

the Marquesans, who are their inferiors in mental good qualities, the Tongese are physically unquestionably the finest specimens of mankind to be found anywhere in the world south of the equator.

Dr. Berthold Seeman, who some ten years ago was sent to the Pacific by Her Majesty's Government on a mission of inspection, declares in his report, "All entitled to pronounce an opinion on the subject have agreed that there are few spots in the world where one sees so many handsome people together as in Tonga." He goes on to say, "The unqualified praise given to their good looks by all voyagers has made them rather conceited, and their success in war haughty and arrogant in the extreme." This is nothing but human nature: in any land, he that wins the day will claim the laurel. The Tongæ have fought very much, and almost always at a disadvantage—that is to say, on foreign soil, to which they had to transport themselves by sea—yet in most cases they have been the victors.

The history of Maafu, who is at present one of the most powerful of their chiefs, presents the strongest proof of their bravery and sagacity. He began active life in 1842, by hiring himself and small companies of his people to unprincipled trading captains for the purpose of making voyages to the New Hebrides, and there cutting sandalwood by force of arms. Having gained much experience in these affrays, he invaded Fiji in 1848, and for a series of years carried fire and sword into a great part of it. Indeed, it is well understood that he would have made himself absolute master of the whole of that great archipelago, had not the Governments of England and the United States instructed their representatives to arrest his operations. When at the height of his power, his force consisted of 3,000 of his own countrymen and a like number of Fijian allies. He still maintains a very strong body of followers, his magazines are well stored, and he has many pieces of cannon. As his expeditions have been chiefly conducted by sea, it will be easily understood that he must be a man of great daring and perseverance.

The government of Tonga is liberal, enlightened, and respectable. It is Protestant, but there is no oppression of other creeds permitted. The laws are just and strictly enforced; there is no respect of persons before the law: the King himself sets the example of obedience. The Statutes are printed, and distinctly understood by all the people. All the great islands are divided by broad roads, laid out by a European engineer; they are formed and kept in repair by the labour of such as have been convicted of crimes. There is an efficient police, and for the defence of the country all the able-bodied men are supplied with arms (*i.e.* a musket and bayonet) by their Government, and are required to attend a regular drill twice every week. The musketry instructors are Europeans of experience, having both served in wars, one under General Sherman, the other with Garibaldi. They receive a liberal salary and good quarters from the King, who also maintains a secretary, a land surveyor, a surgeon, and several skilled mechanics, all Europeans.

The laws of Tonga forbid the sale of land to foreigners; but it is permitted to be leased upon liberal conditions for so long a term as to be tantamount to actual sale.

All traders, planters, or permanent foreign residents not in the service of the Government are obliged to take out a license. Spirits and some other articles pay a heavy duty. All the people contribute to the support of the State. The tax upon an adult male is six dollars per annum.

The government is administered by the King personally, assisted by a Council. On each of the great islands there resides a Governor. They are men of superior intelligence: they speak English, dress well, and live in handsome houses built after the European fashion, of imported materials. A short time ago, I had occasion to visit the Governor of Vavao. His name is David (that of the King is George, and of Maafu, Charley. All high-caste Tongese take great pride in English names). David is a man of huge stature, and of so noble a presence that he looks not much the worse from having lost an eye in the wars. He wore a very handsome uniform, which had been made to his order in Sydney, and, together with his sword and other accessories, had cost him £200. His house would be regarded in the Australian Colonies as a fitting residence for any high official personage below the rank of a Viceroy. It is constructed of imported materials; all the interior paneled and polished, the furniture of every room being elegant and costly, and imported from New South Wales. In the centre of the building is a large dining-hall, with stained glass doors at each end. It is only used on state occasions. Here the table was laid with every requisite, fine linen, plate, and cut glass. The cook was a Chinaman, the pantler a negro. A better or more elegantly served dinner one would scarcely expect in Sydney; everything was in profusion, even to champagne and soda water. This David, like all his colleagues in the Government of Tonga, apes the manners of a British officer. One remark he made was very characteristic of the man. I perceived on a Sunday afternoon that he did not leave the house, although his people were all at church for the second time. I inquired the reason, and he replied, "I have been this morning; too much church is not good. I have been told that English gentlemen do not go to church more than once in the day. We got our religion and our laws from the English. Why, then, should we not imitate their customs in other respects?" This is but the expression of the general feeling of the ruling race of Tonga. They have been so long accustomed to act by English advice, that when a time of trouble overtakes them (and it is approaching surely and rapidly, and may arrive at any moment), it is upon England that they will seek to lean.

In the Tongese character there is a certain amount of craft, which may be wickedness or wisdom; but they possess one peculiarity of which Polynesians are generally altogether deficient—they can keep a secret; and in politics they will not show their hand either to friend or foe.

If one chances now to question any man of influence in Tonga as to the immediate future of his islands, his countenance falls, he seeks to change the subject, or becomes sombre, silent, and even suspicious. The reason is plain enough. There is a dark cloud hanging over the Friendly Isles, which must burst shortly and rain blood, unless some strong Power mercifully steps in to disperse the elements of mischief. There has been a war in Samoa (now said to be terminated). It has lasted for more than four years, and has in a great measure devastated the most fertile island of that group. It has been conducted upon a most sanguinary principle, and has left behind a legacy of misery from which it will take many years to recover. The same, if not prevented, is about to happen in Tonga, but with even more disastrous results, forasmuch as these political animosities have been intensified by