

went to the Court-house, a large stone building to the right of the dwelling-house; the queer "chop—thud—thud—chop" came from there now. As they gained the door the sound went back to the sleeping-hut. They followed it with dogged determination; it had gone to the bush at the back. They followed, then it came from the beach. On to the beach they went; then they looked at one another nonplussed; for it came from over the sea in a weird wail. For some moments they remained silent—a silence that seemed to "freeze them. It was

been cut or recently fallen. But, no; there was no sign of any such thing.

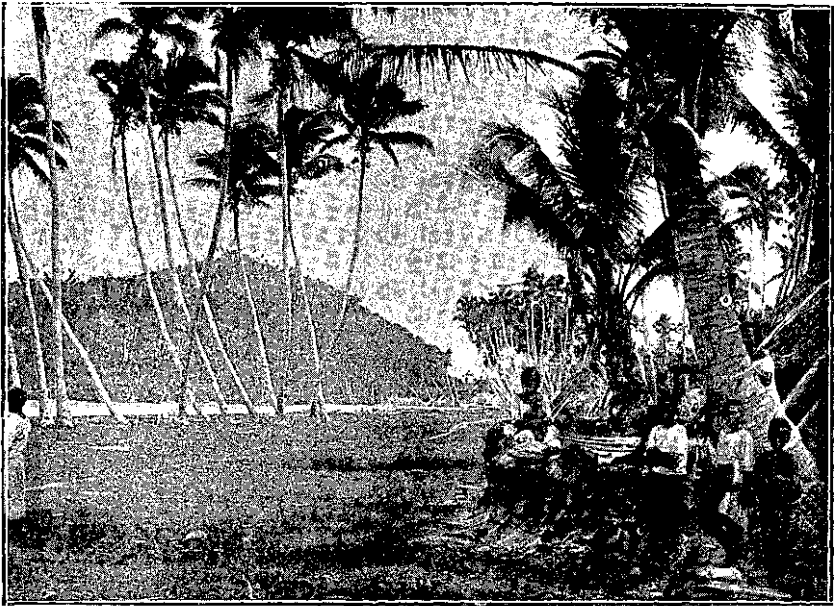
"Friday, who is cutting wood on Marafu's land every night?"

Friday glanced sharply at Dyson.

"Good God, sir, have you heard it, too! It's the chief's land, sir, and no one goes to cut there until next month; then they cut copra for the taxes."

"Well, then, what is this noise?" asked Dyson, sharply.

"Excuse me, sir, I am a native like the rest, but I have travelled much, and know the white man's



Waters, photo,

Solokopi, Rotuma.

Fiji.

broken by Jack, who said in an imploring voice:

"For the love of God, let it rest, boys! Let it alone, I pray you. Ask Friday, Mr Dyson, he will explain."

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Friday had opened the Court-house, and the tropical sun burnt fiercely in the open doors. Dyson strolled down with his pipe. He had been up since four a.m., having gone all over the bush with the others to see if any trees had

ways. You will only say, 'Puff, all rot,' if I tell you what it is."

"No, Friday, I can feel with you in this, for have we not fished together, and drunk our kava together?"

"Sir, Mr Dyson, it's what we natives call the 'Atua.' It means that a great chief is near Li Mare—that is in English near the land of the departed. As the Atua has warned Vailoga, it means that it is either the Puri, his wife, or child. I have spoken!"

"Thank you, Friday," was the