Review: Fiji Folk-Lore

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AUSTRALASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS.

FIJI FOLK-LORE.

'Tales from Old Fiji.' By Lorimer Fison. London: A. Moring, Ltd., The De La More Press. Pp. i.-xlv., 1-175. 22 *Illustrations and a Map.*

Folk-tales obtained from reliable sources and told in a pleasing manner, as are these, have both a literary and a scientific value, and from both points of view the old Fijian tales told by Mr. Fison deserve to be widely read. A large number of interesting ethnological data will be found embedded in the tales as well as in the introduction and appendix. In the introduction will be found notes of various words that in one sense have a harmless significance, but which are employed to convey a sinister or evil meaning. Among the Windward islands of Fiji two sorts of turtle were spoken of, "short turtle" and "long turtle." Of these the former referred to the real turtle, but the latter to the dead body of a man which was to be eaten. Among the Leeward islands a like distinction prevailed, pig being substituted for turtle. There is also a long discussion on the origin of cannibalism. Mr. Fison holds that in former days the Fijians were scantily supplied with animal food, and as they were subject to that insatiable craving for animal food which an exclusively vegetable diet produces, they betook themselves to human meat. It was hunger, and not superstition or revenge, which led to cannibalism. Most of the dozen tales are interesting as stories quite apart from the psychological or ethnological data they contain; some are myths of origin, others account for the migrations of peoples, or narrate the deeds of doughty chiefs; one tells of the untimely death of a lad who was the offspring of the sun and a beautiful human girl. One boastful tale states that "Napoleoni was a son of Tonga, for his mother came to us in a ship from the land of Merikei. She was a young woman, tall and fine; and after a while she sailed again to her own land, where she brought forth a child, though no man had her to wife, and this child she called Napoleoni. Now, after many days, when he was grown, the men of Faranise sent ambassadors to Merikei, begging for help against Uelingtoni. . . . So he led the men of Faranise. I could tell you of his mighty deeds—how he smote the enemies of Faranise, though they were many and strong; how he chased Uelingtoni from land to land till he caught him at Uatalu, and banished him to a desert island, where he died."

THE MONTHLY RECORD.

EUROPE.

Is there a Glacier on Ben Nevis?—In the March number of *Symons's Meteorological Magazine* this question is answered in the affirmative by the Rev. R. P. Dansey, who points out that there is one especial feature which favours the accumulation and duration of snow on Ben Nevis not to be found in nearly such a marked degree on any other Scottish mountain. The summit plateau, which rises steeply from the south-west—the Glen Nevis side—terminates, after forming the summit crest, in a magnificent series of precipices, nearly 2 miles in length, overlooking the north-east face. At the bottom of these precipices runs the small stream of the Allt-a-Mhuilinn, whence the corrie takes its name (see the photograph here reproduced). On the other side of this rise again the steep scree-covered slopes of Carn Mor Dearg, 4012 feet, which at the head of this great corrie joins Ben Nevis on the east by an arête which never falls below 3478 feet. The

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