

The policy of the Wesleyan Society pursued in Fiji is very different from that maintained by the missionaries in Tonga, where dancing is suppressed. The village was full of visitors, and everyone was dressed in his best. The dancing green in front of the chief's house was cleared, and a white tappa flag was stuck up in the centre. We called on the chief, and found him sitting on his mat in a fine large house, about 40 feet long by 20 broad, 10 feet in height to the slope of the roof, and 25 feet to the ridge pole, built of a wooden frame, the rafters and beams being secured with plaited cocoanut fibre or sennit. The walls were of reed, the roof a thatch of grass; the sleeping place at one end was on slightly raised ground, 6 inches above the rest of the floor, and divided off by a curtain of tappa suspended from a cord stretched across; the floor was merely the earth covered with mats. This description will suit any Fijian house except as to dimensions. The chief sat on his mat near the middle of the house, whilst four or five servants and a visitor sat at the far end. The chief's little boy was being polished up by his nurse for the festivities, and another woman was making girdles of jasmine twigs for the chief's little daughter, holding one end of the garlands between her toes, as she twined the twigs into the sennit with her fingers at the other. When the small boy was handed from one nurse to another, each, after passing him to the other, went through the usual ceremony of respect to a chief, sat still a moment and clapped her hands four times reverently, and did the same after handing the boy to his father. The clapping was not done so as to make a noise, the palms of the hands were merely brought together quietly four times. The women looked reverently on the floor whilst doing it, as if saying a prayer. It was not at all done as an act of ostentation—indeed the women's backs might be turned to the company at the time—but appeared much more like a ceremony of private devotion. The posture of the hands whilst being clapped together is the same as that of Europeans and Japanese and so many races during prayer. The chief dressed his son's head himself. The head dressing consisted in shaving off all the boy's wool, except a vertical ridge which was left intact at the back and looked somewhat like the crest of a Greek helmet, and in smearing the whole of the shaved part with a thick coating of a bright vermilion red.

“We drank kaava and tasted Fijian puddings, which are glutinous semi-fluid masses, made of taro and cocoanut, and flavoured with molasses. The puddings are kept done up in a bag of banana leaf, and are very nasty, though specially prepared as a luxury on this occasion. The chief showed us two clubs, family heirlooms, which had killed a large number of illustrious enemies; but since, as he told us, they are always kept very carefully oiled, just as we oil our cricket bats, there was no hair nor remains of blood or brains about them.

“It was past noon before the people began to assemble in numbers, and seat themselves on the banks and rising ground, commanding a view of the dancing place. The dancing was begun by the body of about eighty young men which I had