to admire the cliffs of mother-of-pearl, sheer pages of colorful history thrown up long ago by some primeval illness of mother earth.

Swank was so intoxicated by it all that I made almost the only break of our island experience.

"You've been drinking," I accused.

"You lie," he answered hotly, "it's these colors! Wow-wow! Osky-wow-wow! Skinny wow-wow Illinois!"

"Oh, shut up!" I remonstrated, when I saw Tilaana advancing toward me, fluttering her *taa-taa* in the same menacing way in which Kippy had attacked the *wak-wak*.

"I beg your pardon," I said. "I was wrong. I apologize."

We stood in a circle and chinned each other until peace was restored.

The view from the summit was, as authors say, indescribable. Nevertheless I shall describe it, or rather I shall quote Whinney who at this moment reached his highest point. We were then about three thousand feet above sea-level.

I wish I could give his address as it was delivered, in Filbertese, but I fear that my readers would skip, a form of literary exercise which I detest.

Try for a moment to hold the picture; our little group standing on the very crest of the mountain as if about to sing the final chorus of the Creation to an audience of islands. Far-flung they stretched, these jeweled confections, while below, almost at our very feet, we could see the Kawa and Triplett, a tiny speck, frantically waving his yard-arm! Even at three thousand feet he gave me a chill.... But let Whinney speak.

"It is plain," he said, "that the basalt monadnock on which we stand is a carboniferous upthrust of metamorphosed schists, shales and conglomerate, probably Mesozoic or at least early Silurian."

At this point our wives burst into laughter. In fact, their attitude throughout was trying but Whinney bravely proceeded.

"You doubtless noticed on the shore that the deep-lying metamorphic crystals have been exposed by erosion, leaving on the upper levels faulted strata of tilted lava-sheets interstratified with pudding-stone."

"We have!" shouted Swank.

"Evidently then," continued the professor, "the atoll is simply an annular terminal moraine of detritus shed alluvially into the sea, thus leaving a geosyncline of volcanic ash embedded with an occasional trilobite and the fragments of scoria, upon which we now stand."

William Henry Thomas

Of all the members of the now famous cruise of the Kawa into hitherto uncharted waters it is doubtful if any one entered so fully into the spirit of adventure as the silent fore-mast hand whose portrait faces this text. It was he who first adopted native costume. The day after landing in the Filberts he was photographed as we see him wearing a native wreath of nabiscus blooms and having discarded shoes. Every day he discarded some article of raiment. It was he who first took unto himself an island mate. It was he who ultimately abandoned all hope of ever seeing his home and country again, electing rather to remain among his new-found people with his new-found love and his new-found name, Fatakahala (Flower of Darkness). Truly, strange flowers of fancy blossom in the depths of the New England character. It is reported that he has lately been elected King of the Filberts.]

We gave Whinney a long cheer with nine Yales at the close to cover the laughter of the women, for the discourse was really superb. In English its melodic charm is lost, but you must admit that for an indescribable thing it is a very fine description.

After several days of idyllic life in our mountain paradise we felt the returning urge of our various ambitions.

"Kippy, my dear," I said, "I think we ought to be going."

Sweet soul that she was! that they all were, these beautiful women of ours! Anything we proposed was agreeable to them. As we trooped down the mountain singing, our merry chorus shook the forest glades and literally brought down the cocoanuts.

Whinney was not alone in his scientific discoveries for on the return trip Babai suddenly gave a cry of delight and the next instant had climbed with amazing agility to the top of a towering palm whence she returned bearing a semi-spheric bowl of closely woven grass in which lay four snow-white, polka-dotted cubes, the marvelous square eggs of the *fatu-liva*!

"Kopaa kopitaa aue!" she cried. "Hide them. Quickly, away!"

I knew the danger, of which my temple still bore the scar. Concealing our find under our *taa-taa* we scraped and slid over the faulted and tilted strata to which Whinney had referred until we reached the beach. High above us I could hear the anguished cry of the mother *fatu-liva* vainly seeking her ravished home and

potential family.

The marking of the eggs is most curious and Whinney took a photograph of them when we reached the yawl. It is an excellent picture though Whinney, with the raptiousness of the scientist, claims that one of the eggs moved.

Just before we left the mountain beach my own radiant Daughter of Pearl and Coral made a discovery which in the light of after events was destined to play an important part in our adventures. Kippiputuona, my own true mate, there is something ironically tragic in the thought that the simple blue flower which you plucked so carelessly from the cliff edge and thrust into your hair would some day—but again, I anticipate.

We had reached the yawl, which we made a sort of half-way house and were chatting with Captain Triplett. Whinney was repeating parts of his talk and I noticed that Triplett's attention was wandering. His eye was firmly fixed on the flower in Kippy's hair. That called my attention to it and I saw that whenever my wife turned her head the blossom of the flower slowly turned in the opposite direction.

Suddenly Triplett interrupted Whinney to say in a rather shaky voice, "Mrs. Traprock, if you please, would you mind facin' a-stern."

I motioned to Kippy to obey, which she would have done anyway.

"An' now," said the Captain, "kindly face forrard."

Same business.

The flower slowly turned on Kippy's head!

Stretching forth a trembling hand, Triplett plucked the blossom from Kippy's hair!

You can only imagine the commotion which ensued when I tell you that, in the Filberts, for a man to pluck a flower from a woman's hair means only one thing. Poor Kippy was torn between love of me and what she thought was duty to my chief. I had a most difficult time explaining to her that Triplett meant absolutely nothing by his action, a statement which he corroborated by all sorts of absurd "I don't care," gestures—but he clung to the flower.

An hour later when we had escorted the ladies safely to their compound, I paddled back to the yawl. Peering through the port-hole I could see Triplett by the light of a phosphorous dip working on a rude diagram; at his elbow was the blue flower in a *puta-shell* of water.

"Triplett," I asked sternly, as I stood beside him an instant later, "*what is that flower?*"

"That," said Triplett, "is a compass-plant."

"And what is a compass-plant?"

"A compass-plant," said Triplett, "is—-," but for the third and last time, I anticipate.

I *must* get over that habit.

CHAPTER VIII

Swank's popularity on the island. Whinney's jealousy. An artistic duel. Whinney's deplorable condition. An assembly of the Archipelago. Water-sports on the reef. The Judgment.

Whinney and I were surprised to find that the islanders took Swank more seriously than they did either of us. Of course, since the Kawa's forcible entry into the atoll premier honors were Triplett's, but Swank was easily second.

The curious reason was that his pictures appealed. I think I have indicated that Swank was ultramodern in his tendencies. "Artless art," was his formula, often expressed by his slogan—*"A bas l'objectif! Vive le subjonctif."* Whatever that means, he scored with the Filbertines who would gather in immense numbers wherever he set up his easel.

This was due in part to his habit of standing with his back to the scene which he proposed to paint and, bending over until his head almost touched the ground, peering at the landscape between his outspread legs.

"It intensifies the color," he explained. "Try it."

Baahaabaa bestowed a title on our artist—"Maimaue Ahiiahi"—"Tattooer of Rainbows"—by which he was loudly acclaimed. Whinney and I used to sing, "He's always tattooing rainbows!" but artistic vanity was proof against such *bourgeoisie*.

Baahaabaa was tireless in suggesting new subjects for him to paint. One day it would be a performance of the *Ataboi*, the languorously sensuous dance which we had first seen in the women's compound; again he would stage a scene of feasting, at which the men passed foaming shells of *hoopa* from hand to hand. A

difficulty was that of preventing the artist from quitting work and joining his models which Swank always justified by saying that the greatest art resulted from submerging oneself with one's subject.

"Look at Gaugin!" he used to say.

"But I don't like to look at Gaugin," I remonstrated.

Whinney foolishly tried to compete with Swank by means of his camera—foolishly, I say, though the result was one of the finest spectacles I have ever witnessed.

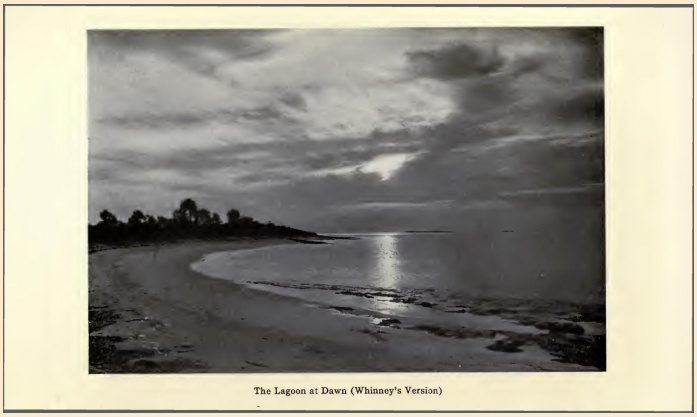
For days Whinney had been stalking Swank, photographing everything he painted. In a darkroom of closely woven *panjandrus* leaves the films were developed and a proof rushed off to Baahaabaa long before the artist had finished his picture.

This naturally irritated Swank and he finally challenged the scientist to mortal combat, an artistic duel, camera against brush, lens against eye.

When the details were explained to Baahaabaa, he was in a frenzy of excitement. As judge, his decision was to be final, which should have warned Whinney, who, as the challenged party, had the right to select the subject. His choice was distinctly artful.

"I think I've got him!" he confided. "We're to do the 'lagoon at dawn.' You know what that means? Everything's gray and I can beat him a mile on gray; secondly, there won't be a gang of people around, and, thirdly, Swank simply loathes getting up early. They're all alike, these artists; any effort before noon is torture!"

"All right," said Swank, when I explained the conditions, "I won't go to bed at all."



The Lagoon at Dawn (Whinney's Version)

What the camera can do in interpreting the subtle values of a delicate color scheme is here shown in the prize photograph submitted by Reginald Whinney in the great competition presided over by Chief Baahaabaa. It is rare indeed to find a beach in the Filbert Islands so deserted. An hour after this photograph was taken more than three thousand natives were assembled to witness the judging of the exhibits. In the small hours of night, the entire strand is covered with pita-oolas, or giant land-crabs, about the size of manhole covers, who crawl inland to cut down the palm trees with which they build their nests. An examination of the picture with a powerful microscope will reveal the presence on the surface of the water of millions of dew-fish enjoying their brief interval of day and dew.]

When the rivals showed up on the beach at the appointed time I regret to say that Swank was not himself. He had spent the night with Baahaabaa and Hitoia-Upa, who supported him on either side, and balanced him precariously on his sketching-stool where he promptly fell asleep. In the meantime Whinney was dodging about with his camera, squinting in the finder, without finding anything—one never does—peering at the brightening sky, holding his thumb at arm's length, [Footnote: In Southern Peru the same gesture used to signify contempt and derision.] in a word going through all the artistic motions which should have been Swank's. The latter finally aroused himself and laboriously got onto all fours, looking like a dromedary about to lie down, from which position he contemplated the sunrise for several minutes and then began to fumble in his painting box.

"Ver' funny—ver' funny," he crooned, "forgot my brushes."

"Let me get them for you," I suggested.

He waived me aside. "Gimme air."

Whinney's shutter was now clicking industriously. He had decided to use an entire film, and submit the picture which came out best. Swank was gradually covering his canvas by squeezing the paint directly from the tubes, a method which has since been copied by many others—the "Tubistes" so called. Every few moments he would lurch forward and press his nose against the canvas, once falling flat on his masterpiece, most of which was transferred to his chest. But he persevered.

Whinney by this time had retired to his darkroom; Baahaabaa and Hitoia-Upa snored; Swank worked and I,

from a near-by knoll, watched the miracle of a tropical dawn.

It was a scene of infinite calm, low in color-key, peaceful in composition, the curve of purple and lavender beach unbroken, the crest of dark palms unmoved, "like a Turk verse along a scimitar." The waters of the lagoon, a mirror of molten amber, reflected the soft hues of the sky from which the trailing garments of night were gradually withdrawn before his majesty, the Day.

Swank only allowed himself the use of the three primary colors—consequently his rendering of the opalescent beauty of this particular dawn was somewhat beyond me.

Where I saw the glowing promise of color rather than color itself, Swank saw red. Where I felt the hushed presence of dawn "like a pilgrim clad," Swank vibrated to the harmonies of pure pigment, the full brass of a tonal orchestra.

Of a sudden his color hypnotism transported him.

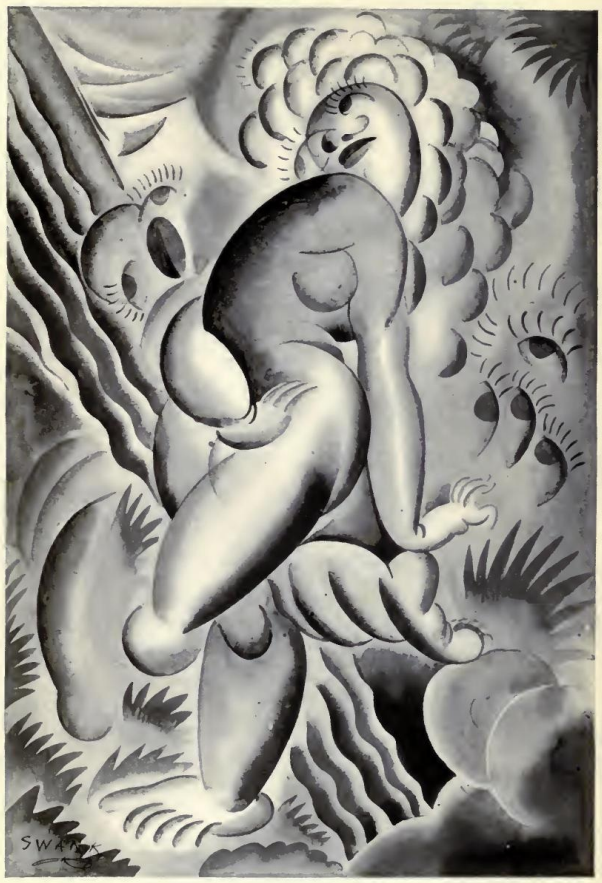
"Eee—yow!" he howled, brandishing a handful of Naples yellow mixed with coral which he hurled at the canvas. "Zow! Bam! Ooh, la la!" His shrieks roused his escorts and brought a rapidly swelling crowd to the dune, where, to the sound of his own ravings and the plaudits of the spectators, he finished his masterpiece.

Late afternoon of the same day was the hour agreed upon for the Judgment. Baahaabaa had sent invitations by express swimmers to all the near-by islands. He invited the entire archipelago.

The picture of their approach was interesting. Kippy haled me to the top of a tall tree whence we watched the convergent argosies, hundreds of tiny specks each bearing an outspread *taa-taa* of gleaming leaves. It was as if Birnam Wood had gone yachting.

"Tapa nui ekilana lohoo-a" chanted my mate.

Following her outstretched hand I discerned a group of *taa-taas,* arranged in wedge formation, the enclosing sides being formed by swimmers carrying a web of woven *haro*, in the center of which reposed a visiting chief with three or four of his wives.



The Lagoon at Dawn (Swank's Version)

An interesting example of the way in which the mind of a painter works will be found in this reproduction of the masterpiece created by Herman Swank in competition with the photograph of the same title. Both camera and painter were to reproduce the same subject, yet how differently they reacted to it. In the beauty of nature about him it is evident that the great artist felt only the dominant feature of island life, the glorious, untrammeled womanhood of the South Seas. The wild abandon, the primitive gesture of modesty, the eyes of adoration—symbolically expressed as detached entities floating about the loved one—all are present in this remarkable picture. Thus expressed, too, we may find the ever-present ocean, the waving palms and, if we seek carefully, the Kawa herself, scudding before the trade wind. Truly may this be called, as the artist prefers, the Venus of Polynesia.]

By four o'clock the beach was thronged with thousands of gleaming bodies. Festivity and rejoicing were in every eye. Shouts of welcome, bursts of laughter, and the resounding slap of friendly hand on visiting hip or shoulder, the dignified welcome of the chiefs, cries of children, dances and games, myriad details of social amity—all presented a picture of unspoiled Polynesia such as is found in the Filberts alone. When I forget it, may I be forgot.

Of course Swank, Whinney and I were objects of much curiosity—and admiration. Hundreds of times my radiant Daughter of Pearl and Coral repeated:

"Ahoa tarumea—Kapatooi Naani-Tui"—"I should like to make you acquainted with my husband, Face-of-the-Moon."

Hundreds of times did I press my chin against soft ears and submit to the same gentle greeting. Hundreds of times did I raise the welcoming hoopa-shell with the usual salutation—"Lomi-lomi,"—"May you live for a thousand years and grow to enormous size."

In a rest period Kippy and I swam to the reef where the younger set were sporting among the coral, diving for pearls which rolled on the purple floor. As I think now of the value of those milky globes, the size of gooseberries, I marvel that not a thought of covetousness crossed my mind. What were pearls to us?

"Catch!" cried Kippy, and threw a fish-skin beauty in my direction. I admired its lustre for an instant and its perfect roundness acquiredfrom the incessant rolling of the tides—then carelessly tossed it back. It slipped between Kippy's fingers.

"I'll get it," I cried, making ready to dive, but she shouted a warning.

"Arani electi. Oki Kutiaa!"-"Look out! The snapping oysters!"

Gazing down through the crystal depths into which our bauble had fallen I saw a great gaping *kutiaa*, the fiercest of crustacea, its shelly mouth slightly ajar, waiting for the careless hand or foot that might come within its grasp. We let the pearl go and amused ourselves by sucking the eggs of the *liho*, a bland-faced bird which makes its nest in the surface coral branches. [Footnote: The *liho* is in many respects the most remarkable fowl in existence. It is of the *gallinaris* or hen-family crossed with the male shad which causes the bird to produce eggs in unheard of quantity.] Here, too, we laughed over the ridiculous *ratatia*, that grotesque amphibian who is built like a ferry-boat, with a head at either end and swivel fins so that however he may move he is always going forward.

From these diversions the sound of singing summoned us. The Judgment was about to take place. At top speed we swam ashore and joined the crowd. For once I was glad that literature had no place in the competition, so that Kippy and I were free to watch the proceedings.

Years ago I saw the ceremonial by which the British Government conferred on the Bahia of Persia the title of "The Bab of Babs," but it was nothing compared to what I now gazed upon.

As far as the eye could reach stretched the crowd. Under a gorgeous dais of *panjandrus* leaves respondent with *alova* blossoms sat Baahaabaa, on his right Captain Triplett, on his left Hanuhonu, the ranking visitor, and all about retinues of nobles, with their superb families, groups of dancers, slim and straight as golden birches, singers, orators and athletes. It was grand opera on a titanic scale, with the added distinction of really meaning something.

Baahaabaa spoke first—in fact I think I may say that he spoke first, last and all the time. I can conscientiously claim that he is the champion long-distance orator of the world. Ever and anon he gave way to a guest but only for a moment.

"We are met," he said—I translate freely—"we are met to witness the emulation of friends." Could anything be more delicate?

"We have with us tonight, in this corner, Wanooa-Potonopoa (Whinney), the Man with his Eye in a Box" (this was plainly a reference to Whinney's camera)—"while in this corner, we have Mainaue Ahiiahi, Tattooer-of-Rainbows. Both boys are members of this island."

The applause was enormous but Swank had the grace to rise and kiss his finger-tips toward the audience which immediately put him on a friendly footing.

After a few more speeches by Baahaabaa the exhibits were unveiled. Of course, the result was foregone. I must admit that Whinney's was not hung to advantage. The two pictures were placed against tufts of *haro* at forty yards distance where, naturally, the detail of the photograph lost something of its effectiveness. Swank's picture on the contrary blazed like a pin-wheel. The further you got from it the better it looked.

A characteristic point in the competition was that Swank had introduced figures into his composition where no figures had existed. "What do I care?" he said to my objection. "I was there, wasn't I? And you were there?

There may have been others."

A mighty roar followed the unveiling, a shout of such force that tons of breadfruit and thousands of cocoanuts fell from the adjacent trees. But it was plain to see whom the shouting was for. Then Baahaabaa made the awards and—the prizes were identical—two royal *rigolos* of mother-of-pearl, elaborately trimmed with corals and pendants of limpid aquamarine. What tact, what grace and charm in these identical rewards!

I am fortunate in being able to reproduce both masterpieces, so that my readers may form their own decision. Personally, Whinney's photograph seems to me to reproduce more completely my memories of "The Lagoon at Dawn." But I may be wrong. Modern artists will probably back up the popular judgment and on that memorable day in the Filberts I would certainly have been in the minority.

CHAPTER IX

More premonitions. Triplett's curious behavior. A call from Baahaabaa. We visit William Henry Thomas. His bride. The christening. A hideous discovery. Pros and cons. Our heart-breaking decision. A stirrup-cup of lava-lava.

It was two weeks after the great Competition before the celebrations which followed it terminated, the tumult and the shouting died, and the last of our amiable visitors paddled homeward, some being towed by new-found wives, while not a few remained in our own community, infusing our society with the novelty and fresh gossip of their islands. Little by little we settled back into domestic quiet.

A blithe incident enlivened that peaceful period, preceding tragic events which must be told in their proper place.

On the fairest of tropical mornings Kippy and I heard a gentle tapping at the trunk of our tree and, peering over the floor, saw below Baahaabaa, his face shining with happiness.

"Katia?" we questioned, but he was mysterious and led us quietly to the trees occupied by the Swanks, the Whinneys and finally Triplett, all of whom he roused as he had us.

"Katia?" we repeated.

"Hoko," he answered, and to our surprise, again motioned us forward. For twenty minutes we threaded a forest trail in which still lurked the shadows of night. At a giant palm tree our leader again tapped gently.

Who should look over the edge of the densely screened dwelling but William Henry Thomas!

At first glimpse of us he hastily drew back and I heard the muttered sound of old-fashioned, New England cursing. Reassured by Baahaabaa, however, he slid down to join us, followed by his wife.

It was the first time I had ever really seen her and I must say that I was completely bowled over by the sight. Plainly not of the same social class as the beautiful women whom Baahaabaa had selected for us, she yet possessed an eerie charm of her own which instantly stirred strange emotions in my breast. I heard Swank gasp and Whinney's face was white and drawn, his favorite expression when deeply moved. She stood close to her husband, half-twined about him with the grace and strength of an *eva-eva* vine while her kindling eyes burned questioningly, her lithe body tense and protective. "He is to be christened," said Baahaabaa, with a magnificent gesture toward William Henry Thomas.

We could only look our astonishment.

"Yes," continued the chief, smiling benignly, "first among you all is he to have his name recorded in our ancient fashion."

As he pronounced these words Baahaabaa lifted his left foot solemnly and pointed to his own royal appellation tattooed on the sole. Our wives did likewise.

"What is his name?" Whinney asked.

William Henry Thomas's head rose proudly as his wife replied in thrilling, woodland tones, "Fatakahala."

"Fatakahala!" repeated Baahaabaa, "Flower of Darkness," and William Henry Thomas raised his head as high as it would go.

"When does the ceremony take place?" asked Whinney. Baahaabaa pointed to the distant peak of the mountain.

"Tonight. Maka, the Tattooer, is ready; the fishbones are sharpened; the juice of the tupa-berries fills the holy shell. We go."

All that day we strung ceremonial garlands about the base of the mountain, which, with its circumference of a mile and three-quarters, was no small task. But sunset found it completed. We supped on the beach and at nine, under a rising moon, climbed toward the summit. The peak was reserved for William Henry Thomas,

Maka and her four attendants who bore the utensils and long ropes of *eva-eva*—"to tie him with," whispered Baahaabaa.

The Nest of a Fatu-Liva

This is without question the most extraordinary picture which has ever been taken of any natural history subject. It corroborates in most convincing manner the author's claim to the discovery of the wonderful fatu-liva bird with its unique gift of laying square eggs. Here we see the eggs themselves in all the beauty of their cubical form and quaint marking; here we see the nest itself, made of delicately woven haro and brought carefully from the tree's summit by its discoverer, Babai-Alova-Babai. An extremely interesting feature of the picture is the presence in the nest of lapa or signal-feather. By close observation, Mr. Whinney, the scientist of the expedition, discovered that whenever the mother-bird left the nest in search of food she always decorated her home with one of her wing feathers which served as a signal to her mate that she would return shortly, which she invariably did. Skeptics have said that it would be impossible to lay a square egg. To which the author is justly entitled to say: "The camera never lies."]

At exactly ten, by the shadow of the mountain on the atoll, William Henry Thomas stepped forth into the moonlight to face his ordeal—alone.

In the darkness we waited, Kippy clinging close to me. Then came a sound at which I could but shudder. It was a giggle, the voice plainly that of William Henry Thomas. This was followed by a hysterical sob of laughter.

"The christening has begun," murmured Kippy.

You can not imagine anything more horrible. *Never* before to my knowledge had William Henry Thomas laughed. Now, wilder and yet more wild rang his uncontrollable mirth, rising at times to demoniac screams, anon sinking to convulsive chuckles. The worst of it was that it was infectious.

Conscious though we were of the poor wretch's suffering, we could not help joining his vocal expression of it, and thus we sat, in the darkness, our peals of laughter bursting forth at every fresh paroxysm. Tears of distress rolled down Swank's cheeks.

An hour later the vines parted and a recumbent form was borne gently down the mountain; William Henry Thomas, that was, his new name wrapped in soft leaves over which his wife sobbed in tender ecstasy.

On the day following a bolt fell from the blue.

Swank and I were spending the afternoon with Triplett on board the Kawa where the captain was explaining the workings of various home-made navigating instruments which he had manufactured.

"This here is a astrolabe," he said, "jackass quadrant, I call it." He displayed a sort of rudimentary crossbow. "An' this here is a perspective-glass, kind of a telescope, see? Made'er bamboo. The lenses ain't very good; had to use fish-skin. Got my compass-plant nicely rooted in sand, see—she's doin' fine."

"What's this all for?" asked Swank.

Triplett smiled malevolently.

"Don't you want to know where you be? I've got it all figgered out. Got a chart, too."

He unrolled a broad leaf on which he had drawn a rough sketch of the island, probable north and possible latitude and longitude.

Again the chill of dismay and apprehension which I had felt before in Triplett's presence ran up and down my spine. It was beginning to dawn upon me that Triplett was planning a get-away. "My God!" I cried, "take that thing away! What you trying to do, Triplett? Hook us up to civilization with all its deviltry and disease and damned conventions? Don't you appreciate the beauty of getting outside of the covers of a geography?"

The old devil only grinned, his very leer seeming to say, "I've got a trump card up my sleeve, young man."

What might have been a bitter scene was interrupted by something much more serious.

We saw Whinney running along the edge of the lagoon into which he presently plunged and began swimming madly in our direction. As he drew near I saw that he was deathly white. When we dragged him over the rail he collapsed in the scuppers and burst into tears.

"What is it?" we questioned.

He jerked out his answer in hoarse, broken fragments, while our blood froze.

"It's come.... I was afraid of it.... from the first... it's here... we've done it... we've got to get out... it is not fair..."

"For heaven's sake," I shouted. "What's here? What have we done?"

"Disease!" he panted. "Disease! You know ... how the other islands... Marquesas... Solomons... Tongas... dying, all dying."

His voice sank and he covered his face with his hands, shoulders shaking.

"What... what is it? Who has it?"

It was then that Whinney made the supreme call on his nerve, stiffened visibly and answered in a dead voice, "My wife, Babai-Alova-Babai, has prickly-heat!"

It seemed to me in that moment that the entire atoll revolved rapidly in one direction while the mountain twirled in the other. Through my brain crashed a sequence of sickening pictures, the lepers of Molokai with their hideous affliction imported from China, the gaunt, coughing wrecks of Papeete, the scarecrows of Samoa—and now this!

And Whinney was right. *We* had done it; who individually, I know not, nor cared, but collectively we were guilty. Into this Eden, this Paradise in which I had never seen or heard of the slightest ailment, we, the prideful whites, had brought this deadly thing!

Should we remain, I dared not face the consequences.

"Is it... bad?" I managed to ask.

"Pretty," moaned poor Whinney. "Left knee, small of back... spreading."

"I'm going home," I said. "We'll meet here tomorrow afternoon at the same tune. If this thing develops" ...

I finished my sentence by diving overboard.

Early next morning I knew the worst. Daughter of Pearl and Coral was restless during the night. When the sun rose a single glance at her polished shoulders and my heart broke, never to be repaired. Folding her gently in my arms, I trembled in a paroxysm of grief.

We spent the entire day together, I in an agony of soul which I could not quite conceal and which my beloved tried to dispel by the tenderest tributes of her consuming love. I cannot speak more of what lies too deeply in my heart.

It was by the rarest good fortune that Dr. Traprock was able to secure what is probably the only living specimen now in captivity of the hitherto unknown fatu-liva bird. Immediately upon his arrival at Papeete efforts were made to secure a mother bird of any kind which would hatch out the four fatu-liva eggs then in the explorer's possession. Owing to their angular and uncomfortable shape it was found impossible to keep a bird brooding for more than three minutes at a time. After much effort one egg was finally hatched from

which was derived the handsome specimen shown in the illustration. The youngster is now doing finely in the Bronx aviary. Unfortunately he is a male, so that his hope of posterity rests entirely upon the success of another expedition to the Filbert Islands.]

It was a tragic trio which reassembled on the Kawa's deck as the late afternoon sun spread its golden hand across the lagoon. The purple shadow of the Mountain rested on our tiny craft but a shadow yet deeper shrouded our hearts. Each of us carried the consciousness of a terrible duty. We ought to leave the Filberts.

Broken-heartedly we talked over the situation.

"Getting worse," was Whinney's report. "Saw Baahaabaa scratching his leg this morning—probably got it."

Poor Baahaabaa, how my heart ached for him.

"We ought to leave," I said.

It was the first time any of us had dared state the hideous truth in plain words. They fell like lead on our spirits. Swank's sensitive soul was perhaps the most harrowed of all.

He sat moaning on the taffrail taking little or no part in the discussion. All at once he sprang up with blazing eyes.

"I can't do it!" he shouted. "I can't—and I won't. Blessed little Lupoba,—my Mist-on-the-Mountain. How can I desert you? How can we any of us desert our wives—let us stay, let us live, and, if we must, let us die. Love is more than life."

It was a powerful appeal. Overwrought as I was, I nearly succumbed to the false reasoning which was but the expression of my desire. And then once more the vision of those deadly inroads of disease rose before me.

"Whinney," I asked, "is there no cure for this awful thing? No antitoxin?"

He shook his head sadly.

"We have been studying it for years. The only hope is in their complete isolation. If we stay here ... and a second epidemic breaks out.... "; he shrugged hopelessly and Swank buried his face in the bilge-sponge.

"Enough!" I said sternly. "Triplett, when can we leave?"

"Tonight, sir," he answered with his old subservience. "I've got her completely stored, watered and ready."

"Come on," I said shortly. "We must get William Henry Thomas."

We swam ashore dejectedly, each, I know, contemplating suicide. For an hour we visited our friends. For them it was but a friendly call, for us the agony of parting.

Gentle, dignified Baahaabaa, shall I ever forget you as you stood with your hands resting on my shoulder, confidently expecting to see me on the morrow!—Merry Hitoia-Upa, kindly Ablutiluti, and Moolitonu, oh! that I might send some message across the waste of waters to tell your loving hearts of the love which still kindles in mine.

We did not dare visit our wives.

At dusk, that our conference might be unnoticed, we found our way to the William Henry Thomas family tree.

He came down instantly. All his old deference was gone. Something in the straight look of his eye told me that his christening had worked a tremendous moral change in the man, but I was not prepared for its extent.

"Not me," he said briefly, when we explained the necessity of our departure. "Not by a damn sight."

In vain we reasoned, urged and argued.

"Don't you want to go back to your own people?" asked Swank weakly.

A mocking laugh was the reply.

"My own people! Who was I among my own people? Just a bunch of first names—no last name at all. William Henry Thomas! That's a hell of a bunch of names. Who am I here? Fatakahala—Flower of Darkness—I guess that'll be about all. Good night, gentlemen."

With the agility of a monkey he bounded up his tree and disappeared. I stood at the foot of the tree and tried to argue further with him. "Remember Henry James," I shouted. "Think of Charles Henry George." It was in vain.

Swank started after him, but as he reached the floor-level a large *hola-nut* struck him squarely on the top of the head and he fell back, stunned.

Still further depressed we made our way back to the Kawa, our hearts aching as with the hurt of burns, a dull, throbbing torture.

"Drink?" said Captain Triplett in his most treacly manner. He held out a cup of *lava-lava*, the most deadly beverage of the islands. It is mixed with phosphorus and glows and tastes like hell-fire. I saw his plan and for once was grateful. We took the bowl from his hands and filed into the tiny cabin—each picking out a corner to fall in.

In silence we filled our shells and raised them to our lips, the last thought of each of us for our lost loved

ones!

Hours—perhaps days—later I was dimly aware of a soft sobbing sound near my ear. Was it Swank crying? And then I realized that it was the chuckling of water under the Kawa's counter as manned by the intrepid Triplett she merrily footed it over the wrinkled sea.

CHAPTER X

Once more the "Kawa" foots the sea. Triplett's observations and our assistance. The death of the compass-plant. Lost! An orgy of desperation. Oblivion and excess. The "Kawa" brings us home. Our reception in Papeete. A celebration at the Tiare.

That Triplett's refitting of the Kawa had been thorough and seamanlike was amply proven by the speed with which she traveled under the favoring trades. When our saddened but still intrepid ship's company reassembled on our limited quarterdeck there was no sign of land visible in any direction. The horizon stretched about our collective heads like an enormous wire halo. It was as if the Filberts had never existed.

The captain alone was cheerful. Joy bubbled from that calloused heart of his in striking contrast to the gloom of his companions. Most of the time he was our helmsman, his eye cocked aloft at the taut halyards of *eva-eva*, occasionally glancing from the sun to the compass-plant which bloomed in a shell of fresh water lashed to an improvised binnacle.

At regular intervals he took observations, figured the results, and jotted down our probable course on his chart. This document we could scarcely bear to look at for upon it our beloved island figured prominently. But the course of the Kawa interested us. It was a contradictory course and even Triplett seemed puzzled by the results of his calculations.

"Can't quite figger it out," he would mutter, lowering the astrolabe from its aim at the sun—"accordin' to this here jackass-quadrant we orter be dee-creesing our latitude—but the answer comes out different."

"Too much jackass and too little quadrant," snapped Swank, whose nerves were still like E strings.

Little by little, however, the calm of the great ocean invaded our souls and that well-known influence (mentioned in so many letters of consolation), "the hand of time," soothed the pain in our hearts. I think it was the quiet, self-contained Whinney who brought the most reasoned philosophy to bear on the situation.

"They will forget," he said one evening, as we sat watching the Double Cross slowly revolve about its axis. "We must remember that they are a race of children. They have no written records of the past, no anticipations of the future. They live for the present. Childlike, they will grieve deeply, for a day maybe; then another sun will rise, Baahaabaa will give another picnic—" he sighed deeply.

"The tragedy of it is that their memories should be so short and ours so long," I commented.

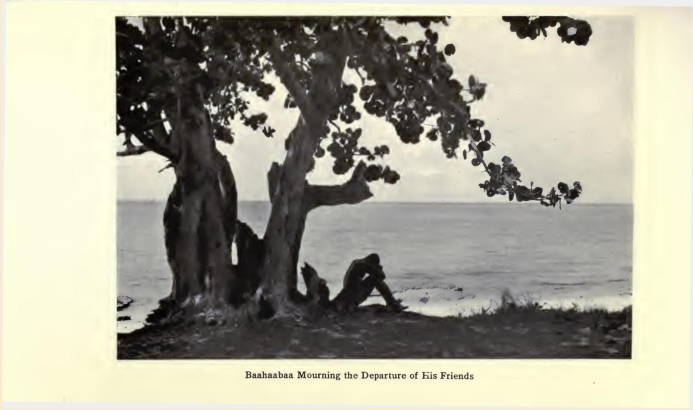
"Yes," agreed Swank, "but I suppose we ought to be thankful. They were a wonderful people, it was a wonderful experience. And no matter what art-juries of the future may do to me, my pictures were a success in the Filberts."

Blessed old Swank, he always looked on the bright side of things!

Day by day matters mended—and our spirits rose. We began to think more and more of getting in touch with civilization. What a tale we should have to tell. How we should put it over the other explorers with their trite Solomons and threadbare Marquesas!

"Where do you think we'll land, Captain?" I asked Triplett.

"Hard to say," he answered, "accordin' to compass-plant I'm steerin' a straight course for anywhere, but accordin' to the jackass (he had dropped the word "quadrant" since Swank's thrust) we're spinnin' a web round these seas from where we started to nowhere via where we be."



Baahaabaa Mourning the Departure of His Friends

In all the history of great friendships there is nothing more touching and more noble than the beautiful bond which existed between Baahaabaa, the simple, primitive chief of the Filbertines and the white men who spent the happiest months of their lives on his island and then so strangely vanished. For several days after their departure he spoke no word. But every evening at sunset he took his place opposite an opening in the reef where the Kawa had first made her appearance and there he sat until darkness covered him. "Whom are you awaiting?" his chieftains asked him. He shook his head mournfully; memories in the Filberts are mercifully short. Then placing his hand over his heart he said, "I know not who it is, but something is gone—from here."

Three weeks later when this photograph was taken he was still keeping up his lonely vigil.]

We tried to help him. While the Captain pointed his astrolabe sunward and announced the figures Whinney and I, like tailors' assistants, took them down, Whinney doing the adding, I the subtracting and Swank the charting. The results were confusion worse confounded.

And then a dreadful thing happened.

The compass-plant sickened and died.

Whether some sea-water splashed into the shell or whether it was just change of environment, I do not know. But day by day it drooped and faded.

I shall never forget the night she breathed her last. With white faces we sat about the tiny brown bowl in which lay our hope of orientation. In Triplett's great rough paw was a fountain-pen filler of fresh water which he gently dropped on the flowerlet's unturned face. At exactly one-thirty, solar time, the tiny petals fluttered faintly and closed.

"She's gone," groaned Triplett, and dashed a tear, the size of a robin's egg, from his furrowed cheek. In that ghastly light we stared at each other.

We were lost!

From then on we gave up all attempts at navigation and went in for plain sailing. Taking an approximate north from sun and stars we simply headed our tight little craft on her way and let her pound.

A sort of desperate feeling, the panic which always comes to those who are lost, led us to wild outbursts of gaiety and certain excesses in the matter of use of our supplies. Every evening we opened fresh gourds of *hoopa* and made large inroads into our stores of *pai*, pickled *gobangs* and raw crawfish.

How long this kept up I cannot say, for we had given up time reckoning along with other forms of arithmetic. But I well remember that it was the Captain who had to intervene at last.

"Look here, boys," he said. "Do you realize that you're eatin' an' drinkin' yourselves outer house an' home? We got jest a week's grub in our lockers, if we go on short rations. Beyond that,"—he waved his arm toward the ocean, as if to say "overboard for ours."

"Look here!" cried Swank excitedly, "do you suppose I want to go in for one of these slow starvation stunts, perishing miserably on half a biscuit a day! O man! that's old stuff. Every explorer that ever wrote has done that, you know—falling insensible in the boat, drifting around for weeks, being towed into port, sunbaked, like mummies. Not on your life! What I propose is one final party—let's eat the whole outfit tonight, hook, line and sinker."

We carried the proposition by acclamation, except Triplett who spat sourly to windward, a thing few men can do. And we were as good as our word.

Late into the night we roared our sea-songs over the indifferent ocean, pledging our lost ones, singing, laughing and weeping with the abandon of lost sheep. With Triplett it was a case of forcible feeding for he kept trying to secrete his share of the menu in various parts of his person, slipping fistsful of crawfish in his shirt-bosom and pouring his cup of *hoopa* into an old fire-extinguisher which rolled in the ship's waist. Pinioning his arms we squirted the fiery liquid between his set jaws, after which he too gave himself up to unrestrained celebration.

Our supplies lasted for two days, and for two days our wild orgy continued.

We have all read of the hunter lost in trackless forest wilds who finally falls exhausted on his pommel and is brought safely home by his loose-reined mustang.

That is exactly what happened to us. I know I am departing from literary custom when I abandon the picture of slow starvation, with its attractive episodes of shoe-eating, sea-drinking, madness, cannibalism and suicide which make up the final scene of most tales of adventure. But I must tell the truth.

While we caroused, our helm was free, the tiller banging, sail flapping, boom gibing, blocks rattling. It was as if we had thrown the reins of guidance on the neck of our staunch little seahorse and she, superbly sturdy creature, proceeded to bring us home. On we went across the waters, steered only by fate.

In the midst of a rousing rendering of "Hail, hail, the gang's all here," we were startled by a grinding crash that threw us in a heap on the floor. Down the companion way burst a flood of green water through which we struggled to the steeply slanting deck, where on ourport bow I glimpsed the picture of a pleasant sandy beach, trees, ships, docks, a large white hotel and hundreds of people—white and brown, in bathing! In one thundering burst of amazement the truth swept over me; we were in the harbor of Papeete! In the next instant strong arms seized me and I was borne through the breakers and up the beach.

Well, they were all there! O'Brien—dear old Fred, and Martin Johnson, just in from the Solomons with miles of fresh film; McFee, stopping over night on his way to the West Indies; Bill Beebe, with his pocket full of ants; Safroni, "Mac" MacQuarrie, Freeman, "Cap" Bligh—thinner than when I last saw him in Penang—and, greatest surprise of all, a bluff, harris-tweeded person who peered over the footboard of my bed and roared in rough sea-tones:

"Well, as I live and breathe, Walter Traprock!"

It was Joe Conrad.

I told my story that night in the dining-room of the Tiare, or, at least, I told just enough of it to completely knock my audience off their seats. For many good reasons I avoided exact details of latitude, longitude, and the like.

No island is sacred among explorers.

"Gentlemen," I said, rather neatly, "I cannot give you the Filberts' latitude or longitude. But I will say that their pulchritude is 100!"

The place was in an uproar. They plied me with questions, and Dr. Funk's! It was a night of rejoicing and triumph which I shall never forget, and which only Fred O'Brien can describe.

The later results are too well known to need recital, Swank's success, Whinney's position in the Academy of Sciences, my own recognition by the Royal Geographic Society.

The tight little Kawa still rides the seas, Triplett in command. She is kept fully stocked, ready to sail at a moment's notice. Soon, perhaps, the wanderlust will seize us again and, throwing down our lightly won honors, we will once more head for the trackless trail.

But we will not make for the Filberts. Too tender are the memories which wreathe those opal isles, too irrevocable the changes which must have taken place. Rather let us preserve their undimmed beauty in our hearts.

On our next trip we have agreed, all of us, that by far the best plan will be to leave the choice of our route, destination and return (if any) to the Kawa herself.

OTHER BOOKS BY WALTER E. TRAPROCK

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NOTE:—Most of the above are out of print. The author still has a few copies of "Curry-Dishes for Moderate Incomes" which may be had at the publication price, $200.

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