

occupying this quarter of Mbau, for even on this small island the people were often much divided. On going up the hill we came suddenly upon two old women bathing in a fresh water pool; they made for deep water in a hurry, but I saw that they were tattooed of a uniform indigo blue colour, from the hips to near the knees, just like the Samoan men.

“ King Thackombau was visited in the morning by two of our party, who took him by surprise; he was found lying on his stomach, reading his Bible. I went with a party afterwards and we were regularly announced. The King, who was dressed in a flannel shirt, and a waist cloth reaching to his knees, rose to receive us, and came forward and shook hands. He is a very fine looking man, 6 feet high, with his dark face set off by an abundance of grey hair; his eyes are bright and intelligent, and his face full of expression, in this respect very different from that of the ordinary Fijian of lower rank. Three chairs were produced, this being the whole stock in the house, and those of our party without chairs sat on the matted floor. The King reclined on his stomach as before, on his own peculiar mat, at the head of our circle, with his Bible and Prayer Book neatly piled on the right hand front corner of the mat. We said, through our interpreter, that we were glad to see His Majesty looking so well, and explained the nature of the voyage we were making in the Challenger. I was then deputed to give an account of the wonders of the deep sea. In this subject Thackombau took the liveliest interest, inquiring about what kinds of animals existed in the deep water, evidently knowing the shallow water ones well. He was very much interested in the fact that they are so often blind. He said he could not understand the depth in miles, but comprehended it perfectly in fathoms. He then inquired the strength of the various navies, asking after that of England, Germany, France, Russia, and America, and wanting to know even the numbers of wooden and iron ships. The information we gave him drew from him the remark that the English were a wonderful people, far greater than the Fijians. The house was a large barn-like one of ordinary Fijian structure, with tall open roof, and a sleeping place separated off at one end with a ‘tappa’ curtain. There was the usual square hearth, with its edging of stone. Overhead were stored the heads of canoe masts. A European chest of drawers, a table, a lamp, and two tin coffee-pots, were the only visible articles of luxury. Against the door-post hung a fine club, freshly painted blue, belonging to the king’s youngest son. We asked the king for a pilot to take us up the mouth of the Wai Levu, the great river which opens nearly opposite Mbau. He sent out at once to order one for us, and we took our leave of this knowing old Christian, who is currently reported to have partaken of two thousand human bodies, and is certainly known to have cut out, cooked, and eaten a man’s tongue, in the man’s sight, as a preparation to putting the rest of him in the oven, and that merely to spite the man because he begged hard not to be tortured, but clubbed at once. The contrast between Thackombau and King George of Tonga was very striking, at least as far as concerns their behaviour before visitors: Thackombau took the liveliest