



Religious Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia.

Author(s): Robert Henry Codrington

Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 10 (1881), pp. 261-316

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841527>

Accessed: 15/06/2014 05:34

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

“ For he was worthy—full of power ;
As gentle—liberal-minded, great,
Consistent ; wearing all his weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.”

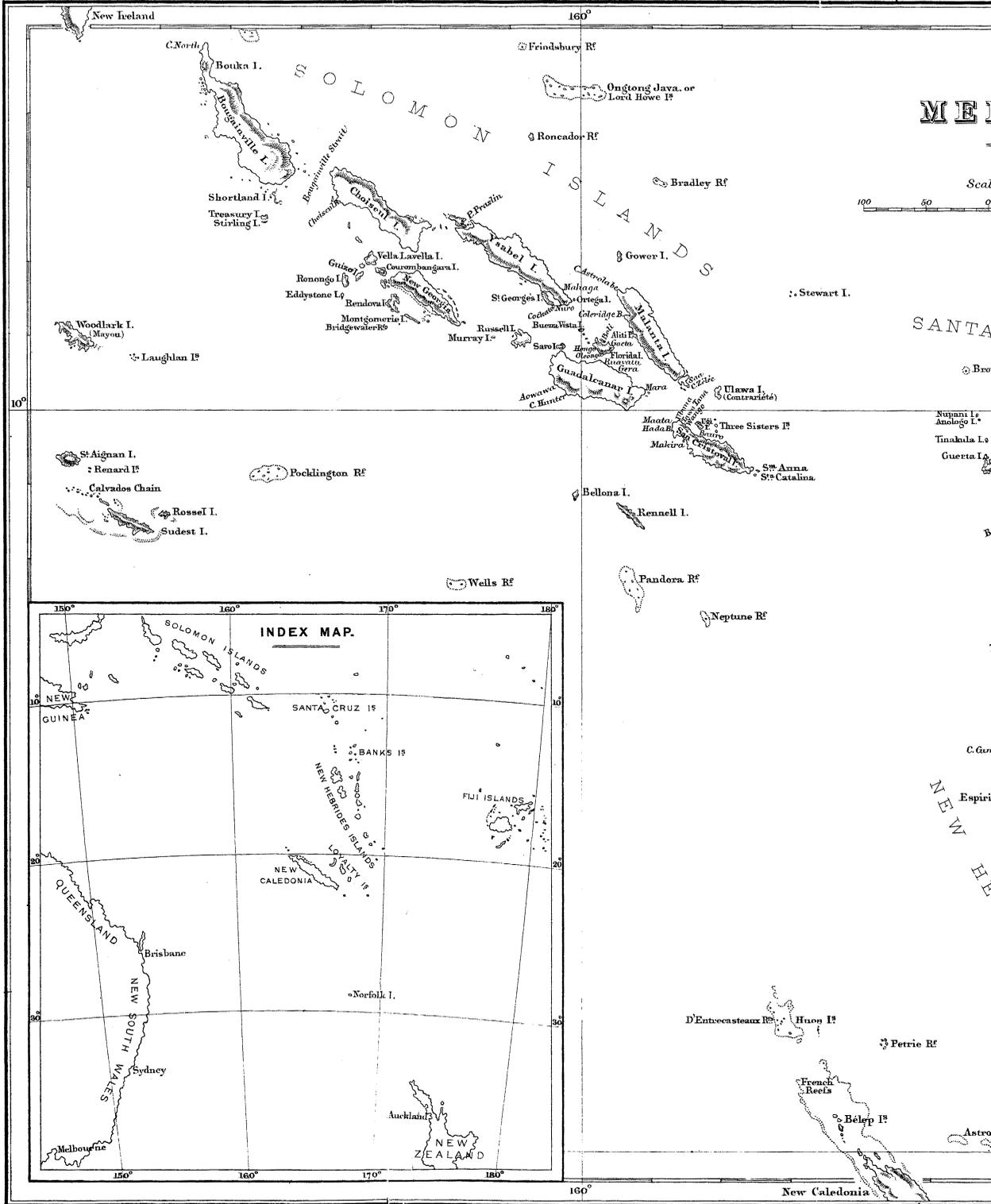
The excellent portrait, which the courtesy of the publisher of the “*Revue d'Anthropologie*” enables us to reproduce, is from a photograph in the possession of Dr. Topinard, bearing the inscription “*à mon collègue et ami, Topinard, souvenir affectueux, Broca.*”

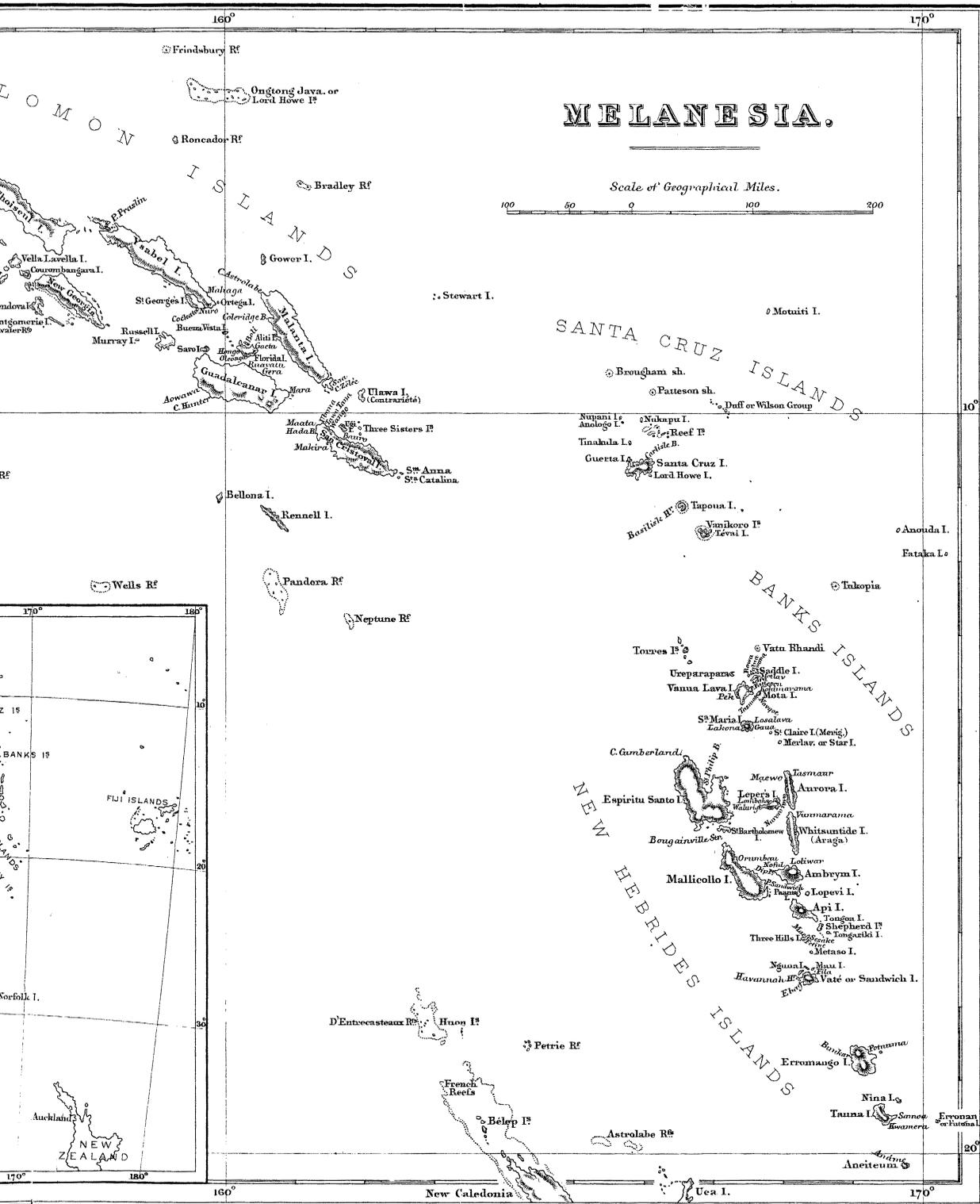
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS *and* PRACTICES *in* MELANESIA. By the
Rev. ROBERT HENRY CODRINGTON, M.A., Fellow of Wadham
College, Oxford ; Melanesian Mission, Norfolk Island.

To represent with tolerable correctness the religious belief of a savage people must always be very difficult. Their ideas are not clear, and there is no systematic form in which they are accustomed to represent them among themselves. Although the superstitious practices which go along with the superstitious beliefs are followed with little variation in form, perhaps over a considerable area, and when there is much variety of dialect, yet inquiries into such matters will meet with what at first seem very different answers in one place and another.

To undertake to describe the beliefs and practices which make up what may be considered the religion of the Melanesians, is pretty certain to go beyond what is attainable by any one. The islands and the dialects are so numerous that no one person's knowledge can well range over the whole. To represent what is believed and practised in some parts of Melanesia is all that can be attempted here ; but it is extremely probable that if the true account can be given of the conception of the supernatural world prevailing in one group, it would hold good in the main of the whole people.

What is called Melanesia is made up of four groups of islands, which are plainly distinct. The first comprises New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, from whence little information is at present to be had ; the second is made up of the New Hebrides and Banks' Islands, which are closely connected ; the third is the Santa Cruz group, which has, by a series of calamities, been cut off from almost all observation ; the fourth is the Solomon Islands. In all but the first there is a portion of the population not Melanesian, but belonging to the Polynesian Islands to the East. What is here offered is drawn chiefly from





Theo. K.-H. Lith. 40, King St. Covent Garden.

the Banks' Islands and Solomon Group, whence the most advanced scholars have come to the Melanesian Mission Station on Norfolk Island.

The young people among the islands know very little indeed of what the elders believe, and have very little sight of their superstitious observances. The elders are naturally disinclined to communicate freely concerning subjects round which, among Christian converts, there hangs a certain shame; while those who are still heathen will speak with reserve of what retains a sacred character. Such reserve, on the part of converts or the unconverted, is so far natural and proper, that a considerate missionary probably will not press inquiries too early or too far. If one should, he will probably fill his mind with mistaken notions, and perhaps publish them before he finds that they are wrong.

Hardly any European, whether missionary or traveller, can approach savage life and customs without such preconceived opinions as will colour the view of what he sees. Hence the head of some implement carved for the simple purpose of adornment figures as a Solomon Island idol; a stone, kept in a house for cracking nuts, appears a fetish; or the singing and dancing at a feast seems a religious celebration. To some, every legend will bear traces of primitive truth; to others, the evidence of the growth of myths. If the visitor for the first time mounts into a Banks' Island village, and sees, a little apart from the group of houses, a platform squarely built up of stones, a small high-pointed edifice upon it, with the embers of a fire below, and above an image grotesquely shaped in human form, it is not strange if he takes it for granted that he sees an idol and a shrine and altar. When he hears of Qat and his eleven brothers, one seizes on a solar myth; and another cannot but think of Noah and the Flood, when he hears of the deluge which floated off the canoe into which Qat had shut up his family and all living creatures

Approaching the subject of his inquiries with some prepossessions of this kind, one who is trying to obtain information from the natives, even supposing him to be able to communicate with them in their own language, will meet with native accounts of their own beliefs and practices much less trustworthy than he supposes.

The native, with his very vague beliefs or notions floating in his mind, finds in the questions of the European a thread on which they will precipitate themselves, and without intention to deceive, avails himself of the opportunity to clear his own mind, while he satisfies his questioner. When there is no certain medium of communication; when a native interpreter,

who speaks a little broken English, is employed to ask questions and to return the answers, nothing can be depended on as certain which is received. To be able to use some European word, or word supposed to be English, to describe a native practice or to convey a native belief, is to have an easy means of giving information; and so, among the islands, "plenty devil" is the description given of a sacred spot, and "tevoru" (devil), in Fiji, has become the common appellation of the native ghosts or spirits.

Supposing again that the inquirer is able to communicate pretty freely on ordinary subjects in the language of any island, he will surely find himself baffled when any one of the elder people undertakes to give him information. The vocabulary of ordinary life is almost useless when the region of mysteries and superstitions is approached.

Some such statement of the difficulties in the way of a certain knowledge of the subject is a necessary introduction to the account which has to be given of the religion of the Melanesians. The account must be partial, the knowledge of the subject is incomplete, and absolute certainty is not to be attained. After all, were it not that the beliefs and ways of savage people are of so much interest, it would seem that what can be learnt of Melanesia is of very little value.

The Melanesian people, however, form but a branch of a very widely spread and very ancient race; it may be thought with much reason that they represent a more primitive condition of the race than that in which it is found either to the west or the east of them; among, that is to say, the islands of the Malay Archipelago and those of the Eastern Pacific. There can be no doubt that the languages of Madagascar, of Malacca, and of the Banks' Islands, are dialects of the same original tongue; and hardly less doubt that the people are branches of the same stock.

To the student of language or ethnology who approaches the islands of the Pacific from the side of India, it is very natural that the characteristics of the languages or the people common to those islands and the Malay Archipelago should best be described as Malay. To one again who approaches the same islands from New Zealand, the people and the speech of some places will appear to be Maori, and throughout the islands Maori characteristics will be conspicuous. It is, nevertheless, far from being probable that those who are known in comparatively modern times as Malays are the original stock from whence the islands of the Pacific have drawn their blood or speech; and no one can suppose that the Maoris of New Zealand have been the source whence those among the in-

habitants of Melanesia have sprung whose speech is in fact almost Maori, and their physical and social characteristics the same. But whatever may be the respective position of Malay and Papuan in the great and ancient family to which they both belong, it is clear that the Melanesians—the inhabitants, that is, of the four groups above enumerated—are Papuans; and that they have near them, to the west, the modern Malays, and near them, to the east, the modern Polynesians. In New Guinea the Papuan, in what is thought his home, is in contact with the Malay; in Fiji, where the mass of the population is identical with that of the Melanesian Islands, the Papuan has long been in contact with the Polynesian. In Melanesia itself, no intercourse with the modern Malay from the westwards is known, but abundant traces appear of Polynesian visitors from the east. In those parts, therefore, where the effects of Polynesian immigration are least conspicuous, it will be reasonable to look for the characteristic Melanesian people, and their characteristic religious beliefs and practices.

It would not be, in all probability, very difficult to define the districts in which the direct modern influence of visitors from the Eastern Islands is to be seen. The more remote the time of immigration, the wider the range of its influence, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish possible traces of Polynesian ways and beliefs among the superstitions of Melanesia. Besides, however, what may be considered originally common to all the branches of the race, and besides what is to be found in Melanesian Islands in unmixed or almost unmixed colonies of Polynesian immigrants, there is doubtless an element commonly present in the New Hebrides which is traceable to modern Polynesian influence from the east.

If any special knowledge were to be had of the distinct and plainly Polynesian settlements in the Melanesian Islands, it would be hardly appropriate to introduce it here, since it is a foreign element which is present and distinct beyond mistake.

For example, the inhabitants of Tikopia, a small island not very distant from the Banks' Group, are unmistakably Polynesian in language and appearance, without any admixture of Papuan blood. Their customs are no doubt those of the island whence they originally came. The same is the case with the people of Rennell Island and Bellona Island, which lie south of the Solomon Group. To one coming from New Zealand with a knowledge of the Maori language and people, their speech and habits are at once familiar. The language, at any rate, of the Reef Islands, near Santa Cruz, in one of which Bishop Patteson met his death, is purely Polynesian, and the Bishop could always easily converse with them. Physically, they do not

appear to be pure Polynesians, being probably much mixed with the neighbouring people of Santa Cruz. The same is the case apparently with the people of Ontong Java, or Lord Howe's Group, which lies to the north of the Solomon Group.

In some parts of the New Hebrides, however, such as in part of the island of Mae (three hills), the people appear in no way different physically from their neighbours; but their tongue is purely Polynesian, is in fact that of Tongatabu, from whence no doubt they have come. They retain also further unmistakable marks of Polynesian origin or influence. Some evidence of a similar connection with the eastern islands could probably be traced generally among the New Hebrides; but to trace it would require such a knowledge of the Polynesian people and of the New Hebrides people as it may be safely asserted that no one now possesses. Nothing is known to show that the Banks' Islands have been influenced by Polynesian immigration or neighbourhood; though there are still men alive who can remember a visit, which might have ended in a settlement, of double canoes from Tonga. The Banks' Islanders alone among Melanesians knew no cannibalism, and wore no dress.

In the Solomon Islands another strain in the blood of the population is apparent; much more apparent in the more westerly islands of the group. The pure Polynesians of Rennell Island, the Polynesians, in speech and customs at least, of the Reef Islands, present no difficulties, for their race and origin is apparent. It is very different when in Florida or Ysabel wavy hair, or in children almost straight hair, somewhat oblique eyes, a scanty beard, with light and delicate extremities, make up a type distinctly different from the frizzly-haired and thickly-bearded Papuan, and still more unlike the Polynesian with his straight hair and massive limbs. It is evident that there is an admixture of some element from the West; how ancient it may be it is impossible to decide, and it is not easy to give it a name. But it is not that modern Malay colonisation of the Papuan Islands which is spreading towards these Solomon Islands, but has by no means approached them, and which corresponds to the settlements of the Polynesians from the East, in Fiji and the New Hebrides. It is an element of more advancement in the arts of life, and of more general vigour and activity. No visitor can fail to feel himself nearer the Asiatic islands when he finds the public hall of each village adorned with heads, when he comes within the region in which head-hunting is the practice, and when he sees in Savu or in Florida houses which are the counterpart of that at Waigion figured in Mr. Wallace's book on the Malay Archipelago.

The religious and superstitious beliefs and practices of a

people are sure to bear traces of the origin and subsequent admixture of the population. In Melanesia, therefore, as there is a very perceptible admixture of Polynesians from the eastwards, it will be reasonable to look for the origin of some beliefs and practices in the eastern islands; and as in advancing westward there is a different and apparently Asiatic element among the people, it will be natural to expect some change in religious ways and notions corresponding to it. It would be highly unreasonable, when anything corresponding to a Polynesian practice on the one hand, or to the practices of the Asiatic islands on the other, occurs in Melanesia, to put it down as an importation from one side or the other; for there is a common origin to the whole plainly stamped upon every language throughout. But where there is in Melanesia least apparent admixture of population from east or west, it is reasonable to suppose that whatever can be ascertained of the native notions of the supernatural and of the original superstitious rites, will represent most completely the religious beliefs and practices of the Melanesian people throughout. The Banks' Islands appear to be thus the best representatives of the whole.

CHAPTER II.

THE BANKS' ISLANDS. BELIEF IN SUPERNATURAL BEINGS.

THE seven islands of the Banks' group, though there is a considerable diversity of dialect, have a population among whom no other differences seem to prevail. It is evident, therefore, that the religious beliefs and rites which were common to them, all belong to the same period of the history of the people as does the use in unknown antiquity of the common tongue, from which the various dialects have long ago diverged. The largest island of the group by far is Vanua Lava, in which are trees found also in the Solomon Islands, but not in the rest of this group, and where the variety of animal and vegetable life is said to be greater than in the neighbouring islands. It is to Vanua Lava also that the stories common to all the group refer. The information which has been gained concerning the native superstitions has been chiefly derived from Mota, a much smaller island lying five miles from Vanua Lava; and the native words which must be used in treating the subject will be those in use at Mota. In all probability, what may be learned from any one island of the group would hold good of

the whole, though Vanua Lava may have been the centre and the source of all.

Supernatural Beings. Beliefs, and the customs and practices which result from them, are concerned with the invisible world, or with those things at least which belong to another sphere of being from that of living men. The Banks' Islanders distinctly recognised two orders of intelligent beings different from living men; they believed in the continued existence of men after death in a condition in which they exercised power over the living; and they believed in the existence of beings who were not, and never had been, human. All alike might be called spirits, but it will be convenient to use the English words *Ghost* and *Spirit*, corresponding to the Mota *Tamate* and *Vui*, and meaning in the one case the disembodied spirits of dead men; in the other, beings corporeal or incorporeal, but never human. Very often the story told of a *Vui* will represent him as if a man; but the native will always maintain that he was something different, and deny to him the fleshy body of a man. It is too much to say of any of these *Vuis* that they were held as gods; those indeed to whom the term would be most readily applied are the most like to men, but all were thought to be more than men in power over the forces of nature, and were called upon by prayer to help in time of need.

In order to distinguish the two great classes of *Vuis*, it will be well to speak of them as *corporeal* and *incorporeal*, with the understanding that the *Vui* who is represented as corporeal has a body indeed, but not a human body.

Corporeal Vuis figure largely in the stories and legendary belief of the people. The most conspicuous is I Qat, concerning whom and his familiar assistant Marawa and his eleven brothers more will be told hereafter. There was a time when all were living at Vanua Lava, but they had disappeared time out of mind from their quasi-human habitation. Yet they are still at hand to help, and are invoked in prayers; though it is not by their agency that the forces of nature are ordinarily supposed to be moved or controlled, but by that of the incorporeal *Vuis*. The dangers to which Banks' Islanders are most exposed are those of the sea, in their voyages in poor canoes from one island to another. The following prayers give a notion of the way in which *Vuis* of this kind are called on to help:—

“Qate! you and Marawa, cover over the blow-hole for me, let me come into a quiet landing-place, let it calm nicely down for me! Let the canoe of you and me come into a quiet landing-place!”

“Qate! Marawa! look down upon me, smooth the sea for us two, that I may go safely on the sea. Beat down for me the

crests of the tide rip: let the tide rip settle down away from me, beat it down level that it may sink and roll away, and I may come to a quiet landing-place.”

“Qate! Marawa! let the canoe of us two turn into a whale, a hawk, a flying-fish; let it leap onwards over the tide rip, let it speed, let it pass out into my land.”

In answer to such prayers as these, it was supposed that Qat and Marawa would come and hold fast the mast and rigging of the canoe, and save it in all danger.

It will be seen that I Qat is represented as creating men and animals, and it was natural that the first European visitors to the Banks' Islands should have believed him to be the supreme God of the native mythology. But it is evident that Qat is by no means looked upon as the author of the natural objects, by which the natives found themselves surrounded. He was born into a country already inhabited, not by men, but by *Vuis*; he finds himself among houses, canoes, bows, and arrows, and in the midst of such arts of life as the natives had attained when first seen by white men. If it were not for the supernatural powers that he and those with whom he lived possessed, there would be little indeed to show him other than a man. With the confusion which is common in such mythologies he is even considered by some to be the ancestors of those who claim his birth-place in Vanua Lava, Alo Sepere, as the home of their forefathers. In all this, the legends of the Banks' Islanders concerning Qat will be found to correspond to those which prevail among the Maoris, and other Polynesian people, concerning Maui or Tangaroa. The brothers of Qat have all of them the name of Tangaroa, the *Vuis* of the northern New Hebrides have the same name, which is also applied in the Banks' Islands to stones used as fetishes or amulets. With the exception of his introduction of Night, the feats of Qat are trivial and apparently unmeaning; the most remarkable of all is his disappearance from the Banks' Island world. The story which is told at Santa Maria is as follows:—

Where now in the centre of the island is the great lake there was formerly a great plain covered with forest. Qat cut himself a large canoe there out of one of the largest trees. While making it, he was often ridiculed by his brothers for his folly, and asked how he would ever get so large a canoe to the sea. He answered always that they would see by-and-bye. When the canoe was finished, he took inside it his wife and others, making up altogether eight persons, collected living creatures from around, even those so small as ants, and shut himself and all inside. Then came a deluge of rain; the great hollow of the island became full of water,

which burst through where now descends the great waterfall of Gaua. The canoe *to*re a channel for itself out into the sea, and disappeared. There was an expectation of a future return; and a few years ago, when a small trading vessel ran on the reef, and was lost, she was apparently standing in to the channel of the waterfall stream; and the old people cried out that Qat was come again, and his vessel knew her own way home.

The resemblance of this story to that of Noah cannot be missed. It is far from improbable that the number of eight persons, and the closing in of the canoe, may have been added since the Bible history has been made known among the natives. A canoe closed in above is not likely to be thought of; and the rapidity with which a new foreign story is taken up and assimilated has been shown by the narration of the Riddle of the Sphinx, by a Mota lad in Norfolk Island, as a Mota legend. The resemblance without is striking, and that the story is in the main originally native is certain. When for the first time Bishop Patteson went ashore at Mota, they cried out that the brothers of Qat were returned. So Captain Cook in the Sandwich Islands was received as the returning Rono.

Though Qat was gone away, and, as was sometimes said, had taken the best things with him, with which he would some day return, yet inasmuch as he was a *Vui*, he could be invisibly at hand. As for Marawa, the Spider, he has not yet disappeared from Vanua Lava. A few years ago, a man in the early morning going to the river side saw a *Vui* there, smaller in stature than a man, and with long straight hair. He followed him up along the stream till he disappeared in a narrow gorge behind a stone. The stone opened like a door, and within it was a cave, which was the *Vui's* home. To the man's questions he replied that he was Marawa, and lived there, and that he would wait and be seen again if the man went back to the village for some money. The man is still alive, and still finds it to his profit to tell his story, and receive on Marawa's behalf the money of those who wish him to do them a good turn.

These *Vuis* are certainly not malignant beings, only to be propitiated by offerings lest they should do harm to men. Qat's brothers envied him and persecuted him, and there are many stories of wicked *Vuis*, the giants and the ogres of Banks' Island nursery tales; but Qat himself is a good-natured fellow, playfully mischievous, and enjoying the exercise of his wonderful powers; and if his sense of justice makes him punish his enemy, Qasavara, with death, when he triumphs over his brothers, he gives them only the lesson of their experience, that quarrelling and envying bring nothing but

discomfort, and charges them in their new country to lead a better life.

Occupying as Qat does the most conspicuous place in the mythology of the Banks' Islands, he gives his name to remarkable objects; a fungus is his basket, a fungia his dish, sulphur his sauce, a beam of light shining through the roof in the dusty air his spear, and the flying shadow of a solitary cloud over the sea is the shadow of Qat.

Of the same order of beings with Qat and his brothers, though looked upon as very inferior, are certain *Vuis* having rather the nature of fairies. The accounts of them are vague, but it is argued that they had never left the islands before the introduction of Christianity, and indeed have been seen since. Not long ago there was a woman living at Mota who was the child of one; and a very few years ago a female *Vui* with a child was seen in Saddle Island. Some of these are called Nopitu, which come invisibly, or possess those with whom they associate themselves. The possessed are themselves called Nopitu. Such persons would lift a cocoanut to drink, and native shell-money would run out instead of the juice, and rattle against their teeth; they would vomit up money, or scratch and shake themselves on a mat, while money would pour from their fingers. This was often seen, and believed to be the doing of a Nopitu. In another manner of manifestation, a Nopitu would make himself known as a party were sitting round an evening fire. A man would hear a voice in his thigh, "Here am I, give me food." He would roast a little red yam, and fold it in the corner of his mat. He would soon find it gone, and the Nopitu would begin a song. Its voice was so small and clear and sweet that once heard it never could be forgotten; but it sang the ordinary Mota songs.

Such spirits as these if seen or found would disappear beside a stone; they were smaller than the native people, darker, and with long straight hair. But they were mostly unseen, or seen only by those to whom they took a fancy. They were the friendly Trolls or Robin Goodfellows of the islands; a man would find a fine red yam put for him on the seat beside the door, or the money which he paid away returned within his purse. A woman working in her garden heard a voice from the fruit of a gourd, asking for some food, and when she pulled up an arum, or dug out a yam, another still remained; but when she listened to another spirit's Panpipe, the first in his jealousy conveyed away garden and all.

Under the cover of these fanciful popular beliefs, it may be readily understood how much mischief and wickedness could be carried on.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF QAT.

I QAT was born at Alo Sepere in Vanua Lava; his mother Iro Qatgoro was a stone at the time of his birth, according to some, or turned into one afterwards, which is still to be seen. Qat was the first-born, after him Tangaro-Gilagilala, that is Tangaro the Wise; the other brothers, down to the twelfth Tangaro-Loloqong the Fool, were all called Tangaro with the addition of the name of the leaf of some tree. They were grown up as soon as they were born, and they took up their abode with their mother in the village; where Qat occupied himself in creating trees, rocks, pigs, men, and the objects of nature generally.

At first it was only day, and they cooked and ate till they were tired of it, and his brothers pressed Qat to do something for them to make a change. Some say that he heard there was night at Vava, the Torres Islands some 40 miles off, and sailed over there; others relate that he paddled till he reached the foot of the sky to buy night from I Qong, Night. He took with him a choice pig and told Qong what he wanted. Qong blackened his eyebrows and showed him sleep that night, and next morning how to make the dawn. Qat paddled back with a fowl and birds to show the morning, and with a promise that Night would come. Arrived at his home Qat warned his brothers to provide food and mats, for Night was coming. Presently they saw the sun moving and sinking towards the west, and cried out to Qat that it was crawling away. "Yes," said he, "it will soon be gone." "What is this coming up out of the sea and covering the sky?" cried they. "It is Night," said he; "sit down on both sides of the house, and when you feel something in your eyes lie down and keep quiet." Presently it was dark and their eyes began to blink. "Qat! Qat! what is this? shall we die?" "Shut your eyes," says he, "this is it; go to sleep."

When night had lasted long enough Qat took a piece of red obsidian and cut the darkness, and the dawn came out. The fowls and the birds began to crow and sing, and the brothers of Qat awoke.

One day the brothers of Qat climbed a tree for fruit, which was the property of a bad *Vui*, an eater of men. Tangaro the Fool let a nut drop on the house of the *Vui*, who came out and killed all the brothers and put them into a food chest. Qat waited five days for his brothers, then took his bow and arrows and his shell hatchet and went in search of them. He brought out the *Vui* by again dropping a fruit on his house,

fought with him and killed him ; then searching for his brothers found their bones in the chest. He revived them by blowing through a reed into their mouths.

The origin of the connection of Qat and Marawa was as follows:—

The brothers proposed to make canoes, and worked at theirs every day. Qat intending to surprise them delayed for some time, and then having chosen a large tree and begun to chop it down, he hastened home before evening lest it should be known that he was at work. For several days he found every morning that what he had chopped away had been replaced at night, and the tree made solid again. At last, to find out the cause, he hid himself under a large chip, and saw a *Vui*, a Spider, a Marawa, replacing the wood he had cut away. In his search for the large chip the Marawa found Qat, and eventually agreed to make the canoe for him, which he did in a very short time. When the brothers had finished and launched their canoes, Qat lifted his hand and one after another they sank. Then he and Marawa appeared in his own, and having amused himself with their mortification, he recovered their canoes for them in the night.

Qat's wife was Iro Lei, whom he had made for himself, and very beautiful, and his brothers envied him the possession of her. To revenge themselves for his tricks with them, and to obtain Iro Lei, they tried to kill him. Once they beguiled him into a hole under a rock which they had undermined, in search of a land crab. When they had let fall the rock upon him, and were running off each in hopes of securing Iro Lei for himself, Qat called Marawa to his rescue, and was found in his own house by his brothers with his head in his wife's lap.

On another occasion they cut half through the branch of a fruit-tree and persuaded Qat to go out for the nuts. When he fell as the branch broke, and as they thought was killed, Marawa again saved him, and they found him reposing with his wife. Again they got him to mount a nutmeg tree, which they made to grow so tall and big that he could not come down, and then ran off to claim Iro Lei ; but Marawa the Spider spun him a line, or as some say, gave him a hair of his head, by which he descended to the ground, not, however, before his brothers had gone off with his wife and his canoe.

Qat runs to the village, calls his mother to give him his cocoa-nut-shell bottle, his cock's feather, his necklace, his shell axe, and some bananas. These he stows into the bottle and himself besides, and makes his mother throw him into the sea. The canoe of his brothers had passed beyond the furthest of the Banks' group when Qat in his cocoa-nut came up ; he drew them

towards him, paddle away as hard as they would. Though they took up the cocoa-nut, none but Tangaro the Wise knew what it was, and Qat went on before them and came to land. Then he decked himself in his ornaments and awaited his brothers, perched on a pandanus. When they came ashore he chopped the canoe to pieces, with a song which is still preserved, and advised his brothers, now in a strange country, to live in peace and union, especially since they had a dangerous neighbour. This was Qasavara, a *Vui*, and very strong and fierce. He pretended friendship and brought Qat and his brothers to his place, giving them lodging for the night in his "gamal," the long eating-house found in all the Banks' Island villages. In the night Qasavara came to kill them, but Qat had tapped the ridge pole with his knuckles and opened it for his brothers to sleep in. Before day they came out, and Qasavara was told by Tangaro the Fool where they had been hidden. Next night Qasavara broke open the ridge pole, but they were in a side post. A third night he broke open the side post and they were in a centre post. Then he determined to kill them by day at a feast.

Qat made his preparations by planting an "aru," a Casuarina, and telling his brothers how to escape and climb up it. In washing their hands before preparing the food they contrived to spill all the salt water, so that when the time came for pouring salt water into the oven there was none, and they volunteered to go for more. Thus they went two and two till all but Qat had escaped. Qasavara then attempted to kill Qat, who continually avoided his strokes, leaping from side to side of the oven, while he caught up the food and ran off to his aru. As he climbed up to his brothers, Qasavara climbed after him, but as he came near, Qat cried out "Stretch, my aru!" and the tree grew up between them. This was done over and over again till the aru touched the sky, when Qat cried, "Bend down, my aru!" The top of the aru reached down to Tetgan in Vanua Lava, and all the brothers got down and ran off. Qat remained holding fast the top of the tree; and Qasavara seeing that he was beaten, cried for mercy. But Qat cried, "Spring back, my aru!" and the tree sprang back and dashed Qasavara against the sky. He fell dead, either in Vanua Lava or in Gaua, and turned into a stone, on which sacrifices are made by those who desire to be strong in fighting.

The story of the disappearance of Qat and his brothers varies, as it is natural that it should, in the several islands of the group. The version accepted at St. Maria has been already given, but in all it is argued that they went off in a canoe carrying the best of everything with them, and that the

condition of mankind was altered for the worse on their departure.

The making of men and animals by Qat occupies no conspicuous place in his legend, it was done, by the way, as other things were being done. Man was made at first with the same shape as that of pigs, but on the remonstrance of his brothers against the monotony of his creatures' appearance, Qat beat down the pigs to go on all fours. Man was made of clay, red from the marshy riverside of Vanua Lava. A touch of a finer feeling than is common lights up the story of the making of the first woman. Qat took rods and supple twigs and wove them together to make Iro Vilgale, the first female among mankind; he set them up on end and fashioned with his basket work the head and various members; then when he saw a smile he knew it was a woman.

The story of the bringing of death into the world is remarkable, because it is told without any variation in the Solomon Islands and Banks' Islands alike. At first men never died, but when advanced in life they shed their skins like snakes or crabs, and came out in renewed youth. An old woman went to a stream to change her skin, and let the old one which she had shed float away till it caught against a stick. She then went home where she had left her child. The child refused to recognise her, and declaring that she was another person could only be pacified by the woman returning for her cast integument and putting it on again. From that time mankind have died.

In another Banks' Island story this woman is Iro Puet, the wife of I Mate, Death. The inconvenience of the *permanence* of property in the same hands having been felt, Qat sent for Mate, who lived by the side of a volcanic vent at Gaua, Sta. Maria, where now is one of the descents to Panoi, the lower world. Assured that he would not be destroyed, Mate came forth, and went through the show of death and a funeral feast. Tangaro the Fool was set to watch the way to Hell, lest Mate should follow it; but when on the fifth day the conch was blown, and Mate fled from the place of his death, Tangaro the Fool mistook the paths which divided to the world above and to the world below; and all men since have followed Mate into Panoi and never return to life. Another account makes Tangaro the Fool, under his other name of Tagelingelinge, the cause of death, because when Iro Puet set him to guard the way to Panoi in prospect of her own death, he pointed out that way to her descending ghost instead of the way back to the world, and so she died for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INCORPOREAL SPIRITS.—STONES ; SNAKES.

THE *Vuis* which are incorporeal and have nothing like a human life, have a much higher place than Qat and his brothers in the common religious system of the Banks' Islanders. They have no names, and no stories are told of them, and they have no shape, but they are numerous, and they are present and powerful to assist men who can communicate with them. That savages should conceive of purely spiritual beings is perhaps incredible ; and so it is found that though no one has seen one of these *Vuis*, yet there is the belief that if seen it would be a grey indistinct something that would meet the eye. The line too between these *Vuis* and such as are conceived as visible, and such as Qat or Qasavara, is not distinctly drawn ; but still those *Vuis* to whom sacrifice is commonly offered, who are approached through some outward medium of communication, are on the one hand clearly separate from the disembodied spirits of the dead, and on the other from such beings as have or have had a shape and life like men.

These *Vuis* are very generally associated with *Stones*. It is not that the stone is a *Vui*, or that the *Vui* is in the stone, but that there is such a connection between the *Vui* and the stone that the stone is the spirit's outward part or organ. To a certain extent the same connection exists between *Vuis* and snakes, owls, and sharks.

Communication with these *Vuis* is not in the power of all, but there is no order of priests. If a man has his stone or his snake, by means of which he supposes that he can obtain favours from his *Vui*, he will instruct his son or some one else to take his place. If a man finds a stone, either in its natural site which strikes his fancy, or one worn in a stream into the resemblance of a fruit or animal, he conceives at once that there is a *Vui* about it, and believes that he derives advantage from it. Certain well-known stones are looked upon as sacred, either because the fancy of former generations has fallen on them, or because of some accident or adventure that has happened on the spot. But there are spots which only a few men know and visit, which others pass by with awe, where there is some stone which has established its reputation, and where the presence of the *Vui* has made sacred the banyan that grows there (Note 1), and the snake that lives among its stems, and the owls that haunt its branches. To sacrifice upon these stones will bring a man strength in fight, abundant crops, a multitude

of pigs, all the good things of native life. The man who knows the stone and knows the *Vui*, being in a way the priest of it, will receive money from one who wishes to sacrifice, and offer it, or rather some of it, to obtain the benefit desired by him. The other will not approach or see it. No other sacrifice than that of the shell-money in common use seems to be offered in the Banks' Islands.

The influence of these *Vuis* is at least generally beneficent. It is far from the case generally that they are propitiated lest they should do men harm; though it is true that neglect of due observance would be punished by the jealous spirit. The malignant spirits are the ghosts of men. Still there are stones near which an accident has happened, or which for some other reason have a sinister reputation, and their *Vuis* are thought to have rather a turn for mischief. But the Banks' Islander did not conceive of his world as full of hostile spirits; it was in men while they were alive that he was acquainted with cruelty and hate, and it was from the ghosts of men after they were dead that he looked for spite and mischief.

The character and influence of the *Vui* connected with the stone was judged by the shape of the stone. A stone in the shape of a pig, of a bread-fruit, of a yam, was a most valuable find. No garden was planted without the stones which were to ensure a crop. A large stone lying with a number of small ones underneath it, like a sow among her sucklings, was good for men to sacrifice upon for a numerous litter, and good for a childless woman. A stone, with little disks upon it, a block of ancient coral, was good to bring in money; any fanciful interpretation of a mark was enough to give a character to the stone and its associated *Vui*.

The name of *Tangaroa* also was given to stones which a man would carry with him in a bag, or keep hung up in a house, to bring him luck or to avert misfortune. If a man went into another's house in his absence and meddled with his property, and after awhile an accident were to befall him, it would be said that the *Tangaroa* had done it. Such stones are used as amulets to secure safety in fighting; others, if swung about in an invaded place, will take the courage out of the invaders; others will straighten the aim and strengthen the arm to shoot.

Some stones have such power that if a man puts one under his pillow and dreams of a man, that man will die. But the more probable opinion is that this is the work not of a *Vui* but of a ghost, and corresponds to the stones which have the name of "eating ghost:" stones of remarkably long shape which are supposed to be associated with some dead person, and which are

set in a house to guard it. Any one entering a house in the absence of its owner will call out his name, lest the ghost should think he has bad intentions and do him mischief.

Next to stones in sacred character from association with *Vuis* come snakes, either the land snakes which commonly haunt the complicated root-stems of a banyan, or the amphibious ones which are common on the beach. It is not every snake that is sacred, but such as have a connection with a *Vui*, which are his property, or as they say "near" him. Those who have the knowledge of such a snake say that they go in secret to its haunt and call it out. It comes and crawls over their bodies and puts its tongue into their mouths. Then the sacrifice is made by scattering of money, not to the snake, but to the *Vui* whom the snake represents. At the same time, the previous proprietors of the snake, now dead, are invoked, for it is supposed they still have an interest in the matter.

Since no one approaches while this is going on, no one can say whether there really is a snake in the case or not. It is certain that after the death of one who has been in the practice of receiving money to offer to the snake, when others have gone to re-open so profitable a connection, the creature has not been found; and the conclusion is that the man and the snake die together.

Owls, lizards, eels, crabs, and sharks have their share of the same regard; not all of them, but such as are fancied to be connected with a *Vui*. In the same way it is not only stones on which money is offered with prayer either to *Qat* or the incorporeal *Vui* that is attached to it; but a stream or rather a deep hole in a stream (Note 2), or a pool among the rocks on the beach, has money scattered in it and is a sacred place. Into such a deep pool among the coral rocks a man will scatter money, calling on the spirits of his immediate ancestors, and then dive to the bottom. If he sees anything unusual, a crab or cuttlefish, or any such thing, he fancies the creature has a particular connection with him; that it is, as they say, the real origin of his being. If he sees nothing strange, to sit for an instant at the bottom will give him *mana*, supernatural power.

A very singular superstition prevails, not only in the Banks' Islands but in the Northern New Hebrides also, concerning snakes, which have the power of assuming human shape, whether of male or female, for the purpose of tempting men and women, and to yield to whose seductions brings death. Some supernatural character of course attaches to such snakes; they are snakes and not *Vuis*, but a *Vui* has some connection with them. A young man will see a woman with her hair decked with flowers beckoning to him or calling him; coming nearer, he

will see the features of a girl of his own village or the next; he will suspect that she is a snake, and will observe that her elbows and knees are reversed, the elbows in front, the knees behind. This reveals her real character and he flies. If one has courage to strike her with a stick, she sinks and glides away at once as a snake. Not long ago a man at Gaua met on the beach at night a snake in the form of a woman of the place. Seeing by her knees and elbows what she was, he offered to fetch her some money from the village. When he returned with it she was waiting for him in her proper form as a snake; he scattered money on her back, and she went off with it into the sea. Nothing seems to be more fixed in the minds of the natives than the persuasion that all this is true.

Sharks do not meet with so much superstitious regard in the Banks' Islands as in the Solomon Islands; but a shark is sometimes a Tangaroa, a visible manifestation of a *Vui*. Such a one a few years ago was to be seen in the harbour of Vanua Lava, Port Patteson, extremely tame, following its owner through the surf as he walked along the beach. It was a shark, not itself a *Vui*, but it was a Tangaroa. The owner had given money to a Malwo man of Aurora, in the New Hebrides, who had sent the shark to him.

It is by the operation of these *Vuis* also that men are able to make rain or sunshine, and to produce abundant crops of yams and bread-fruit. Stones are the principal media for the exercise of such power, but it is the *Vui*, which the man approaches by the stone, whose power is at work. There can be no doubt but that the rain-makers and weather-doctors believed in their own powers, though much of their success may have been owing to a shrewd observation and experience. To make sunshine, if a very round stone was found, it was wound round with red braid, and stuck with owl's feathers to represent rays; it was then hung on some high tree, a banyan in a sacred place, or a casuarina, a tree which has always something of a sacred character. The stone representing the sun might also be laid upon the ground with a circle of white rods radiating from it for its rays. A piece of Astræa coral stone worn round will sometimes bear a surprising resemblance to bread-fruit, and such a stone laid at the foot of a tree will bring an abundant crop. But the possessor of such a stone, because of his connection with the *Vui*, can impart the *mana*, the power which is in the one, to a number of similar stones at once, and so produce a general crop for his village.

It would be very difficult to ascertain whether the *mana*, the personal influence upon which so very much of a man's power depends, in whatever way it is exercised, is thought to originate in a connection with these spiritual beings. The

notion conveyed by the word, which is apparently common to all the dialects of the Pacific, is vague, and the origin of the power not likely to be clearly conceived in the native mind. There can be little doubt, however, but that, as the media of communication with spirits are so various and abundant, and as such communication does certainly in many cases impart *mana*, a supernatural character is attached to any superiority or influence whatever which a man may exercise over his fellows. It is not natural vigour of mind that gives a man the lead in his village; it is not superior industry and a keen eye for business that makes a man's goods increase and his harvests abundant; it is not natural strength or skill that sends his arrows straight; but the man has *mana*; and whether it comes from *Vuis* or from the ghosts of his dead relations will hardly be a matter to be discussed.

There are few points, perhaps, in which the difference between the Melanesians and the Polynesians is more marked than in the position which the *tapu* occupies among them. A few minutes' intercourse with people of the pure Polynesian colonies in Melanesia, as of Tikopia or Rennell Island, is enough to bring the *tapu* to the surface. But among the Banks' Islanders, as generally among Melanesians, though the signs of it appear at every turn, the *tapu* is only employed to reserve the owner's rights to his fruit, or to prohibit the common use of a path, or of a part of the sea-shore for a certain time. Any man, or any set of men who have a sufficient status in the place, can put on his mark and make the *tapu*. At any rate there is no supernatural agency supposed to be at work, except inasmuch as the *mana* of the man who makes the *tapu* is supernatural. The man who should disregard the sign and break the *tapu* would not be sick or die in consequence, but he would have to make it up with the one who set the mark and his associates; he would have to give a pig or money to appease their anger. It is commonly the case that the *tapu* is not set as resting on the authority of a single person, but on that of the grade of the club, or secret society, to which the individual or party belongs; indeed, another word, and not *tapu*, is used when it is a private individual in connection with no recognised and powerful body who puts up his own mark. In such a case, self-assertion is likely to meet with respect, and that is all. The main thing is that no sacred character attaches to the Banks' Island *tapu*, no spirits or ghosts give it a superhuman force.

CHAPTER V.

THE GHOSTS OF THE DEAD; PLACE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS;
CHARMS AND WITCHCRAFT; PRAYER AND SACRIFICE;
SECRET SOCIETIES.

THE spirits called *Vui* are clearly distinct from the ghosts of dead men called *Tamate*, a word in itself signifying dead man. The belief of the Banks' Islanders concerning ghosts belongs to their whole conception of the soul, and of the continued existence and condition of the soul after death. That they should believe in a continued existence is almost a matter of course; but it is not to be expected that their conceptions of the unseen world should be clear and distinct, or that the stories and beliefs concerning it should all agree.

That a ghost is the disembodied spirit of a man, is accepted; but what is the spirit or soul when it is in the body? To that question it is not easy to get a satisfactory answer. Let a man once be dead, and the distinct existence of the *Tamate* that lies in the house or in the grave, and of the *Tamate* that haunts the place or is gone to Panoi, is plainly recognised; though both are called by the same name. But though one word *atai* is generally allowed to stand for that which in English is called the soul, it will not do to accept the word as precisely corresponding. The notions of the native mind were not clear enough before Christian teaching came to be represented by one word which should convey the same meaning to all who heard it. *Atai* is the best word, indeed the only word, that can be used; yet a Christian native well knowing the sense which the word bears to him now will still be found to doubt whether a heathen man would understand it precisely in the same way.

There are three words which it will be worth while to consider and understand, for each of them is used in different islands as meaning soul, and all are found in Mota. The nearest equivalent for soul is found among them, but three islands make choice each of a different one of the three words. They are "Atai," "Tamaniu," "Nunuai."

"*Atai*" in Maori means a shadow or reflection. In Mota it has no such meaning in regard to natural objects. But *atai* is used in Mota for something taken as peculiarly and intimately connected with a person, whether he has set his fancy on it himself, or another has shown it to him. Whatever it may be, the man believes it to be a kind of reflection of his own personality; the man and his *atai* live, flourish, suffer, and die

together. *Atai*, then, is not a word borrowed from this counterpart without the man, and applied secondarily to his soul; but it is a word which carries a sense with it, applicable alike to that object and the unseen self (Note 3).

"*Tamaniau*" in Mota is another name for the same thing, which is also called an *atai*, that is something animate or inanimate which a man has come to believe to have an existence intimately connected with his own. But this is not used at Mota as a word corresponding to "soul"; at Aurora in the New Hebrides it is commonly accepted as such.

"*Nunuai*" in Mota is the recurrence of an impression made on the senses long after the impression has been made. A man who has heard a scream in the course of the day which has startled him, hears it again ringing in his ears; it is the *nunuai* of the scream. A man fishing for flying-fish paddles alone in his canoe with the long light line fastened round his neck; as he lies down tired at night, he feels the pulling of the line as if there were a bite, though the line is not on his neck, and this is the *nunuai* of the line. To the native it is nothing fancied, it is real, but it has no form or substance. In another island of the New Hebrides, Whitsuntide, this is what they call the soul.

It is this soul, the *atai*, which in death is separated from the body. Before death, it is not thought that the soul is commonly separable from the body, though in some dreams of extraordinary character, some will say that it goes out and returns. There are stones also upon which if a man's shadow falls, the ghost which belongs to it has the power of drawing out his soul. So as the very widespread notion prevails at Mota that a sneeze is a sign that some one is calling the name of the man that sneezes, there is thought to be particular danger in the case of an infant lest some ghost should be calling away its soul. If a child sneezes they will cry "Live, roll back to us," as if the child's soul were already called away.

The soul being separated from the body by death, is not supposed to go far away at first. Indeed, the name of the deceased is loudly called with the notion that the soul may hear and come back. A woman knowing that a neighbour was at the point of death heard a rustling of something in her house, as if it were a moth fluttering, just as the sound of cries and wailings showed her that the soul was flown. She caught the fluttering thing between her hands, and ran with it, crying out that she had caught the *atai*. But though she opened her hands above the mouth of the corpse there was no recovery.

On the fifth day there is a mourning and a feast, the body having been already buried. The ghost is then supposed to

leave for Panoi, and shouts are raised, and conches are blown to drive it away from the village. In the case of a well-to-do man, pigs are killed, with the notion that in some way they will accompany him to Panoi. In this sense they will say that a pig has an *atai*, but it is not thought that animals or other things have an *atai* as men have; and it is equally said that it is the *nunuai*, as above, of his pigs and ornaments that go with a man to the other world. At the death-feast, a leaf of cooked mallow, or a bit of food, is thrown aside, and the name of the dead man is called; but this is not done so much with the notion that the ghost will eat the soul, as it were, of the food, as that it is a friendly memorial of him, and that he will be gratified by it. At the same time, no doubt, there are many who think that there is a *nunuai* of the food which reaches the ghost.

“Panoi,” the Hades of the Banks’ Islands, is a general receptacle for the ghosts from all the group. It is somewhere underground, and there are various entrances to it which are called *sura*. In Vanua Lava and Santa Maria there are still active volcanic vents where there are *suras*; in Mota there is one at the top of the mountain. Generally, however, any point of land is a place for ghosts to assemble for their descent to Panoi. Before descending, or if they are able to come up again, the ghosts entertain themselves at the *sura* with songs and dances; they are often heard shouting and whistling with crabs’ claws at night, especially when there is a moon. At times a departed soul has come back from the *sura* to his body; and the man has revived to tell how he was hustled out of the *sura* by the ghosts, who said there was no room for him, and he must go back. Of Panoi itself the notions are but vague; if there are trees the leaves are red; the ghosts do nothing, neither work nor fight; they eat excrement if they eat at all; their existence is empty and wearisome.

There is no difference in condition following on good or bad conduct in the world; but there is a notion that conditions of wealth and poverty are reversed; and some think that all who die under similar circumstances remain together. There is, however, a belief, which women particularly cherish, that the *sure-lumagav*, the place where the ghosts of lads who die in the flower of their youth are congregated, is more pleasant than the rest, that all kinds of flowers abound there, and scented plants. Some think the same of the *sura* of simple harmless people, the *sure-tupa*.

The best authority for the state of things in Panoi was a woman who had been down there. She was very anxious to see her brother who was just dead, she perfumed herself with

water in which a dead rat had been steeped, to give herself a deathlike smell; she pulled up a bird's-nest from a Puet, and descended by the hole that she had opened. She found no difficulty in reaching Panoi, and she found friends who were surprised to see her, but never detected her as one still alive. She found her brother lying in a house, because as a recent ghost he was not yet strong enough to go about. He cautioned her to eat nothing, and she returned. She professed herself, but a few years ago, able to go down as she liked, and whatever was generally believed to be there, she declared that she had seen.

With regard to the immortality of the soul there is a difference of belief; some say the ghosts live for ever in Panoi, others that after a long time they perish. There is a belief, further, that there is a second Panoi, in which those who die out of the first, begin a further term of existence in the form of children. When they are old again they turn into the black, wrinkled, and shapeless masses adhering to the trunks of trees which are the nests of white ants.

The ghosts, however, in Panoi are not those who play so large a part in the unseen world of the Banks' Islanders. Whether it is that ghosts can get out of Panoi, or that there are some that have never settled there, every island is haunted at night by ghosts, and it is by the malicious activity of ghosts that most of the evils of life are brought upon mankind. To say that "savages are never ill," is, like so many statements of the sort concerning savages, wholly untrue in the Banks' islands, in the sense that whenever they are ill they think the disease has been induced by witchcraft or by supernatural agency of some kind. No one imagines his fever and ague to be anything but natural; but there are some diseases which are put down as the work of ghosts, and on some occasions common complaints are thought to have been caused by witchcraft and all witchcraft is wrought by ghosts, by *Tamates*, not by *Vuis*. Just as some men are believed to have a special connection with some *Vui*, some are also believed to have a connection with a ghost or *Tamate*. A stone is the common medium whereby the power of the *Vui* is brought to bear for the benefit of its possessor; and it is by the medium of the bone of a dead man that a ghost is induced or enabled to affect for harm a living man.

There are three principal kinds of charms by which evil was believed to be inflicted through the power of ghosts. The *Garata* was the charming by means of some fragment of food, bit of hair or nail, or anything closely connected with the person to be injured. For this reason great care was used to hide or safely dispose of all such things. The *Talamatai* was a charm

composed of bone and a bit of stone with certain leaves tied up together, with incantations and prayers to a *Tamate*. This was set in a path, and the first who stepped over it was smitten with some disease. The *Tamatetiga* (ghost-shooter) was a bit of hollow bamboo in which a bone, leaves, with whatever else would have *mana* for such a purpose, was inclosed. Fasting on the part of the person using all these charms added much to their efficacy. The man who had prepared his *Tamatetiga* would fast till he found his opportunity, and then covering the open end of the bamboo with his thumb he would take his aim; when he lifted his thumb the magic power shot out, and whoever it hit would die. A few years ago at a great feast at Motlav, a man was carried out, too weak with fasting to be able to walk, and armed with a *Tamatetiga* to let off against an enemy unknown. As he aimed and shot, a man thinking himself the object fell on the spot ready to die with fright: he recovered, however, on finding from the lamentations of the shooter that he was not intended to be hurt. In Mota a man was just letting off his *Tamatetiga* when his sister, carrying her child, stepped across his aim, and he felt that the child was hit. By way of preventing harm, the bone and leaves that were in the bamboo were kept in water that the child's body might be cool and moist (Note 4). The control of the supernatural force was a difficulty; it was by the *garata* that a hold was had upon the person whom it was intended to harm; the fragment of his food brought him within the power of the charm. Other charms were supposed to work upon the first person who came within their influence, and it is yet common in old-fashioned places for the giver of food to a visitor, to bite it first himself, to show that it is not charmed, or to take the risk upon himself.

It was not only by means of charms that the evil work of ghosts was done, they were always seeking an opportunity to do mischief to the living. No one would go about at night for fear of *Tamates*, unless he carried a light, which ghosts themselves were afraid of. If a child were sick, it was thought that it had wandered within reach of some *Tamate* which was drawing out its soul; to cure it the names of all the dead whose ghosts were likely to be at hand were called, while counter-charms were muttered by women who knew them, and were called in on such occasions; when the name of the ghost who had possessed the child was called, he would be forced to fly.

When a man went out of his mind it was supposed that a ghost was possessing him, and wonderful things were thought to be done by one in such condition. To recover such a person, if he could be caught a fire was made of strong-smelling herbs, and the patient held in the smoke. The names of the dead

were called, and when the right name was given the possessed man would confess it, and the power of the ghost would fail. There have been cases in which a morbid desire for communion with a ghost has made persons eat a morsel of a dead man's flesh; one who had done so had then power himself to cause possession of another, by the ghost with whom he had formed this connection. Among the Banks' Islanders alone of Melanesians, cannibalism was unknown, and such an act as this was thought horrible, yet it imparted *mana*. The same name *Talamaur* was given to one who did this, and to one whose soul was supposed to go out from him, and eat the soul or the lingering life of a freshly-dead corpse. The story of one of these *Talamours* is worth notice; it was a woman who confessed her exercise of this power, and on the death of a neighbour gave notice that she should go in the night and eat the corpse. The friends kept watch, and heard at dead of night a scratching at the door, a rustling and a noise close to the corpse; some one threw a stone and seemed to hit the unseen thing. In the morning the *Talamaur* was found with a bruise on her arm, which she said was caused by a stone thrown at her while she was eating the corpse.

Ghosts do not appear in visible form, but if anything is seen of them it is as fire or flames. Phosphorescent fungus often gives a fright. There are stories also of ghosts which credit them with some bodily powers, and if the vague fears of them can be expressed, it is that they eat people. It has been mentioned that some stones are thought to have *Tamates* and *Vuis* about them, and that if a man's shadow falls on the stone, the *Tamate* will eat him. Here again it is not thought that the shadow is the soul, but that the shadow is very intimately connected with the man, and the stone with the ghost, and by the medium of the shadow on the stone, the ghost can reach the immaterial part of the living man. The spirit of a stillborn child is especially dreaded.

It is impossible to distinguish accurately, and yet some distinction must be made between the ghost whose intercourse with mankind is thus mischievous and dreaded, and the souls of departed friends who are called upon for help. Prayers, as a rule, are made to dead men and not to spirits—to *Tamates*, not to *Vuis*. With the exception of the calls to Qat and Marawa, mentioned above, it is not known that any prayers are offered except to the dead. To call this the Worship of Ancestors is hardly correct. People who carry no memory of their predecessors beyond their grandfathers can hardly be said to worship ancestors; indeed, it may be doubted whether any dead person is appealed to by one who has not known him alive.

It is not by any means the case, of course, that ghosts of the dead are appealed to as benevolent spirits, only to help their friends in what is good; the help that is required of them is very often to do mischief, to which, indeed, they are rather thought to have an inclination. The following prayers will show what they are called upon and thought to do.

Prayer on opening an oven when a leaf of cooked mallow (Note 5) is thrown as if for a dead person: "This is a lucky bit for your eating. Those who have charmed you, killed you [as the case may be]; take hold of their hands; drag them to Panoi; let them die."

Prayer on a voyage: "Uncle! Father! plenty of pigs for you, plenty of money, kava for your drinking, twenty bags of food for your eating in the canoe. I pray you look upon me; let me go safe on the sea."

Prayer on pouring out a little of the liquor before drinking kava: "Grandfather! this is a lucky drop of kava for your drinking; let pigs abound to me; let the money I have spent come back to me; let the food that is gone come back to the house of you and me."

Prayer over a hole in which sacrifice is made by two persons, with a view to advancement in the *Suge*: "Grandfather! Uncle! Father! Great-uncle! let us two go on; there will be a hundred fathoms of money for you; look upon us two; don't look unfavourably on us; let money abound to us, pigs, food; let our *Suge* succeed; let not our canoe be swamped; you sit and look after us; let us go on all right, with no unfavourable looks upon us; let us go on straight in this hole of yours and ours, in the hot *suge*-hole of us three!"

It has been said that sacrifices are offered to the dead, but not of anything except money in the Banks' Islands, and that prayers are also addressed, almost exclusively, to them. It would appear, therefore, that the religious rites, such as they are, of the Banks' Islanders are rendered to the dead; but sacrifice and prayer must not be estimated by any other than the native standard, or thought to make a show as the public religious practices of the people. There are no sacred buildings and no priests; there is no public worship; those who have communication with *Vuis* apply to them for their own benefit, and for those who pay them for their intercession. All men when they are of age or position sufficient, and have been taught how to do it, make their prayers and sacrifices upon occasion. A large proportion of the population know very little of what their elders practise.

For the public festivals with songs and dances there is nothing practised, except in small things by individuals, of a

religious character. There is no superstitious association whatever recognised in the dances of any kind, and there are no sacred songs (Note 6). There are no images either which can be called idols, hardly any to which a superstitious regard can be thought to be paid.

The great institutions of the Banks' Islands are the *Suge* and the *Tamate*, which in the absence of all political organisation whatever, supply a certain bond of unity and order throughout the group. Neither have a religious character, nor is any superstitious practice necessarily connected with them; but inasmuch as any man who gets on in the world is supposed to do so by *mana*, and as *mana* is got by superstitious practices, so much of superstition is mixed up with both. So large a share of native life and interest is given to these things that some account of them ought to be shortly added.

The *Suge* is a club, the house belonging to which is the most conspicuous building in every village, and is to be found wherever there is a permanent habitation. This house, or *gamal*, has many compartments, each with its own oven, in accordance with the several grades in the society. Almost all the male population belong to this club, and were formerly bound to take their meals in the *gamal*, the women and little children alone eating in the houses. To rise from one grade to another money has to be given and pigs killed; to take the highest degrees is very expensive, and requires a certain amount of influence, social, and according to native notions, like all other powers, to some extent supernatural. On this account men seeking the high degrees fast, and perform such rites as that of the *Qarang suqe* (*suqe*-hole) above mentioned. As admission to the highest grades depends on the good will of the few who have already reached them, and all promotion in every rank is consequently under their control, the authority of the men highest in the *Suge* is very considerable indeed. It is these persons who appear to traders and naval officers as chiefs. Their position, however, is merely social, but as has been said before, the fact of their having been able to reach such a position, argues in the native mind the possession of *mana*, which always has some supernatural quality.

It is remarkable that this institution of the *Suge*, quite unknown in the Solomon Islands, is found in the New Hebrides as far south, at least, as Mae, Three Hills. The Banks' Islanders, however, think the southern *Suge* very incorrect.

The *Tamate* is a secret society, or rather there are many secret societies all called *Tamate*, of which one, the *Tamate liwoa*, or great one, is the chief, and probably the original. The name is "The Ghosts," and the pretence was that there was in

it an association of living men and ghosts. In the Banks' Islands the *Tamate* is as universal as the *Suge*, and its sacred place, the *Salagoro*, found beside every village. The society, however, does not include all the male population: many remain *matawonowono*, with their eyes closed. Some of the lesser *Tamates* are cheaper than the *Tamate liwoa*, some are more exclusive. Entrance to these societies is obtained by payment, and the neophyte has to spend many days in the *Salagoro*. There is really nothing, however, of initiation, for there is nothing to be initiated into; the only secret was the making of the masks and hats in which the members appeared in public, and the way of producing the sound which was supposed to be the cry of the ghosts. The masks or hats were very ingeniously made, and often beautifully ornamented, the various *Tamates* having various masks. In times not very distant the mysterious character of the *Tamate* was still maintained; the women and children believed that real ghosts were present. All supernatural character has probably now disappeared at Mota, and the societies are maintained for the pleasure of the thing, from old associations, and the conveniences of a club at the *Salagoro*. It is not only in the Banks' Islands that a secret and a costume have their attractions.

The members of the great *Tamate* indulge in much licence. When they choose to go abroad to collect provision for one of their feasts, the women and uninitiated are obliged to keep away from their paths. The warning voice of the *Tamate* is heard, and the country is shut up. There is also a considerable power in these societies to keep order. Each has its distinguishing leaf of a croton. When a member of any *Tamate* sets a *tapu* he will mark it with its leaf, and any one who violates the *tapu* will have to do with all of that society. A man who belongs to all, or all the important, *Tamates* will consequently have much power, and the same man will probably, almost certainly, be high also in the *Suge*. He will have great personal influence and *mana*, and he will have the two great institutions of the country at his back. In islands where there is no political or tribal organisation, position in the *Suge* and the *Tamate* makes the "Great man," whose authority is respected and maintains order. Some years ago men in the highest position in Mota forbade the carrying of bows, in accordance with Bishop Patteson's teaching, and when a man in anger caught up his weapon, the cry of the *Tamate* was heard all round the district, and the fault had to be atoned for with a pig.

The *Tamate* in some shape obtains in the New Hebrides as far south at least as Ambrym; and there is something of it in one island at least of the Solomon group.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

THE New Hebrides, consisting of a chain of islands stretching generally in a line for nearly 400 miles, are not likely to present so compact and homogeneous a body of beliefs and practices as the Banks' Islands. The diversity of language which is so conspicuous between the northernmost and southernmost islands of the group would suggest a difference much wider than actually exists between their customs and superstitions. But the people are in fact the same throughout, with various degrees of admixture, and the dialects are soon seen to be, in fact, dialects and not separate languages; and so there can be no reasonable doubt that, with whatever variation here and there, the notions of the people concerning the other world, and their superstitious practices, are substantially the same throughout the New Hebrides. If so, as the difference between what is believed and practised in the Northern New Hebrides and Banks' Islands is not great, what has been already given as prevailing in the Banks' Islands will stand good to a large extent in the New Hebrides also. A single example will suffice to show how complete is the identity both in language and belief between the two extremities of the group.

In an account of Anaiteum given by a missionary visitor, the "gods" of the people are called *Natmas*. Besides the god Nugerain, to whom the creation of the island was ascribed, there was a "multitude of spiritual beings" who are called *Natmases*, to whom prayers were made and sacrifices offered, and who were supposed to have power over the elements, crops, and disease. It is evident that these *Natmases* are the Mota *Tamates*; the word is the same on the face of it (Note 7); and one proof of unity such as this is of more value for the understanding of the subject than a number of points of diversity observed, and very imperfectly ascertained, in different islands of the group.

It appears that the small island of Futuna, which lies a little away to the eastward of the main line of the group, is inhabited by a people speaking the Polynesian language, but not physically different from the Melanesians of the other islands. The same is the case in the little island of Niua, in the islet of Fila, and is part of the mainland of Fate, Sandwich Island, and in the middle division of Mae, Three Hills. In these it is most probable that something remains of the beliefs and customs as well as the language of the eastern islands.

At Mae, then, remains one decided mark of Polynesian character—a hereditary chieftainship with the power of the *tapu* attached to it. Whatever appearances may induce visitors, or indeed missionaries, who take it for granted that there are chiefs among all savages, to think that the leaders or most prominent persons who appear are the chiefs of their respective places, it is pretty certain that in the Banks' Islands, and New Hebrides generally, there are no chiefs in the sense which the word bears in Polynesian Islands; there are no men distinguished by higher or sacred blood, none who have an official and political position which they inherit and transmit to their posterity. In Mae, however, and probably among the other Polynesian-speaking communities, there are hereditary chiefs, who as children can succeed to their fathers, and who alone possess the power of the *tapu*. This at once makes a great difference; but whether there is much besides which these Polynesian people hold and practise unlike their neighbours, or whether their neighbours have received from them anything not known in more purely Melanesian districts, as they have received circumcision, is not ascertained. At Mae circumcision is not a religious rite, nor has it apparently any superstitious associations. It prevails very generally in the Southern New Hebrides, which have no doubt received many immigrants from the Eastern Polynesian Islands; but it is unknown in the New Hebrides north of Ambrym, and in the Banks' and Solomon Islands; except in the pure Polynesian settlements.

At Mae they distinguish between the spirits (if they think of more than one), who correspond to the *Vuis* of the Banks' Islands, and the spirits which are the ghosts of dead men. A ghost is called *Itua*, the Maori *atua*; when seen, an *Itua* is red, like flame; and there are certain places and stones which are sacred and unapproachable by those who do not know the *Itua* to which they belong. In this it is probable enough that the notion is not strictly limited to the dead. A libation is offered to an *Itua* on drinking kava, and a fragment of food from a meal is in like manner offered; in this the object of the action is the commemoration or invocation of the recently dead. A certain Tavake is esteemed as a spirit—a *matigtig*, not a dead man, and it is possible that he may be a deified ancestor of the chief's; supposing the Mae people to be sufficiently Polynesian still to have ancestors of whom they conceive. The place of departed spirits is Bulaiva. There is nothing in these beliefs at all different to what obtains elsewhere; but so little is known that the supposition may be entertained that, if the old and undisturbed ideas of the native mind could be reached, something from the eastern islands would still be found to be

retained, together with the Polynesian language, dress, chiefs, and *tapu*.

Of the northernmost islands of the group more can be ascertained, and it will be seen that the native notions and religious practices are substantially the same as those of the Banks' Islands, as the dialects spoken are very closely akin. Of the great islands of Espiritu Santo and Malikolo, the largest of all the group, very little is known as regards these matters; but so much of absolute proof exists of a common population that it would be difficult indeed to believe in any considerable variation in other things. They may have different names in different islands for the supernatural beings who are the subject of these stories; and there may be various ways of sacrificing or of holding communion with the dead; but substantially the practices and beliefs of all the Northern New Hebrides are the same, and the same with those of the Banks' Islands.

The identity of the language is conspicuous, however mutually unintelligible the dialects may be; and whenever a native of one of these islands may land he may find his due place in the *gamal*, the clubhouse of the *Suge*. What is chiefly remarkable as showing how comparatively modern are these diversities, even of language, is the identity in all these Northern New Hebrides of the division of the population into two "sides of the house," which obtains in the Banks' Islands (Note 8). A native of Merlav, Star Island, the nearest of the Banks' Group to the New Hebrides, will go over to Maewo, Aurora Island, the northernmost of the latter group. Just as if he goes to one of his own group, he will find a different dialect which he can hardly at first understand, but he will know who are his *sogoi*, who belong to the same "side of the house" with himself; so if he paddles over to Maewo he finds a different speech, which he has to learn, but his own *sogoi*. But whereas at home at Merlav all the stories are of Qat, at Maewo Qat is unknown, and they say that Tagar is the *Vui* who created them. If a Maewo man, again, goes to Araga, Pentecost Island, he goes to his own people, his *sogoi*, and it is perfectly known who they are. Again, an Araga man goes across to his *sogoi* at Lepers' Island, and the people there who have intercourse with Espiritu Santo know equally well who are of their "side" there. It is evident, therefore, that in the Banks' Islands and Northern New Hebrides the people are one, and that there exists an institution prior to their diversity of language and of legends. It is impossible to doubt the substantial identity of the population throughout the group, but whether the Polynesian influences from the east, which are plainly visible, or whether other causes have made a considerable change in the more southern islands, is

not easy to discover. A comparison of what is known of the northern and southern islands will leave very little doubt but that a certain knowledge of the beliefs and customs of any one island would explain almost everything which a visitor observes.

In Maewo, Aurora, the most northern of the New Hebrides, they distinguish as in the Banks' Islands between the spirits who never have been men, *Vui*, and the ghosts, *Tamate*. Of the *Vuis* whose names are known, Tagar takes the place of Qat as the legendary maker of various objects; Qat is unknown. The foolish brother of Qat, Tangaro-loloqong, is represented by Suqe-matua, who always did things wrong when Tagar was doing them right. No sacrifices or prayers are made to Tagar, he is only the subject of stories; he stayed at Maewo long ago, made men, pigs, fruit-trees, and went off in a canoe.

Other *Vuis*, nameless and unknown to all but those who have special communication with them, are approached at stones upon which particular leaves are laid; not by any order of men, but by all as they have the fancy, or get introduced by another. Stones also in houses called *tangarooa*, or carried about the person, bring *mana* with them, because of the *Vui* connected with them. So also the stones for rain and sunshine, for giving abundant crops of bread-fruit, yams, or taro. Snakes and owls also in some places are representatives of *Vuis*, and give men *mana*.

The *Tamates* are addressed in prayers, and something in the way of sacrifice of food is offered to them. Places where remarkable men have been buried, whether recently or in times beyond present memory, are sacred, not to be approached but by their owners, who make prayers there to the *Tamate*.

They call the soul *tamani*; on leaving the body it goes on the road to Panoi to the northern point of the island, where there is a deep gully down which they pass. Before leaving the world, they stay some time at this place, and some are heard at play, others crying with grief and pain, the lately dead who have just become aware of their condition. When the *Tamate* makes the descent it finds two *Vuis*, Gaviga and Matamakira, on either side the path, trying to wound it with their spears. Further on is a pig which will devour all who have not in their lifetime planted the Pandanus, which supplies the fibre for mats and baskets. Those who have planted one, find it at hand and climb out of the reach of the pig. Those also who have not killed many pigs for feasts can make no progress, but hang on the branches of the trees that overhang the beach. In Panoi the ghosts are very black, they eat excrement, they live in a dim and unsubstantial place, where all the trees have red

leaves. Below this Panoi is another, in which those who descend into it turn into burning embers. It is by *Tamates* that diseases are brought, and through them that charms are worked. The story of the origin of death by a woman putting on again her cast skin, and the belief that snakes take the form of men, is the same as in the Banks' Island.

Next to Maewo is Araga, Pentecost Island. The people believe that Tagar came down from heaven and made things, and then went back; and that he is still able to help, and is therefore addressed in prayers. When Tagar was making things, another *Vui*, Suqe, was with him, but was always doing and proposing to do what was wrong. Tagar planted the rind of the yam, Suqe the inner part; Suqe wished men only to die for five days, but Tagar made them die right out; Suqe proposed that there should be six nights to one day, but Tagar made them equal. Tagar had and has a wife and children, and many brothers were with him on earth. The *Vuis* which belong to stones are not the same as Tagar and his brothers: if they have names they are only known to those who know the stone and its *Vui*. Sacrifices are offered to Tagar and other *Vuis* on their stones; a man who wishes for their favour gives the man who knows the *Vui* a pig and mats, and he rubs the stone with cocoa-nut. There are places where snakes are believed to be belonging to some *Vui*; those who know them sacrifice to the *Vui* through them as a medium.

It is by the *Tamates* that disease is caused and that charms work. When a man dies his *nun* leaves the body; the body of a person of consequence is buried in the place, and pigs are killed at the death-meal whose *nun* follows his. The ghosts meet at the southern point of Araga, nearest to Ambrym; at Lingling, where there is a stream which they cannot cross, and where they are heard dancing, drumming, and whistling. When they descend to Hades they leap off a projecting tree (Note 9), and a shark waiting below bites off the noses of those who have not killed pigs, or complied with some other custom of the country. They perish finally; but yet whether there are some who never leave the island, or whether they can come back, ghosts haunt the country in abundance, especially where the dead have been buried. If seen they are like fire. The places where dead persons of consequence are buried are thought sacred; or it may be a place which ghosts are supposed to haunt. In these sacred spots sacrifices are offered. Not every one can go into such places, but only such as have a special interest in each. Such persons to propitiate the ghosts, who are always feared, take mats, food, pigs living or cooked, and leave them in the sacred spot. In such places also the fragment of

food by which another is to be bewitched is left, and as it decays the life of the person aimed at is drawn out by the ghost. To ghosts, also, prayers are offered. It cannot be said that this is a worship of ancestors; it is the ghosts of the lately dead who are feared, propitiated, or invoked. The belief in the change of some snakes into men is very strong.

In Lepers' Island, Opa, opposite to Araga, they call the *Vui*, using still that word, who made things Tagaro. *Suqe*, they say, was with him, always disagreeing. When the time came for his departure, Tagaro paddled away in a canoe, and since then things have been changing for the worse. Prayers are addressed to Tagaro, and to *Vuis*, which have stones or snakes appropriated to them, who also go by the name of Tagaro. The sacrifices are obscure; a man who has access to a *Vui*, or Tagaro, in some sacred place, or by some stone, will receive pigs, money, and mats for his intercession, but he is not known to offer them. He takes the same to introduce another to his sacred place or stone. Ghosts, on the other hand, do not appear to have prayers or sacrifices offered to them; but it is they who cause disease, and by their means that magic works. Weather doctors work by stones and leaves; but in the cure of diseases, which is much in the hands of old women, recourse is rather had to *Tamates*.

The soul is called *tantegi*. On the fifth day after death, at the death-meal, they throw some of the food on the grave before they eat themselves. The souls on the way to the receptacle for Opa *tantegis*, which is *loloboetogitogi*, goes first to the lake on the top of the island, at the edge of which there is an active volcanic vent. There they stay for a hundred days, with Galeon, who stops them on the road. When they leave him they have to meet a pig, who will devour those who have not followed far their *suqe*.

Passing southward, the next island is Ambrym, distinguished by its vast volcano. A visitor will see there two objects which are not seen in the northern islands. Large figures, screened with bamboos and profusely ornamented and painted, will be found in the villages, and will naturally be taken for idols (Note 10). They are, however, made and kept in memory of some persons of consequence, and are set up at the great feast, perhaps a hundred days, after death. That they do not represent ancestors is pretty certain: the very oldest can be but few years old. The custom is in all the islands to bury persons of consequence in the village by the side of the open space which is kept clear for dances and other common purposes. The grave is covered with stones built up like a wall, and stones of a convenient size for seats, or for a standing-place for an

orator, or for killing pigs upon at a feast, are placed near. These stones are treated with a certain respect by persons of no position, because of their association with the great man who is buried near, or with feasts which they themselves have never provided. The drums also are erect, the hollowed logs of trees as elsewhere, but not lying horizontally as in the islands to the north. Their top is fashioned into a grinning face; and if the drum be the image of a venerated ancestor, the blows of the performers are struck upon his stomach. A drum is part of the furniture of a village or of a rich man's establishment all through the islands; those that stand thus erect are more conspicuous, the other kind being often covered from the weather; but it must be thought very improbable that they are in any way idols, or indeed, except by the way, put to any superstitious uses, no songs or dances in Melanesia being known to be employed in a religious way.

There is probably very little difference between the customs of the people of Ambrym and Malikolo, or the neighbouring island of Api or Tasiko. Beyond these comes Mae, which is the furthest island to the southward now visited by the Melanesian Mission.

Of Sandwich Island, Fate, and the three islands that lie beyond, which are all occupied by Presbyterian Missionaries, very much the same account is given. They are said to believe at Fate in six future states, ending in annihilation, and their "worship of ancestors" is confined as elsewhere to the recently dead. The "two gods" to whom they are said to trace the origin of all things, Mauitikitiki and Tamakaia, seem by their names to belong to the Polynesian inhabitants of the island, as does their Hades, Lakiuatoto (Note 11).

Of Eromanga it is said that their "great god and creator" is Nobu, who after making men at Eromanga, went off to another land. The spirits of the dead go eastward, and also roam the bush. Men at first went like pigs, and pigs walked like men. The first of the human race was a woman, and then her son. They have, as at Mota and Florida, a story of a man swallowed by a whale. The Missionary, Mr. Gordon, who was murdered by the natives of the island, reported "a species of idolatry connected with the worship of the moon, the image of which they exhibit at their idolatrous feasts, which are regulated by the moon and are great abominations." It may well be doubted, however, whether this is a correct interpretation of what was seen (Note 12). That the same superstitions about spirits and their connection with stones are prevalent as farther north is apparent, with the same beliefs in the powers of men who are called priests to control the weather and cause or cure diseases.

The residence for many years of two missionaries on the southernmost island of the New Hebrides, Anaiteum, has long ago brought the whole people to the profession of Christianity, and their beliefs and customs of old times have passed away. It is evident that, as before observed, there was a substantial identity in such matters between this and the other extremity of the group. The early missionaries reported the people to "live under the most abject bondage to their *Natmases*," taking these *Natmases*, which we have seen to be the ghosts of the dead, for "gods or spirits" (Note 13). When it is said that the fat of pigs was offered to the "gods," and that on occasions of feasts no one tasted the food until a part had been presented to the "gods" by a "priest," there can be little doubt that what are called gods are these *Natmases*, as the "priests" are the near relatives. The belief in other spirits, not the ghosts of the dead, appears equally clear in the account of "sacred stones," sacred places, and sacred objects, without number," and the "minor deities," said to be a progeny of Nugerain, and called "gods of the sea, of the land, of mountains and valleys, &c." Doctors for the weather and for diseases had the same apparatus of stones, bones, and leaves as elsewhere, and the same charms were practised by means of the fragments of food. Nugerain was the creator, who fished up the island, as Maui did New Zealand; a legend probably borrowed from the Eastern Islands. What is mentioned as a "vague and dim tradition of the Fall," is no doubt an incorrect rendering of the common story of the origin of death in breaking through the primitive practice of casting the skin.

The place of departed souls was called *Imai*, which had two divisions; the one a "sensual paradise," to which nothing in the beliefs of the northern and western islands bears any resemblance; the other, a "most miserable place," where they fed on the "vilest refuse," according to the common belief elsewhere, and were "tormented." One of the torments mentioned clears away the difficulty raised by the mention of torment, which is quite foreign to the common Melanesian conception of Hades, and points to an agreement with the almost universal belief in some kind of ordeal to be gone through on the way to Hades. This torment is the piercing of the nose and ears with a sharp instrument; and the true story is probably the same as that told at Florida, as the statement that "stinginess" is the crime chiefly punished in Hades is to be understood by what they say in Lepers' Island, and elsewhere, about the fate of those who have not killed pigs for public feasts.

In two points a difference is seen between Anaiteum and

the greater part of Melanesia. Human sacrifices are said to have been offered but rarely. The question arises whether it was really so; whether the man was not killed, because he was supposed to be the cause of some calamity. The Sun and Moon also, especially the Moon, "held a distinguished place among the gods of the Anaiteumese," as also at Eromanga. That the Sun and Moon are spirits, or inhabited by spirits (*Vuis* in the language of the Northern New Hebrides is commonly believed; but that they should be worshipped and sacrificed to is not a common thing. Looking, however, at the whole Archipelago from the Torres Islands to Anaiteum, it cannot fail to be seen that with all diversities of dialect, and minor differences in other ways, the beliefs of the people concerning the unseen world and the practices that follow upon them are substantially the same.

Of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands very little can be said. The absolute power of a few hereditary chiefs in these latter islands points to something different from the common Melanesian population, as the pottery and elaborate irrigation described by the first visitors to New Caledonia gives a notion of another stage of civilization; though pottery is also made in Espiritu Santo, and water is in many islands ingeniously brought among the cultivations. It seems certain that prayers and food are offered to the recently dead; what besides has been related by visitors is either a repetition or an obvious misrepresentation of what is common elsewhere (Note 14).

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, SAN CRISTOVAL.

THE three hundred miles that separate the Solomon Islands from the Banks' Islands, carry the voyager into what he cannot fail to observe to be, in some respects, a new world. The difference between the elegant plank-built canoes, and the clumsy tree-trunks of the islands he has left behind, is striking. He sees at once that he has come into the region of the betel, and is told that he has passed out of the region of kava. He knows that it is now possible to sail on without losing sight of land to the Asiatic continent itself, and if that should seem too far, the great island of New Guinea, the Papua, from which the whole race around him takes its name, is comparatively close before him. Whatever of difference, however, may be observed in the people will, as has been remarked before, seem to make

them less Papuan; their more frequently straight hair and oblique eyes, and their generally shorter stature. The origin of this difference, and the degree to which it obtains, not in the physical form, but in the customs and belief of the people, is the most interesting subject of inquiry in the Solomon Islands.

Diversity in language still prevails, but the area over which one dialect extends is generally larger, though local differences are found everywhere. The distinction between the people of the sea-coast and of the inland villages is marked in the larger islands, not by diversity of language so much as of feeling; and yet in some places where European intercourse has corrupted the population, it is maintained almost entirely by the adoption of children from inland. All the dialects spoken have evidently the same origin with those of the Banks' Islands and New Hebrides, and the people are undoubtedly Melanesian, as in those islands, Papuan, not Polynesian. Small colonies of pure Polynesians are found in small islands of the group.

The islands visited by the Melanesian Mission are San Cristoval, Ugi, Ulawa, or Contrariété, Malanta, Guadalcanar, Florida, Savo, and Ysabel. It is probable that to divide these into two groups will not only be a matter of convenience, but will represent an existing difference between the customs of those who occupy the two extremities. The islands of Guadalcanar and Malanta stretch side by side for a hundred miles, and the ends of each will belong to the south-eastern and north-western divisions respectively. We may take San Christoval with the small neighbouring islands, Ulawa, and the south-eastern ends of Malanta and Guadalcanar, as forming one group, and the further ends of the last-mentioned islands with Florida, Savo, and Ysabel as forming another. Of the first, San Cristoval may be taken as an example; whatever prevails there in belief or in practice will be found with little variety in the surrounding parts.

In San Cristoval a difference is recognised between beings of a higher nature than human, and the spirits of dead men; but everything in the nature of a *cultus* is directed to the dead. A spirit, never human, is called *Vigona*, but only one *Vigona* is spoken of, and that was a snake; its outward form or manifestation, that is, is said to have been a snake. The name of this spirit, who was female, was Kahausibware, her abode was on the mountain at Bauro in the centre of the island. It was she who made men, pigs, fruit-trees, yams, the animals, and their food with which the island is furnished. After a while, the race of men being in its infancy, a woman left her child in the house while she went to work, in charge of Kahausibware, whose child in some way it was. The child so annoyed the *Vigona* by its

screaming, that it strangled it with its tail. The mother coming in found the folds of the serpent still wound round the body, and seizing an axe began to chop the snake to pieces. As she chopped it asunder, the parts came together again; but at last the spirit gave in, cried out that she would go away, and that the woman would soon be sorry for having used her so badly. The spirit-snake accordingly made its way down a watercourse to the sea and left the island. She first swam to Ugi, but still seeing the mountain at Bauro, she went further to Ulawa, and thence to the south-east end of Malanta, but still there was in fine weather the sight of her former home. Finally she reached Marau, the end of Guadalcanar, nearest San Cristoval, and the view of the mountain of Bauro being shut out by the nearer hills, there she rests till the present day. Snakes upon that mountain are venerated as being the progeny or representatives of Kahausibware, but they are not *Vigonas*. No prayers or sacrifices are offered to Kahausibware; she is nothing but the subject of stories. Since her departure, all things have deteriorated. The same story of the origin of death in the putting on again of the cast skin is related concerning the woman whose child was strangled by the snake, as is current in the Eastern group.

The spirits of dead men are called *Ataro*. When a man dies his soul (*avungana*) goes from his body to a small island near Ulawa, Rondonana. At first the ghost feels like a man; he gives the news of his place, and does not realise his condition. After some days a kingfisher pecks his head, and he sinks into the shadowy existence of a real ghost. They do nothing, but stay for ever in a cave, or ranging aimlessly about the islands. Men landing under stress of weather often see them on the beach, but on close approach they disappear. They have no power, but exist with an empty life, and are afraid of living men. The kingfisher is killed at Bauro, because of its treatment of the ghosts, but young ones spring up from the blood of all that are killed.

It is a matter of much difficulty, as elsewhere, to reconcile the concourse of dead men's souls, in such a receptacle as this, with their presence and activity in the neighbourhood of their graves and among their living countrymen. It is possible that, if common people on their death disappear in their souls to Rondonana, and never really become *Ataros*, men of rank and position, those in one word who have had *mana*, are thought to undergo a different change, and remain as *Ataros* near their homes. It is also possible that it is conceived that there are two souls, the *anima* and the *animus*, one of which goes to Rondonana, and the other remains as an *Ataro*. No clear

conception is formed by the natives : some will say one thing, some another ; but all will be agreed that common men when they die do not become the *Ataros* that are feared, invoked, and propitiated. To have power as a ghost, a man must have had it when alive ; the more he has when alive, the more he will have as a ghost ; and while alive he gets his power from the dead who have gone before him.

The bodies of common people are thrown into the sea, but men of consequence are buried. After a time they take up the skull or some part of the skeleton, and put it in a small building in the village, where upon occasions they pray or sacrifice to obtain help from the spirit. Ghosts (*Ataros*) are seen and heard to speak ; their appearance is that of persons lately dead, their voice is a hollow whisper. On occasions, however, when the people of a place are gathering for a fight, some one, who has an *Ataro* with whom he communicates, will speak with the *Ataro's* voice loudly, prophesying success, and stirring up fierceness and courage. It is the *Ataros* of those who have lately died that have most power ; that is, if of late a man of great *mana* has died. If in any place there has been no great man of late, they think most of one of the former generation, who has never been superseded ; but after a time all are forgotten, or thought to have little *mana*, whom no one remembers in the flesh.

In this way, as there will be a general recourse to the aid of some famous dead warrior or leader, so individuals, families, and sets of neighbours will have some one of their own to whom as an *Ataro* they will apply. The ghosts are believed to fight among themselves with ghostly weapons. If then a person is sick in a way that is supposed to show that it has been done by a ghost, his friends will form an opinion as to the ghost belonging to some unfriendly party who has done it. They therefore, or the one among them who has access to the powerful ghost of their party by the medium of his skull, or some relic of him, will call upon that ghost to attack the other who has done the mischief. The two ghosts fight, but mortals only know of the combat by the result. The ghost who wounds his adversary causes thereby the sickness or death of one of his adversary's living clients.

The manner in which the help of a powerful *Ataro* is obtained by prayer and sacrifice on a public occasion is thus described in an account written by an educated Christian native : " When our people want to fight with any other place, the chief men of the village and the older men and the youths, with those who know how to sacrifice, come together to the place in the village which is sacred to the *Ataro*, whose name is Harumae. When they are thus assembled to sacrifice, the man who acts as

chief sacrificer takes a pig; and if it be not a castrated pig they would not sacrifice it to that *Ataro*: he would despise it and not eat it. Not the chief sacrificer, but those who help him kill the pig by strangling it near the sacred place. Then they cut it up, taking care that no blood drops on the ground, to prevent which they put it into a bowl. Then the chief sacrificer takes a piece of the flesh, and dips up some of the blood in a cocoa-nut shell, and goes in with both to the sacred house, and calls the *Ataro* thus, 'Harumae! Chief in war! we sacrifice this pig to you that you may help us to beat those people, and whatever we shall carry off from that place shall be your property, and we too will be yours.' Then he too burns the piece of flesh in a fire on a stone, and pours the blood on the fire. Upon that the fire flames up and reaches the roof, and the place is filled with the smell of the pig, a sign that the *Ataro* has heard. But when the man goes in, he does not go boldly, but with awe; and this is a sign that he is going into the sacred house, that he puts away his bag, and washes thoroughly his hands, lest the *Ataro* should despise him." It is to be observed that this Harumae has not been dead many years—the elder people of his place well remember him; nor was he a great fighting man, he was as his name, "Feed the enemy," implies, a kind and generous man, but he was thought to have much *mana*. The ghost of another man of very different character has also a great reputation in the same place, Tapia by name, who in his lifetime was no great warrior, but very powerful with charms and curses; he is much dreaded now, and the place where he was buried is dangerous to approach, especially in the rain. It is on a little point of land, and if a rainbow is seen, then it is a sign that the *Ataro* is present. If a man should go there alone in the rain, Tapia will take his soul, and tie it to the great banyan that is there. When he gets home he feels his whole body in pain, and sends for a man skilful in such matters, who finding where he has been, says that Tapia is wishing to eat him. He then sacrifices on behalf of the sick man, gives Tapia some pig's flesh or a fish, and begs him to eat it instead of the man; finally brings back the soul with him, and the man recovers.

The dead are thus applied to for help in battle, in sickness, and also to produce abundant crops. Not every one knows how to address them, but the prayers that are muttered are handed down from father to son, or taught for a consideration. It is worthy of notice that the inland people are thought to have much more *mana* in these matters than those on the coast; there are some in the Island of Malanta so full of it that when they come down to the beach villages they dare not spread out their fingers, for to point the finger at a man is to

shoot him with a charm, and one stretched out would be a provocation to an attack. Mischief is worked in these islands, as elsewhere, by fragments of food, or a bit of something from the person which, when put into the place considered sacred to the *Ataro* will bring disease or accident. To cure disease, besides the sacrifices as above mentioned, to propitiate the adverse ghost, there are means of bringing *mana* to bear from the *Ataros* by charms muttered over water for the sick person to drink, and by the use of certain leaves and roots, amongst which ginger has a conspicuous place. Rain, sunshine, wind, and calm, are equally controlled by the charms which have *mana* from the dead. In all these matters the lately dead are thought most powerful.

At the death-feast a piece of food is burnt as if for the eating of the ghost. If a person of great consequence, a figure may be made of him after his death, for the ornamentation of a canoe-house, or of a stage put up at great feasts. These images are hardly idols, though food may sometimes be put before them, though to remove them would be thought to bring down punishment from the dead man upon those who should so insult him. In these islands, however, it is a favourite amusement, or was so in former times, to carve figures which, though often taken for idols, had no superstitious meaning whatever.

The native conception of the forms of the ghosts which haunt the sea was curiously shown in a very elaborately ornamented canoe-house at Wango, now in decay. One of the many pictures of native life showed men in a canoe being shot at by ghosts. The shapes of the ghosts are made up of fish; the head is a fish, and the hands and feet, all projecting angles of the body, are in the form of the heads or fins of fish, and fish serve as arrows or darts. The notion is that ghosts make fish, such as flying-fish and gar-fish, dart out of the sea upon men in canoes, and that any one struck by them will die. The sea, with which the living men have so much to do, is equally the scene of the activity of the ghosts. In any danger they are invoked, or propitiated with an offering of an areca-nut or some food. Sharks, especially those of a dark colour and large size, are thought to be *ataros*; they are prayed to in danger, and offerings are made to them. At Ulawa they seem particularly to be regarded; one in particular, whose name is Sautahimatawa, to whom sacrifices are made of money and porpoise-teeth, which are more valued than money. In that place, if a sacred shark has attempted to seize a man, but he has escaped, they are so much afraid of his anger that they will throw him back into the sea to be devoured. These sharks also are thought to help in catching bonitos, for which *mana* is supposed to be particu-

larly necessary. Until a boy has caught one of these fish he has not taken his place in the world. In order to gain *mana* for the purpose, boys and young men will spend even months in separation from the rest in some canoe-house; where they sacrifice, or rather some one who has *mana* does so for them, and seek the necessary spiritual force. They paddle out continually till they succeed. Sometimes a man who has *mana* will put his hand on a boy's, and so enable him to catch the fish. This is the only custom resembling an initiation known in this division of the Solomon group.

Stones are, as everywhere, regarded with reverence, where, from their appearance or situation, or some association, they have come to be thought connected with an *Ataro*. Those which are in the open are treated with respect: no one will go too near, or sit upon them; those that are out of sight in the bush make the place sacred, and sacrifices are offered upon them, or near them, of money to their spirit. But as the *Ataros* connected with them are of ancient times, few know much about them, or give them more than a vague respect.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOLOMON ISLANDS, CONTINUED. FLORIDA, YSABEL.

THE further division of the Solomon Islands comprises the north-western ends of Guadalcanar and Malanta, Florida, Savo, and Ysabel. There is a connection between the languages generally, much closer than is found on the eastern side of Melanesia; the dialect of Savo, however, being very distinct. Over a considerable part of this area also the three or six exogamous divisions of the people of Florida prevail; at least among the people of the coast. The inland people of Malanta are reported by the others to be very different from them, which is accounted for on the supposition that the seafaring people who occupy islands close to the shore are a recent colony from Guadalcanar, from whence even yet, as they live by trade, they procure the greater part of their food.

The central position of Florida, between Malanta, Ysabel, and Guadalcanar, gives it a representative character; and it is fortunately not difficult to ascertain generally what are the religious beliefs and practices of the people.

What is at the outset very remarkable is, that they will not allow that there are any beings of a supernatural order that have not been men. The word used for such beings as are

approached by prayers and sacrifices, *Tindalo*, is, as is common, that used for the ghosts of dead men; but it is strange to meet with the belief that there are no supernatural beings corresponding to the *Vigona* of San Cristoval, or the *Vui* of the Banks' Islands. Soul or spirit is *Tarunga*; this is with the living man, and leaving him at death becomes a *Tindalo*; remaining a *Tarunga*, a spiritual, not a material, being; and no *Tindalos* will they allow to exist that have not been the *Tarunga* of a living man. Hence, is a difference and a difficulty in the account of the origin of mankind. The first was a woman named Koevasi, but how she came into existence no one knows. She made things of all kinds, and became herself the mother of a woman, who again had a child from whom the people of the island spring. Koevasi was the author of death by resuming her cast-off skin to satisfy her granddaughter, according to the widely-spread tradition. She was also the author of the different dialects of the neighbourhood; for having started on a voyage, she was seized with ague, and shook so much that her utterance was confused. Wherever she landed, the people caught from her their almost unintelligible speech. Koevasi thus, though declared to be a human being, corresponds to the various supernatural persons to whom the origin of mankind is ascribed throughout Melanesia; and accordingly she is not the object of any worship, only the subject of legendary tales.

The Florida belief concerning the region of departed spirits is parallel with what has been already given, but in one interesting particular it varies or improves. Nowhere else apparently is there a "ship of the dead." All *Tarungas* from Florida assemble after death at a western point of the island, in an inhabited country where the path of the *Tindalos*, the dead, goes through the cultivated ground (Note 15). The ghosts spend some time at this place, and their dancing is heard at night. After a time a canoe comes over to them from Guadalcanar, and takes them to Galaga. They land on a rock near the shore, and there for the first time they become aware that they are dead. They then meet with a *Tindalo*, who carries a rod, which he thrusts through the cartilage of their noses to prove whether they are pierced; if so, there is a good path which they can follow to Marau, the extremity of the island. If the nose is not pierced, the ghost is not allowed to follow the path, but has to make his way with difficulty and pain. Living men in canoes nearing the shore at this place (Galaga) see the forms of the ghosts, and recognise individuals, but on nearer approach they disappear. A man still alive at Gaeta, having to all appearance died, revived to relate that he had reached the

canoe, which came for him and his companions in the night; but that a tall black *Tindalo* forbade him to come aboard, and sent him back to the world again.

A native account of the Florida belief concerning their *Tindalos* is given in a translation in "Mission Life" for November, 1874. The point of particular interest is that it points to, but does not discriminate, the *cultus* of certain *Tindalos* who are not, as universally elsewhere they seem to be, the ghosts of recently deceased powerful men of the place. The spirits of men recently deceased do undoubtedly become objects of worship as elsewhere; being supposed able to help their friends, they are invoked and they have food offered to them, but they cannot be called ancestors, much less gods. Besides these there appear legendary ancestors of the divisions of the population which are not tribes in a proper sense, though much more like it than in the more eastward islands; for the members of these divisions have much more in common than the disability of intermarriage when they have a legendary common ancestor, and, with a reference to him, some food from which all are bound to refrain. It does not appear, however, that worship, prayers, or sacrifices are frequently offered to these legendary ancestors; they are *Tindalos* because they are dead, but they have become mostly the subjects of stories, and are not brought into action upon the living as are those recently deceased. But there are, besides *Tindalos*, spirits called *Keramo*, who may almost be called gods, because, though only the spirits of famous warriors, they have only been known in Florida in their spiritual state and power, and never in human form. In fact, it is said that their names and their *cultus* have only recently been introduced from the islands further west, where the Florida people suppose a stronger *mana* to prevail than among themselves. It is said that these *Keramo* are famous fighting men of recent times in the islands beyond, whom the Florida people now have recourse to for aid in war, as they used till lately to invoke their own dead warriors. Together with this *cultus* of the *Keramos*, they say has been introduced from the west, the practice of taking heads; and, what seems very questionable, considering the presence of undisguised cannibalism in the more easterly Solomon Islands, the practice of eating human flesh in sacrifice. According to their own account, the Florida people till lately did not eat human flesh, and now only eat it in sacrifice. They say that the Savo people do not even yet; and generally that it is the inland people in all the islands who eat human flesh for food, and not those who live on the coast. It is probably true that the notion prevails everywhere that *mana* is obtained by partaking of such food, and that in some places

people only have become cannibals who eat it as they would other flesh.

The way of obtaining the assistance of the *Keramo*, the *Tindalos* said to have been lately introduced, is that which is common elsewhere, by prayer and sacrifice, and by means of certain leaves, ginger, bark or roots of plants, through which *mana* is conveyed, partly by eating or chewing the things, partly by tying them as amulets about the person. The knowledge of these things, as elsewhere, resides with men who have been taught, or have bought the knowledge from former possessors, and some will be in communication with one, some with more than one of the *Keramos*. The heart of a pig is offered and burnt in sacrifice, because being in the middle of the body it is thought the best representative of the whole. What is burnt in sacrifice, whether to a *Keramo* or to a recently-deceased *Tindalo*, is supposed to become his food, in a spiritual sense; without any very clear conceptions, it is everywhere supposed that the immaterial ghost appropriates the corresponding part of the food.

Stones do not appear to occupy an important place in Florida, yet there are stones that are sacred with the notion that a *Tindalo* haunts the place, and can be approached there; food is put on such stones, with calling on the *Tindalo*, and when afterwards eaten it conveys *mana*. Money is offered and left in small quantities.

Charms for causing and curing disease, for producing calms and winds, rain or sunshine, operate as elsewhere by means of the *Tindalos*, the spirits of the dead. In whatever way anything extraordinary is produced, whether it be by a well-directed aim or a plentiful haul of fish, whether by skill, strength, or good luck, all is ascribed to the *mana* obtained for a *Tindalo*, from a ghost.

Snakes that haunt a place which is sacred to some *Tindalo* are themselves sacred as being his property. There is one in Savo which causes the death of every one who happens to see it. Alligators also are supposed in some cases to be *Tindalos*; a man will fancy that one is possessed by the ghost of some friend, and will feed it, or even sacrifice to it. Such an alligator will become an object of general reverence, and will even become tame.

The world is supposed to consist of several heavens overlying one another, making four or five habitable surfaces like the earth—a notion which runs through several Banks' Island stories also. A story is told of Vulcanangela, who getting out of his depth to recover the arrow with which he was shooting fish, was carried off and swallowed by an enormous bonito. After

some days he felt the fish ground on a sandy beach, and cut his way out with the piece of obsidian he had kept in his mouth for sharpening his arrows. He found himself at the foot of heaven, and, seeking for a place to warm himself, sat in the path of the sun, who was just coming out in likeness of a man with a walking-stick. The stick struck against Vulcanangela, and the sun becoming aware of his presence, asked him how he came there, and on hearing his story took him with him as he climbed to heaven. Midway there was a village and the sun's house, where Vulcanangela remained a long time a guest with the sun's wife. Everything above was as on this earth; they were on the upper surface of our sky. After a while, looking for a lost arrow, the man found that it had fallen down a hole, through which the earth was to be seen. A longing for his home then seized him, and the sun and his wife pitied him, and let him go. They made a cage for him to sit in, and collected a vast quantity of a kind of supple-jack to let him down. He reached the earth in safety, shook the supple-jack as a signal that he was safe, and the sun let go the line, which fell on a hill in Florida, where that kind of creeper is now very abundant. Vulcanangela is now a *Tinanlo*, whose name is not lightly mentioned.

It is at Belaga, in Florida, that an institution corresponding to the *Tamate* of the Banks' Islands and Northern New Hebrides is found. There is a district of the coast which at uncertain intervals of some years is taken possession of by those who have been initiated. At this time, those who have not yet been brought in are admitted, even if very little boys. There is nothing to be initiated into; but those who are acquainted with *Tindalos* and the ways of approaching them, sacrifice continually to one and another. The whole company is supposed by the women, and those who are not yet brought in, to be in communication with the dead, that is with the *Tindalos*; no one dares to approach the place, and no one thinks of resisting or complaining if their property is carried off or themselves ill used. At the end of the time a great piece of the handiwork of the *Tindalos* is displayed on the beach, and all, women included, flock to see it. It is a lofty framework of bamboo, decorated and painted, and has hitherto been accepted and viewed with awe, as the work of spirits and not of men. The sight of similar things in the Salagoros of the Banks' Islands by many Florida people has begun to shake the credit of this imposture; as the free entrance of Solomon Islanders, who being strangers require no initiation and pay no fees, has helped to explode the secret of the *Tamate* associations there.

The very large island of Ysabel, at its south-eastern end, is inhabited by people differing very little in language from those at

Florida, and with customs which if they vary at all, only show the better the general character of the superstitions of this region.

With them the soul, the *Tarunga*, of the living man, becomes a *Tindalo*, and the place of these departed spirits is the little island of Laulau. Living men visiting the island see the rocks on which the ghosts, who fly through the air, first become aware of their sad condition; they see forms as of men at a distance, which disappear at a nearer approach; they find the paths round the island nicely kept, and the bathing-places cleared of stones; if they hang up fish in the trees in the morning they find them carried to another place; and marks made in the road, as guides to those who come after, are taken away. On the top of the island is a pool of water, Kolapapauro, and thither the ghosts repair, to Bolafagina, who is the lord of the place. Across the pool is a narrow tree-trunk, along which the ghosts advance. Bolafagina examines their hands; those who have a triangular mark cut in their hands, following the line of the forefinger and thumb, are received by him, and live in happiness under his rule; those who have no mark are thrown by him into the gulf, and perish.

The *Tindalos*, however, are active in their old homes; it is they who cause and remove some diseases, and by whose power all charms are effectual. When a man is sick in such a way that a ghost is supposed to be the cause of it, a doctor who understands the matter is called in to find out who it is. He dangles a stone or some heavy ornament at the end of a string, and calls the names of all the lately deceased; when the right name is called, the stone moves. By the same process he discovers what the ghost will take to leave the sick man—a fish, or a pig, or a mash of yams. Whatever he may desire is taken and offered at his grave, and then eaten, and the sick recovers.

When a chief dies they bury him; but so that by keeping a fire over his head they are able to take up his skull for preservation in the house of the relative who succeeds him. An expedition then starts to obtain heads in his honour; any one not of his place will be killed if they fall in with them; the heads which add *mana* to the new *Tindalo* are arranged upon the beach belonging to his place. Till the heads are procured, the people of the village do not move about. The grave is built up with stones, and sacrifices are offered to the dead upon it. Of course the living chief knows that he will receive this worship after his death (Note 16). Common people's ghosts are not considered; but it should be observed that though a chief's son or brother succeeds him, it is by virtue of no superior ancestry, but because the wealth and the *mana* of the deceased are

handed on to him. There is nothing to prevent a common man from becoming a great chief, if he can show that he has got the *mana* for it.

The knowledge how to make prayer and sacrifice, and whom to address, is not in the hands of all. One who knows a particular *Tindalo* goes to the place where he is buried and makes his prayer. If it be a sacrifice, the pig is killed by stifling it, and the head is laid upon the grave-stones. The man who officiates cuts its neck, and all present join in the prayer, calling the name of the dead and asking for *mana*. The flesh is cooked and eaten near the place by the sacrificing party, part being burnt by the grave-side as the dead man's share. Sometimes fish or other food is offered in the same way, and unhappily there can be no doubt but that human victims are sometimes offered. This horrible rite, they say, has been lately introduced, as at Florida; but whereas at the latter place they deny that more than a very little flesh is eaten as a sacrificial act, and that of an enemy already killed in battle, it is certain that in Ysabel the human victim is killed and eaten as in the sacrifice of an animal.

The notion is that much *mana* is added to, and in return received from, the *Tindalo* by such a victim. The practice, they say, has not been introduced into Savo; there common people at death are thrown to the sharks, and chiefs are buried by the sea, with stones built over them on which sacrifices are offered. These are the "devil-stones" of traders, and English-speaking natives.

To obtain *mana* for fighting, the ghosts of the recently dead are applied to; leaves of particular kinds are brought together, with ginger, which has a sacred character in all this region, and the bark of trees, scraped and eaten. To obtain good crops, food is taken to certain stones thought to be sacred to some *Tindalo* of ancient times; the food is laid on the stones with prayer that it may get *mana* and then eaten. Fish is used in the same way for success in fishing. There is a certain sacred pool of water, into which scraps from a person's food whose life is aimed at are thrown by those who know the place and the *Tindalo* there. If the scraps of food are quickly devoured by fish or a snake, the man will die; otherwise the *Tindalo* is unwilling to do the mischief desired of him. Sharks and alligators receive in Ysabel the same occasional worship as *Tindalos*, which is given in all this region; but sharks particularly in Savo, where they abound.

The people of the south-western part of Ysabel have suffered very much from the attacks made upon them from year to year by the inhabitants of the further coast of the same island, and of

neighbouring islands with whose exact position they are not acquainted. The object of these attacks is to obtain heads, whether for the honour of a dead or living chief, or for the inauguration of new canoes. Throughout the Solomon Islands a new war canoe is not invested with due *mana* until some man has been killed by those on board her; and any unfortunate voyagers are hunted down for the purpose on the first trip or afterwards. The people of Rovigana, known to traders as Rubiana, carry off not only heads but living prisoners, whom they are believed to keep, till on the death of a chief, or launching of a canoe, or some great sacrifice, their lives are taken. It is from these people that, as they say, head-hunting and human sacrifices have been introduced into the nearer islands of the group.

In all these islands there is a vague belief in the existence of wild, not really human, men. The belief is by no means limited to these larger islands, but prevails throughout from Mae in the New Hebrides to Ysabel, and is expressed in stories more or less extravagant. Some credence has been given to these stories in regard to the larger islands, where the existence either of a much lower type of humanity, or of some large simians, has been thought possible. The fact that the same stories with modifications are told everywhere is the most complete disproof that can be given. In the little island of Mae they are, or were, for they are now extinct, seen on the Three Hills; at Ambrym they are seen basking on the rocks on the slopes of the great volcano; in the Guadalcanar they are met with where the inhabited sea-coast is left, and adventurous visitors begin to climb the lower ranges of the lofty mountains. Everywhere these beings are seen singly, or rarely male and female together, sometimes with one young one. They always carry baskets, live in trees, wear no clothes, feed on wild fruits, and tear and devour men whom they can overpower. In the several islands they are either much larger or much less than men, with very long arms, or with nails like birds' claws, or with knees and elbows the wrong side before. In one word, the same stories are told from New Zealand throughout Melanesia to the Asiatic continent itself. The question is, whether the story in any form is true anywhere. If true somewhere, as certainly not in the Melanesian islands, how have the Melanesian people learnt them? Are they the common inheritance of their ancient stock? Do they point to the real existence of man-like apes or ape-like men in far distant times and lands? or are they everywhere alike the creatures of imagination which delight in producing monsters for the wonder of children and of strangers?

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

A GENERAL view of the Religious Beliefs and Practices in the islands of Melanesia comprised in the foregoing survey, will certainly show a general agreement throughout, more thorough than perhaps would be anticipated. It is seen that almost everywhere, though the belief seems to fade away towards the westwards, the existence of spiritual beings, distinct from men living or dead, is believed in. It is true that the conception can hardly be that of a purely spiritual being; yet by whatever name the natives call them, they are such as in English must be called spirits. To these beings the creation of men and animals, and the furnishing of the habitable world is ascribed; but they are not generally the chief objects of worship—not those by whose agency will be brought about what the natives who seeks supernatural aid will most desire. It is to the spirits of the dead that recourse is had in witchcraft, in prayer in time of danger, in the sacrifices which gain strength and victory in war.

A clear and well-understood distinction, no doubt, cannot always be maintained, and the confusion may be thought, moreover, to be partly caused by a transition through which the practices and beliefs have recently been passing. While at Florida the veneration of stones occupies a very small space in the religion of the people, and prayers are not offered at all to their legendary creator; whereas in the Banks' Islands almost no religious rite is unconnected with the use of stones as media for spiritual influence, and prayers are addressed to their *Vuis*; it may not unreasonably be conjectured that a change has been going on by which the worship of the dead, and all practices connected with the belief in their active powers among living men, have come more into vogue than in olden times. Whether this has proceeded from the natural development of religious ideas, or whether it has been brought about by influence of communications from east or west, may be a question which cannot yet receive an answer; but probably the practices connected with stones and spirits, not ghosts of the dead, prevail most strongly where there is least evidence of intercourse with another race, that is in the Banks' Islands. At any rate, in all the islands it is plainly believed that power of a spiritual character belongs to the dead, and may be obtained from them by living men. Whatever power of this kind a man possesses is his lifetime, though it may show itself in bodily excellence,

is conceived of as supernatural, and attaching to that part of his nature, his soul, by whatever name it may be called, which not only survives the dissolution of the body, but is even enabled to act more effectively by death. The man of no *mana* in the world has nothing but an empty existence to look forward to after death; but the chief, whose position depends upon, and has been mainly at least gained by, the proofs he has given of the *mana* which is in him, knows that his death will only add to his powers, though it will deprive him of the pleasures and comforts of the flesh. A Melanesian, therefore, whether it be in the islands where spiritual beings, not the ghosts of men, are much regarded, or in those where the lately dead have almost the worship that is given, moves always in a world of which great part is invisible; his body is not all himself; the grave does not close altogether the future for him. By one means or another, by stones or leaves, he can put himself into communication with the unseen powers; he can please them by sacrifices, and he can gain their help by prayers.

Can such beliefs and practices as these be called a religion and treated as a religion by those who are to carry them the gospel? A system in which supernatural powers believed to exist should be sought for and directed by sorcery could hardly be held by any one to be a religion; but it is probably not well to limit the term so strictly as to exclude any belief in beings who are invoked by prayer, and who can be approached by some ritual of communication. It is probably also not wise for any teacher of true religion to neglect or despise, even when he must abhor them, the superstitious beliefs and rites of those whom he would lead from darkness to light. It is far better, if it be possible, to search for and recognise what is true and good among wild and foul superstitions; to find the common foundation, if such there be, which lies in human nature itself, ready for the superstructure of the Gospel. It may surely be said that no missionary who knows and loves his people will ever fail to find this foundation, even among the lowest races of mankind, or find himself utterly unable to say to them: "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you."

It may be true that there is no moral element in these practices, that no man's life is made better by what he believes, and that there is no prospect of reward or punishment in another world to encourage virtue and to deter from vice. But there is the belief, found among all savage people, in the existence of the soul, and in its continued existence after death; there is the feeling, over and above the desire to obtain what will be useful in this world from spirits, that communication with the unseen world is a thing to be desired for itself. A savage people, if

such are to be found, who have no appetite for intercourse with the invisible, would fail to supply to a missionary a fulcrum by which, when it exists, they may be raised to a higher level. The man who believes he has a soul, and that death is but a change of existence, and that unseen spiritual influence is at work upon him, is in a more receptive condition as regards Christianity, than one whose whole thought is to eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies. He is full of superstitions, and his superstitions will certainly be debasing, and be shaken off, even in Christianity, only with the greatest difficulty, but he will hear the first lessons of Christianity with some glimmering approach to understanding.

It does not appear that the belief in the existence of the soul of man proceeds in Melanesians from their dreams or visions in which deceased or absent persons are presented to them, for they do not appear to believe that the soul goes out from the dreamer, or presents itself as an object in his dreams. It does not also appear that the belief in other spirits than those of the dead is founded on the appearance of life and motion in inanimate things, for such spirits are conceived to possess as property, or to love as favourite haunts, the trees, stones, springs, or hollows, which are therefore considered sacred. But, however, it has come to be so, the belief, the knowledge that a man has a soul, in a different sense from that which can be applied to a brute, is fixed in the native mind, and may give a foothold for an advance into the way of salvation; as indeed a childish belief in superhuman beings may be a step towards a faith in God. The belief in a man that he has a spirit within him, and that his spirit does not die, may be directed to faith and hope in the True God and Eternal Life.

NOTE 1. The banyan has no sacred character of its own, but a certain sacredness attaches to the cycas and the casuarina. Such trees are in no way worshipped, but it is thought that there is something about them which makes them peculiarly appropriate in sacred places.

NOTE 2. There is a stream in Saddle Island, or rather a pool in a stream into which if any one looks he dies; the malignant spirit takes hold upon his life by means of his reflection on the water.

NOTE 3. It may be said to be certain that there is no notion whatever among the natives that the shadow is the soul, though a hold can be got upon a man by means of his shadow. Similarly in Fiji, the Rev. Lorimer Fison writes, "the Fijian word for Soul is Yalo, that for shadow, Yaloyalo. I have not been able to find any trace of the belief that shadow and soul are identical. I believe that Williams' remark about the 'two spirits'

(quoted by Lubbock) was the result of a confusion in his mind, concerning Yalo and Yaloyalo." That the soul and the shadow should be called by almost the same word in Fiji, and by the same word in Mota and Maori, is not by chance; but it is probably a borrowing of the name of a shadow, to express that which is in thought likened to it.

- NOTE 4. When a man was shot by a poisoned arrow, the possession of the head of human bone went far to influence the result. If the shooter regained it, he put it in the fire, if the wounded man retained it, he kept it in water; and the inflammation was violent or slight accordingly. The effect of poisoned arrows was in the native view not so much owing to the poison, which is wholly vegetable, as to the human bone of which they are made, and the charms which aggravate the wound.
- NOTE 5. If some small thing happens to fall, or suddenly appears, on a morsel of food, it is thought a sign of luck: a man will attain his desire. It is called a *tangarovia*.
- NOTE 6. There is a dance which only those can perform who have been initiated, and the initiation is carried on with much ceremony and secrecy. This dance is called the Qat. It is certain, however, that there is no religious or superstitious character about the whole. The initiation consists in learning a song which guides the steps of the dance, and this song is, "Mother! bring my bow here, bring my bow here, that I may shoot a fowl, shoot a flying fowl, bring my bow here!" The name Qat has no reference to the *Vui*, but the name of both is the same—knob or head. That of the dance refers to the head-dress worn by the performers.
- NOTE 7. *Natmat* is the equivalent in a neighbouring island in the Banks' group for the Moto *o tamate*, a dead man or ghost. In the Anaiteum New Testament, *e.g.*, Luke vii. 15, the "dead man" is *natimi mas*.
- NOTE 8. The people of the Banks' Islands are divided for purposes of marriage, and with regard to nothing else, into two divisions called *Veve*, which are strictly exogamous. Those of either *Veve* are *sogoi* to one another, and call the rest the "other side of the house." The wife never becomes one of her husband's side of the house, but they will say she is at the door-way, half-way across. A similar system, the number of divisions varying, prevails in the Northern New Hebrides, and throughout the Solomon Islands.
- NOTE 9. Compare the tree at the Reinga, the New Zealanders' place of descent into Hades.
- NOTE 10. Memoir and Journal of Commodore Goodenough, p. 323.
- NOTE 11. Commodore Goodenough, p. 321, Murray's "Missions in Western Polynesia," p. 228.
- NOTE 12. Murray's "Western Polynesia," pp. 179, 209.
- NOTE 13. Compare the fights among the ghosts at San Cristoval, and the belief in ghosts which haunt the sea there.

NOTE 14. Murray, p. 279. Brenchley's "Cruise of the Curaçoa," p. 342.

NOTE 15. Compare the path at Anaiteum, which the first missionaries were unwittingly about to fence across "the path by which the said *Natmases* were accustomed to pass from the mountain to the sea." (Murray, p. 38.)

NOTE 16. "In fact" [in Fiji] "there seems to be no certain line of demarcation between departed spirits and gods, nor between gods and living men. 'I am a god,' Tuakilakila would sometimes say, and he believed it too." (Quoted from Mr. Hazlewood in Brenchley, p. 181.)

DISCUSSION.

Mr. LEWIS thought the mass of information contained in the paper would be most valuable when it could be properly studied in print. On that occasion he would only remark that there appeared to be a strong resemblance between some of the *Vuis* described, and the fairies and dwarfs of north-western Europe. The latter had been with much reason considered to represent an earlier, and in some cases, extinct race of inhabitants, and it might be a question whether the Melanesian legends had a similar foundation.

Mr. HYDE CLARKE said that Mr. Codrington's paper was most valuable, but that unfortunately a discussion could not be fully carried out until the paper had been published. He must repeat his statement that the culture and language of all those regions in Australasia, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Australia, were to be traced to a common origin, with other ancient culture, and, as it seemed, from Africa. The system of secret societies described was most interesting, as it was parallel with those in West Africa, described in the Journal.

The mythology was evidently of the ancient type of fetishism. The distinctions drawn by Mr. Codrington between the "spirits" of men, etc., and those which had never had a human shape, was useful to be borne in mind. What was referred to was not a soul in modern phrase, but that exact verisimilitude, commonly united with a living body, but capable of separation, as exemplified in our own superstitions of the "fetch" or "wraith" of a living being. This was the "ka" of the ancient Egyptians, to be recognised among the Babylonians and Hebrews, and which lies at the foundation of a host of beliefs and superstitions. The oath by the "ka" of Pharaoh was more sacred than the oath by Pharaoh himself. It was the "ka" which furnished the framework for the soul, spirit, shadow, but not necessarily for the life. The "ka" might enter another living body of man or animal, and hence another series of mythological phenomena, from which the doctrines of metempsychosis are derived. This too is most probably the explanation of the mystery of masques, found all over the world, and formerly connected with religious observances. This may be

suggested for the gold masques found in tombs, and the external representations of the Egyptian corpse. The medicine man, who wears the head or masque of a bear, &c., may have attributed to him possession by the animal whose semblance he wears, and from which a mystic power is conveyed. As there is a selection in mythology of the various ancient forms, or a development from ancient forms, it is most important to obtain careful observations like those of Mr. Codrington.

In comparing popular legends we cannot be too careful, lest we might arrive at very strange conclusions. By example, while he was listening to those Australasian legends, he could have believed they were taken from the Babylonian and Assyrian clay tablets now in the British Museum. He could not say if one legend derived from the other, but it did not seem likely at first sight, and he believed that the imagination of the legend-mongers would everywhere spontaneously develop much in the same way.

Mr. BOUVERJE PUSEY remarked that no details were read as to the invisible *Vui* (spirits) supposed by the Mota people to control the powers of nature; he also called attention to the very remarkable resemblance between the secret societies described and the Mumbo-Jumbo associations, &c., of negro Africa.

NOTE *on a* STONE IMPLEMENT *of* PALÆOLITHIC TYPE *found*
in ALGERIA. By Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Bart., F.R.S., M.P.,
D.C.L., LL.D., &c.

NOTHING which can throw even a gleam of light on the condition and distribution of man in palæolithic times is without interest, and I think therefore that the Institute will like to see a stone implement which I found in Algeria last year, and have sent this evening for exhibition. So far as Europe is concerned, unmistakable palæolithic implements of the Hoxne and St. Acheul type have hitherto, in my opinion, only been found in the centre and south. They have not yet been met with in Scotland, in the north of England, or in Scandinavia. I know that as regards the latter statement I am at issue with some high Scandinavian authorities, but when I was in the north I carefully examined all the large Scandinavian collections without finding a single specimen of a true palæolithic type. True, this is now some years ago; but if such implements have since been discovered, they have not yet been described or figured. Moreover, our eminent colleague, Mr. Evans, has more recently visited these countries, and is entirely of the same opinion. The fact is the more remarkable considering the zeal with which Scandinavian archæologists have collected for so many years. Nor have any implements of these types yet