

# White Shadows In The South Seas

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By FREDERICK O'BRIEN

## VIII—How The Marquesans Dance The Wild Native Dance That Still Holds Sway in Time of Festival

Drums were beating all the morning, thrilling the valley and mountain-sides with their barbaric boom. The savage beat of them quickened the blood, stirring memories of a than making walking wild and primitive instincts. Tobo's eyes glared and her toes curled and uncurled like those of a cat, while she told me that the afternoon would see an old dance, a drama of the sea, of war, and feasting such as the islands had known before the whites came.

The air thrummed with the resonance of the drums. All the morning I sat alone on my paepae, hearing them beat. The sound carried one back to the days when men first tied the skins of animals about hollow tree trunks and thumped them to call the naked tribes together under the oaks of England. Those great drums beaten by the Nightingales and Song of the Nightingales made one want to be a savage, to throw a spear to dance in the moonlight with the beat with quivering nostrils and lashing tail who was part of the forest and the night.

Music is ever an expression of the moods and morals of its time. The bugle and the fife share with the drum the rousing of martial spirit in our armies today, but to our savage ancestors the drum was supreme. Primitive man expressed his harmony with nature by imitating its sounds. He struck his own body or a hollow log covered with skin. Uncivilized peoples crack their fingers, snap their thighs, or strike the ground with their feet to furnish music for impromptu dancing. In Tonga they crack their fingers; in Tahiti they pound the earth with the soles of their feet; here in Atouana they clap their hands. The Marquesans have, too, bamboo drums, long sections of the hollow reed, slit, and beaten with sticks. For calling boats and for signaling they use the conch-shell, the same that sounded when "the Tritons blew their wreath of horn." They also have the jew's-harp, an instrument common to all Polynesia; sometimes a strip of bark held between the teeth, sometimes a bow of wood strung with gut.

Civilization is a process of making life more complex and subtle. We have the piano, the violin, the orchestra. Yet we also have ragtime, which is a reaction from the nervous tension of American commercial life, a swinging back to the old days when man thought he was free. There is release and exhilaration in the barbaric, syncopated songs and in the animal-like motions of the jazz dances with their wild and passionate attitudes, their unrestrained rhythms and their direct appeal to sex. These rag-time melodies, coming straight from the jungles of Africa through the negro, call to impulses in man that are stifled in big cities, in factory and sium and the nerve-wearing struggle of business.

So in the dance my Marquesan neighbors returned to the old ways and expressed emotions dying under the rule of an alien people. With the making light of their reverenced tapers, the proving that their gods were powerless, and the ending of their tribal life, the dance degraded. They did not come to dance now that their joy in life was gone. But the new and jolly governor, craving amusement, sought to revive it for his pleasure. So the drums were beating on the palace lawn, and afternoon found the natives gay with paepae and brilliant shawls as the natives came down from their paepae to the seat of government.

Chief Kekela Avana, adopted son of the old Kekela, and head man of the Paumotu district, called for me. He was a dignified and important man of forty-five years, with handsome features, an English cricket cap, and a scarlet loin cloth, accompanied us down the road.

A hundred natives were squatting in the garden of the palace, and rum and wine were being handed out when we arrived. Haabunai and Song of the Nightingales, the man under sentence for making palm brandy, were once more the distributors, and took a glass of rum. The people had thawed since the dance of the governor's inauguration. As Kirio Patuhamane explained, they had wanted to observe the disposition of their new ruler, the last having been severe, dispensing no rum save for his own selfish gain, and having a wife who despised them.

My tawny feminine friends resented keenly white women's airs of superiority, and many were the cold glances cast by Malicious Gossip, Apporo, and Flower at the stiffly gowned Madame Bapp, who sat on the veranda drinking absinthe. They scorned her, because she beat her husband if he but looked at one of them, though he owned a store and desired their custom. Poor Madame Bapp! She thought her little man very attractive, and she lived in misery because of the openly displayed charms of his customers. She loved him, and when jealous she sought the absinthe bottle and soon was away with whip and broom on the miserable Bapp, who sought to

It was useless; she had looked to doors and windows, and he must take a painful punishment, the white crockery smashed and all Atouana Valley listened on its paepaes, laughing and well knowing that the little man had given no cause of jealousy. She greeted me with cold politeness when I mounted to the veranda, and the governor dispensed glasses of "Dr. Funk", a drink known to all the South Seas. Its secret is merely the mixing of a stiff drink of absinthe with lemonade or limeade. The learned man who added this death-dealing potion to the pleasure of the thirsty was Stevenson's friend, and attended him in his last illness. I do not know whether Dr. Funk ever mixed his favorite drink for R. L. S., but his own fame has spread, not as a healer, but as a dram-decocter, from Samoa to Tahiti. "Dr. Funk" one hears in every club and bar. Its particular merits are claimed by experts to be a stiffening of the spine when one is all in; an imparting of courage to live to men worn out by doing nothing.

The governor in gala attire was again the urban host, assisted by Andre Bauda, now his close friend and confidant. Bauda himself had

priests and preachers. Yet it was full of suggestion of days gone by and the people who had once sailed the seas among these islands. Again the dancers raised their arms, and the canoe sailed over sunny waters. At length it touched at an isle, it was carried through the breakers to a resting place on the sand. Its oarsmen rejoiced, they danced a dance of thanksgiving to their gods, and wreathed the ti leaves in their hair.

At this moment Haabunai, master of ceremonies, gave a cry of dismay and ceased to beat his drum. With an anguished glance at the assembled spectators, he dashed around the corner of the house, to reappear in an instant with his hands full of green leaves.

"Mon dieu!" cried the governor. "Mon salut! Mon salut!" Haabunai, busied with his duties, had forgotten to provide the real and sacred ti. In despair at the last moment he had raided and utterly destroyed the governor's prized let-

er-me." Apporo, overcome by the rum and the dance was lying among the rose bushes. Many others were flung on the sward, and more rose again to the dance, singing and shouting and demanding more rum. The girls came forward to be kissed as was the custom, and Madame Bapp drove them away with sharp words. Soon the hula-balo became too great for the dignity of the governor. He gave orders to clear the grounds, and Bauda issued commands from the veranda while Song and Flag lugged away the drums and drove the excited mob out of the garden and across the bridge.

All in all, this Sunday was typical of Atouana under the new regime. After a quiet bath in the pool beneath my cabin I got my own dinner, unassisted by Exploding Eggs, and went early to bed to forestall visitors. The crash of a falling coconut awakened me at midnight, and I saw on my paepae Apporo, Flower, Water, and Chief Kekela Avana asleep. The chief had flung his trousers over

and delicately charming face. Her features were exquisite, her eyes lustrous black pools of passion, her mouth a scarlet line of pride and disdain. A large leghorn hat of fine black straw, with chiffon, was on her graceful head, and her tiny feet were in silk stockings at a patent leather. She held a gold and ivory prayerbook in gloved hands, and a jeweled watch hung upon her breast.

This dainty, fetching heiress, born of French father and a savage mother, had all the airs and graces of a ballroom belle. Where had she gained these fashions and desires of the women of cities, or Europe? Her father had spent thirty years on Hiva-oa, laboring to write a fortune from the toll of the natives, and dying, he had left it all to this daughter, who with her laces and jewels, her elegant, slim form and haughty manner, was in this wild abode of barefooted half-naked people like a pearl in a gutter. She was free now to do what she liked with herself and her fortune. What would she do?

It was the question that every tongue and in every eye when, after mass, she passed down the lane respectfully widened for her in the throng on the steps and with a black-berthed sister at her side, walked to the nun's house.

love grows ardent, he wears a red rose or hibiscus. But if he tires, he puts some green things in their place. Bon dieu! That is the death of ignominy for the woman scorned.

"It is not singing and dancing I desire!" she exclaimed. "Pas de tout!" I must know more people, and not people like priests and these copra dealers. I have read in novels of men who are like gods, who are bold and strong, but who make their women happy. Do you know an officer of Zele, with hair like ripe bananas? He is tall and plays the bagpipes. He has one time long ago when the warships were here. He was on the governor's veranda. Oh, that was long ago, but such a young man would be the man that I want.

Her Marquesan blood was speaking in that cry of the heart, unrestrained and passionate.

"Write to me when you are in Tahiti, and tell me if you think I would be happy there," she said imploringly. "I have no friends here except the nuns. I need so much to go away, I am dying here."

Coming up my trail a few days later, I found on my paepae a shabbily dressed little bag-of-bones of a white man with a dirty gray beard and a harsh voice like that of Bauda. He had a note to me from Le Brunne, introducing M. Lemoal, born in Brest, a naturalized American. The note was sealed, and I put it carefully away before turning to my visitor. It read:

"I send you a specimen of the Marquesan beaches, so that you can have a little fun. This fellow has a very tremendous life. He is an old sailor, private, gold-miner, Chinese-hunter, thief, robber, honest-man baker, trader, in a word, an interesting type. With the aid of several glasses of wine I have put him in the mood to talk delightfully."

A low-browed man was Lemoal, sapped and ruthless, but certainly he had adventures.

"I saw you with that daughter of Lih-Lih," he said, using the native name of the dead millionaire. "You be careful. One time I baked bread in Taada. My oven was near this plantation. I saw that girl come into the woods and take off her dress. She had a mirror to see her back, and I looked, and I saw a patch of white. She is a leper, that rich girl!"

The man was like a snake to me. I threw away the glass he had drunk from. And yet—was it idle curiosity, or was it fear of being shut away in the valley outside? Perhaps by the quarantine officers, that made her ask me that question about the segregation of lepers?

Lih-Lih had spent thirty years making money. He had coined the sweat and blood and lives of a thousand Marquesans into a golden fortune, and he had left behind him that fortune, a marble tomb and Mlle. N—

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New Health Can Be Obtained by Enriching the Blood Supply

When a girl in her teens becomes peevish, listless and dull, when nothing seems to interest her and daintiness do not tempt her appetite you may be certain that she needs more good blood than her system is provided. Before long her pallid cheeks, frequent headaches and breathlessness and heart palpitations will confirm that she is anemic. Many mothers as the result of their own girlhood experience can promptly detect the early signs of anaemia. For the trouble to mother does not wait but at once gives her daughter a course with Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which renew the blood supply and banish anaemia before it has obtained a hold on the system.

Out of their experience thousands of mothers know that anaemia is the sure road to worse illia. They know the difference that good red blood makes in the development of womanly health. Every headache, every gasp for breath that follows the anemic girl, every pain she approaches if her back and limbs are sore, if you have not taken the best steps to give your weak girl new blood, and the only sure way to do so is through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

New, rich, red blood is infused into the system by every dose of these pills. From this new rich blood springs good health, an increase of appetite, new energy, high spirits and perfect womanly development. Give your daughter Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and take them yourself and note how promptly their influence is felt in better health.

You can get these pills through any dealer in medicine or by mail postpaid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

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### PILES

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The haka, the Marquesan national dance.



A tattooed Marquesan.

been in the island only a few months and knew no more Marquesan speech than the governor. Both these officials were truly hospitable, embarrassingly so, considering my inability to keep up with them in their toasts.

Soon the demijohn of rum had been emptied into the glasses passing from hand to hand in the garden; Haabunai and Song of the Nightingales again evoked the drumming beat of the great drums, and the dance began. This was a tragedy of the sea, a pantomime of danger and conflict and celebration. For centuries past the ancestors of these dancers had played it on the Forbidden Height. Even the language in which they chanted was archaic to this generation, its words and their meanings forgotten.

The women sat upon the grass in a row that first, in dumb show, they lifted and carried from its house to the beach a long canoe. The straining muscles of their arms, the sway of their bodies, imitated the raising of the great boat, and the walking with its weight, the launching, the waiting for the breakers and the undervow that would enable them to pass the surf line, and then the paddling in rough water.

Meantime at a distance the men chanted in chorus, giving rhythmic time to the motions of the dancers and singing in the long-disused words the story of the drama. And the drums beat till their rolling thunder resounded far up the valley.

After the canoe was moving swiftly through the water the women rested. It seemed to me that the low continued chant of the men expressed a longing for freedom, for a return to nature, and a melancholy comment on the days of power and liberty gone forever. Though no person present understood the ancient language of the song, there was no need of words to interpret the exact meaning of the utterance. Though no word had been uttered, the motions of the women would have clearly told the tale.

When they began again, the sea grew more agitated. Now the wall of the men reproduced the sound of waves beating on the canoe, and the whistling of the wind. The canoe was tossed high by the pounding sea, it slid dizzily down into the troughs of waves and rocked as the oarsmen fought to hold it steady. The squall had grown a pale, roaring upon them while they tried to hold it steady. The canoe began to fill with water, it sank deeper and deeper, and in another moment the boatsmen were flung into the ocean. There they struggled with the great seas; they had grown a pale, roaring upon them while they tried to hold it steady. The canoe began to fill with water, it sank deeper and deeper, and in another moment the boatsmen were flung into the ocean. There they struggled with the great seas; they had grown a pale, roaring upon them while they tried to hold it steady. The canoe began to fill with water, it sank deeper and deeper, and in another moment the boatsmen were flung into the ocean. There they struggled with the great seas; they had grown a pale, roaring upon them while they tried to hold it steady.

bed, the sole provision for salad-making in Atouana. He hastily divided the precious leaves among the dancers, and with willing lettuce enwreathed in their tresses the oarsmen launched the canoe once more in the waves and returned to their own seats, praising the gods.

All relaxed now, to receive the praises of the governor and the brimming glasses once more offered by the diligent Haabunai and Song, aided by the gendarme.

A gruesome cannibal chant followed, accompanied by the booming of the drums, and then, warmed by the liquor that fired their brains, the dancers began the haka, the sexual dance. Inflamed by the rum, they flung themselves into it with such abandon as I have never seen, and I saw a kamaaina in Hawaii and have seen Caroline, Miri, and Mamoe, most skilled dancers of the Hawaiian Islands. With the continued passing of the cup, the hurahura soon became general. The men and women who had begun dancing in rows, in an organized way, now broke ranks and danced freely all over the lawn. Men sought out the women they liked, and women the men, challenging each other in frenzied and startling exposition of the ancient ways.

The ceaseless booming of the drums added incitement to the frenzy; the grounds of the governor's palace were a chaos of twisting brown bodies and agitated parents, while from all sides rose cries about hysterial laughter, and the sound of clapping hands and thumping feet. Here and there dancers fell exhausted, until by elimination the dance resolved itself into a duet, all yielding the turf to Mary Daughters, the little, lovely leper, and Kekela Avana, chief of Paumotu. These left the lawn and advanced to the veranda, where so contagious had become the enthusiasm that the governor was doing the hurahura opposite Bauda, and Ah Yu danced with Apporo, while Song, the prisoner, and Flag, the gendarme, madly emulated the star performers.

Kekela, who led the rout, was a figure at which to marvel. A very big man, perhaps six feet four inches in height, and all muscle, his contortions and the frenzied movements of his muscles exceeded all anatomical laws. Many daughters, her big eyes shining, her red lips parted, followed and matched his every emotion. Her entire trunk seemed to resolve on the pivot of her waist, and her arms akimbo, accentuating and balancing her lascivious mobility.

The governor and the commissaire, Ah Yu and Apporo, Monsieur Bapp with Song of the Nightingales and Flag, made the palace tremble while the thrum of the great drums maddened their blood.

Exhausted at last they lay panting on the boards. Song was telling me that the liquor of the governor's gift surpassed all his illicit make, and that when his sentence expired he would remain at the palace as cook. Ah Yu, in broken English, sang a ditty he had heard forty years earlier in California, "Shoo-be-ty-doo-bod-

the railing, and was in his pareu, his pictured legs showing, while the others were asked on my mats. There was no need to disturb them, for it is the good and honored custom of these hospitable islands to sleep wherever slumber overtakes one.

The night was fine, the stars looked down through the breadfruit trees, and Temetu, the giant mountain, was dark and handsome in the blue and gold sky. Two sleepers were huddled together by my trail window, the horses were laying down in the brush, and a nightingale lifted a gay love song in the coconut-palms above the House of the Golden Bed.

Next morning all Atouana had a tight handkerchief bound over its forehead. I met twenty men and women with this sign of repentance upon their brows. Watercross, the chief of Atouana, who guards the governor's house, was by the roadside, that when his sentence expired he would remain at the palace as cook. Ah Yu, in broken English, sang a ditty he had heard forty years earlier in California, "Shoo-be-ty-doo-bod-

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means that it is a bad thing. "Hana paopao," he said sadly. "It is disagreeable to work. One likes to forget many things."

There was bitterness and sorrow in his tone. His father was a warrior, the god of the chiefs, and led many a victorious foray when Watercross was a child. The sun remembers the old days and feels deeply the degradation and ruin brought by the whites upon the people. A distinguished-looking man, dignified and haughty, he was one of a half a dozen who were working out taxes by repairing the roads, and he was one of the few who worked steadily, saying little and seldom smiling.

Mademoiselle N— The Jeanne d'Arc, a beautiful, long, curving craft manned by twelve carmen, came like a white bird over the blue waters of the Bay of Traitor one Saturday afternoon, bringing Pere Victorien to Atouana.

News of his coming brought all the valley Catholics to eight o'clock mass

At the Gospel she came in walking slowly down the aisle and taking her place as though unaware of the hundred covert glances that followed her. Wealth is comparative, and Mademoiselle N—, with perhaps a few hundred thousand dollars in cash and coconuts, stood to the island people as Rockefeller to us. Money and hands were not all her possessions, for though she had never traveled from her birthplace, she was very different in carriage and costume from the girls about her.

She wore a black lace gown, clinging, and becoming her tender figure