

A man wearing a dark hat and a dark jacket is seen from behind, looking out a window. The window is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The man's hair is white. The background outside the window is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a landscape or a building. The overall mood is contemplative and quiet.

MR. FORTUNE
SYLVIA TOWNSEND
WARNER

INTRODUCTION BY
ADAM MARS-JONES

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER (1893–1978) was a poet, short-story writer, and novelist, as well as an authority on early English music and a member of the Communist Party. Her first novel, *Lolita Willows* (available from New York Review Books), appeared in 1926 and was the first ever Book-of-the-Month Club selection. *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, her second, followed a year later. *The Salutatio* was the title novella of a 1932 collection. According to Warner's biographer Claire Harman, it "was almost certainly begun in the expectation that it would grow into a full-length novel, a sequel, or an extended coda" to *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*. Yet it also stands on its own, and Warner considered it "the purest, the least time-serving story I ever wrote." Over the course of her long career, Sylvia Townsend Warner published five more novels, seven books of poetry, a translation of Proust, fourteen volumes of short stories, and a biography of T.H. White. NYRB also publishes *Summer Will Show*, Warner's novel of the French Revolution of 1848.

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NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS



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Introduction

COMPARISONS of writers with barnyard animals aren't ordinarily complimentary, but there's no mistaking the admiration in John Updike's tone when he describes Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893–1978) as having “the spiritual digestion of a goat.” Elsewhere he has saluted the “more than half-century of brilliantly varied and self-possessed literary production” which somehow “never quite won her the flaming place in the heavens of reputation that she deserved.”

Yet Warner's first two novels were highly successful in both Britain and America (*Lolly Willowes* being selected in 1926 as the very first Book-of-the-Month Club choice), and for forty years from 1936 she contributed a mass of stories to *The New Yorker*—upwards of a hundred and fifty in all.

Some of the reasons for her relatively slow absorption into the canon are trivial: a three-part name like Sylvia Townsend Warner, for instance, nude of a hyphen, suggests an American origin to British eyes, which may have discouraged one of her natural constituencies (readers have always been parochial, or if they're being cosmopolitan they like to know it).

Other reasons lie deeper. Although *Lolly Willowes* was the opposite of a false start, it did create a false impression. British reviewers rightly compared this fantasia about a superfluous woman who finds that there is a place for her in the world after all (she's a witch) to David Garnett's *Lady Into Footman* (1922), but it also seemed to hint at a feminist agenda.

Her second novel, *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* (1927), consolidated the success of the first, but it gave notice that this was a writer who infused personal material into her work with a pipette, rather than pumping it in using a high-pressure hose, as the century more and more preferred. Mr. Fortune is a missionary in the South Seas seeking to make converts in a joy-based, guilt-immune culture.

Sylvia Townsend Warner's later long fiction was at home in very various settings: late-eighteenth-century Spain (*After the Death of Don Juan*, 1938), for instance, or a community of nuns in fourteenth-century East Anglia (*The Corner That Held Them*, 1948). Since the 1970s, these novels have been republished by feminist presses, but without *Lolly Willowes* to start the series and set the tone they would seem politically wayward and escapist.

Warner herself was anything but a superfluous woman, even before the appearance of *Lolly Willowes* turned her from a praised and published poet into a best-selling novelist. She was one of five editors (the youngest, and the only woman) of *Tudor Church Music*, a massive edition made possible in the straitened economy after the First World War, by a grant from the Carnegie UK Trust. As such she already enjoyed in specialist circles what her biographer Claire Harman splendidly calls “mute celebrity.”

This seems an admirable life for a professional woman, but her appointment would hardly have happened without the influence of Percy Buck, another of the editors. The two were lovers for seventeen years from 1913, or rather she was his mistress, since the affair was secret and there was no question of Buck leaving his wife and five children. She had affairs with other men over the period of their involvement, but infidelity to her boss's infidelity was hardly enough to make her a model of emancipation.

In 1930 she started to share a cottage in Dorset with Valentine Ackland, a young woman with short hair and given to the wearing of trousers, whose marriage had been annulled. Shortly after that they were sharing a bed.

The dislocation of status between being a married man's secret and a scandalous woman's wife

partner was in theory absolute. In practice Warner weathered it smoothly. Sexual heresy made her more radical, and no less so.

Admiration for her casual fortitude is inevitably damped down by the conviction that Ackland (1906–1969), the love of her life, was in many ways the bane of it also. There followed decades of repetitive trauma. As Chester Kallman to Wystan Auden, so Ackland to Warner. Auden, though, might have envied the lucid triumph Warner recorded in a letter of 1951: “Here I am, grey as a badge wrinkled as a walnut, and never a beauty at my best: but here I sit, and yonder sits the other one, who had all the cards in her hand—except one. That I was better at loving and being loved.”

In her low-key attitude to her own sexual dissidence, as in so much else, Sylvia Townsend Warner was the strongest possible contrast to her older contemporary Virginia Woolf. She emancipated herself from provincialism at least as fully as Woolf, but without anything like the same struggle, the same effort of the will. She had the knack of melting across barriers, rather than defining herself against them. Though her prose has its cubist moments, she was immune to the sense of crisis, of total rupture, that marked modernism.

Reading *Mrs. Dalloway* shortly after publication, she resisted the spell of its author, “though I think she can move like a swan, speak like a siren, twine like a convolvulus.” Warner’s root objection was that Woolf remained enthroned in her own prose, unwilling or unable to abdicate in favor of her readers: “What is the use of describing feelings and thoughts, however vividly, if they are to remain the author’s? This is *My* book, this is what *I* feel about it—It made me feel almost ashamed as I read to see such gifts made such a schoolgirlish use of.”

Warner may have been a passionate member of the Communist Party (she and Ackland joined in 1935, and visited Spain the next year), but ideology leaves the lightest possible footprint in her work. She boasted that the medieval nunnery in *The Corner That Held Them* was analyzed in orthodox Marxist terms, but what sort of Marxist devotes six years to the perfecting of a novel so remote from the struggle for tomorrow? Political crisis she could recognize, but it took place—and demanded a response—in a parallel universe from her writing life.

There’s a similar separation of domains and powers at work in the novel reprinted here, *Mr. Fortune’s Maggot*. The theme that teases what we now call colonialism—the assumption that Western civilization deals directly with reality, while other groups are subject to local illusions—is anything but doctrinaire. It doesn’t inhibit the writer from confidently embroidering any amount of Polynesian exotica, from a narrow base of knowledge. Warner claimed to have relied on a single book for background (a volume of letters from a female missionary)—and a book read ten years previously that, so vivid in memory that she didn’t need to revisit it or consult others: “...it had the minimum of religion, only elementary scenery, and a mass of details of everyday life.” She did ask friends, though, about some less exotic matters: “Before long I must see you, for my missionary has got to dive under the sea somewhere about p. 115. The only time I have been under the sea was quite involuntary, but I remember your telling me you loved diving...I have also made some enquiries about algebra, but the earthquake and the harmonium...have settled in nicely” (letter to David Garnett, March 6, 1926).

In a letter to William Maxwell written in the mid-1960s, Warner traced the beginnings of the story to “an extremely vivid dream. A man stood alone on an ocean beach, wringing his hands in an intensity of despair; as I saw him in my dream I knew something about him...” Even late in the writing of the book (which she compared to being pregnant with a child made of Venetian glass) she remembered being “in a state of semi-hallucination,” dressing for instance for the weather in the book rather than the weather in the streets.

Yet in letters written in the mid-Twenties to her most intimate literary friend, David Garnett, close

in age but senior in reputation, she made no mention of a dream and struck a jaunty, almost boisterous note: “You would laugh if you could see the story I am writing now. It is a lovely subject, there is nothing original about it, for it takes place on a Pacific island (like Defoe and H. de Vere Stacpoole) and the hero is a clergyman (like Mrs. Humphry Ward and Oliver Goldsmith), and it is written in the alternate layers of Powys and Garnett, both imitated to the life. I roar with laughter at it and write it feverishly. The Rev. Crusoe is Theo, of course, and Man Friday is you...” (November 11, 1925). “Powys” is the reclusive T. F. Powys, best remembered for his novel *Mr. Weston’s Good Wine*, and “Theo” is “Theo”—Warner had originally met David Garnett when trying, successfully, to get Powys’s fiction published.

Jauntiness can of course defend softness and susceptibility, and since Garnett would be the book’s first reader Warner may have wanted to play down her involvement with her character and his story. Perhaps a fresh wave of feeling overtook and enlarged an original satirical impulse, producing a change of tone that surprised even the writer. In March of 1926 she was warning Garnett that despite such gaieties as earthquake and harmonium, “it is not a gay story, and perhaps you will not like it.” In October she further distanced herself from the story: “My missionary is an impossible length, fatalistic, sodomitic, alternately monotonous and melodramatic, his only success is an aigre-doux quality which will infuriate any reader after the third page. I love him with a dreadful uneasy passion which in itself denotes him a cripple...”

Whether the novel’s tender thread was there from the beginning or woven in later, Garnett was the first of many readers to respond strongly to it: “David took the proofs to read and shut himself up with them,” Warner wrote in her letter to William Maxwell. “When he came out, having read the book, he began to tell me that he thought it was good. His face swelled and reddened and we both realized that he was in tears.” Garnett corroborated this account of his reaction in a review for the *Daily News*: “...suddenly, our eyes are blurred with tears, and through them we see the truth, bitter and needing more courage than we can command. So we are rather childishly ashamed of having ever laughed at Mr. Fortune...”

Warner herself claimed to share this feeling of responsibility: “I remember writing the last paragraph, and reading the conclusion and then impulsively writing the envoy, with a feeling of compunction, almost guilt, toward this guiltless man I had created and left in such a fix.” It isn’t good for authors to be too much at the mercy of their own effects—think of Alice Walker solemnly thanking her characters for coming—but Warner seems to have come to no harm.

In 1930, though, she reread *Mr. Fortune’s Maggot* and decided she could do more for her hapless hero than desert him with apologies. She could intervene again, and continue his story.

She wrote two thousand words of what became *The Salutation* in a single sitting, with no idea of what would come next. A timely dream that night provided her plot. Warner continued to think well of the finished story, written “out of my heart as an *amende* to my poor Timothy. Not that I could make him happier, but to show that I did not forget him.” She described it as “the purest, the least time-serving story I ever wrote,” and made it the title story of a collection published in 1932.

That phrase “time-serving” seems unduly harsh, an implied rebuke to the rest of her short fiction, but she may have had a particular private criterion in mind. In a letter of 1962 Warner referred, with regret, to the “moral purpose” informing some of her writing, saying she was never aware of it at the time of composition, “but when I read myself afterward I see my moral purpose shining out like a bare fish in a dark larder.” Perhaps she meant that there were no off smells of that sort about *The Salutation*. The novella is free of any taint of wheedling—though there is an inherent paradox about a sequel that offers no antidote to the unconsoling firmness of its original.

This was the only time in her literary career that Sylvia Townsend Warner returned to finish her work and tried to take it further. Her instinct was all the other way, toward moving on. In her last extraordinary group of stories, published as *Kingdoms of Elfin* (1977), the characters are mainly fairies, though the cuteness factor is low to nonexistent—it's as if she wanted a change even from warm-bloodedness.

The Salutation, being designed to be read without necessary reference to *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, contains no explicit identification of the heroes of both stories as one. It isn't quite substantial enough to be a companion piece to the novel, but there's too much new material (a whole new country and society, a whole new palette) for it to be considered a coda. Not quite matching, not quite contrasting, novel and novella are like a chair and a stool from the same marvelous maker. The ending of *The Salutation*, with its dream loop, suggests that even the second time around, Sylvia Townsend Warner found it hard to finish her business with so tender a creation.

—ADAM MARS-JONES

MR. FORTUNE'S MAGGOT

MAGGOT. 2. A whimsical or perverse fancy; a crotchet.

—N. E. D.

The scenes and characters of this story are entirely imaginary. In the island names the vowels should be pronounced separately with the Italianate vowel-sounds. Words of three syllables are accented on the second: Fanùà, Luèli.

I am greatly obliged to Mr. Victor Butler for his assistance in the geometrical passages, and for the definition of an umbrella.

Preface

IN 1918 when I first went to live in London, at 127 Queens Road, I was poor and thought I could not afford a Times Book Club subscription. I soon exhausted my own books, and though I had the British Museum by day I wanted something to read in the evening. Then I happened on the Westbourne Grove branch of the Paddington Public Library. It was a very down-at-heel establishment, with a great many bad biographies of unimportant people, and all the books had the same smell (I suppose it was some public disinfectant). I found it very convenient, and used it hard. One of the books I borrowed was a volume of letters by a woman missionary in Polynesia. I can't remember the title, or her name; but the book pleased me a great deal, it had the minimum of religion, only elementary scenery, and a mass of details of everyday life. The woman wrote out of her own heart—for instance, describing an earthquake, she said that the ground trembled like the lid of a boiling kettle.

In 1925 I had finished *Lolly Willowes*, and was writing poetry and a few short stories when one early morning I woke up remembering an extremely vivid dream. A man stood alone on an ocean beach, wringing his hands in an intensity of despair; as I saw him in my dream, I also knew something of his circumstances. He was a missionary, he was middle-aged, and a deprived character, his name was Hegarty, he was on an island where he had made only one convert: and at the moment I saw him he had just realised that the convert was no convert at all. I jumped out of bed and began to write down, and even as I wrote a great deal which I had known in the dream began to scatter; but the main facts, and the man's loneliness, simplicity, and despair, and the look of the island, all remained as actual as something I had really experienced.

With the minimum of fuss I made a few notes of the development, discarded the name of Hegarty because it might lead me into a comic Irishman, and began to write. The opening, up to Luelia's baptism, is, with scarcely a word's alteration, as I wrote it down. This must have been in winter because I remember Duncan Grant coming to dinner on the same day, and we had the gas fire on, and ate some sort of stewed game. The moment he had gone I went on writing.

My remembrance of the book from the Paddington Public Library was so vivid and substantial that I never felt a need to consult any other books. The lady's account of the earthquake I could supplement by Bea Howe's remembrance of the Valparaiso earthquake: this gave me the lamppost beginning to swing. The public library lady also gave me the lava in the water flowing towards the south. The idol I had from the missionary's cottage at Wayford in Somerset which I hired for the summer of 1926. The parrot lived next door to this cottage, and I grew very familiar with its voice in the tree, and noticed how much quieter unconfined parrots sound.

There had been some breaks between when Duncan came to dine and when I was at Wayford; but after that I wrote steadily, and with increasing anxiety; not because I had any doubt about the story but because I was so intensely conscious that the shape and balance of the narrative must be exactly right—or the whole thing would fall to smithereens, and I could never pick it up again. I remember saying to Bea that I felt as if I were in advanced pregnancy with a Venice glass child. It was made the more alarming by the way in which things kept on going right—like the business of Mr. Fortune's watch, for instance. I was really in a very advanced stage of hallucination when I finished the book-writing in manuscript and taking wads of it to be typed at the Westbourne Secretarial College at 127 Queens Road.

I remember writing the last paragraph—and reading over the conclusion, and then impulsively writing the envoy, and beginning to weep bitterly.

I took the two copies, one for England and one for USA to Chatto and Windus myself. I was afraid to trust them by post. It was a very foggy day, and I was nearly run over. I left them with a sense that my world was now nicely and neatly over.

—SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER, DORSET, 1977

THOUGH the Reverend Timothy Fortune had spent three years in the island of Fanua he had made but one convert. Some missionaries might have been galled by this state of things, or if too good to be galled, at least flustered; but Mr. Fortune was a humble man of heart and he had the blessing which rests upon humility: an easy-going nature. In appearance he was tall, raw-boned, and rather rummaged-looking; even as a young man he had learnt that to jump in first doesn't make the 'bus start any sooner; and his favourite psalm was the one which begins: "My soul truly waiteth still upon God."

Mr. Fortune was not a scholar, he did not know that the psalms express bygone thoughts and a bygone way of life. In his literal way he believed that the sixty-second psalm applied to him. For many years he had been a clerk in the Hornsey branch of Lloyds Bank, but he had not liked it. Whenever he weighed out the golden sovereigns in the brass scales, which tacked and sidled like a yacht in a light breeze, he remembered uneasily that the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, that they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.

In the bank, too, he had seen riches increase. But he had not set his heart upon them: and when his godmother, whose pass-book he kept, died and left him one thousand pounds, he went to a training college, was ordained deacon, and quitted England for St. Fabien, a port on an island of the Raratongan Archipelago in the Pacific.

St. Fabien was a centre of Christianity. It had four missions: one Catholic, one Protestant, one Wesleyan, and one American. Mr. Fortune belonged to the Protestant mission. He gave great satisfaction to his superiors by doing as he was bid, teaching in the school, visiting the sick, and carrying the subscription list to the English visitors, and even greater satisfaction when they had discovered that he could keep all the accounts. At the end of ten years Archdeacon Mason was sorry to hear that Mr. Fortune (who was now a priest) had felt a call to go to the island of Fanua.

Fanua was a small remote island which could only be seen in imagination from that beach edge with tin huts where Mr. Fortune walked slowly up and down on evenings when he had time to. No steamers called there, the Archdeacon had visited it many years ago in a canoe. Now his assistant felt a call thither, not merely to visit it in the new mission launch, but to settle there, and perhaps for life.

The two clergymen strolled along the beach in the cool of the evening. The air smelt of the sea, of flowers, and of the islanders' suppers.

"I must warn you, Fortune, you are not likely to make many converts in Fanua."

"What, are they cannibals?"

"No, no! But they are like children, always singing and dancing, and of course immoral. But all the natives are like that. I believe I have told you that the Raratongan language has no words for chastity or for gratitude?"

"Yes, I believe you did."

"Well, well! You are not a young man, Fortune, you will not expect too much of the Fanuans. Singing and dancing! No actual harm in that, of course, and no doubt the climate is partly responsible. But light, my dear Fortune, light! And not only in their heels either."

"I am afraid that none of the children of men weigh altogether true," said Mr. Fortune. "For that matter, I have heard that many cannibals are fond of dancing."

"Humanly speaking I fear that you would be wasted in Fanua. Still, if you have felt a call I must not dissuade you, I won't put any obstacles in your way. But you will be a great loss."

The Archdeacon spoke so sadly that Mr. Fortune, knowing how much he disliked accounts, wondered for a moment if God would prefer him to wait still in St. Fabien. God tries the souls of men in crafty ways, and perhaps the call had been a temptation, a temptation sent to try his humility. He turned his eyes towards where he knew the island of Fanua to lie. What his superior had said about

had not displeased him, on the contrary he liked to think of the islanders dancing and singing. It would be a beautiful estate to live among them and gather their souls as a child gathers daisies in a field.

But now the horizon was hidden in the evening haze, and Fanua seemed more remote than ever. A little cloud was coming up the heavens, slowly, towards the sunset; as it passed above the place of Fanua it brightened, it shone like a pearl, it caught the rays of the sun and glowed with a rosy rim. Mr. Fortune took the cloud to be a sign.

Heartened by a novel certainty that he was doing the right thing, he disappointed the Archdeacon quite unflinchingly and set about his preparations for the new life. Since the island was so unfrequented it was necessary to take with him provisions for at least a year. In the ordinary course of things the Mission would have supplied his outfit, but he had a scruple against availing himself of that custom because, having kept the accounts, he knew their poverty and their good works, and also because he was aware that the expedition to Fanua was looked on as, at best, a sort of pious escapade. Fortunately there were the remains of his godmother's legacy. With feelings that were a nice mixture of thrift and extravagance he bought tinned meat, soup-squares, a chest of tea, soap, a tool-box, a medicine chest, a gentleman's housewife, a second-hand harmonium (rather cumbrous and wheezy but certainly a bargain), and an oil-lamp. He also bought a quantity of those coloured glass baubles which hang so ravishingly on Christmas trees, some picture-books, rolls of white cotton, and a sewing-machine to make clothes for his converts. The Archdeacon gave him a service of altar furniture and the other mission-workers presented him with a silver teapot. With the addition of some plate-powder Mr. Fortune was now ready to embark.

In fancy he had seen himself setting foot upon the island alone, though he knew that in fact some one must go with him if only to manage the launch. But that some one would be a sailor, a being so aloofly maritime as scarcely to partake in the act of landing. He was slightly dashed when he discovered that the Archdeacon, accompanied by his secretary, was coming too in order to install him with a proper appearance of ceremony.

"We cannot impress upon them too early," said the Archdeacon, "the solemn nature of your undertaking." And Mr. Fortune hung his head, a grey one, old and wise enough to heed an admonition or a rebuke.

The voyage was uneventful. The Archdeacon sat in the bows dictating to the secretary, and Mr. Fortune looked at the Pacific Ocean until he fell asleep, for he was tired out with packing.

About sunset he was aroused by the noise of surf and by peals of excited laughter; and opening his eyes he found that they were close in under the shadow of the island of Fanua. The launch was manœuvring round seeking for an inlet in the reef, and the islanders were gathered together to view this strange apparition. Some were standing on the rocks, some were in the sea, others were diving from cliff to water, in movement and uproar like a flock of seagulls disturbed by a fishing-boat.

It seemed to Mr. Fortune that there must be thousands of them, and for a moment his heart sank. But there was no time for second thoughts; for behold! a canoe shot forward to the side of the launch, a rope was thrown and caught, the Archdeacon, the secretary, and himself were miraculously jumped in, the sea was alive with brown heads, every one talked at once, the canoe turned, darted up the smooth back of a wave, descended into a cloud of spray, and the three clergymen, splashed and stiff, were standing on the beach.

Now Mr. Fortune was properly grateful for the presence of the Archdeacon, for like a child arriving late at a party he felt perfectly bewildered and would have remained in the same spot, smiling and staring. But like the child at a party he found himself taken charge of and shepherded in the right direction until, in the house of the chief islander, he was seated on a low stool with his hat taken off,

garland round his neck, and food in his hands, smiling and staring still.

Before dark the luggage was also landed. The evening was spent in conversation and feasting. Even one who could squeeze himself into Ori's house did so, and the rest of them (the thousands did not seem above a few hundreds now) squatted round outside. Even the babies seemed prepared to sit there all night, but at length the Archdeacon, pleading fatigue, asked leave of his host to go to bed.

Ori dismissed the visitors, his household prepared the strangers' sleeping place, unrolling the beds mats and shooing away a couple of flying foxes, the missionaries prayed together and the last good nights were said.

From where he lay Mr. Fortune could look out of the door. He saw a tendril of some creeper waving gently to and fro across the star Canopus, and once more he realised, as though he were looking at it for the first time, how strangely and powerfully he had been led from his native land to lie down in peace under the constellations of the southern sky.

"So this is my first night in Fanua," he thought, as he settled himself on his mat. "My first night..."

And he would have looked at the star, a sun whose planets must depend wholly upon God for their salvation, for no missionary could reach them; but his eyes were heavy with seafaring, and in another minute he had fallen asleep.

As though while his body lay sleeping his ghost had gone wandering and ascertaining through the island Mr. Fortune woke on the morrow feeling perfectly at home in Fanua. So much so that when he stood on the beach waving farewell to the launch he had the sensations of a host, who from seeing one of his guests turn back with a renewed sense of ownership to the house which the fact of their departure makes more deeply and dearly his. Few hosts indeed could claim an ownership equally secure. For when the Archdeacon, visited with a sudden qualm at the thought of Mr. Fortune's isolation, had suggested that he should come again in three months' time, just to see how he was getting on, Mr. Fortune was able to say quite serenely and legitimately that he would prefer to be left alone for at least a year.

Having waved to the proper degree of perspective he turned briskly inland. The time was come to explore Fanua.

The island of Fanua is of volcanic origin, though at the time of Mr. Fortune's arrival the volcano had been for many years extinct. It rises steeply out of the ocean, and seen from thence it appears disproportionately tall for its base, for the main peak reaches to a height of near three thousand feet, and the extremely indented coast-line does not measure more than seventy miles. On three sides of the island there are steep cliffs worked into caverns and flying buttresses by the action of the waves, but to the east a fertile valley slopes gently down to a low-lying promontory of salt-meadow and beach, where once a torrent of lava burst from the side of the mountain and crushed its path to the sea; and in this valley lies the village.

The lower slopes of the mountain are wooded, and broken into many deep gorges where the noise of the cataract echoes from cliff to cliff, where the air is cool with shade and moist with spray, and where bright green ferns grow on the black face of the rock. Above this swirl and foam of tree-tops the mountain rises up in crags or steep tracts of scrub and clinker to the old crater, whose ramparts are broken into curious cactus-shaped pinnacles of rock, in colour the reddish-lavender of rhododendron blossoms.

A socket of molten stone, rent and deserted by its ancient fires and garlanded round with vegetation as wild as fire and more inexhaustible, the whole island breathes the peculiar romance of being with a stormy past. The ripened fruit falls from the tree, the tree falls too and the ferns leap up from it as though it were being consumed with green flames. The air is sleepy with salt and honey, and

the sharp wild cries of the birds seem to float like fragments of coloured paper upon the monotonous background of breaking waves and falling cataract.

Mr. Fortune spent the whole day exploring, and when he felt hungry he made a meal of guavas and rose-apples. There seemed to be no end to the marvels and delights of his island, and he was as thrilled as though he had been let loose into the world for the first time. But he returned with all the day's wonders almost forgotten in the excitement and satisfaction of having discovered the place where he wanted to live.

It was a forsaken hut, about a mile from the village and less than that distance from the sea. It stood in a little dell amongst the woods, before it there was a natural lawn of fine grass, behind it was a rocky spur of the mountain. There was a spring for water and a clump of coco-palms for shade.

The hut consisted of one large room opening on to a deep verandah. The framework was of wood, the floor of beaten earth, and it was thatched and walled with reeds.

Ori told him that it could be his for the taking. An old woman had lived there with her daughter, but she had died and the daughter, who didn't like being out of the world, had removed to the village. Mr. Fortune immediately set about putting it in order, and while he worked almost every one in the island dropped in at some time or other to admire, encourage, or lend a hand. There was not much to do: a little strengthening of the thatch, the floor to be weeded and trodden smooth, the creepers to be cut back—and on the third day he moved in.

This took place with ceremony. The islanders accompanied him on his many journeys to and from the village, they carried the crate containing the harmonium with flattering eulogies of its weight and size, and when everything was transported they sat on the lawn and watched him unpacking. When he unpacked the teapot they burst into delighted laughter.

Except for the lamp, the sewing-machine, and the harmonium, Mr. Fortune's house had not a European appearance, for while on the island he wished to live as its natives did. His bowls and platters and drinking-vessels were made of polished wood, his bed (Ori's gift) was a small wooden platform spread with many white mats. When everything was completed he gave each of the islanders a ginger-bread nut and made a little formal speech, first thanking them for their gifts and their assistance, and going on to explain his reasons for coming to Fanua. He had heard, he said, with pleasure how happy a people they were, and he had come to dwell with them and teach them how they might be as happy in another life as they were in this.

The islanders received his speech in silence broken only by crunching. Their expressions were those of people struck into awe by some surprising novelty: Mr. Fortune wondered if he were that novelty or Huntley and Palmers.

He was anxious to do things befittingly, for the Archdeacon's admonition on the need for being solemn still hung about the back of his mind. This occasion, it seemed to him, was something between a ceremony and a social function. It was a gathering, and as such it had its proper routine: first there comes an address, after the address a hymn is sung, then comes a collect and sometimes a collection, and after that the congregation disperses.

Mr. Fortune sat down to his harmonium and sang and played through a hymn.

His back was to the islanders, he could not see how they were taking it. But when, having finished the hymn and added two chords for the Amen, he turned round to announce the collect, he discovered that they had already dispersed, the last of them even then vanishing noiselessly and enigmatically through the bushes.

The sun was setting behind the mountain, great shafts of glory moved among the topmost crags. Mr. Fortune thought of God's winnowing-fan, he imagined Him holding the rays of the sun in His

hand. God winnows the souls of men with the beauty of this world: the chaff is blown away, the true grain lies still and adoring.

In the dell it was already night. He sat for a long time in his verandah listening to the boom of the waves. He did not think much, he was tired with a long day's work and his back ached. At last he went indoors, lighted his lamp, and began to write in his diary. Just as he was dropping off to sleep a pleasant thought came to him, and he smiled, murmuring in a drowsy voice: "To-morrow is Sunday."

In the morning he was up and shaved and dressed before sunrise. With a happy face he stepped out to his lawn and stood listening to the birds. They did not sing anywhere near so sweetly as English blackbirds and thrushes, but Mr. Fortune was pleased with their notes, a music which seemed proper to this gay landscape which might have been coloured out of a child's paint-box.

He stood there till the sun had risen and shone into the dell, then he went back into his hut; when he came out again he was dressed in his priest's clothes and carried a black tin box.

He walked across the dell to where there was a stone with a flat top. Opening the box he took out first a linen cloth which he spread on the stone, then a wooden cross and two brass vases. He knelt down and very carefully placed the cross so that it stood firm on the middle of the stone. The vases he carried to the spring, where he filled them with water, and gathering some red blossoms which grew on a bush near by he arranged them in the vases, which he then carried back and set on either side of the cross. Standing beside the stone and looking into the sun, he said in a loud voice: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The sun shone upon the white cloth and the scarlet flowers, upon the cross of wood and upon the priest standing serious, grey-headed and alone in the green dell all sparkling with dew as though it had never known the darkness of night.

Once more he turned and went back to the hut. When he came out again he carried in either hand a cup and a dish which shone like gold. These he put down upon the stone, and bowed himself before them and began to pray.

Mr. Fortune knelt very upright. His eyes were shut, he did not see the beauty of the landscape glittering in the sun-rise, the coco-palms waving their green feather head-dresses gently to and fro in the light breeze, the wreaths of rosy mist floating high up across the purple crags of the mountain— and yet from the expression on his face one would have said that he was all the more aware of the beauty around him for having his eyes shut, for he seemed like one in an ecstasy and his clasped hands trembled as though they had hold of a joy too great for him. He knelt on, absorbed in prayer. He did not see that a naked brown boy had come to the edge of the dell and was gazing at him and at the stone which he had decked to the glory of God—gazing with wonder and admiration, and step by step coming softly across the grass. Only when he had finished his prayer and stretched out his hands towards the altar did Mr. Fortune discover that a boy was kneeling at his side.

He gave no sign of surprise, he did not even appear to have noticed the newcomer. With steadfast demeanour he took from the dish a piece of bread and ate it, and drank from the cup. Then, rising and turning to the boy who still knelt before him, he laid his hand upon his head and looked down on him with a long look of greeting. Slowly and unhesitatingly, like one who hears and accepts and obeys the voice of the spirit, he took up the cup once more and with the forefinger of his right hand he wrote the sign of the cross upon the boy's forehead with the last drops of the wine.

The boy did not flinch, he trembled a little, that was all. Mr. Fortune bent down and welcomed him with a kiss.

He had waited, but after all not for long. The years in the bank, the years at St. Fabien, they did not seem long now, the time of waiting was gone by, drowsy and half-forgotten like a night watch.

cloud in the heavens had been given him as a sign to come to Fanua, but here was a sign much nearer and more wonderful: his first convert, miraculously led to come and kneel beside him a little after the rising of the sun. His, and not his. For while he had thought to bring souls to God, God had been beforehand with His gift, had come before him into the meadow, and gathering the first daisy had given it to him.

For a long while he stood lost in thankfulness. At last he bade the kneeling boy get up.

“What is your name?” he said.

“Lueli,” answered the boy.

“I have given you a new name, Lueli. I have called you Theodore, which means ‘the gift of God.’”

Lueli smiled politely.

“Theodore,” repeated Mr. Fortune impressively.

The boy smiled again, a little dubiously this time. Then, struck with a happy thought, he told Mr. Fortune the name of the scarlet blossoms that stood on either side of the cross. His voice was soft and pleasant, and he held his head on one side in his desire to please.

“Come, Theodore, will you help me to put these things away?”

Together they rinsed the cup and the dish in the spring, folded the linen cloth and put them with the cross and the vases back into the black tin box. The flowers Mr. Fortune gave to the boy, who with rapid grace pulled others and wove two garlands, one of which he put round Mr. Fortune’s neck and one round his own. Then discovering that the tin box served as a dusky sort of mirror he bent over it and would have stayed coquetting like a girl with a new coral necklace had not Mr. Fortune called him into the hut.

In all Lueli’s movements there was a swiftness and a pliancy as though not only his mind but his body also were intent on complaisance and docility. A monkey will show the same adaptability, delectation and pleased with his deftness, but in a monkey’s face there is always a sad self-seeking look, and his eyes are like pebbles unhappily come alive. Birds, or squirrels, or lizards whisking over the rock have a vivid infallible grace; but that is inherent, and proper to their kind; however much one may admire or envy them, they do not touch one into feeling grateful to them for being what they are. As Mr. Fortune watched Lueli folding up the priestly clothes, patting them smooth and laying them in the tin box, he felt as though he were watching some entirely new kind of being, too spontaneous to be human, too artless to be monkey, too sensitive to be bird or squirrel or lizard; and he wished that he had been more observant of creation, so that he could find out what it was that Lueli resembled. On some women, happy in themselves and in their love, will show to a lover or husband this kind of special grace; but this Mr. Fortune, whose love affairs had been hasty and conventional, did not know.

While they were breakfasting together in the verandah the missionary had a good look at his new convert.

Lueli was of the true Polynesian type, slender-boned and long-limbed, with small idle hands and feet: broad-minded persons with no colour prejudices might have described him as aristocratic-looking. This definition did not occur to Mr. Fortune, who had had no dealings with aristocrats and was consequently unaware of any marked difference between them and other people; but he reflected with satisfaction that the boy looked very refined for one who had been so recently a heathen. His eyes were rather small and his nose was rather snub, but these details did not mar the general good effect of regular features and a neatly shaped head. Though when he talked he pulled very charming faces, in repose his expression was slightly satirical. In colour he was an agreeable brown, almost exactly the colour of a nutmeg; his hair was thick but not bushy, and he wore it gathered up into a tuft over either ear, in much the same manner as was fashionable at the French Court in the year 1671.

In spite of his convert's advantageous appearance and easy manners Mr. Fortune judged that he was not the child of any one particularly rich or distinguished; for in these islands where the poorest are scrupulously clean and the richest may wear for sole adornment the sophisticated elegance of fresh gathered flowers, social standing may yet be deduced from the degree of tattooing. Lueli had greaves and gaiters of a pattern of interlacing bamboo-shoots, and in addition a bracelet round his left wrist and on his right shoulder-blade an amusing sprig. But this was all. And from the elegance of the designs and their wilful disposition it seemed as though he had been decorated for no better reason than the artist's pleasure.

When Mr. Fortune came to make inquiries he found that he had judged rightly. Lueli was one of a large family, which is rare in these islands. His mother was a fat, giggling creature, without a care for the world; even among the light-hearted people of Fanua she and her brood were a byword for the harum-scarum ways. Their dwelling was a big tumble-down hut in which there was scarcely ever any one at home except a baby; and though they had no apparent father or other means of sustenance, there was no obstacle to well-being in this fertile spot where no one need go hungry who could shake fruit off a tree or pull fish out of the water.

All of the family were popular. Lueli in particular for his beauty and amiability was a regular village pet. But, whether it be that an uncommon share of good looks, like a strain of fairy blood, separates their owners apart, or whether beautiful people are in some way aware of the firebrand they carry with them and so are inclined to solitariness, Lueli, like other beauties, had for all his affability a tincture of aloofness in his character. Although he was a pet, it was not a pet dog he resembled, solicitous and dependent, but a pet cat, which will leap on to a knee to be fondled and then in a moment detach itself as impossible to constrain as a beam of moonlight playing bo-peep through a cloud. So when he deserted the village and attached himself to the newcomer no one was hurt or surprised, they took it for granted that he would go where he pleased.

This complaisance had slightly shocked Mr. Fortune, particularly as it fell in so conveniently with his wishes. It was most desirable, indeed almost necessary, that his convert should live with him, at any rate for the present, in order to assure and perfect the work of conversion. Afterwards the finished product could be let loose again, a holy decoy, to lure others into salvation's net. But good men do not expect silver spoons to be slipped into their mouths. Easy fortune finds them unprepared and a trifle suspicious.

Mr. Fortune sought to inoculate his good luck by a scrupulous observance of formalities. He put on his black felt hat and went to pay a call on Lueli's mother. On the fourth visit he happened to find her at home. Taking off the hat and bowing, he addressed her with a long speech in which he drew a careful distinction between obedience to God and obedience to lawful authority. Lueli, said he, having become a Christian, any attempts on her part to discourage him would be tempting Lueli to disobey God, therefore as God's priest it would be his duty to oppose them. On the other hand, as Lueli's only visible parent and lawful guardian she had an absolute right to decide whether Lueli should remain at home, and if she wished him (Lueli) to do so, far from opposing her he (Mr. Fortune) would enforce her authority with his own and insist upon the boy's return.

Lueli's mother looked rather baffled, and crumpled her face exactly as Lueli crumpled his in the effort to follow Mr. Fortune's explanation. But when he had finished she brightened, said that it was all a very good scheme, and asked if Mr. Fortune would like a netful of shrimps?

He spoke a little longer of his affection for the boy, and his plans for teaching him, explaining that though perhaps an European education might not be much use in Fanua, wherefore he was not proposing to trouble him with much arithmetic, yet a Christian education is useful anywhere, and

Lueli must soon learn the Catechism; and then carrying the shrimps he set off to visit Ori.

~~Ori was the chief man of the island and it would be only civil and politic to consult him. Besides~~ there was always the chance that Ori might put a spoke in his wheel, a chance not to be missed by any conscientious Englishman. But when Ori had listened to the speech about obedience to God and obedience to lawful authority which Mr. Fortune delivered all over again (with, of course, suitable omissions and alterations) he also said that it was all a very good scheme. Wouldn't Mr. Fortune like girl too?

Mr. Fortune refused, as politely as his horror would allow, for he had had more than enough of the girls of Fanua. He wished them no harm, it was his hope to live in charity with all men, girls included and he had no doubt that when they were converted they would become as much better as they should be. But in their present state they were almost beyond bearing. Once upon a time when he was still a bank clerk and had leisure for literature the phrase "a bevy of young girls" had sounded in his ears quite pleasantly, suggesting something soft as "a covey of partridges" but lighter in colour. Now it sounded like a cross between "a pack of wolves," "a swarm of mosquitoes," and "a horde of Tartars."

The girls of Fanua always went about in bevies, and ever since his arrival they had pestered him with their attentions. He had but to put his nose into the village for a score of brown minxes to gather round him, entangling him in garlands and snatching at his hat. If he walked on the beach at sunset repeating to himself that sonnet of Wordsworth's:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea:

long before he had got to:

Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,

he was sure to be interrupted by sounds of laughter and splashing, and to find himself encompassed by yet another bevy, naked from the sea, and begging and cajoling him to go bathing with them.

If he fled to the woods they followed him, creeping softly in his tracks. When he thought himself safe and sat down to rest, a head and shoulders would be thrust through the greenery; soon there would be half a dozen of them watching him, commenting and surmising on his person, and egging each other on to approach nearer. If he got up to walk away they burst out after him and taking hands entrapped him in the centre of a dance wanton enough to inflame a maypole.

Once these nymphs surprised him bathing. Fortunately the pool he was in was only large enough to hold one at a time, so while it continued to hold him he was tolerably safe. But it was tiresome to have them sitting all round gazing at him as though he might shortly turn into a satyr. He told them to go away, he even begged them to do so, for the water was cold and as modesty compelled him to sit with as much of his person in the water as possible he was growing cramped. But all was in vain; they sat there as expectant as a congregation, and for once sat in silence. His zeal told him that, tiresome as all was, this opportunity for proselytising should not be missed. Accordingly he began to preach to them with chattering teeth, only his shoulders appearing above the surface of the water, draped in a sort of ruff or boa of water-weed. He preached for an hour and twenty minutes, and then, seeing that

they would neither be converted nor go, he reared up out of the pool, strode over the shoulder of the nearest girl and proceeded (the word is more dignified than walked), blue and indignant, toward his clothes. Thank Heaven the young whores had not noticed them!

The best thing that could be said for the girls of Fanua (unless judged as trials of temper, mortifications, and potential stumbling-blocks, in which case they would have received very high marks) was that they afforded an admirable foil to Lueli's maidenly demeanour. Day by day he unrolled such a display of the Christian virtues, was so gentle, so biddable, so deft to oblige, so willing to learn, and just sufficiently stupid to be no trouble, that Mr. Fortune felt that he could have endured even twice as many girls as the price of being soothed by one such boy. He had never beheld, he had never dreamed of such a conversion. Indeed, if it had been his own work he would have been uneasy wondering if it were not too good to be true. But he acknowledged it to be the Lord's doing and so he was prepared for anything.

But he was not prepared for his paragon to disappear without a word of warning and stay away for three days and four nights.

For the first twenty-four hours he thought little or nothing of it: Lueli was gone birding or gone fishing: he was playing with his friends in the village, or he might be on a visit to his mother. Mr. Fortune had no objection. On the contrary, he was rather pleased that the convert should thus hie him back to the company of his old acquaintance. There had been something disquieting, almost repulsive in the calm way Lueli had given his former life the go-by. He would not like to think him lacking in natural affection. So he slept through the first night and dabbled through the first day without feeling any uneasiness; but on the second night he dreamed that Lueli had come back, and waking from his dream he ran out into the dell to see if it were a true one.

There was no one there. He called—at first loudly, then he thought that Lueli might be hiding in the bushes afraid to come out lest he should be angry, so he called softly. Then he sat down in the verandah, for he knew there would be no more sleep for him that night, and began to worry, imagining all the dreadful things that might have befallen the boy, and reproaching himself bitterly for having allowed so much time to slip by before he awoke to the possibility of danger. Perhaps Lueli had been drowned. Mr. Fortune knew that he could swim like a fish, but he thought of drowning none the less. Perhaps running through the woods he had been caught like Absalom, or perhaps he had broken his leg and now, tired of calling for help, was lying snuffling with his face to the wet ground. Perhaps he had been carried off in a canoe by natives from some other island to serve as a slave or even as a meal.

“This is nonsense,” said Mr. Fortune. “The boy is probably somewhere in the village. I will get down as soon as it is day and inquire for him. Only when I know for certain that he is not there will I allow myself to worry.”

For all that he continued to sit on the verandah, shredding his mind into surmises and waiting for the colour of day to come back to the whispering bushes and the black mountain. “In a little while,” he thought, “the moon will be in her first quarter and Lueli will not be able to see his way back if he comes by night.”

As soon as he decently could (for he had his dignity as a missionary to keep up) he walked to the village and made inquiries. No one had seen Lueli; and what was worse, no one could be persuaded into making any suggestions as to his whereabouts or being in the least helpful. There was some sort of feast toward; people were hurrying from house to house with baskets and packages, and the air was thick with taboos. Mr. Fortune hung about for a while, but no one encouraged him to hang on there. Presently he returned to the hut, feeling that the Fanuans were all very heathen and hateful.

Anxious and exasperated he spent the greater part of the day roaming about the woods, harking

back every hour or so to the dell and the bathing-pool on the chance that Lueli might have reappeared. In the dell the shadows moved round from west to east and the tide brimmed and retrenched the pool. Everything seemed to be in a conspiracy to go on as usual. By sunset he had tormented himself out of all self-control. His distress alternated with gusts of furious anger against his convert. Blow hot, blow cold, each contrary blast fanned his burning. At one moment he pictured Lueli struggling in the hands of marauding cannibals: in the next he was ready to cast him off (that is if he came back) as a runaway, and he began to prepare the scathing and renouncing remarks which should dismiss him. "Not that I am angry," he assured himself. "I am not in the least angry. I am perfectly cool. But I see clearly that this is the end. I have been deceived in him, that is all. Of course I am sorry. And I shall miss him. He had pretty ways. He seemed so full of promise."

And instantly he was ravaged with pity for the best and most ill-prized convert the world had ever seen, and now, perhaps, the world saw him no longer. Even if he had run away and was still frolicking about at his own sweet will, there was every excuse to be made for him. He was young, he was ignorant, he had not a notion how much suffering this little escapade had entailed on his pastor, he belonged to a people to whom liberty is the most natural thing in the world. And anyhow, had he not the perfect right to run away if he chose to? "Good heavens, do I want him tethered to me by a string?" So his passion whisked him round again, and he was angrier than ever with Lueli because he was also angry with himself for being ridden by what was little better than an infatuation, unworthy of a man and far more unworthy of a missionary, whose calling it is to love all God's children equally, be they legitimated or no. And he remembered uneasily how in visiting the village that morning he had not breathed a word of conversion.

The idea of having to worry about his own conduct as well as Lueli's agitated him so extremely that he fell on his knees and took refuge in prayer, imploring that his deficiencies might be overlooked and that his sins might not be visited upon Lueli; for it was no fault of the child's, he began to point out to the All-Knowing, that his pastor had chosen to erect him into a stumbling-block. But he was in too much of an upset to pray with any satisfaction, and finding that he was only case-making like a hired barrister he opened his Prayer Book and set himself to read the Forms of Prayer to be Used by Those at Sea, for these seemed appropriate to his case. Thence he read on through the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and had persevered into the Accession Service when there was a noise behind him. He leapt up to welcome the truant. But it was only a stray pig, looking curiously in on him from the doorway.

"O pig!" Mr. Fortune exclaimed, ready just then to disburden himself to anybody. But the emotion betrayed in his hurt voice was so overwhelming that the pig turned tail and bolted.

He addressed himself once more to the Accession Service. The Prayer Book lay face downward and something had fallen out of it and lay face downward too. It was a little old-fashioned picture with a lace-paper frame, one of those holy valentines that lurk in pious Prayer Books, and in course of time grow very foxed. He looked at it. It was a print of the Good Shepherd, who with His crook was helping a lost sheep out of a pit. Careless of His own equilibrium, the Good Shepherd leant over the verge of the rocks, trying to get a firm grip on the sheep's neck and so haul him up into safety.

Smitten to the heart and feeling extremely small, Mr. Fortune closed up the print in the Prayer Book. He had a shrewd suspicion that this incident was intended as a slightly sarcastic comment on his inadequacies as a shepherd. But he took comfort too, for he felt that God had looked on his distress even though it were with a frown. And all night (for he lay awake till dawn) he held on to this thought and endeavoured to wait still.

Having been so tossed up and down, by the morrow he was incapable of feeling anything much. He

spent the day in a kind of stoical industry, visiting the islanders and preaching to them, though they had heard him with even less acceptance than usual, for they were all engaged in sleeping off the feast. During the afternoon he washed his clothes and cleaned the hut, and in the evening he practised the harmonium till his back smouldered with fatigue; and all night he lay in a heavy uncomfortable sleep, imprisoned in it, as though he were cased up in an ill-fitting leaden armour.

He awoke stupefied to bright daylight. He could scarcely remember where he was, or who he was, and his perplexity was increased by finding a number of presences, cold, sleek, and curved, disposed about his limbs. Serpents! In a panic that was half nightmare he sat up. His bed was full of bananas neatly arranged to encircle him as sausages are arranged to encircle a Christmas turkey. Who had put the bananas in his bed? Could it be——? He went swiftly and silently to the door and peered into the dell. There by the spring sat Lueli, arranging shells round the water's edge as though he were laying out a garden. His back was turned, he was so absorbed in his game that he did not discover that he was being watched. Presently he rolled over and lay on his stomach, gently kicking his heels in the air.

Mr. Fortune had a good stare at him. Then he tiptoed back again and began to dress.

As a rule Mr. Fortune was rather careless about his appearance, and compared to the islanders he was decidedly dirty, for whereas they would bathe themselves three times a day or more, he considered that once was enough. But now he made his toilet with extraordinary circumspection and deliberation. He shaved himself as minutely as though he were about to attend an archidiaconal meeting, he parted his hair, he fastened every button with a twitch, he pulled his coat forward so that it should sit well on his shoulders, he wound up his watch and knotted his bootlaces so that they should not come undone. He even put on a hat.

All the while he had a curious sensation that he was dressing a man of stone that must needs be dressed like a dummy, for of itself it was senseless and immovable. Yet *he* was the man of stone, his fingers that slowly and firmly pushed the buttons through the button-holes and knotted the bootlaces were so remorselessly and stonily strong that if he had not been managing them with such care they would have ground the buttons to powder; and if he had allowed them for one moment to tremble the bootlaces would have snapped off in his grasp like black cotton threads.

Walking terribly and softly, and still in this curious stony dream, he stepped into the dell and advanced on Lueli. Lueli turned round. It seemed to Mr. Fortune that he was looking frightened, but he could not be sure of this for his eyes also were partaking of the nature of stone, they did not see very clearly. He came up to Lueli and took hold of him by the shoulder and jerked him on to his feet.

Then, still holding fast to Lueli's shoulder, he said:

“Where have you been?”

Lueli said: “I have been fishing with my two cousins. For three days we went in our boats and all night we sang.”

But Mr. Fortune did not seem to have heard him, and said again:

“Where have you been?”

Lueli said: “We paddled round this island and away to the north-west to an islet of shells. I have brought you back these—look!—as a present.”

For the third time Mr. Fortune asked:

“Where have you been?”

But this time he did not wait for an answer. Putting his face close to Lueli's and speaking with his eyes shut and in a low, secret voice, he began to scold him.

“Don't tell me where you've been. I don't care. Why should I care where you go? You made off without asking my leave, so what is it to me where you go to or how long you stay away? Nothing! F

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