

Hearing that there was to be a "meke meke" or native dance at the next village, Bureta, we went on to this place, the path crossing and recrossing continually a stream which here runs through comparatively flat land, and in places is as much as 20 yards across. We found numerous visitors in Bureta, many of whom had passed us on the road. All were dressed in their best, with bright new girdles of yellow and scarlet dyed Pandanus leaves, bodies and hair freshly oiled, ornaments displayed, and faces painted black or red or a mixture of both.

The various methods of dressing the hair are so numerous as to be indescribable. The thickly growing crisp mop of fine close curls is trimmed just as an old-fashioned yew hedge used to be. Sometimes a single thick tuft is left projecting from the back of the head, sometimes a diagonal ridge-like tuft, sometimes one, two, or more small plaited tails only, sometimes a curtain-like fringe shading the neck.

The hair is constantly dressed with shell or coral lime, both to kill vermin and to change the colour, and also, certainly, as a fashion. Most of the young Mbau chiefs that I saw had their hair always in this condition. These young chiefs cut their hair in front in a straight line across the forehead and square at the temples; and, in fact, trimmed it so that when whitened with lime it reminded one most forcibly of a barrister's wig. A young Mbau chief was on a visit at Bureta, and besides having his hair whitened, his face was blackened for the meke, and the contrast between black and white was most effective.

Kaava* drinking was going on in the chief's house at the time of our arrival, the young Mbau chief presiding at the ceremony. It is usual to decry kaava as a drink altogether, because, no doubt, of the nasty manner in which it is prepared, but some persons who habitually drink it praise it as extremely pleasant and cooling. Many of the resident whites at Fiji, as I was told, took kaava once or twice daily, and I knew personally of a German planter and an English settler who did so. It seems, however, that in all Polynesia, it is only at Fiji that this occurs. In the Sandwich Islands and in Tahiti the Whites never think of drinking kaava, but scout the idea.

The taste is at first strange and unpleasant, and has often been compared to that of Gregory's mixture. Travellers seldom make more than one trial of the drink. The taste is, however, certainly not more unpleasant than that of London porter, for example, must be on the first occasion to French-

* A solution in water of the chewed root of a Pepper (*Piper muthy-sticum*). An intoxicating drink.