

RAYMOND FIRTH

WE, THE TIKOPIA

A Sociological Study
of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia

Abridged by the Author

With a Preface by Bronislaw Malinowski



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A TIKOPIA ARISTOCRAT
Pa Fenuatara, heir to the chieftainship of Kafika, and an exceptionally intelligent man. He is here in dance array, with loose hair and fringed cordyline leaf and seaweed circlets at neck and brow.

CHAPTER I

IN PRIMITIVE POLYNESIA

IN the cool of the early morning, just before sunrise, the bow of the *Southern Cross* headed towards the eastern horizon, on which a tiny dark blue outline was faintly visible. Slowly it grew into a rugged mountain mass, standing up sheer from the ocean; then as we approached within a few miles it revealed around its base a narrow ring of low, flat land, thick with vegetation. The sullen grey day with its lowering clouds strengthened my grim impression of a solitary peak, wild and stormy, upthrust in a waste of waters.

In an hour or so we were close inshore, and could see canoes coming round from the south, outside the reef, on which the tide was low. The outrigger-fitted craft drew near, the men in them bare to the waist, girdled with bark-cloth, large fans stuck in the backs of their belts, tortoise-shell rings or rolls of leaf in the ear-lobes and nose, bearded, and with long hair flowing loosely over their shoulders. Some plied the rough heavy paddles, some had finely plaited pandanus-leaf mats resting on the thwarts beside them, some had large clubs or spears in their hands. The ship anchored on a short cable in the open bay off the coral reef. Almost before the chain was down the natives began to scramble aboard, coming over the side by any means that offered, shouting fiercely to each other and to us in a tongue of which not a word was understood by the Mota-speaking folk of the mission vessel. I wondered how such turbulent human material could ever be induced to submit to scientific study.

Vahihaloa, my "boy," looked over the side from the upper deck. "My word, me fright too much," he said with a quavering laugh; "me tink this fella man him he savvy kaikai me." *Kaikai* is the pidgin-English term for "eat." For the first time, perhaps, he began to doubt the wisdom of having left what was to him the civilization of Tulagi, the seat of Government four hundred miles away, in order to stay with me for a year in this far-off spot among such wild-looking savages. Feeling none too certain myself of the reception that awaited us—though I knew that it would stop short of cannibalism—I reassured him, and we began to get out the stores. Later we went ashore in one of the canoes. As we came to the edge of the reef our craft halted on account of the falling tide. We slipped overboard on to the coral rock and began to wade ashore hand in hand with our hosts, like children at a party, exchanging smiles in lieu of

anything more intelligible or tangible at the moment. We were surrounded by crowds of naked chattering youngsters, with their pleasant light-brown velvet skins and straight hair, so different from the Melanésians we had left behind. They darted about splashing like a shoal of fish, some of them falling bodily into pools in their enthusiasm. At last the long wade ended, we climbed up the steeply shelving beach, crossed the soft, dry sand strewn with the brown needles of the Casuarina trees—a home-like touch; it was like a pine avenue—and we led to an old chief, clad with great dignity in a white coat and a loin-cloth, who awaited us on his stool under a large shady tree.

Even with the pages of my diary before me it is difficult to reconstruct the impressions of that first day ashore—to depersonalize the people I later came to know so well and view them as merely a part of the tawny surging crowd; to put back again into that unreal perspective, events which afterwards took on such different values. In his early experiences in the field the anthropologist is constantly grappling with the intangible. The reality of the native life is going on all around him, but he himself is not yet in focus to see it. He knows that most of what he records at first will be useless: it will be either definitely incorrect, or so inadequate that it must later be discarded. Yet he must make a beginning somewhere. He realizes that at this stage he is incapable of separating the pattern of custom from the accidentals of individual behaviour, he wonders if each slight gesture does not hold some meaning which is hidden from him, he aches to be able to catch and retain some of the flood of talk he hears on all sides, and he is consumed with envy of the children who are able to toss about so lightly that speech which he must so painfully acquire. He is conscious of good material running to waste before him moment by moment; he is impressed by the vastness of the task that lies before him and of his own feeble equipment for it; in the face of a language and custom to which he has not the key, he feels that he is acting like a moron before the natives. At the same time he is experiencing the delights of discovery, he is gaining an inkling of what is in store; like a gourmet walking round a feast that is spread, he savours in anticipation the quality of what he will later appreciate in full.

THE BACKGROUND TO ANTHROPOLOGICAL WORK

It is a matter of common agreement among modern anthropological field-workers that an account of the institutions of a native people should contain some description of the methods by which the

information was obtained. This is in accordance with the recognized logical position that even the simplest record of what purports to be the "facts" of a native culture has involved a considerable amount of interpretation, and every generalization about what the people do has meant a selection from the immeasurably wide field of their activity, a comparison of items of individual behaviour. The conditions of the selection—that is, the situation of the observer in regard to the material—should therefore be indicated. In terms of anthropology, it is desirable to make clear such points as: the relation of the investigator to other folk of his own culture, whether isolated from them or in daily contact; the linguistic medium of communication with the natives, whether the vernacular, a "pidgin" or other *lingua franca*, or translation by interpreters; the economic and social medium—payment, in money or kind, services rendered, goodwill, or simple gossip and conversational exchange; the nature of the record, whether accounts of eye-witnesses, or hearsay evidence, or personal observation of the investigator himself; whether what is described is current practice or is now obsolete; and the range of instances relied upon for generalization. Elaborate documentation of every single statement is impossible in the space available, but some general reference is necessary. In the following pages details of this kind are given. They are not in tabular form but are set out as a running account, which is less of a tax on the reader's patience and allows of a realization of the flavour of scientific work in a remote community.

Rarely visited by Europeans and with no white residents, Tikopia lies in the extreme east of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, and is inhabited by twelve hundred healthy and vigorous natives. Homogeneous in speech and culture, they are a unit of what may be termed the "Polynesian fringe" in Melanesia, their closest affinities being not with the people of the Solomons region but with those of Samoa, Tonga and even more distant groups to the east.

Almost untouched by the outside world the people of Tikopia manage their own affairs, are governed by their chiefs, and are proud of themselves and their culture. They are primitive in the sense that the level of their material technical achievement is not high and they have been affected in only a few externals by Western civilization; at the same time they have an elaborate code of etiquette, a clear-cut systematic social organization, and they have developed very strongly the ceremonial side of their life. They still wear only their simple bark-cloth, they live in plain sago-leaf thatch huts, they carry out the traditional forms of mourning, marriage and initiation. *Mirabile dictu*, a large section of them still worship their ancient gods with

full panoply of ritual, a condition almost unique in the Polynesia of to-day.

A brief reference to the religious condition of the people is necessary in order to give some idea of the setting in which my work was carried out.

A section of the Tikopia are ostensibly Christian, the mission vessel calls on the average once a year, and there is a native teacher from the Melanesian community of Motlav in the Banks group living on the island. He, however, is married to a Tikopia woman, and conforms in most respects to the customs of what has been for twenty years his home. He uses the Tikopia language alone, except in church services, he moves freely among the people, his children go through the normal ceremonies of youth, and he makes the appropriate exchanges at funerals and other social occasions. He has no ground of his own but works his wife's land in native style, and when a canoe is manned takes his place among the crew in the ordinary way. In so far as he conforms to native custom his position is that of a man of influence in Tikopia society. On the other hand he regulates church affairs with several Tikopia teachers under him, is strict regarding the observance of the *aso tapu*, the Sabbath, and endeavours to maintain morality by deprecating free sexual association of young people (an old Tikopia institution) urging marriage on those who sin, and debarring from church young men who attend the heathen festivals. He takes advantage of his position, too, to rally even the heathen among his wife's kin to assist him in large-scale gardening, initiation and other important affairs. A man of strong personality, he pursues the aims of the Church and his own advancement as parallel activities, and with equal zeal; he is calculating but generous; and he interprets the Christian teaching with force, in an essentially native manner.

The baptized Tikopia comprise about half the population, and though of the four churches two are on the eastern side of the island the majority of the Christians live in the district of Faea, on the western or lee side. Here is the only convenient anchorage for vessels. This has been one of the predisposing factors in the conversion of the local people. The traditional rivalry between the districts, the character of the chief of the dominant clan of Faea—a strong-willed old man with a distinct eye to the main chance—and the system of payment to mission teachers in European goods, which are greatly coveted by the natives, are other elements in the situation. The equivalent of even £1 or £1, 10s. per annum in calico, fish-hooks, knives and other articles—the salary of a Tikopia teacher—is a prodigious amount of wealth to a native family; the equivalent of the £7, 10s. which is

given to the Motlav man each year contributes in a very large measure to his power and prestige. It has not been entirely accident that two of the teachers are sons of the old chief, and another is his brother's son, while the Motlav man is settled in the chief's village.

In many respects the Christianity of the Tikopia is only superficial. That the old gods still exist is never questioned by the chief or his people; they are merely latent, and from time to time make their presence felt with startling effect. The old chief has abandoned the essence of his kava ritual—the pouring of libations to ancestors and gods with invocations for fruitfulness and health to the land. But he retains an emasculated version of it by throwing food offerings daily to his ancestors before meals. He also conducts the making of turmeric with most of the ancient ritual, especially in observance of taboos. When he fell ill during my stay, as the result of his dramatic attempt to coerce his old gods, it was by the intervention of a heathen chief with these deities that he was cured.

The heathen constitute the district of Ravenja, and number among them three chiefs, including the principal of all, the Ariki Kafika. This man and his eldest son, Pa Fenuatara, were two of my most regular and valuable informants. Among others were the Christian chief, the Ariki Tafua, and his eldest son, Pa Rañifuri, the Ariki Taumako, Pae Sao, Pa Teva, Seremata, Kavakua, Pa Motuata, Pa Rañimaseke, Pa Tekaumata, Pa Taraoro and Afrua. They were drawn without distinction from heathen and Christian, from all districts and clans, from married and unmarried, as will be seen in the course of the book.

As I moved about freely among the people of the whole island, however, most of my data were gathered not from selected individuals in set interviews but in the course of the ordinary affairs of their daily life. In particular I gained a great deal while reclining for hours at a time in the native houses during the intervals of ceremonies, or when food was cooking, when conversation flowed easily and without haste.

I spent just twelve months on Tikopia, from July 1928 to July 1929, and in that time received one visit from the mission vessel—an extra call by courtesy—in October 1928, bringing a second supply of stores and trade goods. For the ensuing nine months I saw no white man. The outer world seemed dim and far away, the only events of interest were those happening in Tikopia, and when the *Southern Cross* finally arrived I can honestly say that the colour of white faces seemed less pleasant than that of brown, and that my chief desire was for the letters of friends rather than for the company of Europeans as such. And this in no way is to impugn the hospitality of the Melanesian

Mission and the officers of the *Southern Cross*, from whom I received kindness much more than ordinary courtesy demanded, most generously given.

During practically all my stay I used only the native language, my initial medium of conversation—a mixture of Maori and pidgin-English—being abandoned entirely after the first three weeks. At no time did I have a regular interpreter. Naturally, I recorded as much material in the Tikopia tongue as possible. But apart from taking down the statements of informants in the ordinary way, I made a practice of jotting down verbatim on the spot scraps of what I overheard, conversations between people, comments on behaviour, observations made during the progress of work, and the like. These often give a more intimate insight into the human relationships involved than a long dictated text on the same theme, and I regard this type of material as among the most valuable of my records. The comparatively simple orthography needed for the language, and a fortunate rapidity of handwriting, enabled me to get down all such material immediately.

Of money I had no need, for the Tikopia do not understand its use. They know of the existence of this thing called *manu*, and that by its aid one may walk into a *fare koroua*, a house where goods are stored, and secure what one desires. From visiting vessels they have even received stray coins, but of their relative values they know nothing. Pa Fenuatara brought me a florin one day and said: "Friend, is this a pound?" "No," I said.

"What is its value?"

"It is worth a knife, not a knife of the size for clearing the cultivations, but a knife so long——" (indicating a 10-inch blade).

"A, so that is it." And after deliberation he gave it to me as a keepsake, since, though he himself had no use for it, it was obviously a thing of value.

Another brought me a halfpenny, and said, "Friend, this is money?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

I replied that it was worth five small fish-hooks for *api* and *nefimefa*, or two of the *tau kurakura* size—the only method of indicating its worth.

Others being given pence by sailors on board a warship in payment for coconuts and bananas threw them overboard on their way back to shore, exclaiming: "Useless bits of iron!"

All my transactions took place through the medium of trade goods. Thus for the building of my house I paid Fakasinetevasa and

his assistants the sum of one axe, two plane irons, five knives, six pipes, five sticks of tobacco and fifty fish-hooks, with *douceur* of rice, meat and tobacco to other people who helped to make the thatch. For the purchase and repair of my small canoe I handed over goods of about the same kind and amount, though they were received with rather bad grace, as an adze was desired instead.

This absence of money in Tikopia has a bearing on several situations. It is an index of the barrier that lies at present between the Tikopia and the economic forces which are at their door; it was one of the conditioning factors in my relationship to my informants, since any equivalent which I gave them had to be in objects desired for their own sake, not as tokens of value; it offers a point of comparison with the culture of other Polynesian peoples, practically all of whom now know and use money even among themselves.

At first I had the greatest difficulty in resisting the acceptance of presents, mainly of pandanus mats in exchange for my goods; later these were implemented by invitations to meals, which it would have been discourteous to decline. Gradually, however, I made my would-be hosts understand that my goods were intended primarily not for purchase of specimens, but as gifts to those who assisted me in recording language and customs. And, in conformity with the native attitude, for the chiefs were reserved the choicest items, of which they early received a selection as an earnest. My system was to make good gifts to those who contributed valuable material and let this principle be known. In my experience the old anthropologist's maxim never to pay for information is not applicable in a community where individual or family privileges are jealously conserved. The only feasible method is to pay, but with discretion, and to rely on one's system of checks to ensure accuracy. As every field-worker who knows a native community well will probably agree, one can always find other people with some knowledge of the matter desired from the expert, and by cautious probing, by challenging his accuracy, by suggestion of his ignorance or of matters withheld by him, or by studied reticence oneself and implication of one's own foreknowledge, one may check very accurately the information given by the real authority. I myself knew for four months the secret name of the principal god of the Ariki Kafika and much subsidiary data before, his confidence won in the meanwhile, he whispered it to me himself, and unconsciously thus proved his own veracity. He never knew that I had forestalled him in this, though he suspected that some lesser "official secrets" were being disclosed by others of his clan. In such a closely knit community as that of Tikopia, where every chief and elder has links with the ritual of the others, it is comparatively simple,

once one has made the first steps, to exercise fairly complete control even of esoteric material.

To make the first breach in the barrier, however, is no easy matter. When I arrived in the island my motives were of course suspect, and though outwardly very friendly and hospitable the people were really greatly disturbed. As I learnt much later, the chiefs gave orders that I was to be told nothing about their gods and ritual practices, and, such is still the solidarity against the stranger, Christian and heathen alike down to the smallest child continued to obey, and to preserve silence on such matters. Shortly after I settled in Matautu I had occasion to ask the sons of the Ariki Tafua, among whom were two Christian teachers, for the beginnings of the genealogy of their family. As one man they assured me with every appearance of sincerity that they did not remember the names of their ancestors, that even the old people did not know who their forefathers were. Surprised at finding such ignorance among a Polynesian folk, usually so proud of their descent, I let the matter pass for the time being. Months later of course they acknowledged their own deceit with a laugh, but when one realizes how in their belief the invocation of the names of their ancestors lies at the core of their safety and prosperity, one can well understand the attempt to mislead the stranger in the interests of the community. Gradually, however, I began to get an inkling of the facts. A fishing formula appealing to ancestors, the existence of the term *atua* (spirit), a disclosure by an informant who went further than he intended, a comparison with Maori custom, and the like all served to prise open the door. Even then, however, the majority remained aloof in such matters, and intensely suspicious of any people with whom I had private sessions. Even the man on whose ground I had built my house had incurred the anger of his fellow-villagers, and had been cursed by them for his acquiescence. In an atmosphere of distrust, spying, and reticence in all but overt social affairs I lived for some months, every step to establish a foothold being a struggle. Later I found that during the first few weeks of my stay a whole cycle of ceremonies of the "Work of the Gods" had taken place day after day in Raveŋa, and not a soul, not even the Motlav teacher, had told me a word about it. Men, women, and even children preserved absolute reticence. A canoe ceremony of the Ariki Taumako I indeed attended as a guest, by invitation, and also went through the ritual of the five days of the turmeric making of the Ariki Tafua, keeping its taboos, but in neither case was I allowed to realize that what I saw was merely a part of a long intricate scheme of systematic activities which marked the turn of the year. Towards

the end of 1928, however, I had learned the significance of this cycle, and managed to make up the deficiency by attending the ritual of the following two seasons at the express invitation of the chiefs. And before this, mainly through the agency of one man of rank, a perversely honest rough-tongued elder, who after declaring on the beach on the day of my arrival his intention of boycotting me, later received me hospitably, performed for me his kava, and constituted himself one of my most trustworthy advisers and informants, I had obtained some insight into the real meaning of Tikopia ritual. Later again as I attended their ceremonies, behaved circumspectly, ate their food, conformed to the tapu, took part in the system of exchanges and, above all, spoke in approval of what I saw, chiefs and elders opened their stores of knowledge. Most of all, as an inmate of the houses of Kafika and Tafua, spending long days under their roofs, I began to feel the pulse of the real native life.

This was not without its reaction. When I fell ill after the ritual cycle of the monsoon season, gossip had it that the chiefs, fearful of my use of what they had disclosed, had sought my death through supernatural means. As I recovered it was said that, fearing vengeance from the white men if I died on Tikopia, they had changed their plan, and intended that I should go and die in my own land. Other responsibilities came too. The Ariki Kafika himself said to me: "Friend, I have told you the secrets of my kava; my *ora* (life) and that of my people and this land Tikopia will go with you. I shall sit here and watch; if evil comes to this land then I shall know that it is through your doing."

More than any other scientist the anthropologist is dependent on the confidence of his human material, and must be always faced by the quandary of how far he is betraying this trust by the publication of what he has learned. To withhold some sections of his data means distorting the picture he is trying to give.

Here I would like to express a personal feeling. What I have set down in this book, and what will appear in subsequent publications I have tried to make an exact and scientific record, keeping back nothing that I learned, and documenting opinions in order that as accurate an estimate as possible may be formed of the institutions and ways of life of these people. Much that was told me, especially in matters of religion, was given in confidence on the understanding that it would be made known only to *tariata potu*, to adepts, to persons of wisdom. I publish it in the belief that this is being done. Should there be among the readers of this book any who may visit Tikopia, in a professional capacity or otherwise, I trust that the knowledge they may gain from it may give them an understanding

and a respect for the native custom and belief, and that nothing which they find herein will be used to the discomfiture of the people or as a lever to disturb their mode of life, whatever be the motive. If this is observed I will have made no breach of faith.

As personal servant I took with me Vahihaaloa, a lad of Ontong Java;¹ to secure a Tikopia who knew white men's ways was impossible. I had wished therefore for a boy who was trained, but a Polynesian, because of his ability to fit into the speech and culture of the Tikopia. Vahihaaloa—Vasielo, as they called him—was admirable in this role. With a native shrewdness was combined a quick wit and a capacity for making friends, and his flair for organizing the youth of the village to assist him in domestic duties and for attending to the proper distribution of the volume of food which flowed into our household was extremely useful to an anthropologist. His love story, a curious mixture of calculation and desire, of magic secretly practised and attraction openly disavowed, was an interesting and rather touching lesson to me in native mentality. I have since learned that tuberculosis has claimed him.

Vahihaaloa soon recovered from his tremors on the day of our landing. After a month or so he began to consort with the young people, he became enamoured of the native dance, let his hair grow long and bleached it in Tikopia style. (See Plate II.)

For about a month we lived in the *fare suli*, the mission school hut kindly placed at my disposal by Bishop Steward. Then we moved to a house built for me near-by, and named Otara, after my New Zealand home. Midway through my stay I went over to Raveŋa to live, partly to become more closely acquainted with other sections of the people and partly to be near the scene of the season's religious ceremonies. There I occupied Tuarani, an old house lent by the Resiako family, with father and grandfather of the owners lying buried beneath the floor, as is the common Tikopia practice. In both Faeca and Raveŋa I lived in the villages, with neighbours within a few yards, so that I was able to observe a great deal of their domestic affairs with ease.

I give this somewhat egoistic recital not because I think that anthropology should be made light reading—though with a little more clarity of thought much of it might be made lighter than it is—but because some account of the relations of the anthropologist to his people is relevant to the nature of his results. It is an index

¹ He was transferred to my service for the time being through the kindness of Mr J. C. Barley, now His Honour the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.

to their social digestion—some folk cannot stomach an outsider, others absorb him easily. The student of human societies is in a different position from most scientists; the active reactions of his material to him, the character of the association between them, determines to an important degree the quality of his data. The social or institutional digestion of the Tikopia, once induced to begin, is of a vigorous character. Conformity to their customs they take not so much as a compliment as a natural adaptation; in a specific ceremony they can conceive only of participants, not of observers. At such a time one cannot be outside the group, one must be of it. There are limits, of course. One has a notebook, for writing is one's habit; one does not wait at funerals, for it is recognized that Europeans are dry fountains; but one must be of this party or that, one must keep the prescribed taboos of sitting or eating, one must make and receive the normal economic contributions.

At the same time the fact that one wears different clothing, usually sleeps in one's own house and normally takes at least the evening meal there, and acts in so many things as an independent unit, not as a member of a group, always prevents complete absorption into one's native surroundings.

Like most anthropologists I regard with scepticism the claim of any European writer that he has "been accepted by the natives as one of themselves." Leaving out of account the question of self-inflation, such a claim is usually founded upon a misapprehension of native politeness or of a momentary emotional verbal identification with themselves of a person who shares their sympathies. I myself have been assured a number of times that I was "just like a Tikopia" because I conformed in some particulars to the economic and social habits of their people, as in dancing with them and observing the etiquette of (pseudo-) kinship, or because I espoused their point of view on some problem of contact with civilization. But this I regarded as a compliment of much the same order as a reference to "our" canoe or "our" orchard ("yours and mine") by one of my courtesy brothers, which did mean certain concrete privileges, but not a share in real ownership. This problem of identification with the native culture is not merely an academic one. Europeans who allege that they "have become a member of the tribe," or "are regarded by the natives as one of themselves," are prone to lay claim to knowing what the native thinks, to being qualified to represent the native point of view. On a particular issue this may be in substance true, but too often dogmatic statements about ideas are substituted for detailed evidence of observed behaviour.

The remaining sections of this chapter give a description of the

island of Tikopia and its people, to form a general introduction to the study of their kinship system and social organization.

THE PEOPLE OF TIKOPIA

In my diary I jotted down my first impression of the people before it had time to fade into the realm of accepted ideas. It was of wild-looking men with bushy hair like a long and tawny mane, with fair skin often stained yellow or saffron with turmeric. Their broad faces seemed to have a strongly Mongoloid appearance, with prominent cheek-bones and a tendency to slant in the eyes. In one or two cases a slight Mongolian fold was present, and this impression of an Oriental physiognomy was increased by their moustaches and short chin beards. In stature they appeared to be very tall. With longer residence I ceased to be so conscious of these features, especially as the element of contrast provided by the memory of the dark, squat Melanesians receded. The photographs (including Plates II, VII, and XII) illustrate the variation in general type.

I made no detailed investigation of the physical anthropology of the Tikopia, but give some data bearing on their most obvious characteristics. The idea of exceptional tallness which I have mentioned has been put forward by other writers too, but in a more definite sense. One indeed describes them as being none less than six feet, and some he supposed to be well over seven feet six inches in height.¹ Later I measured several men and found that Pa Nitini, the tallest on the island, was 188.8 cm. (6 feet 2½ inches), Pa Taitai was 187.0 cm., and two others were 186.8 and 181.0 cm. respectively. These were selected as the men acknowledged to be of greatest stature in the island. Rimakoroa and Pa Fenuatara, who appeared to be of at least normal height, were 177.2 cm. and 175.2 cm. respectively, while Pa Tarairaki, who was not particularly short, was 173.0 cm. It is doubtful then if the average height can be more than about 176.0 cm. (5 feet 9 inches), and it is possibly less.

The exaggeration by previous observers is probably due to their sudden transition from the Melanesian environment and also, perhaps, to the coiffure of the men, their long hair rising well up above the crown of the head. The women are big-boned and well built, and, though I did not measure any of them, appeared to me to correspond to the men in height, the average being perhaps a couple of inches less.

The physique of these people is magnificent. The men have

¹ W. Sinker, *By Reef and Shoal*, 59. Captain Sinker was Master of the *Southern Cross* for many years.

brawny rounded limbs and I used to admire the musculature of the finely proportioned upper arm. There is no unshapely mass of bulging muscle; its movement is seen under the smooth skin only when an object is grasped or lifted. The men in particular are remarkable for their upright carriage, which comports with their self-respect and their easy good manners. Their habit of getting food by climbing the steep mountain sides and descending with loads balanced on a pole over the shoulder probably assists their straight bearing. The women are apt to be more bent in later life, and this is probably to be related to their practice of carrying loads on the back. All the people bear themselves well, but the chiefs and their sons have the most dignity of all. This may be partly a reflex of the respect always accorded them.

Towards middle age there is a tendency for the figure to be spoiled by a baggy abdomen, not of the smooth paunchy type but loose and wrinkled behind the bark-cloth girdle. This seems to be due to the rapid consumption of the large masses of starchy food which form the staple of every meal. The healthy appearance of the people is the more interesting since fish alone has to supply the animal protein and so much of the other body-building constituents.

The Tikopia have no marked body odour, though the existence of "man-smell" (*manu tangata*) is admitted by them and referred to in some of their traditional tales. They distinguish formally the odour of different regional groups of people, as Tongans, white people, etc. One day there was an amusing experience in which the tables were turned on the scientist. As I entered the house of the Ariki Faʻatere his old wife, nearly blind, said suddenly, "What a pungent smell of white man!" I was rather disconcerted, and sat pondering on differences in sensory acuity till I remembered my oil of citronella, which I had smeared on liberally before leaving home as a protection against the mosquitoes.

The hands of many of the people are fine and shapely. Even in a big man like the Ariki Tafua they are well proportioned and move delicately, despite their size. The fingers are long and the palm is often small in comparison to the build of the person. The nails are not trimmed. The deftness of these people is remarkable, and I have often envied the skill with which an old man would tie a reef-knot with the smallest possible ends of string, without fumbling. The natives are very handy at tying things up. They can make a wrapping out of the most unpromising material—a few leaves, a bit of waste fibre, a piece stripped from the midrib of a coconut frond. Rarely does a man carry anything like betel or food or small articles which will not go into his belt folds, bare in his hand. He

forages around till he finds a leaf and something to tie it with, and then neatly parcels up the article.

The feet of the natives are large, and the skin of the sole is very thick. It is usually deeply pitted, like a piece of crêpe rubber, from constant walking on the coral reef.

Physical strength is greatly admired. In the tales of an ancestor of the Ariki Tafua he is represented as having enormously broad shoulders—"a huge man" says the narrator, illustrating with about a fathom of arm stretch! And his power is stressed in accounts given of his wrestling matches and other combats. Pa Veterci, who died recently, is a kind of hero because of his strength. He is described as a little man, but very broad-shouldered, and the people never tire of telling how strong he was in the work of squeezing out coconut cream, or how he once broke a piece of iron in two between his hands. Strength and warlike prowess are thought to go together, and the term *toa* covers both qualities.

In bodily size the Tikopia distinctions are in accordance with ours: *tanjata lasi*, a big man, refers to breadth of body, especially shoulders; *tanjata roa*, a long man, is a tall one; *tanjata potulake* is a short man, and *viki tanjata* a small one. A person of normal height is *tanjata nofo manjari*, one who dwells evenly.

One of the most interesting features about the physical characters of the Tikopia is the curious shape of the head. This can be seen, for example, in the photograph of women fishing on the reef (Plate IV). In young children the back of the head looks quite flat. Soon after I arrived I heard Vahihaloa laughing in his queer cackle at the door of my house. I asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Back along head belong piccaninny alasame timber," pointing to the child of a neighbour. I measured a number of men, not as a serious contribution to physical anthropology, but simply to assure myself that my impressions were accurate. I give the data here in full recognition that they cannot pretend to represent an adequate series. Of the people mentioned above, Pa Nitini had a head length of 19.2 cm. and a head breadth of 15.2 cm.; Pa Taitai, 18.3 cm. and 15.5 cm.; Pa Fenuatara, 17.8 cm. and 16.3 cm.; Pa Tarairaki, 17.4 cm. and 15.9 cm.; Rimakoroa, 18.0 cm. and 15.8 cm. Others ranged from a head length of 19.1 cm. and a breadth of 15.2 cm. to a head length of 17.6 cm. and a breadth of 16.1 cm. with a fairly even distribution between. I made a number of these measurements twice in order to check the rather surprising results. A number of men apparently representative of the community with no cephalic index lower than 80 and with individuals reaching above 90 is striking. This is in accord, however, with the extreme brachycephaly found in Tonga,

Samoa, and certain other parts of Polynesia. I was assured that no artificial deformation of the skull was practised beyond the smoothing of it down by the mother soon after birth. Some people put forward the idea that the flatness of the back of the head was due to the babe lying continually on its back on a sheet of bark-cloth. This does not seem to be an adequate explanation. It may be that we are dealing here with an inherited physical character.

Apart from the fact that my main interest was not physical anthropology, I did not pursue my measurements very far for fear of prejudicing my other work. Though the *tapu* of the head common in many parts of Polynesia is not stringent in Tikopia, it is observed, and married men in particular were rather uneasy at submitting themselves to examination. Pae Sao indeed, though a good friend of mine, flatly refused to be measured, and if any piece of ill fortune had befallen one of my subjects soon afterwards it might have vitiated some aspects of my sociological enquiry, as I should certainly have been held responsible for having taken away his *ora*, his soul-substance. A significant point also was that I made the measurements at different times, and the later comers professed to be quite ignorant in each case of the nature of my instruments; it seemed clear that they had not heard of the matter at all from the earlier subjects. Moreover, it was never discussed afterwards in my presence. The garrulity of the natives on new topics of interest was usually so marked that I could not but help being struck by this reticence, and accordingly discontinued the measurements.

The shape of the men's heads is usually concealed by their luxuriant hair, and on foraging about among it I was surprised to find how little back of the head there really was. In the majority of cases there was hardly any protuberance at all. With the older men I found irregular lumps and hollows in the surface, which they explained as being due to the use of the wooden head-rest. This may well be correct, since these irregularities appear to be lacking on the heads of women and young children, who use a soft pillow instead.

Because of the almost universal practice of chewing betel it is difficult to pronounce on the state of the teeth of the Tikopia. The juice stains the lips a brilliant red which gives the chewer a most sophisticated appearance to the European eye, but the teeth speedily become covered with black film which renders them practically invisible in the mouth. It is not possible to say whether dental caries is frequent or not, but I gather the latter. Seremata from personal choice often gave up chewing betel for a period, cleaned his teeth, and then presented a beautiful white set in a smile. The state of the teeth is used as an index of age. Pae Sao, in describing his

dead brother, said, "Not a tooth had fallen; he was only a young man." And soft foods are spoken of as "the food of the old people—because they have no teeth." The common practice of cracking a nut or other hard object with the teeth indicates their healthy state. Toothache appears to be rare. Teeth are not extracted by force, but if one becomes loose it is worked about until it comes out. The native expression is like ours—the tooth "falls."

The hair is wavy rather than crinkly. The photographs show the variation in type. The hair of some men falls into close curls when cut short, but usually it remains in wavy locks; in some it presents a very bushy appearance. Baldness is rare, but in elderly men the hair is sometimes thin on top, and the Ariki Tafua has a bald patch on the back of his head. According to an ancient tale the sky in olden times was close down above the earth, and men became bald through their heads rubbing on it as they walked. The term for baldness is *kira* which is also the word used to describe the smooth, glassy surface of the sea on a day of flat calm. Body hair is usually not abundant. This is never removed, though some people now shave the cheeks roughly with a razor. Lice in the hair are common. They are removed by a mud-plaster (p. Ch. XIV) or by search. Lousing is often performed as a friendly act between young people, and in villages where Sabbath observance bars other work it is a great Sunday diversion.

There is considerable variation in the skin colour of the Tikopia, from a light warm brown, almost buff tint, to a rich chocolate. These differences may occur in a single family, the former tint being represented by Pa Fenuatara, and the latter by his father, the Ariki Kafika. The mother is of a medium shade. Whatever be the physical constitution of the Tikopia, in terms of intermixture of racial stocks, it seems to me to be unjustified to pick out the extremes of skin colour and speak of them as an index of former separate types, even though the natives allege that pale skin is a family trait. It is interesting to note, by the way, that in a number of individuals that I observed the skin normally concealed under the waist-cloth was somewhat lighter than that of the exposed surfaces of the body. The skin texture is fairly fine.

Albinism occurs and is regarded as an inherited character. Pa Fenuatara, discussing skin colour, said: "Pale skin is in families, it is not in the whole land; it is in its families not only nowadays, but from of old. Look you! some families are families of albinism, from of old also." Pa Avakofe the elder, perhaps the best-informed man in the island, stated that albinism first appeared in the house of Resiake, where four out of eight children were so born. Now it has

appeared in the house of Ranjafu, where two children of Pa Ranjafu are so affected. In this case, he said, it is held to have come from Resiake, whence a daughter of Pu Resiake, though herself not an albino, married Pa Ranjafu. The house of Siku is said to have had albinism among its members since ancient times. Recently the sister of Pa Ratia was an albino. It is interesting to observe that the grandmother of the albino family in Resiake was from Siku, though I was not given this statement in the present connection. It appears then as if albinism in this community really tends to emerge with greater frequency in members of the one kinship group—but the genetic material is obviously inadequate. The father of the Kafika chief, Tarotu, was an albino, but here the connection is obscure; his mother was from Akitunu, and I have not been able to trace his more remote origin on the female side.

An albino is called *te mōka*. The phenomenon is disliked. "It is not good. In this land an albino is bad; he lives like that, then dies; his span of life is not long." Such a person, it is said, may die soon after reaching maturity. He or she may marry, but usually not. People prefer as a rule to have intercourse with such people merely and not to marry them. Concerning the origin of albinism, as distinct from its transmission, ignorance is professed. "I do not know what it may be," said Pa Fenuatara; "I know only that the spirits create it." The only albino I knew, a little boy of Ranjafu family, was a rather unpleasant object with his white skin and pale eyes, always screwed up against the light. He was well treated by his companions and joined in their amusements, but seemed clumsy by comparison. He and his infant sister were the only two in the island when I was there.

A fact is worth noting that may surprise many people—namely, that a brown-skinned folk in a tropical climate can be susceptible to sunburn. In the hottest months the Tikopia not infrequently suffer from this, particularly after a day's fishing in the open sea. The skin of the back becomes a dusky red under the brown and is quite painful; in some cases a crop of small blisters forms. The person has been "sunned," as the expression is. Incidentally, on days of flat calm fishermen often plait for themselves small eyeshades (*tamata*) from coconut leaf to give some protection from the glare on the water.

I prefer to allow the reader to make his own estimate of the mental qualities of the Tikopia from an examination of their behaviour as described in this book. But a reference to a few points may not be out of place. Psychologically, these natives would present an interesting set of problems. Verbally, they are sentimentalists; in concrete transactions they are realists. They have many expressions for affec-

tion, friendship, and the like, which they use freely, but they demand that such expressions be implemented by action, and exact a material equivalent for services performed in the name of sentiment. At first this is disconcerting to the European reared in the literary idealism of personal relations, but soon he comes to recognize it as a frank acceptance of realities, an understanding of the value of courtesy and of solid contribution, each in its own place, without the distinction between them being blurred.

In observation and memory, without conducting any systematic tests, I found them very variable. On the one hand there were elders who mixed up the order of names in their ancestral lists and honestly could not remember all names in a set of a dozen or so. Such was Pa Farekofi who was known to have a *roto naronara*, "an inside that kept on losing," and who had to go to the Ariki Taumako to learn the names of his own gods afresh every time that he performed a kava ceremony. On the other were the attainments of Pa Panapa, who was an expert in reading footprints, and who was said, given the mark of a heel or a toe, to be able to identify the owner correctly. The Ariki Taumako asked him, "When you look, how is it done?" He replied, "Oh! When I look it is as if it were the face of the person." In describing this to me the chief said, "How does he do it? Is it by spirits?"

In general, within the limits of their experience, individual Tikopia may be said to have reached a fairly high level of intelligence, as can be seen from some of their comments on specific situations recorded in the body of this work.

THE LURE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD

One of the characteristic sentiments of the Tikopia is their attachment to their island home. They are proud of the plentiful food supply which it affords and of their tradition of hospitality and peaceful conduct, and have no hesitation in naïvely asking the visitor for confirmation of these views. The young men display an extreme eagerness to see the world and numbers of them beg a passage of every vessel that calls. Some even try to stow away, but are usually discovered soon after the anchor is weighed and ignominiously hauled forth to be dropped off into canoes hovering near, or pushed overboard to swim to shore—a feat which presents no difficulty to them. This keenness to visit other lands and make a closer acquaintance in particular with the works of the white man is animated by a definite object. They want to become possessed of knowledge and property from which they can reap an advantage on their return—in social prestige as tellers of tales of breathless adventure which can be made

to absorb the public interest in long hours of conversation; in the possession of prized tools and ornaments; in the acquisition of influence by acting as interpreters when a vessel calls; or even by making profit as teachers of what they imagine to be the white man's language.

It is hard for anyone who has not actually lived on the island to realize its isolation from the rest of the world. It is so small that one is rarely out of sight or sound of the sea. The native concept of space bears a distinct relation to this. They find it almost impossible to conceive of any really large land mass, and if they were not by now accustomed to the fact that the things of the white man appear always to be in excess of their own, they would think that a visitor in his stories was deliberately drawing a long bow. I was once asked seriously by a group of them, "Friend, is there any land where the sound of the sea is not heard?" Their confinement has another less obvious result. For all kinds of spatial reference they use the expressions *inland* and *to seawards*. Thus an axe lying on the floor of a house is localized in this way, and I have even heard a man direct the attention of another in saying: "There is a spot of mud on your seaward cheek."

Day by day, month after month, nothing breaks the level line of a clear horizon, and there is no faint haze to tell of the existence of any other land. Not more than once in a year as a rule does a faint stain of smoke or a slender thread of a mast tell of a ship somewhere below the rim of the ocean. Such a sight is greeted with the utmost excitement. The first announcement is usually the long melodious "Iefu!" from some keen-sighted worker on the mountain slope, and this is taken up and re-echoed around the hills by those who hear it before they can do more than speculate on its significance. Groups of people gather on the beach, straining their eyes and their imaginations for an hour or two, until the vessel—if such it be—comes sufficiently close inshore for it to be seen from the low land. Then the excitement is redoubled. Cries of "Te vaka! te vaka!" "The ship! the ship!" ring through the villages, and messengers rush off to announce the fact to the other side of the island. If the vessel shows no signs of coming inshore canoes are hastily launched and go in pursuit, taking with them mats, coconuts, and other objects for purposes of trade. This is where a knowledge of nautical English comes in: some people are thought to know the words which, bawled out to the captain from the pursuing craft, cause him to take in sail and heave the ship to. As far as I could gather from the distorted phrases given me they represent the common orders to "put the helm over," "about ship," etc., but

they are conceived as having a virtue in themselves, a kind of magic potency which compels the listening captain to stop. Part of the recent history of the islanders consists in the narration of long tales of vessels being sighted, and of their reception or pursuit, given with an intensity of interest and wealth of detail which brings home to the listener the importance of this breach in the round of the life of the people. If the vessel does drop anchor off shore the scene is one of extraordinary confusion. Children dash madly to and fro, shrieking and yelling without purpose, while folk begin to arrive from the other side of the island, some panting with heaving chests, having run all the way in their eagerness. Canoes put off with produce and domestic articles, the people swarm over the ship and eagerly seek knives, fish-hooks, tobacco and other things in barter. Lucky is the household which secures a large knife or a length of cloth in exchange for one of its fine mats. The poverty of the Tikopia in the most ordinary trade goods and their consequent greed to possess them is pathetic.

The people have been accused of theft by former visitors. All I can say is, that in the twelve months of my stay I lost two boxes of matches, a cube of washing blue, and three sheath knives, these last being the only planned theft. And yet my house was untenanted for days at a time, with nothing more than a few sheets of thatch to keep out intruders. It was not so much perhaps the absence of the will to steal as the vigilance of neighbours and the respect for public opinion which kept away would-be thieves.

The nearest land to Tikopia is Anuta, seventy miles away across the open ocean, and even smaller in size, being only half a mile across—a mere dot in the immensity of the waters. Yet to the Tikopia a visit to Anuta is a great adventure—almost as precious nowadays as a century ago, since the natives have largely given up going to and fro in their own canoes, but only rarely are allowed a trip in the mission vessel—the single regular caller.

Time and again I was approached quietly by young men with the request that when I left I should take them with me to see the lands overseas. These requests I had always to refuse. On one occasion my friend Tiforan, burly, black-bearded and good-natured, spoke to me in his rough deep voice as he followed me along the narrow path through the bush: "Friend, when you go I am going with you to the land of the white men."

"Oh no," I replied. "You will die, of the cold and of the white man's diseases. We two shall not go, I do not desire that you die."

"Oh yes," he urged, "we two shall go. What is man, a stone?

If I go I die, if I stay here I die also. I am an unmarried man; if I go and die it is good. I shall have looked on the white man's country."

The logic of this was irrefutable, so I took refuge in the edict of the authorities of Tulagi who represent to the Tikopia the last court of European appeal, to the effect that the Chief there had forbidden white men to take natives beyond the confines of the country of the dark-skinned folk. But many times the young men, impatient to see the world, said: "Why does not the Governor send us a ship, that we may be taken to other lands?" And again a common response to the warning of danger of death from disease brought the response: "There are two lands, if one goes one dies; if one stays one dies." The two lands are life and death, and one goes from one to the other no matter the place from which one starts.

The wish for foreign adventure is controlled, however, by the desire to return home. The wanderlust of the Tikopia is really guided by his appetite for a colourful narrative with which to impress other people when he comes back; it is himself as the traveller against the background of an audience of stay-at-homes that fires his imagination. To realize the full truth of this one needs to understand the importance of conversation to a people practically devoid of any mechanical means of amusement. The Tikopia were very interested in hearing from me how many lands I had visited. At the end of one of these recitals the Ariki Taumako said, with an intensity of phrasing, "He goes travelling about, observing, while we sit here, we simply sit." And the way in which he prolonged the nasal sound of the word *nofo* (sit) gave an indication of his envy.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE ISLAND

Tikopia may best be described by the simile of a hollow bowl, old, battered, and moss-grown, with a broken irregular rim, one side of which is very much gapped and the interior partially full of water. As the ancient crater peak rises from the surface of the ocean its steep outer slopes with their rich volcanic soil are thickly clothed in vegetation, and its inner walls are scarred in many places by sheer rock cliffs which ring round the large dark lake. To the south of the crater wall lies a narrow expanse of light, sandy but fertile soil, the debris, as it were, accumulated in the lee of a sheltering mountain buttress.

The island is roughly elliptical in shape, the long axis running approximately north-east and south-west, and the mean dimensions

can hardly be more than three miles by a mile and a half.¹ As is to be expected in such a rugged spot, there is considerable diversity of scenery and from the point of view of landscape interest alone Tikopia has considerable attractions. The coast-line is curved, not deeply indented, and is protected from the ocean by a fringing reef, very narrow on the northern side, which is left almost bare at low tide. There is no lagoon and the small area of reef offers no shelter for canoes, which are accordingly always drawn up on shore when not in immediate use. Furthermore, the fishing is largely dependent on the daily covering of the thin band of reef by the tide, and is therefore very variable. Approach to the open sea is given both in Faea and in Ravena by a narrow channel, in each case a mere fissure in the coral rampart, that in Ravena being such a small cleft that it is navigable only in good weather. Even in Faea, which is normally on the lee side of the island, when a sea is running the break at the channel mouth is sufficient to cause a canoe to ship a considerable quantity of water. The natives, however, are expert seamen in a rather rough kind of way, and manœuvre their outrigger craft with some skill, riding a wave with down-pointed bow and light, swift strokes of the paddle, and counteracting the drag on the float which tends to pull the canoe round and capsize it. A considerable amount of deep-sea fishing is done outside the reef in canoes, not always on calm days, and the passage of the channel is a technical accomplishment in which every steersman worthy of the name of *taitai* (sea expert) is deemed to be skilled. Failure means not only the spilling out of the crew, which is not serious, but a grave risk of splitting the hull of the vessel on the fangs of the reef around the entrance.

The shore consists of beaches of white sand, interspersed by rocky bluffs reaching down to the water's edge; coral boulders are strewn in some parts, and along the northern coast stretches of pebbles are found. In places the beach line is pleasantly bordered by trees, but to the south shrubs are more frequent and the ubiquitous goat's foot creeper (*Pes capri*) crawls over the sand. In parts of Ravena and Tufenua the shore is bare of vegetation, and at no spot in the island does the coconut palm actually reach the sea.

The characteristic trees of the coast-line are the *toa* (*Casuarina*) with its pine-like needles, the *fetau* (*Callophyllum*) with its small leaves, rough bark and hard green berries—its trunk provides the canoe timber—the smooth-stemmed *puka* with a large deeply indented leaf and soft pinkish berries, the *fara*, the pandanus with its bloated

¹ *The Pacific Islands Pilot*, 5th ed., 1918, gives the island as triangular in shape and measuring two miles along each of the west and south sides, and three miles from the east to the north-west point.

stem and blade-like leaves. Inland the same occur with an occasional *aaa* (banyan) or *voia* (*Canarium*) towering above, but they are set in a bewildering mass of breadfruit, paper mulberry, Tahitian chestnut and banana, interspersed with sago, coconut and areca palms. The natives recognize at least one hundred and fifty kinds of trees, shrubs, and plants of which some are represented by only a few individuals. Tree ferns, for example, are found only around the cliff head on Reani and Tumuaki, the bamboo can be obtained only from the mountain slopes, while plants such as the *tantane*, a shrub with large reddish leaves, the *reua* and the *taratoto* grow on the mountain top alone. Practically all the trees and plants in the island are of utility to the inhabitants: even the common grass (*manuka*) is plucked and carried off to lay as a mulch around the taro crop.

The northern end of the island is extremely rugged. Short stretches of shingly beach are hemmed in by towering black cliffs, and on the reef which extends in narrow ribs for only a few yards beyond the shore the heaving Pacific swell is always breaking with a roar. At various spots around this coast there are caves, or rather rock shelters, termed *ava* by the natives and used by them as temporary dwellings, with heaps of dry coconut fronds as bedding. The largest of them, Te Ana Lasi, runs back under a side cliff in a little bay for a number of yards, and seepage from the roof provides drinking water. One of the most remarkable features of this part of the coast-line is a huge rock buttress jutting out into the sea in the form of a natural arch, through the portal of which the waves surge.

On the west side of the island is the bay known on the chart as Ringdove Anchorage, formed by a recession of the reef, and offering the only shelter, and that a slight one, for European vessels in the prevailing trade winds. Facing this a rocky bluff stands out from the cliff. On the eastern side the most prominent features are the massive isolated block of Fojna te Koro, 200 feet high, with its cliff face falling sheer into the sea, and the pyramid of Fojjo i Nuku, lower but no less striking. Both are crowned with vegetation.

On the south, in the flat plain of alluvial soil, sandy as the coast is approached, stand the gardens of Rakisu and the orchards of Rotoaia. An area of this in Tai is taken up by a large swamp (*te ropere*), too water-logged to be used for cultivation and encircled by pandanus—a palm which in its nudity and angularity, supported in tripod fashion by multiple bare roots, seems like the inspiration of a modern artist.

A distinctive character is given to Tikopia by its lake, known as Te Roto, or more familiarly as Te Vai, a large open irregular sheet of brackish water, fringed by thick vegetation and set against a back-

ground of rugged hills. Its charm is enhanced by the flocks of grey duck which dot the surface and the occasional pied cormorant which emerges sleek and glistening after its dive for fish. From the beach of Namo the traveller goes inland through Te Roro, or Te Orooro in the older form, passing Somosomo, site of ancient ceremonies, the Oven of ŋa Raveŋa which once cooked a child, the stone slabs of Matorotoro, and other spots famous in tradition. In the innermost bay of the lake he arrives at Uta, where the most sacred temples stand. Leaving this, he rounds a rocky point where detritus of an age-old landslide has tumbled down to the water's edge, makes use of the roots of a gnarled and twisted banyan as steps, and comes to Raveŋa. This is a flat, almost marshy expanse where the sago palm grows thickly, and the swamps-loving giant taro is plentiful. Here the cliffs have receded, and the orchards are larger in extent. The track coils in and out, stones, logs and tree roots provide foothold in the mud and water, till finally the massif of the crater ring again draws nearer the lake shore, rocks appear in tumbled profusion, and past the spring of Vai Tekara, where the women of the Taumako village come to wash and fill their water-bottles, one debouches on to the beach of Tai Raveŋa. Far above, the mountain crest has broadened into a long flat tongue-like plateau, ending in the square-cut bluff of Tumuaki, from the lip of which a superb panorama of all Raveŋa is obtained.

There are two paths up to Tumuaki. The one is a simple trudge starting from Vai Teputa in Faeta and following a stream up a steep gully till, at the base of a huge Canarium almond tree, the wayfarer diverges to a scramble up over the lip of the plateau. Here, on emerging, shrubs of *Lasiantha* are to be seen, with purple flower and soft, woolly, rusty-green leaf, looking as if they have been transplanted from some suburban garden. The other path, from Raveŋa, a toil-some climb amid sharp stones, is crowned by a passage across a bulging rock face which needs a steady head and a sure foot to negotiate. This is Te Pikiāŋa, The Place Where One Hangs On, and it is the boast of Sukimatarāŋa and two other young men that they alone of Raveŋa can come down it with loaded balance pole on shoulder. Others more cautious lower their burdens first and themselves after. Above this the slope is more gradual, and soon a minor track turns to Korofau, celebrated in song as the place of the sweet-scented *manonji* so much used as ornament. Here too grows a tawny variety of hibiscus blossom favoured by the youth of the district. The scented shrubs of Korofau are said to have been planted in ancient days, as also those of Tumuaki, when houses were inhabited on the plateau. Nowadays people visit it only to get food from their cultivations.

At the seaward end of the crest is a knife-edge lip from which there is a view appreciated even by the natives, normally not interested in such matters. To the right is a tumbled mass of rock ending in the promontory of Polokareve, boundary of Ratia and Sukumarāe, while beneath and to the left are houses in groups among the trees. Farther out is the creamy band of beach, the shallow light-green waters of the reef and, sharply demarcated from them by a white line of surf, the dark blue of the open sea. A little to the north a slight gap in the tumbling line of foam marks the channel. And away beyond, like a cordon from which there is no escape, is the clean-cut line of the horizon, ringing in one's gaze with calm inevitability. Turning more to the north one sees the whole expanse of the lake laid open, its succession of little capes and bays with every landing-place clearly marked by a series of long curved lines running out for a hundred yards or so like the ribs of a fan beneath the shallow water. These curious lines are caused by the keels of canoes disturbing the loose mud. From above one can admire the widening ripples as a canoe moves slowly across the water and the graceful curve of its wake as it turns in towards the shore.

The whole of the Raveŋa coast-line from Polokateve to the cliffs of Nuāraki is in reality nothing else but a sand-bar between sea and lake, broken only by the rocky pinnacles of Fonja te Koro and Nuku which stand up like pointed teeth. It appears as if originally they formed part of an eastern crater wall, but after a secondary explosion were left as sole guardians of the barrier. The sheet of water in the old crater is a lake and not a lagoon, but in exceptional gales when the wind presses on a spring tide the waters of the reef may break over. Then houses and trees are swept away. This happened about 1920, and again, I have heard, in 1930, in each case the natives having their own explanation of a supernatural order for the catastrophe. On the north side of Fonja te Koro is a channel cut in ancient times through the sand ridge and known as Te Ava. Normally this is silted up, but at certain seasons of the year, notably in January, at the height of the monsoon, when the lake is full from rain and the tide is high, the channel is dug out by the people of the district. The excess lake waters flow down to the sea, taking with them numbers of fish, which are caught in long-handled nets. The channel is under the nominal control of the Ariki Tafua. The vegetation of this strip of coast-line is sparse, some pandanus, a few coconuts and weather-beaten shrubs forming the major part.

In the rear of Fonjo o Nuku is a tongue of land that runs far out into the lake and provides an easy means of access to the inner shore. When rains have not swelled the waters, by wading breast-high along

a shelf, one can reach a point near Resiake far more quickly than by circling round the end of the lake. This is an area which is used on account of its shallowness for fish drives on foot; elsewhere setting nets from canoes is the general method of securing a catch. The lake is populated by grey mullet (*kanae*) and *ihea tapu*, which are edible, and by certain species of eel and the *ono*, which are not eaten. The chief fish is the *kiokeio*, lordly as a salmon in his resounding leaps, and with most succulent pink firm flesh. Not being an ichthyologist I cannot say if this is really a member of the salmon family; I imagine that its presence in an isolated Pacific crater might be somewhat of a puzzle in distribution. Like that other prized fish, the bonito, the *kiokeio* is celebrated in song.

The shallowest part of the lake is at the southern end where the bottom is soft sand or mud, and slopes very gradually to the bank. In the north-eastern end there is a rock shelf which extends a long way into the lake and renders it fairly shallow there too. This is known as the *sikev* and is named Te Siku o Namo and Te Siku o Ravena according to location. The depth of the lake is very well known to the natives because when they set nets below the surface for the *kiokeio* they buoy them and anchor them to the bottom by weighted ropes of sinnet cord, which is measured in fathoms (*rofa*) of a double arm stretch, and tens of fathoms (*kumi*). On the *sikev* shelf the water is only a single fathom deep or less, and the cowrite shells which weight the lower cord of the net rest on the bottom. The deeper parts of the lake are known generally as *te moana* (the ocean), and those of specifically greatest depth as *te mata o te vai*, the fore-part of the waters, and *te muri o te vai*, the rear-part of the waters respectively. The one is near Tua te Koro and is three *kumi*, that is thirty fathoms deep; the other near the Ravena shore needs four *kumi*, forty fathoms of cord, to find bottom. According to Pa Fenuatara who told me this as we were paddling across, there are no parts deeper than these. They may represent vents of the extinct crater. Spots where a deep part, "the ocean," extends right up to the bank, are known as *te kaofaeta*, and are two in number—at Te Karoa by the side of Tua te Koro, and at Soro in Te Roro.

The waters of the lake are not used for drinking since they are too murky, but for the people on the eastern side of the island in particular they provide an excellent bathing-ground, an easy medium of communication, and a valued source of food. They play, in fact, quite an important part in the life of the Tikopia.

Drinking water is obtained from a number of springs (*vai*), the location of which is shown on the map. Those flowing down from the hill-mass to the south of the lake are regarded as the material

representation of the tentacles of the Octopus God Feke. It is of great utility for a village to have a spring near, and control over these waters is part of the privileges of the clan chiefs, being important for the seasonal manufacture of turmeric. In the dry season, about the end of the year, the flow from these springs is apt to diminish to a mere trickle. In most cases the water is carried out from the hill-slope in an aqueduct of arca palm trunks supported on poles.

Northward of the lake rises the peak of Reani, the crowning point of the island, from the sociological as well as from the topographical point of view. The crest itself is termed Te Uru o te Fenua, the Head of the Land, in acknowledgment of its physical superiority. More commonly it is spoken of as Te Uru Ronjoroŋo—the Cycas Head, from the fact that a cycad used in certain sacred ceremonies grows there. The climb to Reani is steep, though in no way difficult, and a native path of tolerable kind can be followed right up to the crest. There is a choice of ways for the ascent. One may start from Te Roro directly below the mountain and go up by a stiff scramble through Mara Tapu, the sacred taro cultivation on the north-eastern crater wall, or from Namo by the path through Keresa, or on a somewhat longer way up the cliff at Matajaika and over the plateau of Mauja. As one ascends the path sometimes runs close to the old crater lip, and a magnificent view is obtained over all Ravena and Namo. Far, far below the thatched villages lie amid the palms along the narrow sand bar, the canoe landing-places are clearly visible, and the craft themselves crawl like tiny water-beetles over the glassy surface.

The orientation of the Tikopia tends always towards the sea. Ever and again one comes to a halting-place on the climb, a few yards of level ground where one sits down to rest and chew betel. These halting-places are naturally situated on shoulders of the mountain. The last break in the contour before the upward sweep of the slope rises to the final peak is at an elevation of about a thousand feet above the sea. This is known as Te Uru Asia, and is one of the marks for the voyager. When a Tikopia sets out from his native land his first estimates of the distance he has travelled are based on the portion of the island still showing above the horizon. There are five principal points in the scale. The first is the *rauraro*, the lowland in the vicinity of the shore. When this disappears the voyager knows that he is some distance out. When the cliffs (*matu*) arising some 200 to 300 feet in various spots round the coast become lost, another point is reached; then the *uru mauha*, the crests of the chain of hills ringing the lake, perhaps 500 to 800 feet in height, sink below the waves. When the *uru asia* goes down, then the voyager realizes that he is far out to sea; and when at last he sees the *uru ronjoroŋo*, the tip of the

mountain itself, vanish from sight, he greets the moment with sorrow. Many an ocean rover has expressed in song his feelings of the instant when Reani, the Head of the Land, is buried beneath the waves, or conversely when on his return it breaks once more into view, assuring him of his course and of an end to his wanderings. This interpretation of the horizontal scale of sea distances in terms of the vertical scale of Reani, together with the sentimental attachment to it as the symbol of the traveller's linkage with his home, are largely responsible for the interest which the mountain peak has in the eyes of this sea-faring people.

In the field of the supernatural, too, it plays its part: "It is held to be the place of descent of the gods, it is there that they first stand when they come down." Reani, as the projection nearest to their heavenly domain, is naturally the spot on which they choose to set foot when stepping down into the world of men. Though it is not *tāpū* in the ordinary sense of the term, and people walk on it, sit down, and behave as anywhere else, a certain aura of the supernatural clings around the mountain crest. Cultivations of taro stretch nearly to the topmost peak, but the actual crest is a tangled mass of shrubbery, rarely cleared. Here are found certain types of plant wanting on the lower levels—because of human clearance it would seem, and not through a different natural environment. These peculiarities of the flora help to make Reani a place of special interest. The mountain possesses also certain stones with peculiar properties; one is mentioned in a myth as being endowed with powers of locomotion.

The main way of communication in the island is along the beaches of Faea and Raveja; other principal paths are shown on the map. The island is seamed with tracks which are regarded as public ways open to all, and from these minor tracks diverge into the cultivations. They are all not much more than a foot in width, so that travel in single file is imperative. In wet weather the vegetation on either hand makes walking unpleasant. Then in going between Faea and Raveja the people often take the long way through Tai, much of which lies along the open beach. Communication between these two districts can also be carried on when the tide suits by canoe journey round the south coast, inside the reef, and heavy loads are often carried in this way. One of the most interesting tracks is the short-cut from Rofaea to Uta up the path through Te Rua, a dip in the chain of hills. It is a steep rocky way which goes for some distance up the naked bed of a water-course. The wayfarer pants up the slope, and on reaching the saddle is glad to pause on the cleared space while he prepares a wad of betel. At some seasons he is surrounded by masses of the scarlet flowers of the *kalokalob*, the coral tree (*Erythrina*) which grows there in

great profusion. From this spot looking eastward, down through the fingered leaves of the breadfruit he sees the calm mirror of the lake with the pyramid of Fono te Koro on the farther shore. To the west, over banana and paper mulberry trees, he looks on the reef where the women are playing their hand-nets.

The rugged beauty of the Tikopia landscape is enhanced by the magnificent play of colour at certain times of the day. In the evening the shades of the sea vary from a steely grey where the light is reflected on it through a pale green of the reef waters inshore to a darker green near the reef edge, and an indigo beyond. Sometimes when the sky is stormy the sea has leaden hues of the same tone. On a lowering evening the stark staring white of the surf-line is in forcible, almost painful, contrast to the inky black of the sea, and then on a sunny day the water has a brilliant ultramarine shade. The sea in its myriad aspects was a fascinating subject of study to me. For the ear there was always the sound of the surf, its constant noise varying with the wind and the state of the tide. One evening was especially remarkable. It was a stormy sky and there was an impenetrably dense black band of cloud just above the horizon, which itself was free. The cloud hid so completely the setting sun that it brought dusk before the sunset. Then just when the sun was on the point of setting, it broke free, and with the lower rim sinking below the horizon and the upper hidden by the clouds, sent a lurid crimson colour on the sea, the walls of houses and the trunks of trees, while the land already had begun to take on the shades of darkness. This weird conjunction of dusky shadows and red sunset light with a fiery sky around the sun made even the natives remark. They stopped to stare, though they assigned to it no especial significance. As a rule the more subtle and really more beautiful differentiation of shades escapes their notice.

Another evening I noted was of the quieter kind. Beyond the white shelving beach was the light green sea of the reef merging to a dark blue-grey offshore. To the right, looking along to Rofaea, rose the olive-green steep bush-clad cliffs softened from the rather garish tints of full day and backed by dove-coloured clouds. The sun had just set and the sky was still light; there were no lurid cloud effects, but only pastel tints, from steel grey on the horizon through cream to white and then to steel grey again. In the west there was light on the water, though elsewhere it was dulled since overhead the clouds threatened imminent rain. On the beach was a solitary godwit, and in the distance were the silhouettes of people doffing their garments as they went to bathe. In the curl of the beach at the water's edge some debris was washing, a reminiscence of the heavy wind of the few days before. As I walked along the beach the colours changed

with the different angle of view. The sea at Rofaca took on a pale bird's-egg blue, but in the open it was almost black in reflection of the coming storm. And in the west came a weird gleam, of gilt more than of gold, which quickly faded as the dusk drew on.

The climate of Tikopia is comparatively pleasant, considering that it is only 8 degrees south of the equator. The temperature is usually between 80° F. and 85° F., and rarely goes much above 90° F., though the humidity renders even this somewhat trying. The principal climatic feature is the marked seasonal difference between the period of the trade winds, known to the natives as the *toya*, which blow steadily in the N.E.-S.E. quadrant from April till September, and that of the "monsoon," the time of variable northerly and westerly winds with long periods of calm, which rules from October till March. This is called the *raké*. In the *toya* the sky is frequently overcast for several days at a time, and the weather is often wet and even chilly. In the *raké* come the baking hot days, varied by torrential downpours, and about the end of the year, by fierce gales which at times assume almost hurricane force.

In this state of isolation from the outer world, in a home of great natural beauty, adequate in the staple materials for a simple but comfortable existence, the Tikopia have shaped their life.