THE DECAY OF ABORIGINAL RACES.

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In all the countries of the Pacific area settled and dominated by Europeans, the native populations for a considerable period have been decreasing in numbers. Conditions of decay exist not only in those countries where the whites and blacks met at sword and spear point, but also in those lands where the blacks are the white man's ward and where every effort is made to preserve racial integrity and to check decline. The aboriginal races are everywhere threatened with extinction and in all probability in fifty or a hundred years the lands once thickly inhabited by colored peoples will have seen the last of their kind.

No very satisfactory explanation has been given as to the causes of this decline. There is a most extraordinary diversity of opinion concerning it. From missionary to planter a hundred answers will be given to the enquiry: Why is the native population in your district decreasing in numbers?

The death of a race is not a matter we can view with complacency, especially when we are so largely responsible for it. What is our race that it should blight whatever it touches? Are there malign influences surrounding the white man—vices and diseases that even against his will destroy those upon whom he lays his terrible hand? Where are the social physicians who will cure the black man's malady and prevent his death?

Or is his death inevitable? Is he his own worst enemy? Is his death decreed by that Mother Nature whose children we all are? Has this species of the genus homo been tried and found wanting? Does the earth belong to the peoples who use it to the best advantage? In the economy of nature must it be that a race which does not serve the ends of progress shall fall out of the running?

Such questions and many more—moral, economic and scientific—rise in the mind at the mention of the subject.
Few indeed are the countries without a "colored problem." Africa is the black man's continent, but even there the colored races are not safe. In Mexico and all South American countries settled by the Latin races—who have, as compared with the English, little pride of blood—the racial situation is complicated by miscegenation. The United States has the problem in a double form, in the Indian, the nation's ward, rapidly becoming extinct like the buffalo he hunted in the happy days of his independence, and in the negro, who flour-
ished marvelously under slavery, but who is now treading the apparently inevitable road to decline.

In Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific the problem is relatively simple. The facts are obvious, the main data have been gathered by governmental commissions, and the different colonies are alive to the situation.
For convenience and the sake of simplicity a single area in the Pacific field has been selected for study—that of Fiji, where the problem exists in its simplest form, as the natives are nominally Christian and the government has definitely set itself the task of preserving the race committed to its care.

In Fiji there are evidences of an early existence so far civilized that it was at least possible for the native race to increase. It is believed that the decline of the race in stamina set in some time be-
fore the advent of Europeans early in the nineteenth century. It is certain that the racial decline was accelerated from the time the first European trader touched the island-group. On the surface every condition seems to have been and to be favorable for the continuation of the race. Christianity was introduced by 1835. Fiji became a colony of the English crown at the invitation of the chiefs in 1875. Missionary and governor have been friendly. No warfare has been waged against the native. His lands have not been confiscated. The blessings of Christianity, the Pax Britannica, and European civilization have been given him. He is to-day protected against the ravages of disease and is being instructed in matters of sanitation and diet. And yet the race is disappearing—a charming, handsome, splendidly formed race is disappearing—apparently submerged beneath the very civilization that would uplift it.

What are the facts of the decline of population in Fiji? Records of population have been made there only since 1875, the date of cession to the English crown. On that date the native population was officially estimated at 150,000. Guesses as to population made by travelers and missionaries previous to that date range from 150,000 to 300,000. In 1875 an epidemic of measles swept away 40,000 of the people, the census of 1879 showing a native population
of 111,924. There was a slight increase by 1881 (as is common after a great loss of life by wars or epidemics), but by 1891 the
population had declined to 105,800, and by 1901 to 94,397. It is now estimated at about 85,000 in which males exceed females in the proportion of 8 to 7.
Following up the statistics of birth and death, the fact is disclosed that the loss in population is not due to a falling birth rate, but to mortality, chiefly of infants under one year of age. The mean annual birth rate for eleven years from 1881 to 1891 was 38.48, which is larger than that of England by 3.18 and of France by 12.58. But this remarkable fecundity is met by an enormous death rate varying from 35.15 to 59.03, or a mean of 42.76 for the eleven years noted above. Of the deaths more than one-half are deaths of children under ten years of age, and more than two-fifths are of children under one year. The race is declining not from inability to procreate, but from loss of power to resist disease and compromise with death.

Excessive deaths in certain years have been due to epidemics; measles in 1875 resulting in 40,000 deaths; whooping-cough (now very common) in 1884, resulting in 3000 deaths; dysentery (the prevailing disease probably brought in by the first white men who reached the islands) in 1885, resulting in 1000 deaths; influenza in 1891, resulting in 1500 deaths. These are to the Fijians new diseases, to which, therefore, the race has not yet been physically habituated, and against which the people must now struggle with constantly diminishing vitality.

In assigning causes for the race's loss of vitality, we must not overlook the probability that the Fijian race has passed its prime, and that decline is inevitable. Races may sicken and fall into decline like individuals, and for that matter like any species of plants or animals in nature. The earth is full of records of life-forms worn out and discarded. Life is by adaptation. Vital races prove their fitness for existence by their powers of adaptability. First they endure change of circumstances and then use circumstances to their advantage. Other races have faced changes and been harried by disease and have lived. As a race, the Fijian has probably passed its crisis and lost its capacity to adapt itself to its environment.

Nevertheless, much blame, if not all, attaches to the European, who accelerated—if he did not introduce—the decay of the native race, first by his vices and diseases, and next by his mistaken policy of civilizing the savage. To consider this class of causes we may now turn.

When the European first met the Fijian the latter was living under a more or less highly elaborated, social, economic and political system of his own devising. He had reached the stone age in evolution and was using primitive weapons and implements. In his tropical country food grew to his hand and the rivers and seas
swarmed with fish. His life was communal and tribal, under hereditary chiefs, and tribes were constantly at war with one another. Cannibalism was practised to some extent. The Fijian was religious according to his light. The chief constituted the state, and controlled the people by "club-law." As with all primitive peoples the members of the tribe were controlled also by the iron rule of custom and ceremonial usage. The family was polygamous and women occupied a servile position. The system, such as it was, was complete, and to it the native's life was adjusted.

Now to this race in the age of stone comes the European, im-

A FIJIAN SCHOOL WITH ENGLISH AND NATIVE TEACHERS.

measurably superior both in point of age and attainments. A wise forethought might have prevented what took place, but perhaps this was too much to expect. The white man came in three guises and in three periods: first as trader and settler; second as missionary, representing not only the religion but the social ideas and standards of the superior race; and then as governor and judge.

From the first white traders and settlers the Fijians acquired nothing that was good for them: fire-arms, fire-water, and the white man's vices and diseases. These they might have survived had they been left to themselves, but they were now confronted by forces they could not resist, and which, doubtless, they will not survive—
forces springing from the ideas, sentiments, standards and civilization of a race alien and superior, a race whose very superiority spells death to the inferior.

A HINDU FAMILY AND CABIN.

The plantation work is done mainly by nearly 26,000 Hindus indentured by the government for this purpose. The cabin in the illustration is built of strips of corrugated iron.
With the best intentions in the world, the missionaries—and they are here considered not as sectarians but as the social agents of civilization—engaged in the work of reclaiming the savages of the Southern Seas from their savagery. By them the native system was broken up and the European substituted. They set themselves particularly to change the native order in five respects: to stop warfare, to clear the mind from superstition, to change the communal state, to abolish polygamy, and to emancipate women. Looked at from the sociological point of view, it is within the truth to say that everything done to these ends by the missionary for the benefit of his charges was done in reality to their racial disadvantage. The very goodwill of the teachers became the weapon by which the health of the native race was destroyed. In changing the native system the reformers were unwittingly robbing the race of its chance to perpetuate itself.

For a period of fifty years the European missionary worked his will upon the natives. The manner in which the superior code of Christianity operated to devitalize the race may be considered under the five heads noted above.

The European found the native engaged in intertribal warfare. So ages ago the European fought and passed on to higher combats. Just as now the European engages in competitive commerce, so then the savage lived by warfare. War was his occupation, his recreation, his school—the means by which his intelligence was developed and kept at strain. Waged with weapons too primitive to be very destructive of life, war energized the warrior, furnished the basis for those distinctions between men, without which growth is impossible, and cultivated the social feeling by upholding before the individual the interests of the clan.

When war stopped the natives stopped. By the division of labor incident to primitive life, woman was the worker, and now the warrior, except for certain communal services, had nothing to do. To him thereafter life was intolerably dull, and he became what he is to-day, indolent, improvident and apathetic. The very tools of husbandry which the European put into his hands have been used to increase his all too ample leisure. Civilization made the Fijian a sickly idler.

It is never wise to disrupt violently a nation's superstitions. Doubtless the Fijians did many things which a higher intelligence would pronounce absurd. Superstitions, however, are forms of social control, and in some instances the superstitions of the Fijians were connected directly with their welfare as a race. Thus symp-
toms of disease were regarded as manifestations of occult agencies. Fear of witches led the natives to sweep their houses and villages, the presence of offal and dirt being an invitation to an enemy to work his spell. When this superstition vanished the villages went unswept, and there was no authority to compel sanitation, for by the same change the power of the chief was lessened. When ancestor worship was destroyed the last prop of the chief was taken from him, and the state, except for inmemorial custom, ceased to be.

The Fijians still remain communists, but the system is badly mutilated. The spectacle is presented of a race moving on the stumps of a former system, with certain props of an alien and artificial character to sustain its progress. The European lives and rules as an individualist, his home being in truth his castle. The Fijian lives communally, and has no conception of home or privacy. In the conflict between the two systems, the Fijian held his own, but not without much mutilation of it.

In the communal system the chief was important in a number of ways. He ruled by his birthright (which was communal in a sense, in that the chief represented the blood of the common ances-

THE CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL AT SUVA.
The stone was brought from Sydney.
try in its purest form), and he represented the common good. He exercised the authority of the community, and at his command the

members of the tribe performed communal service, such as making roads, building houses and boats, planting gardens and weeding the village "square." To compel obedience, the chief was permitted to

A NATIVE VILLAGE COMMUNE.
KING CAKABAU, THE MOST POWERFUL CHIEF OF FIJI.

He was king of Fiji at the time of session to the English crown. His tribal dialect became the modern written and spoken language of Fiji.
inflict physical punishment and to condemn offenders to death. The chief's club provided the stimulus of fear necessary to give the Fijian incentive to move at all.

PRINCESS ADI, GRANDDAUGHTER OF CAKABAU.
She resides at Suva and is a woman of strong character and marked intelligence.

The Europeans interpreted the chief to be a petty tyrant, and to give his abused subjects the benefits of individual liberty as con-
ceived by them, they curtailed the power of the chief. Thereafter the communal rites were performed heedlessly. The people planted less food, they neglected their villages, and instead of liberty indulged in license. At the same time the exactions of the chief, being disconnected with service and responsibility, became actually tyrannical. So a double evil was incurred. At the present time the Fijian is neither an individualist nor a communist—he is without a governing principle in his life.

Under this head also may be considered the attempt of the missionary to impose upon the natives the European practice as to home and family. Husband, wife and children constitute the English monogamic home. The Fijians house was a single room too open for privacy. The Fijian was polygamous, living in the tribe, not the family, and to his children he was comparatively indifferent. Curiously the effort to introduce the "home" led to the decay of social morality.

In the ancient days chastity was the rule of the sexes; it was preserved under penalty of death. At night the girls slept with their mothers, and the boys went to the common house set apart for that purpose. The young men, taken up with training as warriors and seamen, were rarely profligate. In the "family" as constituted by the reformers the sexes were brought into closer connection and the "home" became anything but what the reformers intended. Sexual license, under "missionary monogamy," and as permitted by a code much milder than the ancient "club-rule," is to-day practically universal.

Polygamy was, of course, to the missionary a special offence. In heathen times polygamy was regarded as honorable, convenient, profitable and as to the chief indicative of wealth and power. It was socially honorific. With reference to economic conditions—the system of food products and the work of women in the gardens—and with reference also to the bearing and rearing of children, polygamy was advantageous to the race. It was advantageous also in respect to the physical improvement of the race, for it exercised a selective control over mating whereby the strongest men mated with the most prolific women. Those who practised polygamy were the ones best able to maintain their wives in food and comforts. The mothers in their turn, being freed from all other work during the four years allowed to nurse a child, did raise their children to maturity.

Monogamy presupposes a high stage of racial development and an advanced economic system. Even now Europeans are imperfectly monogamic, and it is known that the first white settlers in
Fiji fell in with the Fijian polygamic ways with considerable alacrity. By the missionary polygamy was looked upon with complete disapproval. It was the "source of female degradation, domestic misery and personal suffering." The directions given by the Wesleyan Missionary Society to its missionaries included the following: "No man living in a state of polygamy is to be admitted to membership even on trial, who will not consent to live with one woman as his wife, to whom you shall join him in matrimony or ascertain that
the rite has been performed by some other minister; and the same rule is to be applied in the same manner to a woman proposing to become a member of the society." By this rule of the church the practice of polygamy was abolished.

To what gain may be judged by considering the fact that under monogamy the Fijian mother was actually placed in the worst possible position for the rearing of children, inasmuch as her work increased manyfold, and she was obliged to shorten the nursing period. The injurious nature of this latter change is indicated by the fact that the Fijian has no substitute for mother's milk. Being overburdened and not properly cared for, the monogamic mother, while giving birth to a greater number of children than formerly, brought few to maturity. Another evil was that on the abolition of polygamy the young girls were freed from the repression formerly exercised over them, and began indulgence in sexual irregularities which are among the special causes of modern day infecundity and race failure.

The emancipation of woman was another cause dear to the European. It is true that in ancient times woman in Fiji occupied a servile position. She was the worker as man was the warrior and protector. It is true that she had little freedom. In countless ways she was hedged about by custom so as to prevent any exercise of individual choice or expression. But in those times also the women were genuinely moral. The purity of her relations with men was preserved, the penalty for unchastity being death.

She was "emancipated," but nothing was done to fill up the time formerly occupied with servile tasks, with suitable feminine interests and occupations. As with the men, life became intolerably dull, and for excitement the woman turned to sexual intrigues. With the abolition of the ancient penalties attached to sexual immorality, there were no restraints upon such indulgence. Since her emancipation sexual depravity of every kind has enormously increased, accompanied by organic weakness and loss of stamina in offspring. It is a fact that the moral qualities of Fijian women are most defective in those districts where their position in the social scale is highest. The position of women has therefore been unfavorably affected by emancipation.

In all the cases cited the sociological error consisted in enforcing the social laws of an advanced civilization upon a people not prepared to receive them. In every case the changes wrought have been prejudicial to the welfare of the people. If the Fijians had been left in their own system as the Dutch Reformed Church
found it possible to leave the natives of Java, whom it converted to Christianity, the disaster noted might have been averted.

The problem of the colonial government in Fiji since 1875 has been a difficult one. The Fijian was neither savage nor civilized.
The old order was broken up; no new life had been created. With a wisdom born of much experience in dealing with native races, the English government adopted for the native a policy of non-interference, building its own administration upon what was left of the old order, adopting freely the communal system and even acknowledging in certain back districts the polygamous relations. Leaving questions of education and religion to the churches in possession of the field, the government has attended to the material and physical welfare of its charges. It has policed the islands, established courts of justice, and developed trade. For thirty years, however, the decay of the race has gone steadily forward, although it is claimed that for a year or two the rate of decline has been retarded if not checked.

If the Fijian race is to be saved, the colonial government must now go to one or the other extreme of policy. It must either continue its policy of non-interference, even to repealing its laws against adultery and fornication—for what is "illegitimacy" so long as a race lives! Or else it must go to the other extreme; assume complete supervision over the natives, and breed and raise the race definitely with reference to higher standards.

Sociologically that is moral for a race which favors life; that is immoral which leads towards death.