



EXPERIENCES OF A "BLACKBIRDER": AMONG THE GILBERT ISLANDERS.

ABOUT two years ago Mr. W. H. Brommage, a young Englishman, inspired by a love of adventure, and a strong desire to visit the islands of the South Seas, determined, if possible, to sail on the schooner *Montserrat*, then about to leave the port of San Francisco. The vessel was supposed to be bound for British Columbia, but he believed her to be a "blackbirder,"—that is, a ship engaged in the deportation of South Sea Islanders to work upon plantations in Australia, Central America, and elsewhere. Being refused a passage, he shipped as a common sailor, and having in earlier days followed a seafaring life for some years, he was soon appointed quartermaster, in which capacity he had charge of one of the boats in which the "blackbirds" were taken from their island home to the ship, to be conveyed to plantations in Guatemala.

The commander of the *Montserrat* was Captain Blackburn, but the projector of the enterprise was W. H. Fergu-

son, formerly connected with the unfortunate *Tahiti*, which capsized at sea with four hundred "blackbirds" on board. The *Montserrat* carried a graduate of the San Francisco Cooper Medical College as doctor, and a Mr. James Osborne as passenger. To the latter we are indebted for the photographs illustrating this article, the negatives being taken by Captain Davis, of H. B. M. S. *Royalist*. Passing over the voyage, I will proceed at once with the narrative of incidents at Butaritari, and other islands of the Gilbert, or Kingmill, Archipelago, from which group came several of the South Sea Islanders at the Midwinter Fair.

Butaritari, called the "touching island," from the fact that it is the nearest of the Gilbert group to the passing Australian steamers, was sighted on May 26, 1892. Its coast line is so low-lying that the beach was not discerned until the ship was within five miles of it. Butaritari is long and narrow, being not more than thirteen miles in length

by a quarter of a mile in width. Upon a map of ordinary scale a pin's head would fairly cover it.

To seafaring men not accustomed to regions where reefs run out eight or ten miles from land into the ocean, and where for a distance of perhaps twelve miles in a circle round an island coral reefs abound, the approach to a coral island is a very ticklish business. A swerve to the right or left in the narrow channel that gives entrance to the lagoon would mean destruction to the vessel, and perhaps to all on board. Having this danger in their minds, Captains Blackburn and Ferguson deemed it wisest to cruise about during the night, and effect an entrance in the morning.

Next day, as soon as the Montserrat was sighted from the island, two white traders came off to the ship to act as pilots. The two captains and the traders went aloft to pick out the channel, and issued their orders to the mate, who stood on the bridge, and passed the commands on to the quartermasters. Once fairly in the channel, the land was now ahead, then astern, and soon on the port or starboard side of the vessel. Two men were heaving the lead constantly, one crying out, "No bottom at twenty fathoms," while the other would shout, "By the mark ten fathoms," though there was only the breadth of the ship between them. The perils of navigation in such waters can easily be imagined; the direction of the ship is kept constantly changing; the wheel is "hard up" or "hard down" until the anchorage is reached.

Three distinct colors are to be seen in the waters of these channels — blue, green, and brown. The blue water generally indicates the safe course, while the brown water must be avoided as shallow and dangerous. These colors cannot be seen to any considerable distance by a man standing on the deck, but by one aloft they can be readily discerned.

When we reached the safe refuge of the lagoon, we found two other schooners at anchor there,—the Equator and the Tarawa. The latter, having left San Francisco after the Equator, brought down the more recent news, among which was an item of much interest and importance to the natives, viz., the news that their King, Tibureimoa, who had been visiting California in the hope of inducing the United States to take over from him the island of Butaritari, and incidentally to taste the sweets of a higher civilization than his own, would return to his realm on the Montserrat. Tibureimoa's kingdom consists of three islands,—Butaritari, Big Moku, and Little Moku, with a population of about four thousand persons. Each of the foreign traders doing business in his kingdom pays a tax of a hundred dollars a year; each man among his subjects pays a poll tax of one dollar; each woman, half a dollar; and each child, a quarter of a dollar. Besides this, the fines imposed for offenses against the law, for breaches of the peace and crimes, are paid to the King. Altogether he has an income of about eight thousand dollars a year, and he is also supplied with the best fish caught in the waters of his realm, and with the choicest coconuts. On the whole, he lives an easy life, free from care, and unburdened by any high sense of responsibility.

He is assisted in affairs of state by a council of old men, but he has absolute control of the lands of his subjects, and can confiscate them for non-payment of fines due to him. The population of his realm is diminishing, partly owing to the rough treatment which young mothers receive at child-birth, and partly also to the fact that large families are not desired. Tibureimoa has had one public work of some magnitude constructed,—a mole fifteen hundred feet long, fourteen feet wide, and eight feet above high water. The stones used in the construction of this useful, and for so small a

country really great undertaking, were gathered with much labor from all parts of the island, and transported on men's backs to the place where they were required.

During his stay in California, the King's "guide, philosopher, and friend," a pilot named Jack, had died, and this loss preyed much upon the good old sovereign's spirits. He spent much of his time in sad contemplation of the salt

ing death, and perishes from sheer lack of will force. But Tibureimoa was more lucky than most of his countrymen in like case. The people on board the Montserrat did all they could to cheer him up, and lively conversation, combined with strong stimulants, saved him. From the moment that he recovered hope he began to mend rapidly, and spent much of the rest of the voyage in playing cards, drinking wine, and listen-



A VILLAGE SCENE.

sea-waves, and seemed unable to rouse himself from his lethargy. At last he caught a cold and became quite ill. The ship's doctor pronounced his sickness to be pneumonia, and the King thought his last hour was very near at hand. He called his attendants round him, gave up his keys of office to them, and sent his farewell messages to his subjects at Butaritari. When an islander gives himself up in this way, he does almost always die. He offers no resistance to approach-

ing to the music of a guitar. By the time of our arrival at Butaritari he was well enough to take part in the ceremonies attendant upon his return.

The appearance of the Montserrat at Butaritari naturally caused much excitement, which spread through the island like a conflagration. Natives, soldiers, and policemen, ran around with their arms full of palm branches, cocoanut leaves, and other emblems of joy. They evidently meant to surprise their sov-

ereign by a reception brilliant enough to eclipse anything ever before seen in the islands, and destined to be handed down as a great event in the history of Butaritari. And indeed Tibureimoa deserved this outburst of loyalty, not only as their King, but as the wisest ruler they have had. He is beloved by all his people, and respected by all the white people who have had dealings with him. His laws are strict, and he sees that they are carried out to the very letter. By this course he has made Butaritari the most prosperous island in the Gilbert Group.

At sunrise every piece of bunting the ship possessed was hung aloft, and the Montserrat looked very gay, the schooners anchored near her presenting a comparatively poor and insignificant appearance. To quote the forcible expression of a white trader, "the Montserrat loomed up like a nigger's face in a pan of milk." While the steam-launch was being got ready, the King was arraying himself in a manner intended to "paralyze" his subjects. He wore American-made trousers, a Prince Albert coat, and a collar of such prodigious dimensions that no laundry-woman would charge it as "one piece" in a wash-bill. At first Tibureimoa demurred about the collar, as it kept his head up uncomfortably high, and for the further reason that it would make his people think that his visit to the Pacific Slope had rendered him too proud to regard them in as kindly a manner as before; but a little persuasion from the Captain overcame his scruples, and he bravely donned it. At 11 A. M. everything was in readiness, and the King, his son Paul, and his niece, attended by Captains Ferguson and Blackburn, the doctor, Mr. Osborne, and an interpreter, stepped over the ship's side into the launch. The white coral beach was lined with people dressed in garments of the gayest colors; overhead were the waving branches of the palm, cocoanut, and pandanus trees, the

whole forming a striking picture. Nor was the effect marred by the sight of any old or tattered raiment, for those who were too poor to get a new suit for this great occasion kept well in the background. At the wharf two cocoanut trees, cut down for the purpose, had been formed into an arch, stretched over which was a piece of white calico, having painted upon it in bright colors the words, "Welcome Home, our Royal King." The bodyguard of twenty soldiers was commanded by the heir apparent, dressed in an old naval uniform, the private soldiers wearing white ornamented with red stripes down the trousers. They were equipped with weapons of all kinds, from the ancient flintlock to the modern repeating rifle. When the King stepped on shore he was met by the traders and missionaries, who welcomed him home. The guard having fired a military salute, Tibureimoa was escorted to the Queen, who sat on the veranda of the missionaries' house. Here began a long series of nose rubbings, followed by loud yelling.

After these preliminary outbursts, the procession marched along the avenue towards the palace. The avenue is twelve feet wide, and was almost the entire length of the island; it has a border of coral a foot in height, is macadamized with white coral, and has on each side thickly growing cocoanut, banana, and pandanus trees, the branches of which meet and interlace overhead, and reach to within about ten feet of the ground. Well shaded as the avenue was, the heat was intense, and the King, as he marched along, clad in the garments of a higher and more exacting civilization, looked miserable indeed. Before he had traversed more than a hundred yards, his huge collar wilted. When the first arch was reached, the Missionary came forward, and offered up a thanksgiving for the King's safe return; whereat the people waved their hats, and gave three rousing cheers.



AN EIGHT-YEAR OLD GILBERT ISLAND GIRL.

Then they moved on towards the second arch ; but midway between the two arches the King could endure his collar no longer ; he took it off, and his Prince Albert coat also. When the second arch was reached, thanks for the King's safe return were again offered ; and so it went on until all arrived at the palace. The King took advantage of each halt to divest himself of some irksome article of dress, and had the royal house been a hundred yards farther, his attire would have been reduced to stockings and garters, for as he walked into his home a single garment only remained. His guests at once sat down to dinner, and having made a clean sweep of the food provided, they left the wearied King to the enjoyment of rest and domestic peace.

The ship's doctor, not having any work to do until some "blackbirds" were secured, usually spent his days in idling about on shore in company with Mr. Osborne. When it became generally known that one of the two was a real

live, full-fledged medico, people used to sit on the steps of the King's house, waiting until he came along. They then applied to him for treatment for their various ailments and maladies, Osborne acting as surgeon's assistant. Between them they did lots of work, and were brought into contact with most of the natives living in the part of the island occupied by traders. They found no particular difficulty in picking up enough of the language for purposes of communication. The natives esteem the medical profession highly ; indeed it is held by them as next in rank and dignity to the kingly office. On this account the doctor and his assistant were kindly treated everywhere. The doctor especially became a favorite with the young girls, and as "he walked his flowery way" along the avenue, more than one dusky maiden might be espied taking sly peeps at him from behind a covert of cocoanut palms. At first the doctor was disposed to think it very rude and bold for the girls to come out

and stare at him, especially as they wore nothing but a handful of grass around their waists. But alas! human nature — or male human nature, at any rate — is weak, and the doctor soon lost this feeling of natural shyness, and reconciled himself to the open admiration of the fair sex. One day he spoke to the girls, but they scampered off in every direction, their bare arms and legs flashing in the sunshine. Hearing that the women were fond of perfume, he filled his atomizer with eau de cologne, and stealing unawares upon a maiden, sprayed it over her neck and shoulders. She, becoming conscious of the sweet scent, turned round to seek an explanation, and seeing the doctor, opened her mouth (displaying as she did so two rows of pearly white teeth), uttered one wild yell, and bolted. The wily doctor's scheme, however, was ultimately crowned with success, for on his return nearly a score of the fair damsels, having heard of their companion's adventure, were awaiting him. From that time forth the mutual shyness seemed to wear off.

During our stay at Butaritari, the doctor performed one decidedly novel operation. The king's nephew had, as the natives commonly have, great holes in his ears. Some one having told him that the Californians did not wear pockets in their ears, he desired to have his "filled"; for he intended some day to visit the Pacific Coast, and did not wish to be an object of unusual attention. Before beginning the operation the doctor desired to see how many articles the native really can carry in his ears, and asked his patient to stuff in as much as he could. Accordingly he put into the hole in the lobe of his right ear a box of matches, a clay pipe, two pieces of tobacco, and a pen-knife; and into the lobe of the left ear, an undershirt and a waist-cloth. After discharging cargo, the operation was begun. The edges of the holes were trimmed and sewn up, the patient seeming to feel no pain

during the operation, and quietly smoking a cigarette. After a lapse of eight days the ears were entire, and a scar was the only indication that there had ever been holes. The success of the operation soon became known all over the island, and had the doctor remained he might have acquired a fortune, for the natives had fully made up their minds that it was not the correct thing to have great holes in their ears.

On the day before we left Butaritari an incident occurred which was rather amusing. Both the doctor and Osborne were keen collectors of curios, and each tried to outdo the other in the size and variety of his collection. One day Osborne said that he knew of a Samoan family who had lots of mats for sale. Going to the house, Osborne, who was the better linguist, conducted the negotiations. He came out saying that the old man was asleep, and that he did not care to wake him.

As they walked away, Osborne said to the doctor, "Why should n't we stay down here, and get married? That fellow in there has four women fanning him all the time to keep the mosquitoes off. That sort of thing would suit me splendidly."

The doctor made no reply to the matrimonial scheme, but on their return the two called again at the Samoan bungalow. Still the man slept on, and the four women fanned him diligently. Osborne, unwilling to wake him, proposed to go on as far as Crawford's store, and on their return to wait until the old man should wake.

At the third call, the man still slumbered, and the women still fanned. Osborne, provoked at the delay, gave the sleeper a vigorous shake, but had hardly done so before something seemed to affect his nose, for he began to sniff vigorously. The doctor also observed a smell familiar enough to him, and after a look into the man's face backed out of the room, asking Osborne whether he

meant to wait until the sleeper woke up.

When Osborne announced his determination to wait, the doctor said, "Well, so long, I'm off. I don't care to stay until the Resurrection Day for a few mats. That's a 'stiff' you're shaking."

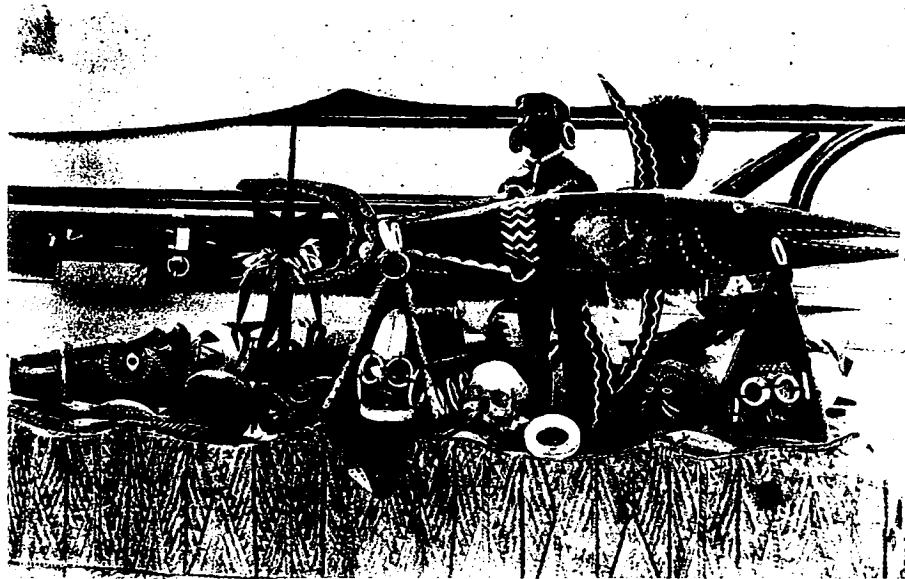
Osborne gave one terrified look at the corpse, and rushed wildly out. Upon inquiries from the neighbors it was ascertained that the man had died six days before.

It is no uncommon occurrence in the islands for a dead body to be kept even longer than six days, the surviving members of the family eating and sleeping beside it all the time, and constantly fanning it to keep it cool, and to prevent flies from settling upon it. The relatives of the deceased take turns in performing this pious labor.

While the Montserrat was anchored in the lagoon at Marakei, the British war ship *Royalist*, under the command of Captain Davis, R. N., came in, and a

British officer soon afterwards came aboard the *Montserrat*. From the officers of the ship we learned that the British government had taken formal possession of all the islands composing the Gilbert group, and that the natives were now being deprived of their fire-arms. The natives were delighted to find themselves under British protection, and when the Union Jack was raised over the islands they shouted even louder than the blue-jackets. And not only the natives, but the white traders also, are pleased at the annexation, which means for them justice, good order, and security of life and property.

After the *Montserrat's* papers relative to the business in which she was engaged had been examined, two letters were handed in,—one for Garrick, the ship's interpreter, and the other for Captain Blackburn. The letter reminded Garrick of the laws of 1874 and 1876, providing that natives should not be deported while under the influence of liq-



SOUTH SEA IDOLS.

uors or opium, or of terror produced by the use of fire-arms or explosives ; and further warned him against giving or selling any of these articles to the natives, under peril of punishment. The letter to Captain Blackburn was of similar import, with the further warning that, as he was taking natives from what had become British soil, they must be treated as British subjects ; and if on inquiry it should be found that this had not been done, the ship's owners would be held responsible. Then the quarters occupied by the native laborers were inspected and approved ; the British officers returned to their ship, which soon afterwards steamed away, much to the relief of Captain Blackburn and Ferguson, who did not wish a British officer to institute a close inquiry into their doings.

While we were lying at Tarawa, another island of the Gilbert group, the Royalist again appeared, and caused Ferguson much uneasiness, for he had neglected to give out clothes to the native laborers, a thing which should have been done as soon as they were taken on board. Instantly all was bustle and excitement, the Captain being very eager to get the natives into clothes of some sort before the Royalist came to anchor. Osborne was asked to deal out the clothes, and Ferguson himself began hurriedly to make out the labor contracts. A pair of trousers and a jumper were snatched up and tossed to a native, no regard whatever being paid to his size or figure, which however did not matter, provided only that all the natives had clothes of some sort before the man-of-war came in too close. Soon the Royalist came alongside, and entered into negotiations for coal. Captain Blackburn sold one hundred tons to the British man-of-war, and would have sold the whole ship had it been demanded. For the first time in his life Captain Blackburn was constrained to put on a polite manner ; he could not do enough

to please Captain Davis, and no request of the British officer was too burdensome to be readily granted.

During his stay at Tarawa the British Captain was engaged in settling disputes between the natives and traders, and in dealing out punishment to offenders for crimes committed within the past fifteen years. Some were fined, others exiled, and sentence of death was passed upon one native who had murdered a whiteman at Butaritari, twelve years before. The story of the crime, which Captain Davis learned at Butaritari, was shortly this : The native had gone into a store to buy gin, which the shop-keeper, well aware of the penalties for selling strong drink to natives, refused to sell to him. In the presence of two witnesses he threatened as he went away to return and kill the trader. During the day he got intoxicated upon native liquor, which aggravated his desire for stronger drink. In the evening he went back to the store, and under pretence of buying tobacco gained an entrance. Then he watched his opportunity and ran a knife through the trader's body, killing him almost instantly. He contrived to hide until a schooner was ready to sail, smuggled himself on board, and escaped to Tarawa. Thither Captain Davis sailed to arrest him and put him on trial. The Captain took with him his private secretary, a first lieutenant, and a squad of bluejackets ; called on the King, explained the object of his visit, and demanded the arrest of the accused. The King at once sent out some policemen, who in a quarter of an hour came back with the man. The King was then told to collect his chiefs, and to proceed at once with the trial. Everything was quickly in readiness, and the trial began. The accused tried to prove an alibi, denying that he was in Butaritari at the time of the murder, and saying that his brothers and sisters would substantiate his statement. When asked on what island they lived, he replied,

"At Miana." Captain Davis decided to go to Miana at once, to get the necessary evidence. The accused was handcuffed to one of the supports inside the house, and the King warned not to permit him to escape. The Royalist steamed off to Miana, procured the testimony required, and returned. The trial was begun anew. The accused's relatives testified that he was at Butaritari at the time of the crime. The King and his chiefs being asked individually their opinion, replied that they believed the accused guilty. On being asked what punishment should be inflicted, the King suggested the native punishment of cutting the victim all over the body. But Captain Davis would not hear of this: "There shall be no butchering," said he; "he must be shot, or allowed to go free."

Then all present assented to his being shot. The King wished the bluejackets to fire at him, but Captain Davis said that the native policemen ought to execute the sentence, and that they might use the muskets of the British sailors.

During all this time the luckless prisoner was standing with his back to the pole supporting the house, and with his hands tied behind him, intently and calmly watching every movement made by the Captain. When asked if he had any reason to offer why he should not be put to death, he replied that he had none, but that he would like to see his wife. The Captain promised to send for his wife, and to permit them to spend fifteen minutes together. Soon she came, a passage being opened for her through the crowd sitting silently round the house. She was a mere girl, not more than fifteen years of age, and really pretty. When the King told her that her husband was condemned to death, she rushed to him, threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed as though her heart would break. The prisoner whispered some words, and seemed to pacify her, for she ceased to cry; yet

her bosom heaved spasmodically, and it was plain that though she made no sound, she was suffering terribly.

The Captain twirled his moustache, and looking at the prisoner, said to his First Lieutenant, "That man has not a bad face: I am very unwilling to put him to death; yet justice must be done. This is the second murder committed within the past fifteen years, and the crime must be stopped, even though it be necessary to punish several persons."

The prisoner, on being told that the fifteen minutes allotted to him to bid his wife farewell had expired, said that he would be ready as soon as he had had a drink. His poor little girl wife ran out, procured a green cocoanut, opened it, and gave it to him. A clean shirt and overalls were handed to him, and he changed his clothes for the last time. After one long, lingering embrace, his wife was taken away, and the missionary came in. To him the prisoner confessed his guilt. Then he was led handcuffed along the beach, under a guard of five native policemen. Captain Davis, wishing to make the execution as impressive as possible, issued an order that all the males in the village should be present, but that the women and girls should be excluded. As the prisoner marched along, he cast furtive glances at the bluejackets resting on their guns at the spot where he was to die. They began to tie a handkerchief over his eyes, but to this he objected; and as he could not use his hands, tried to prevent its being done by moving his head from side to side. At last his eyes were bandaged, and two bluejackets pinioned his arms behind him, and tied him with his back to a tree. Then for the first time his courage seemed to fail, and his knees gave way, but he was quickly straightened up, and his legs tied. Meanwhile some of the natives scrambled up the cocoanut trees, and others on to the roof of an adjacent hut, to get a good view of the execution.

The bluejackets advanced in double-quick time, and forming in line at a distance of ten paces, leveled their pieces at the prisoner. The native policemen stood in front of, but between, the sailors, whose muskets were handed to them. The interpreter gave a few hasty instructions to the policemen where to direct their fire. When Captain Davis saw that all was ready, he gave the order to fire: the interpreter raised his hat as a signal; in an instant flame flashed from the muzzles of the rifles, and at the report the prisoner's head fell backward. Four of the bullets pierced his heart, and the fifth entered just below the chin, so that death must have been instantaneous. His body was immediately unbound from the tree, and laid upon the path. His shirt was open so as to expose his breast, and the crowd eagerly gathered around to look at the bullet holes. The body was borne away by the dead man's friends.

I had heard much of the bravery of the islanders in battle, and of their utter disregard of danger and death, but tribal wars being now things of the past, I had no chance of witnessing a pitched battle, as Mr. Romilly, a Deputy Commissioner of the Western Pacific, had the good fortune to do. I therefore considered myself fortunate in witnessing the execution just narrated.

At Tapitonea, another island of the Gilbert group, Captain Davis sentenced a native missionary, named Kapau, to exile. He was a religious fanatic, who fifteen years before practically ruled the island, and exerted all his efforts to convert the islanders to his faith. Failing in this, he separated his followers from the rest, gathered them together, and moved away to another part of the island. Here a large village was founded, and extensive preparations made for war upon the unbelievers. Kapau worked his people up to such a pitch of religious frenzy that they were just as eager to fight as he himself was. When

their preparations were complete, they marched in a body upon the rest of the population, and catching them unprepared, murdered 3500 of them in a single day, piled the corpses together in heaps, and burned them. After this terrible massacre all the survivors hastened to join the ranks of the fanatic, in the hope of escaping the death that seemed the almost certain penalty of non-conformity.

After leaving Butaritari, where she had lain for ten days, the Montserrat sailed for Maraki, another islet of the Gilbert group, and there she obtained her first draft of "blackbirds." Ferguson and Garrick visited the king, and inviting him and the missionary to come on board the Montserrat, plied them with food and liquors until they were ready to consent to anything. After this the ship's boats visited the island daily, and induced many of the people to come with them. At Apiang, the island on which Garrick's home is, comparatively few natives were secured, as Garrick refused to try to induce the people of his own island, who were heavily in his debt, to leave, their return being a matter of very grave uncertainty. At Parawa the Royalist was again in harbor, and the presence of the man-of-war rendering forcible methods impossible, very few laborers were induced to sign labor contracts. Thence the Montserrat went on to Nanouti, and afterwards visited Taputouea, Peru, Nukunau, Aroroi, and Tamana. Altogether 388 men, women, and children, were in various ways enticed on board the ship.

While the labor-ship was cruising round the islands, the natives were well fed, well clothed, and supplied with plenty of tobacco and water. But once the ship had secured as many laborers as she could get or find room for, all this was changed. The water-tanks were closed, and that greatest luxury to an islander — a bath — became impossible. They resorted to every device to get a

little water, but all their efforts were brutally thwarted by the officers and men of the vessel. A shower of rain was welcomed with the greatest delight, and the health-giving drops were caught in every available can, cup, or coconut. Several of the natives tried to escape by swimming from the vessels, but they were fired at, and a ship's boat lowered in pursuit soon brought them back.

The last island visited was Tamana, which was left on August 9th. A weary voyage of twenty-three days brought the ship to San José de Guatemala. Here Ferguson left the ship, and going up to the city of Guatemala returned with several sugar-planters, who were much pleased with the appearance of most of the men. But some wrinkled, old, emaciated men and women the planters at first refused to take. However, Ferguson said that they must take all or none-so they reluctantly consented to accept all. The partings between the poor people were full of sadness, for they felt that, in all human probability, they would never see each other again. Cattle-trucks were sent down to the wharf to convey the laborers from the ports to the plantations. Here the sad truth first began to dawn upon them that they were intended to work on sugar-plantations, where the work is much harder than upon coffee haciendas.

The natives from the island of Miana

were taken on to Ocos. To reach the plantations they had to make a journey of seventy miles, crossing a mountain range. For this purpose mules were obtained, but as there were not enough for all, some were compelled to walk. It was the wet season, and the trail was broken and full of holes. The march was a dismal and toilsome one, and would have been even worse than it was had not the surgeon kept riding up and down the long line, doing all he could to alleviate the poor creatures' sufferings. Twice a day halts for meals were made, and the nights were passed in old sheds, built at intervals of fifteen miles along the roads. Here fires were lighted, beside which the poor people, too weary to take off their wet garments, lay down and slept the sleep of weariness and exhaustion.

Upon the plantations themselves the laborers are not so very badly treated, for there they are the property of their owners, and men treat their own property well, especially when it is of considerable value. But they are brought from a thoroughly healthy climate, where disease is almost unknown, to a fever-stricken region. Within twelve months their numbers will probably be reduced to one third, and at the expiration of the three years a wofully diminished number will return to their lovely homes in the Western Pacific.

*Arthur Inkersly and
W. H. Brommage.*

