

passionate love for and strong sympathy with their country, but at the end of their military service in Africa much of their patriotism has disappeared, chiefly because of the disillusionments they experience in the place where they have so nobly exposed themselves to death. In most cases their health is broken because of their many privations. There the best of their youth has been spent — the age of illusion and of enthusiasm. They have sacrificed families, love, and liberty without receiving any tangible compensation.

The Moroccan war, in the opinion of the average soldier, based on his long experience on the very scene of

action, is a problem inherited from his fathers — one that will continue to be in the future just what it has been in the past, with the sole alternative of either yielding territory or carrying on, more or less frequently, the same bloody contests, in which so many lives are uselessly sacrificed. For what is gained to-day is abandoned to-morrow; those who are to-day our most loyal friends to-morrow turn out to be our worst enemies; those who one day surrender themselves the next day revolt. This occasions a continual waste of blood and treasure to no advantage. The Moroccan war, in all frankness, is the nightmare of the Spanish people.

## A SOUTH PACIFIC POTSDAM<sup>1</sup>

BY ARNOLD HÖLLRIEGEL

I RENTED a little old green sailboat with an auxiliary motor. Just after we had taken aboard our cargo and were about to leave Suva, the heaviest deluge of rain I ever saw, even in the tropics, suddenly descended upon us. We had to wait until it was over, and that eventually cost me the whole day. Finally we set forth down the lagoon, between the sandy shore, with its files of palm trees and red galvanized-iron roofs, and the creamy white foam-line of the coral reef. When we reached the mouth of the Rewa River, an astonishingly broad, quiet stream to flow down from the cloud-topped, jagged peaks of an island of the size of Viti Levu, we

turned from the lagoon into one of the mouths of the great delta in order to follow another channel to the open sea beyond. But when we were in the very midst of the great mangrove swamp the tide ebbed, and we were left stranded on a mud bank between queer, unnatural shores, not of land, but of densely tangled branches, air roots, dark green foliage, and mosquitoes.

There was nothing to do but to wait patiently for the tide to rise again. I watched dreamily a huge gray crane wading in the distance. My old boatman drank whiskey, as he did in all emergencies. Our nut-brown engineer, a wild savage from a distant island, lay on the bench by the motor and slept. A Fiji boy, black as ebony, his body

<sup>1</sup>From *Berliner Tageblatt* (Liberal daily), January 5

and hair heavily oiled and his only clothing a loin cloth, squatted in the bottom of the boat and chewed a piece of sugar cane.

Seated in the tiny cabin, I began to inspect our cargo for distraction. It consisted of sixty-four yards of calico, mostly pink and red with broad stripes, purchased at the shop of Naujiree Singh in All Nations Street, Suva; a great rope of native tobacco about thirty feet long; sticky Indian candy; and all the mouth organs I could find in town. The latter were German instruments stamped '*Fröhliches Terzett.*' The box containing them bore the manufacturer's trade-mark — three yawling tomcats. That completed the cargo except for whiskey. I was ashamed of the latter, but Suva friends who knew the country had persuaded me that this was indispensable as a gift for the native chiefs.

When I had inspected my whole cargo, I carefully removed one valuable article from its pasteboard box — a gift for a queen. It was a little mechanical fan from Kärntnerstrasse in Vienna. You pressed a button and the propeller began to rotate — a priceless treasure in a climate like this!

To make a long story short, when the tide rose the motor refused to work, and there was not a breath of wind. Consequently it was late in the afternoon before we emerged from the delta into a beautiful bay enclosed on the horizon line by a ring of silver-green island silhouettes. One of these, a small round island nearer Viti Levu, was more distinct, revealing low volcanic cliffs and hills wonderfully brocaded with green. A big fishing canoe with an outrigger and a three-cornered matting sail came out to meet us. The crew, who were magnificent-looking natives wearing only loin cloths, waved to us with loud laughter.

This island had a landing stage. Here

stood a wonderful old gentleman wearing a *sulu* girt closely around his hips and the tunic of a bathing suit. He was Tui Savura, a very high chief among the many chiefs who dwell on the little island of Mbau.

We shook hands. 'Come on board, Tui, and have a drink.'

We drank whiskey and soda in the little cabin. The old chief, his iron-gray hair forming a bushy crown above his furrowed forehead, sat there as dignified and self-possessed as any white gentleman. After we had drunk he took my hand and said in broken English: 'Come; my men bring your things on shore bime-bye. Come see village. Ratu Pope not here.'

That announcement was a grievous disappointment, for I had set my heart on finding the famous Ratu Pope at home, and I had several letters of introduction to him. This remarkably handsome and imposing man, thirty-five years old, whose picture I had seen everywhere in the Fiji Islands, has officially only the title of *Ratu* — an ordinary chief. But everyone knows that he is the legal heir of the old King Mbau and the grandson of King Thakomban, the Fiji monarch who fifty years ago ceded his kingdom to Queen Victoria — not quite so voluntarily as the official reports assert.

Ratu Pope, the grandson, was educated at the Maori college in Wanganui, New Zealand, and is treated as a white man and a gentleman even by Europeans who call ordinary Fijians 'niggers.' He resides at Mbau in a fine house, the only one that has more than a single room — for it has two — and European furniture. The latter consists of wardrobes, a washstand, and comfortable chairs.

I visited this house. It is built, of course, of porous matting, with a steep palm-thatched roof; but no European king has handsomer tapestries, carpets,

and bedding than the wonderfully soft, fine mats and beautifully decorated tapa cloths that I saw here. The great poles that support the roof are wound round with black, white, and red rope of coconut fibre in striking patterns. The rooms are as tidy as any you would find in Holland, as airy and cool as the best chambers in the Grand Pacific Hotel at Suva, and as subtly aristocratic as any apartment in the most exclusive villa of Faubourg St.-Germain.

Old Tui took me to this house first in showing me around the village, for it is the pride of Mbau. But I saw several other chiefs' houses that were less pretentious but equally comfortable and clean. The floors were raised from the ground on posts and were covered with elastic matting. The roof had a trunk of a coconut tree for a gable, both extremities of which were bent slightly upward and projected beyond the building's walls like the thick ends of a bone. This roof was supported by tall poles of the hardest wood, and the siding consisted of colored matting and tastefully patterned tapa cloth. Inside were piles of mats, a lamp, a few framed photographs, but no chairs. That was all, but each of these little cottages, in its tiny garden surrounded with the tidiest, greenest turf I have ever seen outside of England, was a jewel in itself.

Besides these residences there was the church — a horribly ugly building of planks, galvanized iron, and corners. Somewhere on a hill stood the house of the Wesleyan missionary. That is all there is to Mbau, the Potsdam of Fiji, the island where only chiefs and their wives and servants are permitted to live. Not a coconut tree, not a breadfruit tree, is allowed to grow there. Whatever the noble residents need is brought from the other islands, for here ye shall neither sow nor reap.

In one of the handsomest houses I

instinctively bowed low to a brown woman dressed in a red gown that hung loosely from her lean shoulders. She had just risen from the little sewing machine in front of which she had been squatting. She extended to me a delicate aristocratic hand, the fingers encircled by several sparkling rings, and smiled. Her elderly face showed no trace of the Melanesian Negroid features of the natives of Fiji. Her mother was the daughter of a Tonga chief, from an island where the Polynesian women rival the most beautiful Europeans. This lady, for so she was, was the Chieftainess Andi Kakobau, granddaughter of Queen Thakomban and cousin of Ratu Pope. I do not think I ever saw a more regal-looking woman in my life. Moreover, she is wealthy, owning more than three hundred and fifty acres of the best coconut plantations in the Archipelago. She has never married.

'You are welcome,' she said. 'Please make yourself at home in our guest-house. We shall have a little celebration in your honor. It is late. If you had arrived earlier we should have braided many leis for you.'

I presented the lady with the little automatic fan. She played with it for a moment like a delighted child, then handed it to hold to a servant woman who knelt before her.

I watched from the stone steps of the guesthouse the sunset turn the sea in front of the village red and gold, — 'scrambled eggs and paprika,' my drunken boatman said, — and tried to teach a group of black, woolly-haired island children how to play the Radetzky March upon a mouth organ. I think it was the Radetzky March, though I have never been able to tell that piece for certain from Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*.

My supply of mouth organs made me the favorite uncle of every little black

boy on this chieftains' island. Twenty or thirty of them clustered around me on the steps or scrambled on all fours over the turf-colored elevation upon which the guesthouse stood. They held the mouth organs in their teeth as if they were trying to gnaw them — and the thought flashed into my mind that their grandfathers thus gnawed human bones.

We conversed with each other during intermissions in the concert. Several of the older boys had learned English at the Mission School, but speaking that was not as interesting as to hear me talk Fiji. I jotted down ten or a dozen words in my memorandum book. *Yo* means Yes; *Sengai* means No; *Vinaka* means Thank you; and *Tou veitotaki* means 'Let us be friends.'

I kept repeating 'Tou veitotaki' and encoring something resembling the Radetzky March upon a mouth organ. A Fiji mother, slender as a girl, with an hibiscus flower in the wavy bobbed hair that stood out from her head like a brush, approached with a pleasant smile and plumped down upon my knee the naked baby that she had brought on her back.

At last it grew dark. I ate my own provisions, for I had come unannounced and had arrived late; and my first native meal, of fish, taro, and bread-fruit baked in the ground with hot stones, was deferred till the morrow. They brought, however, fine mats for my bed, and, as a special luxury, a pillow.

The guesthouse was the largest building in Mbau — a dignified hall through whose open doors and porous walls the air circulated freely. Its steep roof was supported by poles wound in patterns with colored native cordage; the walls consisted of matting woven like the fabric of a huge panama hat and ornamented with geometrical patterns in black. The only furniture was a long

table upon which I placed my presents — the bright-colored calicoes, the tobacco, and the bottles of cheap perfumery. I sat Turkish fashion on the mats, resting my back against my valise. A light bobbed up and down in the darkness outside. A native brought a lantern and put it in front of me on the mat. Then others came — all the boys and girls of Mbau, led by old Chief Tui, who ordered them about like a schoolmaster. They squatted down, the boys on one side four deep and the girls on the other, the latter wearing bright-colored cotton garments and wreaths of flowers on their heads. A few of the girls, but only a few, had the peculiar fox-red hair produced by lime bleach.

A couple of statuesque young men stood in the background, their black skins reflecting the light of the lantern. It seemed that most of the warriors, together with Ratu Pope and the rest of the chiefs, had gone to one of the other two hundred and fifty islands in the Fiji group to attend a chieftain's wedding. Only two of the principal inhabitants of Mbau, old Tui and Ratu Bola, remained behind. The latter was now sitting beside me, a vigorous man sixty years old, clad in a sulu and a shirt. He took pains to assure me, however, that he also owned a pair of trousers like a white man.

Ratu Bola spoke a fluent English peculiar to himself, picked up along the waterside at Suva and sprinkled with American slang. He was an imposing-looking man, a true aristocrat, but I cannot deny that he suggested having another glass of whiskey rather frequently. I wanted to keep what was left for presents and not to get this cannibal's grandson intoxicated; so it took the greatest tact to handle the situation. But Ratu Bola was not impudent; he merely was greedy like a child. In order to change the subject I

inquired, 'Do these young folks sing?'

'Betcher life. They'll sing like a shot. Big *mele* for you. Do you drink much whiskey in your country?'

The young folks sang in two-part choruses. I do not know much music, but something told me that it must be wonderful singing. It was not Negroid; neither did it lack harmony; but it was a sweet, pleasing accord of well-trained, colorful voices. The first selection was a patriotic song, Ratu told me, to the effect that it was a glorious thing to live in Fiji where the people were very large and strong. Then they sang a song that they had hastily composed in my honor: 'He comes from Suva in the boat of the apothecary Swan, a foreigner with glasses. He has brought many, many presents with him.' And in order that I might understand the sentiment, the chorus was in English: 'Remember me, for I love you.'

They sang this over and over again, and then other songs, Fiji songs, and also softer melodies from Samoa and Tonga, with 'It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary' for an interlude. After that three wonderfully pretty girls in tapa skirts danced. They danced seated, while the chorus chanted the accompaniment from behind them, moving the upper part of their bodies and their toes and fingers, but particularly their graceful brown arms and hands, to illustrate the meaning of the words.

These songs lasted the whole evening. The singers sat in the obscure background of the hall, while in front of them a dignified functionary squatted before a big, curiously carved calabash in which kava was being brewed with great ceremony. This is the native intoxicant. They grate up kava roots and mix lukewarm water with it. I was given the first cup. Somebody had already told me what the proper ceremonial was. You clap your hands three times and shout 'Bola!' The stuff

tastes a little like chloroform and thick mucilage, but you get accustomed to it.

Ratu Bola sat at my side. It suddenly dawned upon me what his name meant — Prince Prosit! He endeavored to make me understand that kava is excellent but whiskey is also very good; but I pretended not to understand, and listened with affected rapture to the singing. At length Ratu motioned with an air of resignation to the man with the kava, who brought him a coconut cup full of it and squatted humbly before him, for no one stands in front of a chief.

'Whiskey is also excellent,' remarked Prince Prosit reflectively after he had drunk his kava.

At least he got another whiskey, but a very small one; whereupon he became quite voluble. I lay on the cushion and jotted memoranda in my notebook. The man was a perfect slang dictionary.

'Betcher life,' he said. 'Fiji bully country. We here in Mbau only chiefs — chiefs, women, children. Have I children? Betcher life. Forty children. Missionary say many wives no good. I marry one wife one house, another wife another house. That Fiji way.' He wrinkled his forehead thoughtfully, and after a pause continued: 'Missionary no good. You do Fiji way, he say no good, go to Hell. I think I go pretty quick 'nother missionary. Roman Catholic much better. Betcher life.'

But it is doing this excellent old fellow an injustice to quote his words verbatim. He was no minstrel Negro. While the girls were singing in the semidarkness of the great reception hall, this old chief, Ratu Bola, convinced me that he was one of the last real aristocrats on the globe. For few real noblemen are left except on the island of Mbau.

'This house, our House of Lords!' Ratu exclaimed suddenly. And it was in fact. The handsome hall, built on



the spot where the temple of the three-headed idol of the Fijians stood so long, was by no means a mere sleeping-room for vagabond writers like myself, but primarily the Council House of the noblemen of Fiji. Once a year the British Governor of the colony sits down here among his chiefs and they talk to him and tell him what they want.

'And what we no like,' said Ratu Bola, throwing back his noble gray head defiantly.

O masterpiece of English policy! Britain has given the natives of Mbau a sort of make-believe Parliament, a republic of great chieftains, where no policeman dare set foot. Here the fourteen proud descendants of the old rulers of the island sit in council with the representative of the Empire's head.

'No common man,' Ratu said to me, 'dare set foot on Mbau unless a chieftain order him to do so. The chief says: "Go to the mainland. Bring fish, bring taro, bring firewood." The common man goes and brings.'

'See,' said Ratu, extending his slender, delicate brown hands with their brightly polished nails. 'See these hands. Betcher life, never worked all life long. Not damned once.' And he added contemptuously, a moment later, 'Also not write like white man.'

So the old man talked on and on in a loud voice, regardless of the sweet singing of the boys and girls. He painted for me the picture of a feudal society where the prince, the born chieftain, never rose from his mat except for gambling, hunting, or war. It was for the common people, the *koigu*, to climb the trees for coconuts; it was for them to kneel before the chief offering him woven baskets of the best food.

'Fiji way,' said Ratu emphatically. He was clearly a conservative of the bluest dye. 'And nix ladies! By us ladies no account. When my grand-

father die ten—twenty ladies hang themselves. Nix good, women.'

That grandfather of his doubtless loved human flesh. But even in his father's time cannibalism had ceased. I had a faint suspicion, though, that my archconservative companion did not fully approve the innovation. Naturally, however, he had to make some concession to the spirit of the times.

'Betcher life,' he repeated, 'Fiji way good for chief. Good me. Fiji boy not chief also good. He make work, I give much taro. He not make work, he go hungry.'

Where else, O ancient three-headed god of Mbau, have I heard well-fed chieftains talk the same?

Very late that night the elder of the two chiefs distributed my presents with the calm dignity of an ancient patriarch. The singers departed. The chiefs rolled themselves up in mats in the corner farthest from my own and, after conversing a long time in an undertone, fell off to sleep. I half-suspected that Ratu Bola took a flask of whiskey with him, but was too tired to count my stock.

I lay on my mat covered with my raincoat. A spring bed and a mattress might have been more comfortable, especially with a mosquito net. As I lay there I could look through the great open doorway at the starry heavens. It was delightfully cool, and after the rain the fragrance of wet grass and the heavy odor of the white blossoms of frangipani trees filled the room. For a long time I heard no sound but the chirping of crickets, the humming of mosquitoes close to my ears, and now and then a strange bird-cry. Then strains of music were wafted to me from far, far away, under the steep roof of a chieftain's house. Somebody was practising the Radetzky March upon a mouth organ.

# HOTELS AND DIPLOMATS: AN IMAGINARY INTERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

BY 'YAFFLE'

THE disparaging remarks that have been made about Sir Austen Chamberlain lately are a sad reminder that we are falling away from the best traditions.

People ought to know by now that the higher up a man is, and the bigger mess he makes, the more we honor him. Here we have a great man who goes to Geneva to represent the greatest Empire the world has seen for weeks. And people criticize him and make him defend his action as though he were a small boy stealing jam, instead of a statesman upsetting the peace of nations.

This affair has taken us at one step back to the Middle Ages. For, as any historian will tell you, — or, if you can't find an historian, a bus-conductor might do, — in those dark days the more elevated a man's position the more dangerous it was. Things had got to such a pitch that by the end of the sixteenth century people at the top of the tree were liable to have their heads cut off at any moment, and no insurance company would accept a cabinet minister at all, as his chances of another year's life were negligible. But of late years we had altered that. If a man was important enough to be in a high position we always made him an earl if he did anything wrong, so as to convince him that he was above the calumny of lesser men. For, as the poet says, 'a pot's a pot for all that.'

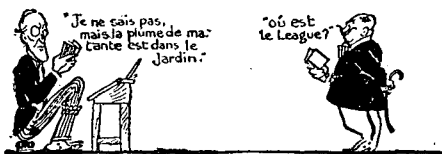
There are many examples of this.

<sup>1</sup> From the *New Leader* (London Labor-Party weekly), April 2

There was Edward Grey, for instance, and Asquith. They let us in for the war, so we made them both earls. Then there was Balfour. He made a secret treaty with France and Russia, which kept the war going for four years instead of only one. So we made him an earl too. In the bad old days a king would have said, 'These caitiffs are duddes. Take away their landes and eke their heddes. We will have their landes. Doe what ye will with their heddes.'

Those evil days have befallen us again. Confident in his belief that the bigger the bloomer the better, Sir Austen goes to Geneva with only a few days in which to smash the League. No one could have guessed from his calm and dignified manner that he was working against time. He may not have smashed the League, but he made it look darned silly. And yet he returned to find everybody grumbling.

Naturally he attributes the cause to the fact that he did not smash the League altogether. I called to see how



He was having a French lesson

he felt about it all. As I entered he was having a French lesson, in order to keep himself in touch with European affairs. He made a fine figure of a man as he stood there with his Garter on one leg, trusting, with that faith that