

AUCTIONEERS OF PARADISE

BY HASSOLDT DAVIS

THE South Sea Islands offer today the most curious and blighting instance of man's assumption of prerogatives supposedly reserved to God: nowhere else on earth has the ignorant native been forced so mercilessly to sacrifice his lands, his customs, even his sunlight, upon the altar of a deity he is unable to understand. All that the islander holds dearest has been taken away from him by the porters of Christian gospel: his art, condemned as offensive to Jehovah; his revered ancestors, consigned to a Christian hell; his songs and dances, banned as immoral; even at times the bounteous fruits of the land, forbidden him because they are contributory to indolence (the Rev. J. M. Orsmund built his church of the most productive breadfruit trees in Borabora because that wild fruit, the staple of island diet, was too easily obtained). The missionary has certainly been the Serpent in the Polynesian Garden of Eden; for it was he alone who taught the natives shame, and foisted the sins of Europe upon a simple people who had recognized hitherto only one sin — that of interfering with a neighbor's happiness.

It is generally intolerable that any religion, however righteous it may seem to its adherents, should be rammed down the throats of children, and squirted like vaccine into the minds of adults. Such forcible conversion has everywhere in Polynesia resulted in complete confusion. To the native mind, one form of idolatry has merely

been substituted for another. The islander's wooden *tikis* and *togogs* have been abolished, and in their stead he must worship the idol of a tortured Christ. Cannibalism is forbidden him, yet he must eat God's flesh and drink His blood at Holy Communion. Polytheism is condemned, yet the Trinity is urged upon him. His cosmogony, which was once quite sufficient for his intelligence, is now jumbled with an alien genesis. His gods, who procreated normally, are rebuked as shameful by the automatic birth of Jesus. The native is today afraid of love, of hell, of sunlight, and believes in nothing utterly.

Throughout five thousand miles of island-speckled sea, among various simple peoples, it is the same. The Polynesians, Melanesians, Micronesians, and Malays, all have been warped from their native integrity by the ambitious Christian apostle who would make over every man to his own pattern, and who has never realized that the problem was not one of turning the native Christian, but of turning Christianity native, of splicing a new religion neatly into an old and barbarous one. All the material was there, virgin and curious. The evangelist in Oceania was welcomed gladly, given generously the sites he asked for, listened to with such courtesy and tolerance as he had never before encountered among savages. Yet it never occurred to him that his God, Who ordained all, might have given the natives that perfect climate, that exquisite

scenery and ease of living, because He was pleased with them.

One can easily imagine the complacency with which the first English missionaries set themselves to whittling the human brands they had snatched from the burning. One visions them, these British men of God, marching in a tense and doleful group like praying mantes, along the golden sands toward the natives who were dancing there; dancing in broad daylight too, not covertly in the dark to obscure their sin; urging their babies to dance, guiding the limbs of crones to a delirious rhythm. The sun through the palm fronds stippled their clean brown bodies with living shadow, but it shunned the long black garments of the Advocates who came to teach the natives shame, to instruct them "for their own good" that God's sunlight was sinful upon nude bodies, and that salvation was to be found in the unhealthy cumbrous folds of Mother Hubbards. The native's flowers and *tapa* clothes were condemned as vain and indecent, and the missionary, working in league with the trader, prevailed upon them to adopt the most hideous of civilized garments and swathe themselves in it from chin to ankle. Just as they had formerly swum nude or in loin cloths, they now swam in Mother Hubbards, allowed them to dry upon their bodies, and died like gnats of lung disease. Tuberculosis, which was brought by the trader and encouraged by mission morality, has more than decimated the population of the Marquesas in less than one hundred years.

Today, at Cheki and other Seventh Day Adventist villages on Marovo Lagoon in the Solomons, the missionaries have forbidden the natives, according to Julius Fleischmann's recent book, *Footsteps in the Sea*, "to eat any meat or shellfish; nor can they smoke tobacco, wear necklaces or

ornaments of any kind. Dancing is strictly taboo. They now produce nothing but baskets, walking sticks, raffia bracelets and clam shell armlets. They are not allowed to wear these, but can produce them for sale so as to have money for the collection box at church. . . . The population has decreased in recent years because of high infant mortality, a condition which was taken care of by the polygamous system under which the people lived, but polygamy is now considered 'immoral.' The loss of a people's mores, ambitions, liberty, and racial individuality is a stiff price to pay for 'getting religion,' especially when it is extremely doubtful whether they have any comprehension of what it is all about."

Whatever may be the errors of detail in O'Brien's *White Shadows in the South Seas*, he at least saw clearly the poisonous shadow which the white man has cast upon the Tahitian sun. "The efforts of missionaries," he wrote, "have killed the joy of living as they have crushed out the old barbarities, uprooting together everything, good and bad, that religion meant to the native. They have given him instead rites that mystify him, dogmas he can only dimly understand, and a little comfort in the miseries brought upon him by trade. . . . Only a St. Francis Xavier or a Livingstone, a great moral force, could lift the people now from the slough of despond in which they expire. . . . Upon this people, sparkingly alive, spirited as wild horses . . . religion, as forced upon them, has been not only a narcotic, but a death potion."

Fortunately for the South Seas, Christianity has not yet obtained such hold upon the natives that it may not loosen before the claws of half-remembered and indigenous gods; the great day of the missions is nearly over; the original ardor for the

white man's faith is rapidly waning as the native discovers its novelty dulled, its tenets inadequate to his needs, its foundations disputed or ignored completely by its Aryan advocates. But the record of one hundred and fifty years of God's work remains to shame the historian.

II

The early evangelists, Marco Polo in China, Livingstone in Africa, Damien at Molokai, went unselfishly and with the utmost altruism to their work of saving souls for God. They were heroes, true fighting men who braved sickness and savagery with no government to protect them in those far lands. But the missionaries in Oceania today are more like spiritual pawnbrokers, safely removed from the hazards of primitive life. The salaries of the Protestants, at least, are sufficient to cover their needs comfortably and permit savings. The mission gives them the hardwood for their houses, and the natives contribute the labor. The cost of clothing is nil, as the Advocates are usually content with a few shirts, black trousers, and coats; and their laundry bills, judging from personal observation of their dress, reflect an exemplary thrift. Practically all their food is supplied them gratis, and the little they have to buy, such as canned goods and bread, they purchase cheaply from the ubiquitous Chinese storekeepers. If they have launches, or other conveyances, these are maintained out of mission funds.

Julius Fleischmann states that a missionary in the Solomon Islands receives a salary of about \$1200 a year, out of which \$200 is expended for living costs. One year out of every five is a holiday with full pay and transportation home. "Before he leaves on vacation his people generally collect about

\$500 as a parting gift, along with curios of about the same monetary value. . . ."

This implies that a Scotch Presbyterian may readily save \$5000 in four years of tutoring his savages — a profitable business indeed. In South China I was told that in the larger stations £200 annually was not an unusual salary; and in Fiji, according to one correspondent who has lived there seventeen years, "the stipends are £200 to £250, residence and perquisites."

In Raiatea, Society Islands, the French Protestant missionary and his wife live comfortably in an enormous house surrounded by acres of fertile land. The descendants of missionaries in Hawaii represent much of the wealth of the islands, all derived from lands properly owned by the natives. The largest pineapple plantation there until recently was owned "by a man whose father started out on his Honolulu career with a Bible in one hand and a bundle of blank deeds in the other," according to Owen P. White.

The story is the same throughout all the South Sea islands. At present it is sheer nonsense to talk of the heroism and sacrifice of those who go forth to convert the heathen. With few exceptions their lives are easier, more varied, more prosperous, than at home. There is no sacrifice involved in abandoning a life of semi-squalor and pittance in America for one of far better income, more power and importance, among lovely islands and a people who confuse you with the God you represent. It is estimated that the Protestant missions of America raise over \$50,000,000 annually for direct and indirect propaganda.

Both the Catholics and the Protestants engage covertly but extensively in trade, although it is forbidden by many governments. Not content with "borrowing" the native's land, these churches deny him the produce of it. In the Fiji Islands, the

Catholics, Methodists (Australian), and Wesleyans all own great areas of land and trade in copra. In the list of private properties in what was formerly German New Guinea, I find the following (figures from *The Times Empire Supplement*):

	<i>Acres</i>
Rheinische Mission (Lutheran Calvinists)	2,897
Neuendettelsau Mission (Lutheran).....	10,411
Liebenzell Mission (Lutheran)....	25
Methodist Mission (Australian)....	5,387
Moorish Mission (Roman Catholic). 4,087	
Capuchin Mission (Roman Catholic)	1,159
Sacred Heart Mission (Roman Catholic)	39,536
Catholic Mission of the Holy Ghost.	17,203

Thus do the meek inherit the earth.

The Melbourne *Argus* presents an astonishing report on the activities of various missions. I quote in part:

The problem which faces Australia at the moment is not the missionary as a minister of religion, or the missionary as a doctor of medicine, but the missionary as a business man, and a very astute business man at that. All the missions are extensive landholders, selling their copra in the open market, and deriving an annual income running into many thousands of pounds. The two largest German missions are the Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and the Mission of the Holy Ghost. The former owns 35,000 acres freehold throughout the islands, the latter owns 17,000. And for business purposes they are gravely registered as companies under the titles, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, Limited*, and *The Holy Ghost, Limited*. The former is actually the fourth largest trading concern in the late German islands. Besides its plantations it conducts sawmills and other commercial enterprises. Throughout the war these missions, with the smaller ones, claimed immunity on the score of religion, and endeavored to gain the same privileges for the business side of the concern as had been granted the spiritual side. A custom's officer at Rabaul tells how the

missions were importing large quantities of wine duty-free "for use at communion." Becoming suspicious, he opened a case and found that it contained champagne, sparkling hock, and other wines not usually associated with communion service. The missionaries were granted liberal concessions with regard to the recruiting of natives; workers on their plantations were ingenuously styled "pupils" or "converts." Many of the missionaries were far keener on converting their coconuts into copra than on converting Kanakas to Christianity.

An excellent business: not only does the native's soul belong to the white man's God, but his lands as well, both being held in eternal pawn by the church and her gentle ambassadors.

III

In 1774 the first missionaries, Spaniards, came to Tahiti to "proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified," but left soon after, discouraged by the polite attention and stubborn resistance jointly offered them. In 1797 the first English missionaries descended from the ship *Duff*. They labored futilely many years to swerve the natives from paganism, some in Tahiti, some in Tongatabu, and a few in the distant Marquesas where the islands were even more bountiful and the people more arrogant. The conversion of the Tahitian king was their first reward, and after him the entire population became nominally Christian, largely because, as the records reveal, conversion led to protection by the white invaders. The native did not realize that he was soon to be left without rights, without gaiety, without pride in race achievements, even without his proper name, which would be changed at Holy Communion from a charming mouthful of vowels like Tetuanui to a dull grunt like John.

Church statistics are not dependable, nor

are the figures of one sect safe from denial by that sect's rivals. If one were to accept the mission reports of the various churches in the South Sea islands — Catholic, French Protestant, Mormon, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, and several others — the number of claimed converts would closely approach the total population there. No allowance is made for the many natives who embrace Christianity briefly and backslide to heathenism. No sect will admit officially the great and continuous flux of natives through its church and into the church of rivals as the novelty of the first declines. A convert once made is, officially, a convert forever, the prisoned hostage of God, whether he worships idols covertly or is already dead and in his native heaven.

The Rt. Rev. J. C. Hoare, the Bishop of Victoria, Hongkong, writing in *Mankind and The Church*, asserts that in one year there were 41,000 Chinese children baptized at the point of death by the Jesuits. These are converts. However, it is as difficult for the layman as for the rival parson to regard such figures placidly, not merely because they imply that missionary work is a wholesale business, but because they show it patently as an unscrupulous one. Yet what else is there to send as dividends to those at home who have invested their hopes, their prayers, and pennies in the enterprise? They cannot be told, those churchwomen and Sunday school children, of conversions made under duress, nor of the bitter rivalry between sect and sect which undermines all Christian effort by so confounding the native that he can hold to none.

The isolated archipelagoes of Micronesia offer an example. Since their first settlement by the Portuguese in 1527, these islands, which include the Carolines, the Marshalls, and the Marianas, have been proselytized successively by Spanish Catho-

lics, American Protestants, German Catholics, Spanish Jesuits, and finally in 1927 by German Catholics again, while at various periods two or more of these sects have been at work simultaneously, their territories overlapping though their interests remained remote as the poles. It is therefore understandable that the native, confronted with this medley and instructed alternately that the doctrines of other sects are blackguard impostures, should doubt them all.

One need only read the reports and circular letters of missionaries to see how heavily this factional warfare weighs upon apostle and convert alike. Yet without compromise, which has proved impossible, or the friendly division of heathen territory, there is nothing for the good men to do but fight each for his particular salvation. A convert to a rival fold is little better than a heathen still. The best test of mission sincerity is its intolerance of all but its own doctrine, though this very sincerity is pathetic because blind.

When the mission hospital at Ambrim, New Hebrides, was destroyed by a volcanic eruption, hundreds of native converts were found by the missionaries to be making sacrifices to their own gods, since it was incredible to them that the white God of Love should have afflicted them, and particularly His own hostel. It must not be assumed that these backsliders had lost their faith in God; they still admitted Him, but now only as a likable inferior to the demons. This is the sort of reasoning against which the missionary, armed with the sword and buckler of the True God, fights so stoutly. And since argument and preaching are ineffectual, he must convert by material bribery, by medicine, and education.

For it has been admitted by churchmen that the means of conversion are unim-

portant so long as the end is accomplished. These means may seem unethical in that the native is converted by fear or the desire for some material gain, but the evangelists defend them as the tools of eventual salvation. The Rev. Deane tells of asking twenty-six Christian natives of Fiji the reasons for their conversion. One was converted through reading Matt. xxv, 46: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment!" One was converted by a nightmare; three through being sent to jail; one was frightened by a policeman; eleven changed because they had been seriously ill; one was shipwrecked; and only eight became Christians by influence of gospel preaching. And five of these latter had been frightened by sermons on the above-mentioned Biblical text. Deane concluded: "Only two grew up on the calmer knowledge of Christianity, and even they were largely under the dominion of fear in their religious experience. Since that inquiry, made about ten years ago, I have come upon innumerable cases of a similar kind."

The church discovered early that one of its most effective means of propaganda was through the magic of medicine, a ruse deplored by Christians and intelligent heathens alike. Again, like idolatry, it is but a substitution of pagan for Christian wonder-working, proving nothing, but convincing the superstitious native that in some respects the new candidate for deity has tricks unknown to the pagan incumbents. The evincing of Christian love by healing the sick, according to Christ's precept, would be admirable indeed if it were not used exclusively as a bribe towards conversion. In all, except perhaps the Salvation Army hospitals, evangelizing is placed before philanthropy in importance. The sick native is welcomed to the mission. He is treated to the best of the mission doctor's often inadequate knowledge, and

meanwhile is preached to, cajoled, threatened with hell-fire, and administered pills in flacons whose labels bear verses from the Bible, all in hope that the patient's gratitude for treatment will offer an opening to conversion.

Re-thinking Missions, a sound inquiry by a commission of churchmen and laymen (Chairman, William Earnest Hocking, of Harvard), makes this point definite in its suggestions for improved mission work: "Service rendered in love, responding to conscious need, given without inducement, offering disinterested relief of suffering, fulfills with nobility the obligations of a Christian physician to those whom he serves. . . . But the use of medical or other professional service as a direct means of making converts, or public services in wards from which patients cannot escape, is subtly coercive, and improper." The commission agreed that the clinical work of American missions in the Pacific was incompetent and ill-managed. The physicians frequently were inexperienced, the hospitals understaffed and not properly equipped to care for the major maladies of the East, such as leprosy, syphilis, and malaria. Too often mere nostrums and prayers, with a dash or two of baptismal water, have been used where chaulmoogra or salvarsan was specific. "Meanwhile," says the commission, "patients have been accumulating who, because of the progress of their diseases, or thanks to other doctors, have discovered the inadequacy of the medical service they received, and who wonder if the doctor's gospel message was not as erroneous as his treatment. Gradually his crowd begins to dwindle."

The findings of this group make credible the rather startling results of a similar inquiry by The China Medical Missionary Association a few years back. Out of two hundred mission hospitals examined, two-

thirds had no isolation block for infectious cases, no screened kitchens, no screened latrines, no means of sterilizing bedding; one-third had no clean hospital garments for patients, no protection against flies and mosquitoes, no trained nurse, or no nurse at all other than the patient's own friends; some hospitals never bathed their patients, and some did not possess a bath of any description. Under such circumstances (and these are not confined to China), it is inevitable that mission hospitals should be fertile breeding grounds for disease; inevitable also that intelligent natives should scorn Christianity as a literal plague. Even in the distant islands of New Guinea, Fiji, and Tahiti, the smallest government-controlled medical stations effect more actual cures than the pretentious mission; and without subsidy of the Will of God.

It would be absurd to generalize upon all medical missions. There are surely exceptions. The French nuns at the leper colony in Tahiti devote four years each to the care of the afflicted, and largely through their humanity have made it possible for government physicians to carry on their work. The Mormons, well-educated men with clinical experience at home, have been respected throughout Oceania for their care of the sick. It is unfortunate that the missionaries generally achieve so little in the way of back-handed amends for the maladies which they and their Christian brothers brought the natives one hundred years ago.

"Alas!" wrote O'Brien, "it could not have been the true Christ who was brought to them, for they had flourished mightily under Oro, and they began almost at once to die. Not peace, but a sword, a sword of horrors, of frightful ills, was brought them." And the missionaries, with stern righteousness, thereupon founded their

clinics. They converted by them, and when the potential conversion ranks were exhausted they moved to greener fields. Whatever little they have accomplished in Oceania for the benefit of the natives has been almost entirely in the way of education, if one can believe that such a partial education of savages to desire our fripperies is beneficial. It is unfortunate that their preceptors have usually been men whose piety outweighed their secular learning, and who were unprepared to teach simply, in the native language, the knowledge they wished to impart.

It is fair neither to God nor native that a young cleric, lacking a gradual reorientation during which he might learn the native's tongue and needs, should be abruptly set down in a primitive community. This is too often the case, and the zealot must dispense his creed blindly, fortuitously, until he has learned what proper provision might have foreseen. The result is a confusion both of creed and culture which leaves the native baffled. For many years an earnest missionary to New Guinea, in attempting to explain the Virgin Birth, misused the word *kanukanuma* to designate the Holy Ghost. The Father of Jesus, he insisted steadfastly, was none other than *kanukanuma*. And the natives listened with wonder, for they were hearing that Jesus was conceived by *sweet potatoes*.

"Educational missions," said the Rev. W. E. S. Holland at a Pan-Anglican Congress, "are only justified as they afford openings for powerful missionary influence." Though the missionaries have held to that tenet strictly, delivering a pound of gospel with every ounce of education, the gospel has largely sifted through and the remnant learning has merely been sufficient to enable natives to read and pervert their employers' accounts. This is progress. The

natives have learned the letter of the law only to despise its spirit. They have learned hymns only to corrupt them into jolly, salacious ballads. And they have learned, through reading and the example of their religious preceptors, that superior white men do no manual work; so that the educated, Christianized native is by far a poorer workman than his heathen brother. He may have abandoned cannibalism and infanticide, but he has exchanged for them arrogance, lying, drink, laziness, and petty thievery. This may be due in part to the fact that converts to Christianity are very rarely found among the intelligent, high-caste natives. A little adult learning in the hands of a Polynesian or Melanesian is not merely a dangerous thing; it is a disease destructive of all his race holds finest. European children cannot be helped by concentrated metaphysics as a steady fare; no more can adult natives on a proportionate diet.

It is undeniable that certain natives, under the ministrations of exceptional missionaries, have become virtuous men respected by their own people and Europeans alike. It is probable also that these would have been equally respected by the thoughtful had they clung to barbarism and pagan gods. But, unfortunately, there are few missionaries in the South Seas sufficiently wise to be able, in the first place, to discover the native whose mind can profit by Christian training, and in the second, to apply such training to the native's advantage.

IV

The missionary, even as a business man trading in salvation, can hardly be admired; as a benefactor he must be deplored. It is true that in every important mission field, China, India, Africa, and the South

Seas, he has sold religion mostly to the lowest and least intelligent classes, through the expedients of medicine, education, caste equality, and, in the case of Oceania, Chautauqua showmanship. He realized early that the best means of wooing the complacent natives was by catering to their love of entertainment, by giving them sonorous hymns to bellow, by thrilling them with an oratory which they naturally loved, and by dunning their excessive pride when there were collections to be made.

Rev. Maurice Frater in *Midst Volcanic Fires* writes of the New Hebrides native: "He gives away nothing unless he has a prospect of something in return. The native word for collection is *sonimani* . . . which literally means 'to throw away money.' Yet he is quite willing to do so if the show in return is worth it."

I can illustrate this best by a personal experience on the island Monoi in Polynesia. Monoi is a tiny atoll of four hundred nominally Christian natives. No white men live there permanently, there are few traders, and the missionaries rarely visit except at Easter when they come for their annual collection. This was such an occasion. Easter, Christ's resurrection, was to be celebrated by a contribution of francs to the mission coffers, the natives informed me. They were vague as to other motives for the visit. It was just one of those Christian things that happened, a sort of back-handed holiday like Sunday, or the free rum festival when one has signed a deed of land to a foreigner.

It was plain that the missionaries were non-sectarian to these simple islanders, though they had been molested variously by them for two hundred years. Personalities alone counted—and the religious show. I had been told of Catholics (the men-with-skirts) who tended the sick and were unafraid to admit that they had oc-

casional seen ghosts; of the grim Protestants (the black-trousered) who couldn't even see their own angels; of the hearty Mormons (the white-trousered) who held perhaps the strangest notions and were admired accordingly: but I knew that the natives were unaware of any spiritual difference in the approach of these men to God. All they cared was that the coming Protestants (Monoi had been Catholic the year before), would bring a good show to the island. They realized fully that they must now pay for their spiritual guidance, even all they had earned in this last year, but that bothered them little for they knew that they should not only have an excuse for discreet celebration, but a reason for boasting thereafter; they never forgot that Paenui, their ancient rival and a much larger island, could pay proportionately little more than Monoi.

Throughout the week I heard the legends of Atua, who was the God of missionaries, rehearsed with gestures and much alarum. The church had called obscene the simple torso-twisting of the natives' delight, so there was to be no dancing, though they all might sing at the festival. Old Tamano, the chief, had zealously guarded a Catholic hymnal given to him by the former missionary, and thought it might do equally well for the coming Protestants. With this they rehearsed.

But the natives were not alone in their preparations. The *tupapaus*, the ghosts of the island, were now everywhere, I learned, making a grand to-do and rehearsing all kinds of performances with which to welcome the angels that the missionaries would surely bring. *Tupapaus* had unwound the *pareu* skirt of the island's one steadfast virgin when she danced at the crowded assembly. *Tupapaus* had put the long, inflated pig-gut in Mrs. Fierceness-Of-Blackness's bed. Hideous ghosts with

flaming beards had been seen by the most conservative gentry in the main village, and the *oromatua nihoniho-rorooa*, the cannibal *tupapaus*, the ghost-eaters, were now soughing round the mountain tombs of the dead, looking for their feebler kin to eat them.

On the morning of the advent, as soon as the keenest eye discerned the boat of God approaching, there was everywhere a fury of excitement. The enormous bird-cage *hymine* house, some seventy feet long by forty wide, was refurbished as a church. The bamboo walls were cleaned, the floor was sprinkled with fresh sand, and wasp nests were removed from a small area of the thatched roof beneath which the new pastor would preach.

The tiny sailboat came gradually closer, tacking against adverse winds, and there was some discussion ashore as to whether the Christian angels could fly straight through the wind or must tack against it. Young Nanu claimed that *tupapaus* burned a hole through the air with their flaming whiskers, no matter how hard the wind was blowing, but old Tamano, grunting contemptuously, claimed that angels flew above the wind entirely. And there were many friendly arguments as to whether the domestic *tupapau*, which flew with its tail and fought with its teeth, could vanquish the imported angel which flew with wings and fought mysteriously by turning an apparently inexhaustible supply of other cheeks. . . .

Then the boat slid through the pass of islands, and suddenly we could see our visitors rising from a huddle on the cockpit floor. There were seventeen of them, one white and sixteen native. The corpulent white pastor, with his boyish lock of mustard-colored hair hanging over one eyebrow, was evidently new to the job and frightened, but his sixteen gigantic native

brethren strode truculently and glumly into the village, kissing all who met them and muttering of the munificence of the rival island Paenui. Sixteen men of God they were, however remote in knowledge; sixteen lumbering monuments hoisting sixteen black umbrellas whenever the sun shone warmly or a drop of God's rain moistened them, these brutes who were healthy savages only a few years ago. The little pastor walked ahead of them, making pious conversation in a preposterous native tongue.

That night there was great feasting. The sandy floor of the house had been carpeted from end to end with enormous *api* leaves, and the walls were decorated austere-ly with the fronds of young bamboo. There were no flowers, and none wore them; these happy islanders who always wore flowers tucked in the *pareu* belt or behind the ear had been made to understand that flowers were but a vain adornment.

At the beginning of the meal the pastor was respectfully prodded to his feet by his henchmen. He clasped his hands before his paunch, looked at his plate, and falteringly spoke. God Atua had been very good to Monoi, he said, to have contributed the wherewithal for such munificence of food. But that was doubtless because the natives of Monoi had been so heedful of God, and so lavish in contributing to His works. Pastors all over the South Seas, said the pastor, would remember the Monoians in their prayers. God bless the food and the partakers of it. Amen.

Then indeed there was great feasting, and when the natives were sated they sang lustily in their own language whatever Roman Catholic hymns they could recall from the year before. The long hut was filled by now; even the babies were there, astraddle their mothers' hips, dozing or suckling sleepily beneath a handkerchief,

(the breasts must not be bared). Of the four hundred and thirty-eight recorded people on the island, probably seven-eighths were assembled there, with all the money they possessed, to be contributed, all or part of it, according to the value of the show.

The women chanted shrilly and the men accompanied with weird vocal effects of drum and guitar, an extraordinary music which resembled the instrumental so fully that it was hard to believe that whining strings and grunting hides were not being plied furtively. It was a desperate chanting. When the song had diminished gradually to a mere burr of tone, hanging there, throbbing, a girl's voice would rise suddenly, lifting with it one by one the voices of the others until the whole chorus reached the awful apex, then gradually subsiding to the level of the proper song. The singers sat almost motionless, their hands in their laps, palms upward, their eyes fixed casually upon the little round pastor flanked by his sixteen pious giants at the end of the room. Only the song moved. There was no wind to disturb the lamps or the motley of shadow paving the floor. Then the song stopped suddenly, for one of the native missionaries had risen. He flung his hands towards the people, then on high towards God, and with great eloquence thanked the people of Monoi for their hospitality.

They should be remembered, he said, not in his prayers only, but in those of his fifteen brothers, and in the super-prayers of the pastor himself. Now, said he, the contributions to the cause of God Atua should be gathered, and he hoped Monoi would be as generous with francs as it was proficient in song. My neighbor Nanu, an arrant heathen, grunted reprovingly.

One after another the sixteen native missionaries spoke their little pieces, each embroidering on that of the last until the

promises of heavenly bliss, and the efficacy of initiate prayer, and the munificence of Monoï had achieved, like the crescendo of the native song, a volume so great as to be terrible. Then the little pastor rose and with neither gestures nor eloquence bowed his head and read from his notebook a simple prayer which, though lacking in drama, was effective in its outspoken simplicity. Monoï being heartily recommended to God's grace, the pastor paused a moment and raised his eyes to the crowd.

"Now," said he finally, "I think that you should all join me to render thanks that you have as your nearest and dearest neighbor the island Paenui, a land of Christian people, your brothers in Christ, who regard the name of Monoï, now as always, as a synonym for piety and generosity and virtue. And, people of Monoï, I know that you in your hearts must love them, and admire them equally, for this year they have contributed two thousand one hundred and fifty francs to the maintenance of the Protestant Church in the islands. And thus they have shown their faith in God, people of Monoï, and their wish that you also may derive the benefits of His bounty. Let us ask the blessings of God upon them."

The pastor bowed his head, and every head in the house bowed low. There was a moment of silence. "Amen," said the pastor.

The native missionary who had spoken first now leaped to his feet and confronted the crowd, while the pastor pulled forward a small metal trunk and unlocked its two padlocks.

"How much does the Chief think that Monoï can contribute?" the missionary demanded.

Old Tamano hesitated, to visualize the figures of Paenui's contribution. "We are a small poor island," he said at last. "We can-

not sell our copra as Paenui can. But I think we might contribute about sixteen hundred francs. . . ."

"Sixteen hundred! Surely you can do better than that!" said the auctioneer of Paradise. "Seventeen hundred?"

"Eh," the chief agreed.

"Good. Ask the headmen of your districts how much each district can give, Brother Tamano."

The chief pulled nervously at his little goatee and summoned the headmen in turn to stand before him, playing them against each other as Paenui had been played against Monoï. "How much, Tutu? One hundred francs? You have good fishermen in your district, Tutu; you have large houses."

The pastor wrote ONE HUNDRED FRANCS in large letters on a square of cardboard which was hung in view of all. He wrote the district name, VAIEA, in still larger letters beside it.

"How much, Aveii?" Old Aveii, the Twin-maker, could not hear distinctly, but caught the question when Tamano pointed to the lettered card.

"One hundred and fifteen francs," he chirped, and it was written.

"How much, Nari?"

Nari looked about for support from his clan. There was only one way open, and that led upward. "One hundred and twenty-five," he said proudly, though his voice quavered.

The nine districts were played against each other, and each sought within the means of its childish pride to be more lavish than the others. The total, the chief admitted humbly when he had added the figures on the card, was only sixteen hundred and some odd francs. This hurt his pride, of course, for he had fallen down on his promise, and he turned to the headmen furiously. "Collect the money!" he ordered.

"Are we to be so outstripped in generosity by the dirty savages of Paenui?" (This was hardly a Christian sentence, as the pursed lips of the missionaries implied.)

Each man of each district was brought up separately to the center of the room where the pastor sat beside his open trunk, and each, unrolling a wad of soiled coins and bills, was constrained by his pitiful pride to give more than he had planned, lest his neighbor outdo him.

"1690," the pastor wrote on the cardboard. "1700. . . . 1710. . . . 1717. . . . 1728. . . ."

The old chief was beaming now and twisting his goatee to a needle point. Ah, but he had good people! They stuck by him!

There was already a great heap of money on the top tray of the pastor's trunk, and there was one district yet to come.

"1740. . . . 1769. . . . 1770. . . ."

"Wait!" cried one of the huge brown missionaries. "My brother," he addressed the donor of the single coin, "I fear the devil has made this coin, for it is not a good one. It bends in the teeth . . . 1769," he corrected the pastor.

This was too much for me. I left quietly and was walking through the purple shadows of the jungle path, through moonlight and shadow alternately as the palms swung to a gentle wind, when young Nanu, the heathen, accosted me.

"It isn't fair! It isn't honest!" he broke out at last, this boy to whom a breach of honesty was still the only sin. "They know as well as I that copra sold for only thirty centimes the kilo last year. They know how little we produced, and that the seventeen hundred francs they took from us is nearly all our island earned! What will we have tomorrow, now that last year's earnings have gone to buy a heaven where we don't belong? Isn't our own *Rohutu*-

Noanoa better for us? Haven't our gods kept faith with us? The God *Tu*, or the God *Ta'aroa*, or even the great God *Taneh*, who eats the bodies of us, would never send us among the white men to steal their souls from their white god!"

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Nanu would be consoled if only he knew that, in all likelihood, the missions and their agents will have relinquished his island before he dies. The coral church they built some years ago is now in ruins, and the native convert who supposedly maintains Sabbath and services in Monoi has himself backslid to an indolence of faith which, if not barbarous, is at best non-partisan. The despair of the mission is evident in its diminishing visits to such small islands as Monoi. God seems content that children should believe in fairies until they reach the cultural age when His worship shall be fit for them.

The missions in Oceania must thus watch their own work being rapidly undone by those to whom they have brought enlightenment, particularly by the sons of the early converts who now realize that the old religion, or none at all, is better than one which they can neither assimilate nor accept by faith alone. The islands of Polynesia are the least encouraging. Already, thanks to the efforts of Alain Gerbault and the late Governor of Tahiti, the old law prohibiting the wearing of the native *pareu* in town has been repealed. Wan bodies are meeting daylight again, and wan minds are freshening vigorously. One cannot predict that Europe will profit thereby, but one can be confident that the brown people of the islands will live more happily and therefore more virtuously than under the mistaken dominion of the auctioneers of Paradise.

THE CLINIC

Radio Takes Over the News

BY SILAS BENT

Spor news, until a few years ago the monopoly of the daily press and its favorite arena of showmanship, is fast becoming obsolescent as a journalistic asset. Always a costly commodity, virtually given away as bait for the advertising columns, it begins to be a liability. Minor factors contributing to this debacle are chain newspapers, which embrace one-sixth of the dailies in this country and reach one-third of their audience; and syndicates, which displace additional news every time they sell another feature. But the main factor is the *Eulenspiegel* radio.

Like its legendary prototype, a clown and adventurer, the radio has ceased to be a joke. In speed it compares with the newspaper as the hare with the tortoise. Every day it skims the cream from the afternoon's headlines; every evening it takes the edge off the morrow's news. Thus it vitiates, in a nation which reads little but headlines, the main function of the press.

Aside from the initial advantage of unexampled speed, the radio has the advantage of the aural over the ocular. To receive information or entertainment through the air is a lazier and pleasanter way than through the printed word; that is why gossip and rumor fly so much faster than pedestrian prose. Radio reports are more vivid and varied. Sometimes, to be sure, the broadcaster heightens excitement and deepens color by exaggerated or false reports, just as newspapers have done in certain phases of their development. The press is

not guiltless in this regard even in its sober present; the Associated Press, which boasts of its accuracy, distributed an erroneous verdict in the Hauptmann case, and erred also in its flash telling of the Supreme Court's gold clause decision.

In dealing with the unexpected and dangerous radio, newspaper owners, publishers and editors have been just on the sunny side of lunacy. At the outset radio was news and got free play. When the National Broadcasting Company was formed in 1926, and a phenomenon became an institution, it proved to be a good story. When daily programs came along, they were printed as prepared because of reader interest. In a lucid interval the newspapers did decide to delete from them the names of advertising sponsors, but whenever publishers tried the experiment of throwing out the whole thing bodily, there was a yelp from the public. Thus journalism has given millions of dollars in free publicity to a competitor calculated to deflect its course and alter the very nature of its structure.

Although the advertising phase of competition between the two is far less vital than the matter of news, it still is not to be belittled. While the revenue from the press was falling off from this source, which supplies three-fourths of all income, the radio was leaping forward, in part by draining advertisements from newspaper columns. Last year the newspapers sold space for nearly half a billion dollars, and broadcasting stations sold time for some-