

TALE OF MARQUESAN RAIN GOD CURIOUS

SPECIMEN IS IN MUSEUM

Queer Beliefs of South Sea Island People as to Efficacy of Idol

To an enlightened person it seems, of course, ridiculous to believe that an idol carved out of a tree trunk could exert any influence upon rainfall or other natural phenomena. But when the chain of coincidences surrounding the acquisition of a wooden rain god which is now on exhibition at the Field Museum of Natural History, is considered, it is easy to see how similar coincidences would appear to the minds of primitive South Sea island tribesmen as cause and effect. In the same way the common superstitions of our own people, such as those connected with the number 13, black cats, broken mirrors and rabbit's foot, persist due to coincidences.

The Field Museum's rain god is one of four which were preserved in a sacred place in the valley of Atuona, on the island of Hivaooa, one of the French-owned Marquesas group in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. Dr. Ralph Linton, assistant curator of Oceanic and Malayan ethnology at the museum, learned of the idols from natives while he was on an ethnological expedition. He found them surrounded by the bones of about 25 tribesmen who had been offered as human sacrifices. He was then confronted with the problem of acquiring and taking away the revered objects in the face of certain opposition from the Atuona tribe.

How Acquired
Opportunity presented itself when a dispute arose between two natives over ownership of the land on which the gods happened to be located. Thinking that Dr. Linton could not take them away, and believing that a paper from a white man would help them in the French court (both as a legal document and because of their idea that it would have magic power) each of these natives came to the ethnologist secretly and offered him the gods if he would give a receipt. Each native thought that this would indicate that Dr. Linton believed him the rightful owner. Linton gave each a receipt, and thus acquired clear title whichever way the case might be decided.

Several months later Dr. Linton solved the problem of removing the four heavy idols by employing a group of porters brought from another island — members of another tribe, whose gods were different, and who were therefore not subject to the same tabus as the Hivaooa natives. In the dead of night these men carried the idols hastily to Dr. Linton's camp near the shore. But the Hivaooa people soon learned what had happened, and a native boy who cooked for Dr. Linton warned him of impending trouble.

Downpour of Rain

"About half an hour after the gods arrived in camp there was a downpour of rain that became heavier and heavier, lasting for twenty-four solid hours," Dr. Linton relates. "The river on the island was rising rapidly, and the natives were badly frightened. It was all due, they insisted, to the wrath of the disturbed gods. They said the gods would continue the rain until the river flooded, washing away my camp and the entire village, sweeping everything and everybody into the sea. The tribesmen were becoming menacing to me, and something had to be done to calm them. I called in the elders of the tribe, and before them I had addressed the gods in the tribal language. I told the wooden idols that they were mistaken as to my motives, that I was merely moving them to the island of Hawaiki, regarded as a sort of Olympus of all native gods, where they would be more comfortable. But I threatened, if the rain continued much longer, I would tie them to coconut trees, where they would be impotent and unhappy gods. This speech placated the excited tribesmen and seemingly the gods also. For, sure enough, half an hour later the rain did stop, and the river subsided. The native faith had been sustained by a coincidence.

Another Coincidence

"There was another coincidence. I managed to get the idols loaded on a schooner and sailed away. Three of them are now in a museum at Honolulu. The fourth arrived in Chicago at a time when the city and all the

middle west had had a drought for weeks. The day the god was uncrated at the Field Museum, rainstorms started, lasting for several days. The story of the rain following the arrival of the idol reached farming districts which had not yet had relief. Immediately a farmer in Iowa requested that the museum lend him the god to bring rain and save his crops. Similar requests have since been received from time to time. Needless to say, however, the museum never grants the loan of the god."

THIS IS BAD NEWS FOR THE OPTICIANS

Horn-rimmed spectacles have been thrown out of office windows onto pavements, run over by trucks, and otherwise mistreated, and escaped without breaking. On top of all this Francis C. Chadwick, of Ardena, New Jersey, has had returned to him a pair of tortoise-shell rim glasses which blew off when he leaned from the cockpit of an airplane to view the landscape at an altitude of 1,000 feet. Arthur Van Brunt, of Asbury Park, discovered the spectacles lying in a field. Despite the fact that the glasses had dropped a thousand feet they were not in any way damaged, owing to the protection afforded by the frame.

Kentucky crops are said to be in danger from the devastation of an army of rats. These rodents must be descendants of the one who are the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

The crying need of the year is a politician who can be wet and dry at the same time and be able to prove it.

With the number of college graduates that are being turned out each year you wouldn't think there would be so many public questions remaining unsolved.

The earthquake-stricken Balkans are sending up a cry for more clothes. That's what we also need.—Atlanta Constitution.

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CALIFORNIA LAW BEING ENFORCED

PRECAUTION AGAINST FIRE

Prohibits Throwing of Cigar and Cigaret Stubs from Cars; Great Damage Has Often Resulted

First arrests and convictions resulting from enforcement of the California state law prohibiting throwing of burning cigars, cigarettes and matches from moving vehicles were made recently, according to a bulletin received by the touring bureau of the Chicago Motor club. The bulletin goes on to say that two men caught throwing burning cigarette stubs from an automobile while passing a grain field were arrested by traffic officers and fined \$50 each in a justice's court.

Recent heavy losses from fire traced directly to careless smokers have stimulated watchfulness on the part of California state traffic officers and the state forestry department. Every means will be used to protect forests and grain fields from destruction by fire.

Penalty Provided

The law provides that throwing from any moving vehicle any light cigarette, cigar, ashes or other burning substances, or any substances which may cause a fire, is punishable by a fine of not more than \$500, or imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed six months or both such fine and imprisonment. The Chicago Motor club points out that every motorist should know and observe the provisions of this fire prevention legislation.

Although repeated warnings have been broadcast, and signs posted conspicuously in the national forests, there are still many careless smokers who are a menace to the trees and fields during the dry season. Reckless war will be made upon this class of motorists this season, it is declared.

MRS DAWES' COOKIES FIRST WON PERSHING

Yarn in Magazine Tells About Them; Maybe It's Apple-sauce, Maybe Not

It's a long way from the pantry to the chanceries of Europe and the halls of Congress where Vice President Charles G. Dawes now long has occupied a place of prominence.

But in the progress of the vice president the cookies of Caro Dawes, otherwise Mrs. C. G. Dawes, have had a not unimportant part. Early in the general's married life, says the Woman's Home Companion, his friends were attracted by the now famous sugar cookies with raisins which were the product of Mrs. Dawes' culinary work.

While they were living in Nebraska Dawes and a lank cavalry officer whom he had met at an unsatisfactory lunch in a hot dog stand, tried out some of Mrs. Dawes' cookies and both found a common taste for these sweetmeats. The cavalry officer, then a lieutenant known by a very small section of the United States, was John J. Pershing.

Nearly twenty years later it was the one time lanky lieutenant, then leading American forces in the World War, who looked up his former cookie loving pal and appointed him chief purchasing agent of the A. E. F. Thus was Dawes started on a career of larger usefulness which caused him to make himself famous as an officer of the United States forces and as a financier who devised a now famous formula for settling German reparations—the Dawes Plan.

There are four billion birds in America, not counting the most important one that adorns one side of the coin of the realm.

The bridge expert has it all over the political expert because it is very seldom anyone has the nerve to contradict him.

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