Ethnological Notes on New Hebrides

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The following papers were read :—

“Ethnological notes on the New Hebrides,” by Lieut. BOYLE T. SOMERVILLE, R.N.

“Funeral Rites and Ceremonies amongst the ‘Tshinyai’ (or Tshinyungwe), and other notes,” by LIONEL DECLÉ.

ETHNOLOGICAL NOTES *on* NEW HEBRIDES (*continued*).

By Lieutenant BOYLE T. SOMERVILLE, R.N.

INDEX OF CONTENTS.

- I. General Account of Islands Visited.
- II. Population, Causes of Decrease, &c.
- III. Traditions and History.
- IV. Clothing, Ornaments, &c.
- V. Painting and Tattooing.
- VI. Dwellings.
- VII. Navigation, Canoes.
- VIII. Fishing, Swimming.
- IX. Weaving and Basket work.
- X. Pottery.
- XI. Stone Implements.
- XII. Fire.
- XIII. Food, Drinks, &c.
- XIV. Cannibalism.
- XV. Music and Musical Instruments.
- XVI. War and Weapons.
- XVII. Cultivation.
- XVIII. Burials.
- XIX. Boys' Games.

Medical notes by Surgeon Daniel J. P. McNabb, R.N., late of H.M.S. “Dart.”

I. *General account and description of Islands visited.*

DURING the survey of the “Dart” in 1890 and 1891, the parts of the New Hebrides visited included Efâte, with its adjoining small islands of Nguna, Mau, Matáso, Mai, and Mácura; then a little farther to the north, the Shepherd group of Tongoa, Tongariki, Ewosi, Buninga, and Valea, together with the south coast of the large island of Epi; and lastly the east coast of Malekula, between Port Sandwich and Port Stanley, a distance of about 35 miles.

With the exception of the last island, the whole are altogether of volcanic, or else of coral and volcanic origin, and almost all have a wide fringing reef. Efâte contains two fair anchorages

in Havannah Harbour and Fila Harbour, while in Malekula is Port Sandwich, perhaps the best harbour for all weathers in the whole group. All of these islands are densely clothed in forest-trees and scrub—best described under the Australian name of “bush”—which is cleared in small patches by the natives for yams, bananas, &c.; and in the vicinity of the harbours above mentioned, by white traders who have there made quite extensive gardens for cultivating coffee, cocoanuts, and so on, which with every sort of tropical fruit flourish luxuriantly in the rich volcanic mould.

II. *Population, Causes of decrease, &c.*

The population is extremely mixed; many different types may be seen in any village on all of the islands, and of all shades of colour from black to light yellowish brown. The hair is tightly curled, and usually in large quantities, though not to the extent seen in Fiji, and the men are generally full bearded. It would, in fact, be hard to say which type mostly prevails, whether Malayan or Papuan; and the same applies to the languages. On the Shepherd islands only is there any perceptible difference, the natives here being of a far finer physique, lighter complexion, and higher intelligence than in Efáte for instance; and in pre-Christian days, though a good deal fewer in numbers, kept the adjoining islands in terror and subjection—like the Danes or Norsemen in our own country. This superiority may be due to the introduction of Samoan blood, concerning which is the following account in Mr. Macdonald's book “Oceania.” At Mai (which is 8 or 10 miles from the Shepherd group), there arrived about forty years ago a canoe from Samoa, which must have travelled some 1,500 miles, and which contained eight half-starved people, who had sustained themselves during this long journey with a species of cheese made of compressed bread-fruit, and with cocoanuts. On landing, they were all killed and eaten with three unusually unappetizing exceptions, one of whom was living a few years ago. Mr. Macdonald has a piece of their canoe in his possession, which is represented as being a large and well-built boat.

In Efáte the population is rapidly dying out. About forty years ago this decimation began with kidnapping, followed by the “sandalwooders,” who shot down the natives regardless—for there was none—of law. After this came the “labour traffic” to Queensland, which carried many off, never to return, having died of nostalgia, consumption, or the results of liquor and vice while in service. Now that these causes of decline are over, as far as Efáte is concerned, an extraordinary feature of the subsidence of the race is the fact that there has lately been

a marked disproportion in female births; nor can this be due to infanticide, the natives being all Christian.

M. Chevillard, a French settler of twelve years' standing, told me that a village near his place which he can once remember quite well with fifty or sixty souls, now contains only nineteen, of which but two are women. The peoples of the small islands to the northward, and especially of the Shepherd group, however, do not seem to be growing less: there was a downward tendency five or six years ago, yet this seems to have checked. In none of the islands, not even the heathen ones, such as Malekula, can the population be called thick. In this latter (along the coast at all events) the villages are collected in groups, and there is a long tract of seaboard with no villages at all, the result of bombardments by men-of-war—mostly French—which has caused the natives to club together or go to seek shelter farther back in the bush.

The seaboard natives of all the large islands speak of those who do not live by the sea as "man-bush." Whether these really belong to a different race it would be hard to say; it is just possible that they are the remnants of the aboriginal inhabitants who perhaps occupied the islands before the invading Malayan or Papuan stream. I had a long conversation one day with an exceedingly intelligent Malekulan, who told me that his tribe had once had a dispute with "man-bush," which was after some negotiations patched up, as the custom is, with the payment of pigs, and that he had accompanied the pig paying party. They went up into the hills by little known bush tracks, and finally arrived at the bush-men's village, which was not built like their own houses, and thatched, but consisted of circular pits in the ground, paved at the bottom and sides with stones, and with a few boughs thrown over the top. In this the family and dogs lived in such dirt that even my savage informant was disgusted, saying that "'e shtink plenty," not leaving the "house," he said, even to answer the calls of nature. They wore, however, the same costume, and had the same religious beliefs as himself, though not speaking the same language. He told me further that these people had no gardens or tame pigs, but spent their lives wandering about the bush living on wild yams, and catching wild pigs with their dogs, the men seldom being actually at home themselves, though the wives stayed there.

These bushmen are reputed to visit the sea-coast occasionally to make raids, kill and steal. It was the unprovoked murder of a woman of my informant's tribe when at work, during one of these raids, that had caused the dispute which occasioned the payment of pigs and visit to their boundaries. Two murders of

French subjects happened at Port Sandwich in Malekula while we were there, believed to have been committed by "man-bush," but as in all the islands he is the invariable scape-goat on a murder happening, we could not ascertain the truth of the charge.

III. *Traditions and History.*

The native tradition (according to the Efátese) is that the islands were fished up out of the sea by "Li maui tukituki," the goddess living in the moon, but I have heard none as to how the people came to live on them. This event is no doubt one of high antiquity, if we are to judge by the extreme diversities of dialect, which, all springing from the same root, must have taken many ages to be altered to their present conditions.

The legend in the Shepherd group is that five hundred years ago their islands were joined together and once formed part of the large adjoining island of Epi, from which they are now separated by a strait about three miles wide, but that a volcanic outburst occurred which broke them up into islands and annihilated the entire population with the exception of one man. He, it appears, had supplied himself with bread-fruit, and when the eruption began, hid himself in one of the village drums, which are huge hollowed out tree trunks stuck on end in the ground. When the disturbances ceased he came out, to discover that he was on a separate island, that everything was drowned in mud, and that everybody was dead except himself. Probably he then made his way to Efáte, as the next story is that an exploring party from that island arrived on the scene, and found but one plant growing on the new island, and from its name they called it Tongoa, and the next in size Tongariki, or little Tongoa.

Those who now live there are partly of Efátese extraction and speak a pure version of the present Efátese language, which like its speakers seems to have become much degraded; and there is a small colony of the same people living on the opposite shore of Epi, quite distinct from the real inhabitants of that island, who are said to be very fierce and savage, and always fighting amongst themselves.

Quiros, a Spanish discoverer, seems to have been the first white man to discover the group, he having landed on the island still known as "Santo" (from his name for it of "Australia del Espiritu Santo") in the sixteenth century; but little was known of it except its existence till Captain Cook visited and partly explored the main islands, landing on several of them. I was surveying on the island of Mau, a small extinct volcano lying to the N.E. of Efáte, when one of the natives volunteered to show me "Mark belong Captain Cook." On my asking what he

meant, he told me that Captain Cook (who named the island Hinchinbrook) had anchored there, landed, and cut some marks in a rock near the beach; also that he had conveyed some of the natives to Australia and brought them back again—this first instance of “labour traffic” I look upon as absolutely a fable; but for the rest I can only say that I was conducted along the beach to an opening in the bush in which, 50 yards from the shore, was a large rock of volcanic stone, with a rectangular face, and naturally smoothed. This rested on a natural wall of volcanic boulders, and at the lower edge of it were four curious marks evidently cut by some sharp implement, in the shape of algebraic brackets, and about 8 inches long. The right hand one was a good deal broken away, but the others were quite clear and sharp. The village tradition was very sound as to the fact that Captain Cook had cut these marks—“Ole fella man, he talk ole fella grandfader blong me,”—but the reason for making them did not appear. I can only conjecture that perhaps the latitude and longitude were painted within the two brackets.

During this century the islands have become better known; first during the rush for sandalwood, then for kidnapping the natives, and latterly by settled traders and “labour ships,” until now, partly owing to commerical enterprise, and partly to the missionary subsidy, a small English, and a smaller French, steamer make a tour of the group once a month.

The group is not yet under any settled government or protectorate, as so many of the S. Pacific islands have been placed; but a joint commission of English and French naval officers sit at certain times of the year, and settle any disturbances between traders and natives which may have occurred since their last visit.

IV. *Clothing, Ornaments, &c.*

In the Christian islands, clothing consists of a cotton shirt and a loin cloth of decent length known by the Fijian (?) name of *lava-lava*, and often trousers and a hat, while the women wear a long shift from shoulders to feet over some sort of petticoat. I understand that in Efâte and the adjacent islands, even in pre-Christian days, a tolerably decent loin-cloth of matting or tappa was in vogue supported on a belt made of the matting like sheath of the cocoa-nut fronds, ornamented with a stitched pattern in dyed grass, and pinned with a sharpened bone from a fowl or other bird. This is still worn in Epi. The women wore a deeply fringed piece of matting which passed between the legs and was supported by a belt, so that the fringes fell over in front and behind—indeed I have specimens of this garment. In Tanna, however, and in Malekula (also, I believe, in Ambrym) any

attempt, in the male, in the direction of costume is directed towards the external genitals—usually very suggestive and disgusting. In both of these islands circumcision is customary, and as the clothing, such as it is, is connected with this practice as regards Tanna certainly, and probably with respect to Malekula, it will be convenient to give an account of it here. Mr. Grey, the missionary at Wea-Sisi, Tanna island, is my informant. Circumcision takes place usually at about the fifth year. The boy is shut up for a month at the time, and though he previously went quite naked, he afterwards adopts the costume of a full-grown man. Mr. Grey is one of the very few white men who has seen a Tanna man without his wrapper. The closest secrecy is adopted with regard to the penis, not at all from a sense of decency, but to avoid Narak (mentioned in my previous paper), the *sight* even of that of another man being considered most dangerous. The natives of this savage island, accordingly, wrap the penis round with many yards of calico and other like materials, winding and folding them until a preposterous bundle 18 inches or 2 feet long, and 2 inches or more in diameter is formed, which is then supported upward by means of a belt, and the extremity decorated with flowering grasses, &c. The testicles are left naked. A Tanna man returned from Queensland with a severe attack of syphilis, and after much suffering he decided to get medical relief from the missionary, he having some knowledge of medicine. Upon his wrappings being removed, Mr. Grey discovered that the so-called circumcision was effected by slitting the foreskin lengthwise at one place, and then rolling it back and allowing it to heal in a thick ridge, foul beyond words. This probably is similar to the method in Malekula, and would account for the ease with which the penis is there carried, also supported upward, but with much fewer means. Here there is only a sheath of banana leaf or fibre matting hanging from the waist-belt, into which the member is thrust, the testicles being left naked as in Tanna. A man who swam off to the ship one day, having disarranged his cloth in swimming, unfolded his outside wrapper on deck without any ado, and disclosed a second wrapper tightly tied behind the ridge caused by circumcision, thus concealing the glans, and offering a still larger means for upward support.

Neither in Tanna or Malekula is there any further body covering; but in the former island the hair is divided into innumerable little locks, each of which is “served over” with fibre threads, and resembles nothing so much as the ancient Egyptian royal wigs.

In Malekula three belts are worn. A narrow under one supports the penis and its wrapper, outside this is a broad strip

of nutmeg (?) bark about 6 inches wide (the investing of which is mentioned in my first paper), and a third which confines this broad bark belt, usually of plaited fibre, with long tassels for state occasions.

The women wear a narrow loin cloth, about 8 inches deep, which is adopted at an early age. It is worn beneath the buttocks, but is secured above the pubis by a belt passing round the waist. The end, to the length of a foot or more, is often in open-worked patterns of good design. In Santo the men are said to go quite naked, and I have a woman's dress from there which consists of a festoon of thirty or forty brown strings, on the lowest three of which white trade beads are threaded. It is secured at the back to a large billet of wood, of the shape of a fishing-lead, about 6 inches long and 4 inches greatest diameter, tapering to perforated points where the strings are secured.

Ornaments.—The hair is cultivated by the men with considerable care, but the women's is usually kept pretty close to the head: it is cleansed with lime, which gives it a yellowish appearance after use. Feathers, flowers, and combs are the almost invariable hair ornaments; sometimes all three together, and always one. The feathers may be a plain tuft of two or three, a huge plume of white cock's tail feathers a foot high, a crest made of the same, but yellow (somewhat like a North American Indian's), worn at "sing-sings," or a cone-shaped "pom pom" of clipped feathers secured on a cocoa-fibre basis.

Small wreaths of creepers are sometimes worn, while combs of bamboo or carved wood, occasionally tufted with feathers, and generally with a carved or incised pattern, are almost always used.

Beards and moustaches are customary, but after certain heathen ceremonies everybody engaged in them shaves. A man of Uripiv told me that on going on a visit to Ambrym (15 miles distant by canoe), he, with the rest of his party, were all shaved by the Ambrym people as being "new chums." The men of Uripiv were much astonished at our beardless condition; and on the first boat landing with two cleanshaven officers, and two ditto sailors, they went to the missionary and said they had never seen such a thing—the ship was manned by boys! Their own beards are never trimmed, and they vary greatly in length, some being quite creditable, while others are mere fringes.

Most of the men's ears are bored, and often have ear-rings of bent mangrove-root and a tuft of hair from a pig's back or tail in one or other, and sometimes, but not often, in both. A hibiscus flower is also occasionally inserted. The septum of the nose is often bored, but I cannot remember any instance of an

ornament being worn in it. Necklaces are rare ; but in Meli, a Fijian colony near Efâte, the men wear a pearl shell trimmed round, or a large operculum ground flat : and I have occasionally seen the same elsewhere. In Malekula a couple of pig's tushes, or a collar of dogs' or fishes' teeth is sometimes worn round the neck, and almost all had a piece of broad white grass round the ankles as well as the neck. Women may also be seen, but rarely, with neck chains of small circular laminae of sea shell and cocconut shell, which I was told represented money, but that I think doubtful ; or also numbers of shell armlets made by grinding down a large conical shell to a ring at its greatest diameter. The outside edge of this ring is often ornamented with lightly engraved dentated lines. Almost all the men wear an armlet of trade-beads of all sorts and sizes, usually blue and white, beautifully woven with fibre into elegant patterns. In Malekula the chiefs alone wear theirs on the right arm, the remainder on the left, but this distinction does not, I think, extend to the Christian islands. The tobacco pipe is usually stuck into the armlet, and the common leather pouch of Queensland station hands is worn on a leather belt for tobacco, money, and cartridges. Finger rings are much sought after by the women, and men may sometimes be seen wearing them, but they are always trade "jewels"—there are none of native manufacture.

Croton leaves, and those of a small lemon-scented flowering plant are in great demand for festive occasions, and are invariably stuck into the back of the belt, the sprays reaching sometimes as high as a man's neck. Flowers are also worn on ordinary occasions on the arms, stuck into the armlets.

V. *Painting and Tattooing.*

Painting.—In all the Christian islands painting of the body is prohibited ; but in Malekula the men are almost always smeared with some colour. The favourite one is black, which is worn on the forehead, one man told me, to keep off sunstroke. I believe it is made from charcoal, and on festive occasions vermilion is also used ; none of the colours seem to be laid on in any particular pattern, but just as fancy dictates. In Tanna the designs are most elaborate and hideous, but I had no time to examine them. At the "sing-sings" the women paint the entire of their face, and the whole of their infants, with bright orange turmeric or red lead ; the former of which is imported to Malekula from Mai (now Christian) and elsewhere, where it was once extensively used, and is now in enormous demand among the heathen. Distemper paints, principally red lead, are a large article of trade with the "white men" in trading

boats, and will readily procure pigs, &c. The turmeric is shaped into small cones and is a very strong and lasting colour, not readily washing off. Widows and daughters when in mourning cover the whole of their heads, faces, necks, and shoulders with white lime, probably burnt from coral.

Tattooing.—Tattooing is not very common, the more usual method of ornamentation of this type being by cicatrices. I have never seen either on the face of a New Hebridean native, but I have seen it on the breasts and thighs of a few women in the Shepherd group—usually a series of dentated lines. Cicatrices may be seen on many men and women, oftenest on the breast, shoulder, and upper part of the arm, the herring-bone, elliptical punch marks, parallel incised lines and circular marks being the most common patterns, and at Uripiv I saw several men who had a “demits” or conventional diamond-shaped face surrounded by rays. I was there told that these cicatrices were made by the women, who first cut the pattern and afterwards remove the scab continually, until a permanent mark is obtained. I fancy this is done during youth.

VI. *Dwellings.*

In Efâte, and to the northward as far as Epi, including the Shepherd group, the dwellings are very rude, though strong in construction and resemble in appearance a badly made hayrick. The roof-tree is bent like a bow and is supported on several rough forked uprights. The rafters, also of bent boughs, are lashed to it, and brought down to the ground on both sides and ends, where they are spread out fanwise, and they are then pegged tightly down to the ground. Roughly trimmed boughs are now lashed over the rafters parallel to the roof tree, and over these a thick heavy thatch of reed grass is cast, which is often as much as 2 feet thick. An entrance is effected, crouching on hands and knees, in the middle of the long side; the rafters here instead of touching the ground are carried over a low ridge bar, seldom more than 3 feet high, over which the thatch hangs in a thick curtain. The entrance is almost always about twice as long as it is high. Inside all is black darkness, smell, and smoke. A fire is usually burning abreast of the entrance though no particular position is allotted to it. A very little of the smoke goes out by the door; most of it rises and blackens all the interior of the hut. The floor, except at the fire-place, is covered with mats of pandanus fibre, strong and lasting, and on these the household squat, and when night-time comes, sleep; the pillow being formed by a piece of stick resting on two short forks of wood driven into the ground.

The islands to which reference is now being made being now

entirely Christian, there are no "men's houses," but I have reason to believe that such existed formerly. The present house is accordingly divided by mat screens into "bed-rooms" at night time. Other furniture there is none, unless an occasional "trade bokis," the trophy of some returned labourer from Queensland, can be accounted as such, and the searcher for curios must hunt in the murky blackness of the rafters and thatch for spears, clubs, stone axes, arrows, and such articles, which have been slowly acquiring a thick coat of soot since they were dispensed with on the introduction of Christianity and civilisation. The houses were built in small villages of six or more, and in one lately heathen village I found a stockade, about 8 feet high, of cotton wood which surrounded each house and pig-and-fowl-run, and was entered over a pig-proof style. These villages appear to have been dotted about almost fortuitously in the bush, and seldom or never near running water or with other natural advantages; running water in fact appears to them as a most unpleasant and unnecessary adjunct to life; and it is curious to see how an almost naked man will tiptoe across a stream, holding up his loin cloth, if he has one, though the water does not come above his ankles. They are not afraid of the sea, however, though they bathe very seldom. In Efáte the missionaries are now persuading the inhabitants of the scattered houses—villages no longer—of the inland to collect in communities near the more healthy sea-shore, and have taught them to build quite tolerable huts of wattle dashed with lime, with walls, windows, neatly thatched roof, and clean coral-strewn paths leading about the village. There are no kitchen middens near the villages, as the pigs finish off all that is thrown away from the houses.

In Malekula, East Coast (heathen), a quite different type of house is built, of a much more civilised appearance. Externally it resembles a neatly thatched roof placed on the ground. I came upon some natives once building a house, and the process was as follows:—Two stout uprights, cut to the required height, with a natural fork in the head of each, were driven into the ground at the desired distance apart, and a ridge pole, well trimmed, and as straight as could be procured, was firmly lashed on the forks with pandanus fibre and strips of bamboo. Along the line where the roof was to touch the ground several small forked stumps were driven in, and two good straight poles were secured by lashings in them, one on each side of the house. Bamboos of the required length and of about 2 inches diameter were then taken and bent over the ridge pole; their ends, just touching the ground on each side, being lashed to the ground poles already mentioned. The wild bamboo of the islands is

of very thin shell compared with the Chinese variety, and is easily bent double, so that the joint passing over the ridge pole splits longitudinally on opposite ends of a diameter, and thus the bamboos lie quite flatly over it. When sufficient bamboos (at about 6 inches apart) have thus been laid, split laths also of bamboo are lashed transversely along them, and over these a neat thatch of plaited cocoanut fronds and pandanus leaves is secured.

The two gable ends of the house are now built in with lengths of bamboo lying touching one another, in two thicknesses; the inner ones being perpendicular and the outside ones horizontal. A small square aperture occurs at one end for a door—only high enough to be crawled in at—and occasionally there is a square window at the other end: these are closed with pieces of board and matting at night, and during the midday siesta. The ordinary living-houses are small, measuring on the ground perhaps 7 feet by 14 feet: but the “men’s houses,” where the single men sleep *en masse*, are much larger, and the doorway is high enough to walk in at without stooping. The ground is usually quite uneven inside, and small mats of plaited cocoanut fronds are left lying about for sitting or sleeping upon. A stray pig or so may usually be found nuzzling in the dust of the men’s houses, and dirt is universal.

At Port Sandwich, Malekula, there is a “tambu-house” on almost every dancing-ground where the articles used in the dances are kept, the “fish,” “tambu-hats” (or masks), and so on; also “demits,” or ancestor effigies, such as would spoil if left outside in rainy weather. The “tambu-hats” above mentioned are made of banana leaves over a bamboo frame covered with clay and painted, and at Uripiv I saw one that had a very fair figure of a large sea-bird with pointed tail—like a boatswain-bird—on top of it; and a mask painted in conventional colours hangs down in front to cover the face. At Port Sandwich I saw two gigantic bas-relief faces made of clay on a diamond-shaped wicker foundation, ludicrously grotesque and highly coloured, which, however, could not be bought, as the time for slaying of pigs on their behalf had not yet arrived. All these things are kept in a partitioned part of the house, and the rest of it is a dwelling place.

I never heard of, nor witnessed, any ceremonies on the construction of a house, but they may of course exist; nor can I say if a dead man’s house is burnt after his decease, but my impression is rather otherwise. The villages are irregularly built, and contain only a very few houses—five or six for instance—but several so-called villages, each with a different name, may occupy quite a small district with often not more

than a few hundred yards between them; each with its own "sing-sing" ground and distrust of its neighbour; with whom it is, as often as not, in a condition of feud. I never saw any built on piles into the sea, and as I mentioned before, water is rather avoided than otherwise.

VII. *Navigation, Canoes, Fishing, &c.*

The canoes of the islands we visited were all fitted with outriggers on one side. Those of Efâte are small, and will, as a rule, contain no more than five people, and that in smooth water; and in this island the original curiously-shaped matting sail has been entirely discarded in favour of trade calico, and European pattern.

In the outlying islands to the northward, and in Malekula, a far larger form, for open-sea passages, is found, together with the smaller ones.

Canoes are made of the trunk of the bread-fruit tree, partly burnt out, and partly hewn: they take a long time to make, and in the heathen islands the launching is accompanied by ceremonies of some sort.

The external shape is quite rough, the ends being just carelessly pointed off, and very few of them—I refer to the small smooth-water ones—follow a straight line between extremities, but are in every imaginable curve, and sometimes even in a double bend like an S. The upper part of the gunwale in the midship part of the canoe is tapered off to a thin edge, and holes are bored through it to which the four or five rough boughs—they are little better—which support the outrigger-float are lashed with a cross fibre (? cocoanut) lashing. The float, pointed at both ends, but otherwise as irregular as the canoe, of which it is about one-third of the length, is secured to these supports in the following way: short stout pieces of stick, pointed at one end, are driven into the midship line of the float, so that each pair forms a St. Andrew's cross. Two such crosses abreast support each outrigger pole in which it rests, and to which it is then tightly secured with fibre. As the whole safety of the canoe depends upon the outrigger, considerable care is, as may be imagined, exercised with this part of the construction. The outrigger poles generally extend out over the opposite gunwale as well, and a grating of cotton-wood or bamboo is lashed upon them on both sides of the canoe. Two paddlers sit upon these, and with one man at the bow, and a steersman aft, complete the crew.

The paddles are as roughly made as the canoe, the steering one being considerably larger than the others; there is no fulcrum used when rowing, but often for comfort of handling there is a T-head on the boom. The baler—a very important factor of

safety—is a large wooden scoop, like a French *sabot*, but rounded to the bottom of the canoe, with a handle coming, as it were, out of the back of the shoe, and extending about half-way across the opening. It is all cut out of one piece of wood.

The large sea-going canoes are built with much more care, and will hold twenty to thirty men. Their construction is as follows: A sort of keel, somewhat of the size, shape, and appearance (only with more regard to straightness) of an ordinary canoe, forms the foundation, and on it sides are built up of three or four planks—which, with only axe and knife for carpenters' tools, must give great trouble to cut out—each about a foot wide, which are lashed, or, more properly speaking, sewn together through small holes along their edges with tough fibre, caulked with the gum of some tree, and payed over with lime. The ends of the planks do not extend to the actual bow and stern of the canoe—which are formed by the keel foundation-log, sharply pointed off—but a heavy, thick board, broader at the top than at its base, where it fixes into the canoe, is planted athwartships at each end of the “hold,” and the planks are stoutly sewn to it. The planks do not overlap at all, as in our boats, but as they follow the line of the end boards to which they are sewn, they form a sort of trough with spreading sides. The end boards extend a foot or so above the planking, and one of their uses is to keep out the surf when launching or hauling up the canoe.

The mast in all sizes of canoe is fitted in a rather curious and ingenious fashion. It is generally a stout, moderately straight piece of a bough, with a fork or “jaws” (as on a gaff or boom) at the foot, which rests on a stout transverse stick like a thwart, so that the mast does not touch the bottom of the canoe. It is supported on this thwart by fibre rope guys fore and aft, and the sail is hoisted on it, the halliards reeving through a hole burnt in the head. By this means the mast can be “stepped” at any part of the boat, there being several of these thwarts acting as strengtheners, and can also be inclined at any angle towards bow or stern, and lowered quickly in case of a squall.

In Malekula the system is somewhat different. The picturesque matting sail is here still in vogue, and is shaped like a sharply horned moon lying with points upward—at a distance it resembles a huge brown sea-bird. There is no mast, properly speaking, but each of the horns of the sail is supported on a longish pole (sometimes of bamboo), like a double lateen, the feet of which are lashed to form a cross. A fore and aft thwart is lashed to two of the transverse ones, and upon this the jaws thus formed ride; the whole concern of sail and spreaders being supported by guys, and can be drooped either on one side or the other as desired, or lowered quickly altogether.

Originally, and of course with a sail such as this, beating to windward was unknown (and even running before the wind in such clumsy craft is slow and even dangerous work, with the balers continually plying, and paddles working to prevent broaching-to); but with the introduction of the calico sprit-sail, an attempt is made to sail close to the wind—though I think beating is out of the question—generally with the outrigger to leeward, but I have seen it carried to windward by adventurous spirits in a light wind and smooth sea.

Decoration.—I never saw ornaments of any kind on the canoes of Efâte or Shepherd islands, but in Malekula the large ones have usually a carved conventional figure intended to represent a sea-bird's head and breast, painted green with black borders and white dots, lashed on to both ends. A long heavy tassel of fibre—I have seen very similar ones in Japanese junks—hangs from the bow, and with it in a long string, the jaws and tusks of several pigs—the relics, no doubt, of the launching ceremony. All down both of the outside edges of the sail long graceful fringes hang down, with extra large bunches at the two tips. The (heathen) natives are fond of travelling what must be considered as long distances—twenty to thirty miles—to pay visits to neighbouring friendly tribes on their own or another island. They frequently do not speak the languages of these tribes; but I fancy that “beach la mar English”—the *lingua franca* of these islands—is found sufficient; and also (as a man once told me) that they mutually understand one another, though they cannot speak each other's tongues. They sometimes remain away more than a month, probably dependent on the strength of the trade wind. The return of a canoe, or the arrival of friends from a distance, is signalized by the blowing of conches, which produce a strange bellowing sound, audible a long distance in still weather. The conches of Malekula are blown through a hole in the side of the spire; those of Efâte at the apex. I obtained in Nguna (off Efâte) a fine specimen, which has the point cut off to a depth of two or three inches, and a mouth-piece made of a young cocoanut is lashed and gummed on, which renders it much easier to blow. I understand that these conches are also used to call together members of a tribe for dances or ceremonies; but not, as far as I could make out, for war.

The outrigger canoe is in many ways very suitable to the work called for: it is exceedingly stable, much more so than an European boat of the same length; and indeed, so long as the lashings of the outriggers hold together, impossible to capsize. It may be hauled up or launched without staving on the roughest coral or boulder beaches, and—with experienced men—in surf

that would effectually swamp a white man's boat. However, it will soon fill when making a passage in anything of a rough sea, though still floating like a log ; and its slowness under paddles or sail, or both, is also very much against it.

VIII. *Fishing.*

None of the natives of the islands we visited, not even the civilised Christians, employ hook and line or net for fishing, but rely entirely on spearing or shooting with bow and arrow. These last operations take place when the tide is flooding on the reefs which fringe all these islands, and especially on moonlight nights. The highest tides, which cover the reef to the depth of about 3 feet, occur at night-time during spring, when, for the greater part of the night, crowds of men and boys bearing torches may be seen wading about and spearing fish. Fires are also lighted on the beach to attract the fish. The reefs, as a general rule, contain a number of natural basins, which, on the tide ebbing, are left with a depth of 6 or 8 inches in large flat pools. Where this does not occur the natives often make enclosures of rough stones with one small entrance ; which, though they will not of course retain the water, are useful for driving fish into at the proper height of tide, and thus offering a better chance for capture, through their not being able to find exit through the stones.

I never saw any very large takes, though there are plenty of fish. We used to catch a good many with hook and line from the ship, but caution must be observed with regard to them, as some species, which feed on the coral buds at certain times of the year, are extremely poisonous.

In Malekula I have seen the natives using a sort of net on a frame of the size and shape of a snow-shoe, with which small fish left behind in the reef-pools by the ebbing tide could be easily landed. Crayfish are evidently plentiful, as their shells are to be found in all directions on the reef-beaches ; but I never saw a native or anybody else catch one. Turtle are very common round the reefs, but are seldom caught. The heathen people will not eat the eggs—or at least, they would not at Uripiv (Malekula).

Swimming.—The New Hebrides natives are not fond of bathing, and though they can swim, are very rarely seen doing so. They swim on their sides, bringing one hand out of the water at each stroke. They are consequently not strong swimmers.

IX. *Weaving and Basketwork.*

The natives of some of the islands excel in weaving, or more properly plaiting floor mats, baskets, and (in old days) articles of

clothing, which become articles of trade with islands where this art is not practised. As far as I saw, they are altogether made by the women, and are constructed from the pandanus leaf, which is dried and cut in long shreds with a knife or piece of shell. The plaiting is done diagonally and generally with some slight pattern. Strips of all sizes are made up to 10 or 12 yards in length, and generally 2 or 3 feet wide. The better ones are finished off with a small open-work pattern at the ends, decorated with tufts of feathers, and down both sides the unwoven ends are left projecting as a fringe. They are excellent mats, stand an enormous amount of wear, and can easily be washed with soap and water when dirty.

Baskets are made of the same material and much in the same style: they resemble a square bag with two stout plaited cords forked into the sides, which, knotted together, form the handle. When the basket is full it is carried with this cord across the forehead, while the basket rests on the bent back. They are the best baskets I know of, as they combine lightness, durability, and strength to an exceptional degree.

Basket work is I think alone represented by the interweaving of cane grass to make garden fences or yam-vine supports. In the fencing, the weaving is carried rectangularly with twenty or thirty reeds to a "strand"; but in the other case, single reeds are stuck in the ground so as to slope diagonally, and are interwoven with another set sloping on the opposite diagonal.

The cocoanut palm leaf is very ingeniously woven in all the islands by plaiting together the long tongues of the frond, beginning at the rib, and joining the tips. A mouth is made by splitting the rib down the middle, and thus a very capacious basket, with a mouth fitting as tightly as a purse is quickly made. Pigs, yams, &c., for sale are usually carried in them. By splitting the rib down the middle first, and then plaiting each half of the leaf separately, a capital thatch foundation—a sort of vegetable tile—is constructed; this is largely used in Malekula, where they are also employed to form the ground covering of the inside of the hut.

X. *Pottery.*

The art of pottery, in the islands we visited, is now altogether lost; but as pieces of broken potsherds may be discovered in all directions, there is no doubt that it was understood in former days. In Santo they still make a rough red pottery, the pots being mostly of the shape of an Indian "*lota*," with a rounded base and generally a slight ornamentation near the rim. They appear to be moulded, not "thrown," but I cannot speak with any certainty on this point. On Efáte there is a legend to

account for the everywhere scattered pieces of broken pottery, which I quote from Mr. Macdonald's book "Oceania":—

"Li maui tukituki"—the primeval goddess who fished the islands up from the sea—"was carrying water home when the land had just risen (at the beginning) from the sea; the land was unstable and moving about, so she threw her water-jars down upon it, and knocked it into steadiness with the shock; but the water-jars were smashed to pieces, hence the fragments of pottery found all over the islands are called the 'buro,' or water-jars, of Li maui tukituki."

XI. *Stone Implements.*

In the Shepherd group, particularly on Tongariki, we found a few implements of the chisel nature, made of shell—probably the big clamshell found everywhere on the reefs. They are well shaped and finished, of a neolithic form, and the edges are only slightly dulled and chipped. In one village I procured three such implements mounted adze-wise in wooden handles; two being chisels and one shaped like a gouge. The back of each implement is finished in a point, and thus makes a sort of pick-axe when reversed in the handle. Besides these larger tools, there are small triangles of shell, one side sharpened like a chisel, but without handles, which are still in use for scraping up cocoanut when making a pudding, &c. The village at which I obtained the adzes had only recently become Christian, and it was suggested to me by a missionary that these implements might have been used for heathen festival purposes, and only sold now on their disuse. The natives were highly amused at my wanting them, seeing that I had good steel tomahawks of my own.

Circular discs of shell or opercula ground flat are worn as ornaments, and chains of tiny discs of shell with a hole bored in the centre—I cannot say by what means—are procurable almost anywhere also.

XII. *Fire.*

Contact with the white man has rendered the use of matches all but universal in the islands we visited. I never saw a fire otherwise produced. A man on Tongariki told me that he could make fire, though I could not persuade him to do so. He told me that on his island (Shepherd group) it was produced by rubbing one piece of stick backwards and forwards on another—as one sharpens a chisel—but that on the adjoining island of Mai, it was done by twisting a stick between the palms, the point of which rested in a hole in another piece of wood. Those who have been in Queensland often have a burning-glass with

which they light their pipes. The lighting of a fire occurs in one dance I witnessed, as described in my former paper, but it was done with a match; and I never saw any particular reverence paid to a fire.

XIII. *Food, drinks, &c.*

There are but few articles of daily food, and these altogether vegetarian. Yams (two or three varieties), bread-fruit, bananas (both indigenous and imported), and plantains with cocoanut, form the staples of diet. There are several kinds of nuts, all excellent eating, of which the almond or *ningui* is the commonest. One indigenous fruit which I have seen is known to white folk as the "Kanaka apple." It grows on a goodsized tree, and has a lovely feathery, bright lilac blossom which it sheds plentifully on the ground. The fruit soon follows, which at a little distance resembles a rather waxy, highly coloured, streaky apple. Its taste is inoffensive, but rather dry and uninteresting, with flesh like a loquat, and a large smooth stone in the middle. The betel nut palm grows everywhere, but the natives do not chew the nut as the Malays and other Easterns.

In the Christian islands the stock of food plants is increased by the taro, sugar cane, sweet potato, and papau or mammy apple. It may not be generally known that the leaves of this plant cooked in the pot with meat will render it much more tender than tropical meat generally is. Besides these, there are delicious oranges, pineapples and a large variety of the passion fruit, known as barbatine or grenadella, of the size of a vegetable marrow, which it exteriorly much resembles. A most palatable pudding is made by the natives by grating up yam or taro with cocoanut, blending the whole with the milk of a young green nut, and baking in the oven wrapped in leaves of "native cabbage," which is a small pink stemmed shrub with vine shaped leaves, and make a most excellent spinach when boiled. A fowl enclosed in this pudding and thus cooked, eaten with the pudding, makes as good a meal as a traveller in savage parts might ask for. The grating is performed either with a sharp piece of shell mounted on a heavy piece of wood, the cocoanut being scraped over the shell, or on the cross section of the stalk of a cocoanut frond, or else, as I saw in Malekula, upon a sieve made on a frame with fibre, the food being grated on the knots of the network.

For long journeys, a sort of cheese is compounded of bread-fruit, highly nutritious and compact, but evil smelling and of disgusting appearance. It is said to keep good for a long period of time, but I never had a chance nor indeed should I have been willing to test it. Otherwise fresh bread-fruit are roasted

on a small fire; and, the black burnt shell being removed, discloses the excellent floury interior with its sweet nuts. Besides the "native cabbage" spoken of above, we used (at the missionary's advice) to make spinach of "naika" and "nabisibisimata," the young shoots of a fig tree, and of the jalap plant respectively, and we found them by no means to be despised.

Meat diet.—Pigs are only eaten on festive occasions, and are not an every-day diet. Fowls are also very occasionally eaten, and, in the Christian islands, their eggs, which are apparently enjoyed, no matter how stale they may be. Flying foxes are considered as great dainties, and in the evening, when their flight begins, one may often hear the natives shooting at them with their old gas-pipe muskets. Goats are kept by the missionaries, and occasionally natives own them; but I think they seldom eat them, and only rarely use their milk.

Fish form a pretty constant article of food, and crabs both sea and land, with fresh water prawns, are also eaten. The Shepherd islanders (Christian) eat shark greedily, but the Uripiv (heathen) people reject it, saying that a man dies from eating it. I have not heard of any worship being accorded to it however.

The natives do not understand the making of salt, but they will eat any given them, and I have seen natives eating bread-fruit on the beach, dip it into the sea to get the salt flavour.

Cooking.—From Malekula to Efâte is entirely done in the well known earth oven, or by roasting, the food usually wrapped in wild banana leaves. The ovens contain hot stones, both beneath and above the article being cooked, and I have seen (in a Christian island, however), a sort of boiling or steaming produced by pouring water over the hot stones.

In Malekula, men and women cook their meals separately, and even at separate fires, and all female animals—sows, and even hens and eggs—are forbidden articles of diet. The natives will, however, eat white man's tinned meat and biscuit, regardless of whether it was cooked by a woman, or if it contains female meat, but I know of a native who explained that a mate of his had died in Queensland from partaking of sow, given him as a ration.

Meals.—There is only one regular meal in the day, namely, in the evening, just after sundown. Otherwise it is just a banana here, a cocoanut there, as hunger prompts. Just before sunset the women (in the heathen islands) come back from the fields bearing their loads of yams, &c., which are then portioned out and cooked.

Drinks.—I have never seen a native drink water (or indeed use it for any purpose). When thirsty, a young cocoanut is split,

and then with the head thrown back the whole of the milk is literally poured down the throat without so much as one gulp. The more civilised, however, are fond of tea, coffee, or cocoa, so long as there is plenty of sugar in them. Kava was made in Efáte and the Shepherd islands, but not, I believe, in Malekula. Its use is now discontinued, so I cannot say what the method of manufacture may have been. I never saw any other drinks; but the avoidance of the most obvious, fresh running water, which is in great abundance, and generally excellent, is very curious.

Utensils for cooking and eating are very few, cooking being done in the oven, and eating is generally off banana leaf, so there are only large oval wooden platters on which yams are grated or mashed; and, in islands using kava, kava-bowls of various forms, both generally slightly ornamented. Knives of hard wood, of several shapes and sizes, are met with for chopping and mashing yams, &c., but the fingers are always used for eating.

XIV. *Cannibalism.*

Until the introduction of Christianity ten or fifteen years ago, cannibalism was in full swing in Efáte and the adjoining islands to Mai and the Shepherd group. Mr. Macdonald, a missionary to Efáte, informed me that there was not a single middle-aged man on the island who had not at one time eaten human flesh, and that each village regarded the next simply as a larder for fresh meat. Of course this is all changed now, and they are so ashamed of this old habit that you can never get a man to confess that he has eaten part of another, though they will often acknowledge that their fathers before them “*kaikai man plenty*,” so that it is impossible to get details about it, but the bodies seem to have been divided among such villages as were friendly. The missionaries intercepted and stopped one feast about twelve years ago, and saw the dismembered portions of a man lying in a canoe; one can only suppose therefore that no one ate very much at a time.

In Malekula we heard little, and saw nothing of cannibalism, yet I am convinced that it occurs, but more perhaps as a religious ceremony than to allay hunger. At Port Sandwich, a native solemnly assured one of our men that a young girl was to be killed and eaten after one of the dances; but I rather doubt that it really took place—the presence of a man-of-war would in any case have probably deterred them. A case which occurred in 1889 or 1890 was of a French half caste boy who was living with his (native) mother near Port Sandwich, and who being up in a cocoanut tree one day picking the nuts, was deliberately

shot at and killed by a native, and, we were told, was afterwards eaten. Upon the mother making complaint, a French man-of-war visited the village with fire and sword, so one must suppose that something of the sort really occurred.

Mr. Gillan, the missionary at Uripiv, told me that he knew of a vendetta between two villages which had been closed, not as is usual by the payment of pigs, but by the sending of a small boy as sacrifice; and who, he concluded, was afterwards eaten.

XV. *Music, and Musical Instruments.*

The natives of the islands we surveyed must be said to be fond of music. The Christian converts readily learn easy hymn tunes, which they delight in, and sing with wonderful correctness of tone, considering everything; but often with a curious disregard of either time, or the length of an individual note, confusing crochets with minims, so that it takes a little time to make out what tune is intended. They sing only in unison, but take great pleasure in hearing the "sing bokis" (harmonium) played, and were certainly much interested in our piano.

Their own songs are altogether of the "chanty" type, one man sings a verse of varying length, and the remainder then join with vigour in a sort of short chorus. To our ears there was always a tone of sadness—rendered grotesque by the style of the songs—in their singing, due no doubt to the untempered scale, and consequent inability to change the key, and there was also an inconsequence about the finish, in not coming on the key note.

When I was landed on Tongariki, eight or nine natives used to come up every evening, and take turns with our bluejackets in singing songs over the camp fire, so I had many opportunities of hearing their music. One man had a specially large selection of songs, and he it was when our boat was being hauled up out of the surf, who gave the words to which all replied with raucous melody, hauling together at the conclusion of the chorus. They may also often be heard singing interminable songs to themselves as they paddle about in their canoes, in which the civilised ear can detect neither time nor tune.

In Malekula, the only singing we heard was in connection with the religious ceremonies, and was accompanied by beating on the drums, or the flapping of the performers' feet, on the ground. For weeks after the big feast (the "Maki" spoken of in my former paper) a mournful howling would nightly ascend from the "sing-sing" ground, with desultory "whacks" on the drum. This howling usually took the form of a chant of about fifteen notes continually repeated, to which a second voice would keep in harmony at a constant interval of four and a half tones

(by our piano on board)—say from F to A flat below it—a most lugubrious sound.

When dancing, all sing the verse together in unison, changing from one foot to the other together, coming heaviest on the right, until at the end of the verse, the leading man would cry in falsetto “Hā” to which the others replied “Hă-Hă” with a stamp of one foot; then again “Hā-Hā,” “Hă-Hă,” and then altogether running down the scale “Huuu,” and with envigoured speed a new verse began.

The men alone sing, so far as we heard; they have as a rule high baritone and tenor voices—if such uncouth voices can be given any particular timbre—slightly nasal, but on the whole both true and flexible. The range of voice seemed to me small, but that may have been from want of knowledge on their part how to produce it: they take up a given note with ease and accuracy; in fact, in church, the teacher generally begins each line by himself, and after the first two or three notes, the remainder join in without a fault, and the same applied, as far as one could judge, with their native songs.

Instruments.—The leading instrument is, I suppose, the universal hollow gong, which is made of hollowed out bread-fruit tree trunks of all sorts and sizes, and may be from 10 feet high and 2 feet diameter, stuck upright in the ground, to little ones 2 feet long and a few inches across, which lie on their side. There is a long slit down one side of the drum ornamented with circular holes, and a rude face is generally carved just above it. The big drums are thumped with a large billet of wood held transversely in both hands, and the little ones are beaten with two small drum sticks. Miles off on a still night their sonorous booming accompanied by the quick syncopated tattoo of the small boys squatting in front of the little drums, may be heard over the sea. As each drum gives a different note, the sound is not altogether unpleasant, and well matches the wild savage songs it accompanies.

The next commonest instrument is the syrinx, or Pandean pipes made of reed grass from Efâte to Epi, or small bamboo in Malekula. In the former the bottom of the reeds are closed, but in the other both ends are open; with both the sound is produced by whistling, as it were, into them, when they give a sweet, but very low note. The pipes seem to be arranged fortuitously—I have never seen two with the same collection of notes—and my belief is that each is made for the playing of one particular tune, and no more. The same applies also to the flutes, which are made of a single joint of bamboo, closed at both ends, with the blowing hole near one extremity and two finger holes on different diameters, stopped by the finger and thumb

at the other. One in my possession has some interesting designs burnt upon it (of which I have already spoken), and which may have had reference to the words of the simple tune produced by this particular instrument.

The conch shell must, I suppose, be reckoned as a musical instrument: it is principally used to herald the arrival of a canoe. The apex is cut off in some for the mouth, and in others the hole is cut into the shell at the side, and a weird bellowing note, which may be slightly altered by thrusting the closed fist into the mouth of the shell, is produced.

The natives are fond of jew's harps: one of them may usually be found in the trade box of a newly returned labourer from Queensland; so no doubt the ease of making the notes and their uncertainty when made, weigh with them in their desire for its music.

XVI. *War and Weapons.*

War among cowardly savages such as these, is carried forward on a very different principle to ours, as it is almost entirely conducted by means of individual ambuscade—a system which the narrow paths and dense bush of the islands not only encourages, but almost necessitates. In Efáte, when war was declared, certain paths were arranged to be “paths of peace,” or neutral ground, and the remainder of the country was “dangerous.” No fighting occurs in the Christian islands now, so the following remarks apply to heathenry, as seen in the island of Malekula:—

When there is war, the men of the villages implicated arm themselves and squat in the “sing-sing” ground until the boldest among them ventures forth, and hides behind a tree until one of the enemy passes close enough, when he “pots” him with a rifle or musket. The use of the older weapons has almost died out, with the exception of clubs and tomahawks, which are still in favour as being certain and noiseless. I met one old (so-called) hero on the now Christian island of Tongoa, who had established quite a reputation ten years before in a war with another village, by lying in wait outside houses, and on hearing a voice within, firing at it. He had thus killed three men and escaped scatheless.

When we were at Port Sandwich, a native, returned about two years from Queensland, and who from fast living and much liquor had become partly mad, ran “amuk” with his rifle, and severely wounded a young chief of a neighbouring village. War was declared, and the young chief's friends retaliated by lying in wait and killing a man of the madman's village. Reprisals of this nature would have desultorily proceeded for an indefinite

time if the missionary had not intervened and procured peace.

Another instance of the small things which keep up the eternal feuds between villages was the supposed bewitching (by the evil eye, I was told) by a man on a friendly visit to the above-mentioned madman's village, of a child who had recently fallen ill. He was laid wait for when returning home and shot dead at about 6 yards range. A war would most certainly have begun had it not been for the courage and energy of Péré Doncéré, the mediator on the former occasion, who managed to patch up the affair. Mr. Gillan, the missionary at Port Stanley (Uripiv island), told me of a fight, more or less *à outrance*, which occurred not long after his arrival in the place about three years ago. Two small islands form the entrance to the harbour, the northern one being Uripiv, the southern Uri, and they are not more than a quarter of a mile apart. Uri has a population of about fifty, while the other has from two to three hundred. There was war between them, and Uripiv manned all its canoes, and put over to Uri with its fighting men. They landed, and having cleared the village, driving young and old before them on to the fringing reef—it happened to be low tide—advanced upon them firing their rifles until the two "armies" were only about 30 yards apart, the fusillade being feebly replied to by the unhappy fifty of Uri. By the time Mr. Gillan had arrived on the scene, some minutes later (having been obliged to paddle himself over in his own canoe), all the powder was expended, and the fighting, in consequence, at a standstill. But instead of heaps of wounded being mutilated in savage fashion by the conquerors, or dead being carried off to be eaten, as he fully expected, he was astonished to find that no one on either side had been so much as grazed by a bullet, although firing at such close range! Peace was accordingly happily arranged, and the affair closed, to the huge relief, I have no doubt, of both parties.

Weapons.—The warlike weapons in use in all the islands we visited were limited to the club, spear, and bow and arrow, augmented in recent years by the "musket" and iron "tomahawk," or light axe.

The clubs are of many patterns, lengths, and weights. They are made of heavy casuarina wood, and in Efâte and the Shepherd islands average 3 feet 3 inches in length, while in Malekula they are only 2 feet 10 inches—making a considerable difference in size and weight. The former ones have almost always a large acorn as a handle and are carried by it, while the Malekulan club generally has a strong sennit sling, ornamented with tassels, and is carried hanging from the right shoulder. Perhaps the most effective patterns of club were the wooden "tomahawk,"

which has a double concave knife edge, or the Malekulan "slicer"—like a huge butter-knife; but these are almost now superseded by the European steel (or iron) axe-head, helved on a club handle. Many of the recent murders of white men have been silently committed by this weapon, which does not betray the murderer like the explosion of gunpowder. In Makura, a tiny island near the Shepherd group alone, it is said, in the New Hebrides, a small throwing club used to be in vogue, about 2 feet long, of an elongated pear shape, pointed at both ends.

Bows.—From Efâte to Epi, the bows are long—averaging 5 feet 8 inches—strong, clumsily made, and of inelegant curve; but a marked difference is observable with the Malekulan variety, the bows here being short, averaging no more than 5 feet, easily bent, carefully tapered to the points, and of singularly graceful shape. In both cases they are strung with some sort of fibre impregnated with a gummy material.

Arrows are very similar throughout: they range from 4 feet 6 inches to 3 feet, about 3 feet 6 inches being the usual length. The reed grass of which the shaft is formed is generally slightly burnt at the joints in order to harden them, and notched at the end, but not feathered. A bunch of feathers with tips outwards is sometimes found tied round the point of the arrow, either as a preservative to the point when not in use, or perhaps to keep it soaked with poison. The head of the arrow is usually a piece of hard dark wood, pointed at the end, which is stuck into the reed, and the splice served over outside with fine fibre while the other is hollowed out to receive the point of human bone, which is about 3 or 4 inches long, and very sharp. Much wordy warfare has raged over the question of poisoning; but I can only say that of the scores of arrows I have purchased in various parts, I never was sold any without the most extravagant precautions and warnings on the part of the original owner as to the danger of touching the points, though in many cases the arrows cannot have been in use for about ten years (since conversion to Christianity), so that no doubt remains in my own mind that in any case the intention of the arrows was to be poisoned; indeed, if unpoisoned, the wound they would give would be so slight as to be of small account.

A native once told me that the poison was produced from some plant in the bush, but he would not show me which it was. Probably the common method of impregnating the arrows in a putrefying body was also employed.

In Efâte and adjacent islands, arrows without human bone points were common—the hard wood being sharpened to a square point, and ornamented on the sides with scratched patterns. Nearly all were coloured near the point over the "service"

with turmeric, white, and occasionally blue and pale green. Another sort of arrow, much larger than the fighting arrow, and often beautifully carved, is used for shooting fish, for which a three-pronged one is also employed; and I have seen special arrows besides for shooting birds, or bringing down fruit or nuts with a flat wooden or iron head like a long cone, tapering back to the shaft, or sometimes with a long spiral sea-shell, the base of which is to strike the object aimed at. Arrows tipped with stout iron wire for fish-shooting are common enough now.

Spears.—The southern spears, that is to say from Efâte to Epi, are always, so far as I saw, made throughout in one piece of casuarina wood, which wood is chosen, being heavy, close-grained, hard, and generally growing pretty straight, besides which it takes a lovely deep red polish after the application of cocoanut oil. The head is carefully, and often beautifully carved to a length of about 2 feet 3 inches in all manner of designs, giving a series of gradually enlarging barbs. It was not poisoned, the idea being (as I was told) to pierce a man with it, and then break it off in his body. The balancing point is just behind the head, from which the shaft tapers off to a length of about 6 feet, making the whole spear of an average length of 8 feet 4 inches. No throwing stick is used to increase momentum, but I should think a good thrower would send a spear with fair accuracy 20 or 30 yards. In the island of Tongariki (Shepherd group) I obtained two rough-looking spears, of which the head was formed of an entire human shin-bone, sharpened off to a point, and was told that poison was placed in the centre of the bone, where the marrow had been. These were the only instances of poisoned spears I found in the southern islands. On this island also I found a large heavy piece of a clam-shell, 1 foot 4 inches long, slightly curved, smoothly polished, of ogee section, tapering to the ends, the greatest diameter being about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is very heavy for its size, weighing about 10 lbs. I could get no satisfactory use for it—it was lying on the ground outside a hut—but my impression is that it is a throwing stone, such as is used in Tanna for felling and stunning an enemy, afterwards to be dispatched with a club.

In Malekula, the spears take a quite different form, as all that I ever saw, except one curious ornamental one which I procured, were shafted with bamboo, and though some had carved wooden heads on the same patterns as the southern ones, the generality had a light point of wood or human bone, decorated at the base with a highly conventional human face (demits), and a tuft of feathers, and were poisoned. Another fairly common variety ended in a flat head from which four or five long humanbone points protruded, of course poisoned. The heads of these spears

are generally "served over" in a chess-board pattern, diagonally placed, each square being differently coloured red, white or blue. Of course these spears are much lighter than the Efátese ones, and no doubt being also straighter and poisoned, did much more efficient work, and at greater distances. Their length is about the same as the others, namely, 8 feet 6 inches.

The conventional spear used in the dances was simply a longish bundle of reed grass, with the tips of the grass left in a bunch, the other end representing the "point." Another spear also used in the dances, actually employed for pricking the pigs to bring blood—and thus supposing them killed—was made like the ordinary weapon, but the head had a tapering hard wooden point 2 feet 6 inches long and without ornament, very sharp.

I never tested any natives at arrow shooting or spear throwing, but I have often seen them practising for amusement or exercise—especially small boys. The bow is held just off the perpendicular, and the string is drawn to the eye or just beyond it. A wooden bracelet is worn on the left wrist to prevent the string from striking that hand on release.

I should say that they were on the whole bad shots, at least they reach no high degree of accuracy such as one might expect. Their range is I should say certainly not more than 30 yards at the very outside, and they probably would not hit anything at that distance except by a fluke. They are more expert at shooting fish than anything else, and they use fair judgment when doing so, to allow for refraction.

XVII. *Cultivation.*

All the vegetables that are eaten are raised by cultivation, which is carried on in small irregular patches at all sorts of unexpected places in the bush. Those who have had the advantage of three years in Queensland are, naturally, the best gardeners, and generally bring back some implement—a spade or hoe—to work with, but the usual tool is simply a pointed stick, with which and a trade bush-knife the bush is cleared, and the rich soil scratched up sufficiently for their purposes.

Yams and taro require and receive the greatest attention; and in the heathen islands there is some sort of religious function at the time of yam-planting, which is also connected with the moon, but I can give no particulars.

There are several varieties of yam, some of which grow to enormous sizes, but the most palatable are the smaller snowy white or magenta tinted ones, which are excellent when properly roasted in the ashes. The wild yam, not much larger than a potato, is also very fair eating. It is brought into cultivation in Malekula, and is much improved thereby. Both sexes assist at the time

of clearing the ground and planting, new patches being opened up when possible every year; but after that, the bulk of the weeding, training the vines, and digging devolves (in the heathen parts) on the women.

After the seedling is planted, a small hillock of earth is raised over it, in the centre of which is a short stick, and round each hillock a trellis of reed grass is built (resembling those that we put round a flower-pot as ornament) of about 4 or 5 feet in diameter, and 6 to 7 feet high. As soon as the young vine appears it is secured to this trellis, and with astonishing rapidity it winds round and round until the whole frame is covered. Few more beautiful plants can be seen thus growing than the yam, with its elegant ivy-shaped leaves, delicately tinted in all shades from deep pink to pale and finally dark green, and clasped by countless tendrils to the framework.

The yams when brought home are (in Efáte) hung to branches of trees near the hut; but in Malekula, special "larders" of reed grass are built, raised about 4 feet from the ground, in order to keep the rats away from their contents.

The "*native cabbage*" before mentioned, is cultivated, though originally wild. It is an excellent anti-scorbutic, and has a pleasant fresh taste, like a rather sweet spinach.

The *papau* or *mammy apple* grows plentifully, and is known in the various island dialects as the "bread-fruit of the white-man," so it has evidently been imported. Several excellent varieties of *banana* and *plantain* have also been imported, the original native ones being small and harsh in flavour.

The *bamboo* is not cultivated, and though used for building and other purposes in Malekula as noted, many of its other uses are not taken advantage of. In one seaside village in Efáte, salt water for washing dishes, &c., was brought from the sea in lengths of bamboo in which the dividing joints had been pierced.

Arrowroot is found wild in the bush in Efáte, and its sale after preparation by the natives, has paid for the printing of the Bible in their own tongue, the erection of churches and school houses, and other beneficial works.

The native gardens are almost always fenced in with reed grass, which forms a very efficient barricade against wandering pigs, &c. Straight sticks from the cotton tree are also used, which soon throw down roots, and eventually spread into an impenetrable hedge.

Pigs, fowls, and dogs are said to have been brought into the islands within the last one hundred years, and Captain Cook has the credit of the introduction of the first two, but I cannot say with what amount of truth. It is noticeable that the same word

for dog, "kuri," is used almost throughout the group—one wonders if it can have any connection with our English word "cur."

No attention is paid to breeding, so that the pigs and fowls are as a rule small; the chief endeavour is to rear boars with as large and circular tusches as possible, and to this end they are tied by the hind leg to a post at a short tether so that they shall not be able to wear them down or break them. Many tusches can be obtained perfectly circular, and I possess one of which the point absolutely grows into the root of the tooth, while another one I have seen completes two and a quarter circles in a spiral, the curves closely touching all round.

Both pigs and fowls have gone wild in the bush, and in Efâte the descendants of domesticated cattle and dogs are found also wild. The wild fowls have become small and of bantam-like appearance, and are generally of a brownish colour with all-white tail feathers. They fly and run at a great speed, and are exceedingly difficult to shoot. Dogs are used for catching wild pigs, and there is generally a number of large hungry-looking curs of pariah appearance lurking round each village, ready to bark at, and frighten away an intruder; but a few well directed stones will generally keep them off until a native whom they know comes to one's assistance.

XVIII. *Burials.*

In Efâte and those parts, the natives, being Christian, bury their dead in the earth, and I understand that those who were not cannibalized in former days were likewise buried. I have never seen a funeral either there or in Malekula (where inhumation is also practised); but at Port Stanley in the latter island, I once saw two large heaps of stones near the beach, which a native told me were chiefs' graves. I never heard of either cremation, or burial at sea in a canoe.

With regard to Efâte in heathen times I quote the following from Mr. Macdonald's book "Oceania": "In Efâte the body was carefully prepared for burial, and dressed. The burial was accompanied with much solemnity, great wailing, and animals slain in sacrifice to the dead at the grave. It was supposed that the spirits, or essence of the animals slain, would accompany the souls of the deceased to the spirit world, the entrance to which was the westernmost point of Efâte, at a place called Tukituki."

I happened to land once on Meli island, just off the shore of Efâte, where a semi-Fijian colony is established, on the day on which their chief had died. The natives asked us to remain for the ceremonies, and presently on the blowing of a

conch shell horn we assembled with the whole of the natives round the hut of the late chief. He himself was apparently laid out inside as we could not see him, and in the front sat his three wives all covered with (I think) yellow ochre and dust, wailing loudly, while a huge fat pig lay dead outside the fence, the village dogs licking up its blood as it trickled forth. Presently everybody—and we also—laid their heads on their bent arms and began to wail; a mournful sound, not unlike keening in Ireland, and quite as perfunctory. After a time we were asked to go away, which we did, and so saw no more of the affairs.

We were asked to tell the people of Fila, off which island the ship was anchored, of the death of the chief (these people, though Christian, being the kinsmen of the Meli men), and that they (the Fila men) would give us something; however, I got no opportunity of doing so, so what the gift would have been I cannot say—one does not generally give a present to the bearer of bad tidings.

In Malekula, a sort of mummy is made, of which specimens were brought to the ship at Port Sandwich by a white trader, who had procured them in exchange for a rifle at the conclusion of a “sing-sing” in his neighbourhood. They are said to be the effigies of the chief whose skull (the only portion retained of all his remains) forms the head. This is plastered with mud to represent a living face, and body of bamboo, twigs, and mud, highly coloured in black, white, red, and purple stripes, forms the figure. All “mummies” seem to be decorated with a similar design; and I would suggest that they represent the body, as laid out for burial. A small one—perhaps personating a baby—has its head founded on a small cocoanut, and others have no body, but only a stick thrust into the hole where the spinal cord passes through.

On each shoulder, a highly conventional face is moulded looking to right and left respectively, and in each hand is a pig’s lower jaw with tushes. Smaller highly conventional heads on sticks, with feathers stuck in where the ears should be, and ornamented with pigs’ tushes, were also brought to us by the same trader, the “tambu” having been removed off them. We were given to understand that they were held in the hand while dancing.

XIX. *Boys’ Games.*

The boys are not much given to playing at games, even when they have no school to go to; however, they may be generally seen practising shooting with small bows and arrows at any and everything, though none become anything remarkable as marksmen. Occasionally in the evening a sort of “touch-last” is

played on the beach, but the boys are shy of being questioned about themselves, and so it was almost impossible to find the rules of it.

On the beach at Tongariki, where there is no fringing reef, the boys had a sort of game which consisted in tying a stone to one end of a cotton-tree stick with strips of its own bark, and then all throwing their sticks together beyond the line of surf. The stones were so selected as to be only just heavy enough to keep the stick upright in the water, but not to sink it; and the last stick to remain bobbing about outside the breakers while the remainder had either lost their stones or were washed up on the beach, was the conqueror.

DISEASES *in the* NEW HEBRIDES.

By D. McNABB, Surgeon R.N.

THESE are not very numerous and the opportunities for investigating them not of the best.

1. *Medical Diseases.*

(a) *Bronchitis*, both acute and chronic, have been observed in the islands of Efâte and Mai. The acute cases occurred in patients who had become Christians and had adopted European clothing. This they never changed, allowing their clothes to become wet and dry in accordance with the weather. In connection with this I have suggested to missionaries the advisability of giving these people as little to wear as is consistent with decency.

(b) *Pneumonia* has also been observed in Efâte, due to the same causes as Bronchitis.

(c) I have had one or two cases of *Dysentery* reported to me by white people, the cases having occurred among natives in their employ. Efâte.

(d) *Heart disease*.—I saw one man dying from this in Malekula. There was indefinite history of rheumatism, and there was both mitral and aortic disease.

(e) *Malaria*.—One does not come across many cases, as it is thought nothing of, but I have seen one case in Mai of splenic enlargement due to Malaria.

(f) *Hepatitis*.—Under this head I had better include one case of small liver abscess occurring in a native of Epi. I drew off pus with a trochar and cannula, and the man did well.

(g) *Eczema* frequently occurs affecting the head, particularly in children.