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ed by Georgina Sweet & ACD Rivett
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SECTION F.

ETHNOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT:

His Honour Mr. Justice Murray, C.M.G.,
Lieutenant-Governor of Papua.

Subject Races and "Natives."

The subject races of whom I speak in this paper are those people whom, like Miss Tox in *Dombey and Son*, we are content to call "natives." This term is surely as absurd as it well could be, for a man who was not a native of some part of the globe would indeed be a *lusus naturæ*, but after all it seems to convey one's meaning well enough, and, when we talk of natives, every one knows that we refer to those races of men, of different colour from ourselves, whom we, I suppose rightly, regard as our inferiors.

Incapacity for Self-Government.

In the opinion of the average Britisher, all foreign nations are obviously incapable of self-government, but the "natives" I refer to really do seem to suffer from a peculiar unfitness in this regard, for they appear to have little or no idea of nationality or patriotism, and, in spite of their tribal organization, they often have but a rudimentary notion of subordinating individual interests to those of the general body. Consequently it probably is desirable, even in the interests of these races themselves, that they should be under European domination, although, as Sir Sydney Olivier has pointed out, this is a consideration which, however true it may be, has never by itself caused any race to annex the territory of another or to assume its government (Olivier, *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, p. 136). It is a truth which looks suspiciously like hypocrisy. it is as old as

Aristotle ("Politics," Book I., ii.), and it has often assisted and served as a pretext; but, where there are no other inducements, the consideration of the duty which the civilized man feels, or affects to feel, for the uncivilized has, in the words of Sir Sydney, "been impotent as a colonizing force and has never effectually operated to induce any white Power to take up the white man's burden."

Two Ways in which Native Races may be Regarded—(i.) As the "Living Tools" of Other Men; (ii.) As Men in the Full Sense.

Still, the white man's burden has been taken up pretty extensively, and there are few, if any, of these native races who are not under the white man's rule to-day; and the white man, therefore, is forced to assume some definite attitude towards them. Now, there are two ways in which these "natives" can be considered. They may be considered either as the "natural-born slaves" of Aristotle's "Politics"—men, indeed, but men whose function it is to be merely the "living tools" of other men; or they may be regarded as men in the full sense of the word, as possessing rights of their own, and as entitled to be regarded not merely as a means to an end but as an end in themselves. The former view is thousands of years old, and found its final and crudest expression in the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Dred Scott case, that "the coloured man has no rights which a white man is bound to respect." It is, in fact, part of the sophistry by which a nation, practising slavery and knowing in its heart that slavery is wrong, endeavours to make peace with its conscience. In the Dred Scott decision the sophistry has practically disappeared, and unrelieved brutality has taken its place; but in the older and more highly-civilized society of Greece one sees the struggle, one sees how Aristotle tries to justify slavery by an appeal to "phusis," and how he comforts himself with the smug reflection —so very unlike his usual style of thought—that it is really for the slave's good after all.

Indentured Labour.

Of course, slavery is a thing of the past, but it has left behind it a rather near relative in the system of indentured labour; and I do not think that it is an exaggeration to say that just as much hypocrisy has been displayed in defence of indentured labour as ever was shown in support of slavery. Unfortunately, indentured labour is for the time being a necessity in some places—*e.g.*, in New Guinea—but it is not an institution which any one who knows anything about it would care to perpetuate. Indentured labour goes far to keep up that feeling of arrogant and innate superiority which is really the basic idea of slavery, and which, I suppose, cannot die out so

long as colour is the badge which distinguishes master and servant, and so long as those economic relations continue which, it has been said, "obscure and distort the apprehension of more deeply human relations" (Olivier).

It is probable that, as Lord Morley says, all mankind is becoming one people for economic purposes, the backward races taking the place of unskilled labour, and, if so, the feeling which I have mentioned is more likely to be intensified than to disappear.

German View of Native Races.

It has been said, especially since the war, by those who have studied the subject, that the Germans in their colonies regarded the natives merely as a means of developing the resources of the country, and not as fellow men whose welfare should be promoted apart altogether from the economic advantages which are likely to ensue to the dominant race; and if you take this German view—which is, in fact, the old Aristotelian view of the natural-born slaves—anthropology and ethnology can give you no assistance in your administration, because your administration, in that case, is based upon a denial of the principle on which those sciences are founded—the principle, that is, of the ultimate unity of the human race.

British View.

The British principle of native administration is, at any rate in theory, very different; and in British books dealing with such subjects you will find it laid down authoritatively that the welfare of a native race is either the first or, at any rate, one of the first objects of administration. This is regarded as a "truism" by Sir F. D. Lugard in his recent report on the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and the same principle has been laid down by the Commonwealth in relation to the Territory of Papua, and it is, I suppose, accepted and greeted with applause everywhere throughout the Empire, except in those countries where it is supposed to be carried into effect; for in those countries it is probable that the theory will only be tolerated so long as no attempt is made to put it into practice.

Now this attitude towards native races, which I may call the British attitude, may be quite wrong, and the true principle may be that which is reflected in the Dred Scott decision already mentioned, but it is the attitude to which the British administration is definitely committed, and I venture to hope that it is an attitude which will never be abandoned, for it seems to me to be the only one that is worthy of a civilized nation. And further, and this is the point that is material for this paper, it is the only attitude that can be regarded as scientific or as in any way reconcilable with the principles of anthropology or ethnology.

British View the Only One that can be Reconciled with Scientific Anthropology.

For ethnology knows nothing of natural-born slaves, of essentially superior races, of Herrenvolk and Sklavenvolk. Scientific ethnology is unthinkable except upon the hypothesis that all mankind is more or less closely related, and that what is true of one race at some place and some time, past or present, may be equally true of another entirely different race at some other time or place. I do not intend to embark upon a disquisition on monogenism and polygenism, nor upon the relation of mankind to the lower animals; what I wish to assert is that the value and even the possibility of anthropology in general, and ethnology in particular, depends upon the unity of the human race—not necessarily, I take it, upon unity of descent, but on unity of spiritual and mental aspirations—and that every advance in these sciences affords additional evidence of this unity.

Unity of the Human Race.

To the practical man, the busy man of affairs who prides himself upon his common sense and his freedom from humbug, the argument from the unity of man must appear to be the merest academic trifling. He is probably prepared to accept that hypothesis as he accepts, for instance, the dogma of the Incarnation, as something which he will admit to be true, but only on condition that it is deprived of all substance and reality; and he would consider it as little less than an outrage if he were asked to draw from either of them an inference which could have the slightest effect upon the actions of his ordinary life. Ht would argue (if he condescended to argue at all) that whatever may have been the origin of mankind, however closely all men—black, white, yellow and red—may be related if you go far enough back, still, as a matter of present fact, they are obviously distinct—in colour, in appearance, in habits, in ways of thought, and in most other particulars that can be enumerated. We should reply that it was true that there were differences, but that they were as naught compared with the fact of our common humanity—in other words, we should say that what is common to all men is not merely more important, but is infinitely more important, than the accidents by which men differ. To this, if he did not become speechless with rage at being compared with an adjective nigger, he would retort by accusing us of a *petitio principii*, inasmuch as it is the importance of this common humanity which is in dispute.

And so the controversy would continue, but it would lead to no result, for both parties are in the right; the practical man is absolutely right in objecting most strenuously to anything in the nature of a doctrinaire administration, and we are right

in insisting that administration should rest upon some solid basis of principle, not only in theory, but also in practice, and that in the case of British administration this principle is to be found in the unity of the human race.

Now, if we have a real, practical belief in this unity, we shall look on native races in an entirely different way; we shall no longer see in them a bundle of inexplicable eccentricities and contradictions, and we shall no longer be prepared to dismiss them off-hand as "half devil and half child." We shall look upon them as men like ourselves, with similar passions, and probably with less self-restraint; with the same feelings of love and hate, and often the same respect for justice and contempt for injustice. I have read that, of the many wrongs which the natives of South-West Africa had suffered from the Germans, those which they resented most arose from the fact that the same justice was not meted out to white and black alike, but that what in the white man was a mere peccadillo, became in the black man a most heinous crime. It must, I fear, be admitted that, as a matter of administration, it is practically impossible to treat the white man and the native alike even in a court of justice, for local public opinion, or prejudice, or whatever you like to call it, will not permit such equality; but an administrator who has a practical belief in the equality I have mentioned—who, in a word, is a good anthropologist—will, at any rate, insist upon as much practical justice as he can get. He will not make the German mistake of denying it altogether.

Widespread Idea that the Native is not Really a Man.

The idea that a black or brown man is not really a man like ourselves is probably more widespread than is generally believed, and it is probably responsible for many of the worst outrages which have been committed not only by white men upon black, but also by black upon white—and especially upon white women. In its most harmless form it is found disguised, in the shape of a theory that the native is a child and must be treated as a child. Of course, there is an analogy between a native and a child, but there are many false analogies, and, though this particular analogy does not lead to any very dreadful conclusions (since one does not, for instance, starve or torture a child), still it appears to me to be, logically, as false as any of them. When I have come across this analogy it has generally been used as a justification for corporal punishment; the native is a child, it is argued, and when he offends he should be punished as a child—which, in effect, means that the native should be punished by a flogging administered without trial and at the caprice of the man against whom the offence, real or imaginary, was committed. On the other hand, if the native does something wrong, and asks to be forgiven as a child is forgiven, the analogy would

probably be forgotten; many sententious platitudes would be uttered about the necessity of setting an example and keeping the native in his place, but it is likely that the pardon would be withheld.

The truth, of course, is that the native is a man, and not a child; he has a man's passions and a man's power to hate and love, but he is a very ignorant man, and he is a man whose customs and ways of thought are strange to us, even in the rare instances in which we try to understand them. And if we must use the method of analogy we should argue not from the child, but from the peasant, for, to quote Mr. Marett, it is the peasant who "is the true middle term of the anthropological cyllogism" (*"Psychology and Folklore,"* p. 19).

"Direct" and "Indirect" Methods of Administration.

Now, there are two methods of governing these native races. One is to abolish all native customs and institutions of every kind, and to introduce European customs and institutions in their place; and the other is to conserve such of these customs as appear to be useful or even harmless, and to make use of them, so far as may be, as an instrument of good government. These methods have been distinguished as the direct and the indirect method respectively; the French, I believe, have favoured the former, and the British, as a rule, the latter. Of course, neither method is exclusive, and, equally, of course, their comparative merits have been the subject of controversy.

Instances of Direct and Indirect Methods.

Perhaps the practical difference between these two methods can be best illustrated by actual instances, so I will give an instance of direct administration, taken from Miss Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, and another of the indirect method from our own administration of Papua.

Miss Kingsley tells us of a black man called Joseph, in the French Congo, who applied for a permit, or something of the sort, and was cross-examined by the French officials as to the name of his father. It appears that nobody on the West Coast reckons descent otherwise than through the mother, and Joseph did not know, and had never had occasion to inquire into, the identity of his father—if he did know who he was he would take no interest in him, for each would regard the other as a stranger; and the point of Miss Kingsley's story is the insistence with which the French regulations, made for a different race with different rules of descent, were applied to a people to whom paternal descent was unknown. (*Vide* Hartland *Primitive Paternity*, vol. i., p. 263.)

This I consider to be an extreme instance of the direct method; and the other, which I take from Papua, is perhaps an extreme instance of the indirect. It occurred when the small-pox scare arose, some seven or eight years ago.

It was necessary to have the natives vaccinated, and it was highly desirable, for many reasons, that it should be done with their consent. At the same time our natives have usually a great horror of the knife or anything which suggests it, and, further, it was to be expected that, even though the first few might submit willingly enough, the pain and sickness which normally ensue on vaccination would make the process vastly unpopular with the remainder. We wanted, therefore, to put some view before them which would give an adequate explanation of the reason for vaccination, and which would also recommend it to their favorable consideration. So we told them that there was a very dangerous and powerful sorcerer in the West—that was the quarter from which the small-pox was expected—and that this sorcerer had conjured up a very bad sickness which might come along at any moment. But, though the sorcerer was strong, the Government was stronger, and would protect all who claimed its protection. A mark would be put on the arm of all those who trusted themselves to the Government; the sorcerer when he came would see the Government mark, would realize that he was powerless, and would retire foiled and baffled to his home in the West. But for those who would not receive the mark the Government could, of course, do nothing.

I have called this an extreme instance of the indirect method, because we worked through the natives' belief in sorcery, which, as a matter of fact, we are doing our best to extirpate; but I still think that we were right, for we were really doing no more than translate the theory of vaccination into a language that a Stone Age savage could understand. Anyhow, whether we were right or wrong, we were successful beyond our wildest dreams—the "Government mark" became hugely popular, not only medically, but socially, and to be without the mark was to confess oneself the veriest outsider. Fortunately, the sorcerer of the West did not come; but if he had come we were ready for him.

I admit that I have purposely chosen instances in which the direct method appears rather at a disadvantage, but it is probable that the other—that is, the British, or indirect, method—really is the better way of dealing with natives, if only for the reason that it is less "cast iron" and is more capable of adjustment to meet the circumstances of any individual case.

Anthropology of Service only where the Indirect Method is Adopted.

Clearly, if you are going to abolish native customs altogether, it is of no practical value to try to understand them, since in any event they have to go; consequently, anthropological study is of little value where the direct method has been adopted. Where the other, or British, policy is followed it may, in my opinion, be of the very greatest assistance, since, obviously, you cannot decide

which customs you should preserve, and which you should abolish, unless you are in a position to form some idea of what customs there are, what is their real nature, and how far they extend.

This seems an obvious truism, but it is a strange thing that, though I have read, I suppose, without exaggeration, scores of criticisms, mostly very hostile, of my administration in Papua, I have never, I think, seen one that betrayed the slightest consciousness even of the existence of such a problem as I have indicated.

Interdependence of Ideas Among Savage Races—Result of Interdependence—Head-hunting—Cannibalism.

In dealing with native customs it must be remembered that, among savage races, the different departments of thought and action are not clearly distinguished as with us; even among ourselves the interdependence of ideas is greater than appears on the surface, but we do keep our ideas and our customs in more or less water-tight compartments, and we can change one set of opinions without altering others—for instance, we can change our politics without changing our religion, while a savage cannot do anything of the kind. His ideas are, as is to be expected, less highly specialized—they are all interwoven and jumbled up together—so that, in suppressing a practice which seems to you simply silly and useless, you are at the same time perhaps affecting a dozen other practices which may be in many ways desirable. Of course, there are some things that must be suppressed, whatever the result may be—as, for instance, head-hunting. This is a custom which the most sympathetic administrator could not be expected to preserve, however great his devotion to the science of anthropology, though in its suppression he will probably influence all sorts of other things of which he knows nothing. In such a case as this, he must take the risk, and perhaps the best thing he can do is to induce the head-hunters to substitute a pig's head for that of a human being, or to persuade them, as I think has been done in Borneo, to put up with old heads and to make believe that they are new. So with cannibalism. If you tell a cannibal that he must not eat human flesh, he will probably reply, "Why not?"—a question to which I myself have never been able to find an answer, except the rather unsatisfactory one, "Because you mustn't." You can, however, get them to give up the practice without so much difficulty as one might imagine. Savages are just as great snobs as we are; and if you appeal to their snobbery you can get them to do a great deal. So, if you can get it into their heads that cannibalism is not good form, and is rather looked down upon by the "nicest" people of Papua, and that a cannibal can hardly be received in the best villages, they will give it up quickly enough. At least, that was our experience in the country of Namau, in the Purari Delta; they gave up cannibalism and, so far as we could see, substituted a pig for the human body.

Collection of Skulls in Namau.

The people of Namau were also head-hunters as well as cannibals (the two do not always go together), and their ravi or large men's houses, were festooned with innumerable skulls; and the removal of these skulls was necessary to the eventual suppression of head-hunting. Not all these skulls were the skulls of enemies—many were the skulls of friends and relations; but all had to go, so that in putting down a crime we were also suppressing a quite unobjectionable funeral rite. Fortunately, no harm appears to have resulted; and, in any case, head-hunting must stop.

Purchase of Land.

Particularly in buying land from natives it is necessary to have at least some rudimentary knowledge of native custom. The practical man, who will stand no nonsense, probably solves this difficulty, and, *more suo*, creates a hundred others, by simply declaring all native-owned land to be Crown land; but, if we have any regard for the traditions of British justice, we shall probably try, whatever the precise details of our land policy may be, to inflict as little hardship as possible upon the native owners, and to do this we must have some general idea of the form of land tenure in different parts of the Territory. Many years ago some person who had the interests of the Papuans at heart, and who had persuaded himself that they were being robbed of their lands, asked that a special Board should be appointed to hear any complaints which might be raised by native owners in connexion with land purchase; the Board was appointed, but it has never met, for the reason that the few mistakes that were made were easily corrected, and that no injustice has been alleged.

Destruction of Sacred Tree—Policeman Ordered to Shoot his Totem.

It would be easy to give individual instances where ignorance or neglect of native customs has caused unnecessary, and sometimes rather serious, trouble. A friend of mine—a humane man, and one who had exceptional consideration for natives—told me that he was once besieged for several days by a horde of cannibals whom he had offended because in his clearing operations he had unwittingly destroyed a sacred tree; he was the last man in the world to destroy anything that any one considered sacred, but there was nothing to distinguish this tree from others, and it had simply gone with the rest. Less serious in its results was the rather thoughtless action of a Government officer who told a policeman to shoot some birds to make soup for a sick colleague. The birds (they were black cockatoos if I remember aright) were the totem of the policeman, and he might not take their life; so he was placed in a very terrible dilemma, for on one side was his clear duty to obey orders, and on the other was the life-long

tradition that forbade him to do so. Eventually, if I may paraphrase a well-known passage of Gibbon, he sighed as a member of the cockatoo totem, but obeyed as a policeman; he shot the birds, but I am told that he spent the night weeping in an agony of fear and remorse. We are inclined to laugh at him in our superior way, but his grief was quite sincere.

Idol and Drum in Purari Delta.

There must be innumerable ways in which even the most careful man offends native feelings, and I am afraid that the ordinary white man is not particularly careful in this regard. Perhaps the British white man is no worse than the others, although those who have seen British tourists on the Continent of Europe may be inclined to be less hopeful. And there are really most unexpected pitfalls, into some of which we all of us, I suppose, occasionally fall. I remember once in the Purari Delta noticing a thing in the men's house, or ravi, that looked like an idol; I offered to buy it, and the chief (there are two for each ravi, one for either side) said, courteously enough, "Of course, if you want it you can have it; but if you take it away we shall all be very ill." I asked him why, but he could not or would not tell.

In the same ravi there were a number of drums, and some of us were idly tapping them as we went along; but when we came to one of them (it looked exactly like the others) we were politely requested not to touch it. "If you do," said the chief, "we shall all die."

Rainmaker Among the Nubas.

A better instance than any of these is that given in a book called *Science and the Nation*, edited by the Master of Downing College, Cambridge. The last chapter of this book is called "The Government of Subject Peoples"; it is written by Dr. Rivers, and the instance to which I have referred is given to illustrate what the author calls "the religious or magical aspects of chieftainship." "Among the Nubas of Southern Kordofan," says Dr. Rivers, "the chief is also the rainmaker, and it is believed that his rain-making powers will come to an end if he leaves the hill upon which he and his people dwell. Formerly, when an official wished to deal with a community of the Nubas, he camped at the foot of their hill, and sent for the chief, thus forcing the people to choose between disobedience to their foreign rulers and the loss of supernatural powers which they believe to be essential to their welfare. Placed in such a dilemma, it is not surprising that they have preferred to offend the temporal powers, thus bringing immediate disaster on themselves and serious trouble and expense to their rulers. With knowledge of the fact that the chief is a rainmaker who must not leave his hill, it would have been easy for the official either to visit the hill himself or use some other intermediary."

Desirable to Avoid Dangerous Ground—Religion—Names.

Now it is obviously impossible for any one to know all the sacred trees, all the drums that may not be beaten, and all the old men who must not come down from a hill, the most that one can hope for is to gain a general idea of when one is likely to be treading on dangerous ground. For instance, anything connected with religion is very dangerous indeed, and we certainly ought to have known better than to have attempted to touch the drum in the land of Namau. So it is practically a universal rule that anything to do with uttering a name is ticklish work. "A name," as Mr. Hartland says, "is an essential part of its owner It is much more than a mere label; it is looked upon as having a real objective existence. The knowledge of the name gives power over the person or thing designated" (*Primitive Paternity*, vol. i., p. 223). Often the man will not give his own name, or the name of certain of his relations; but sometimes, like the man who shot the black cockatoo, he finds himself placed in a position from which there is no escape, as, for instance, when a man joins the police and has to give his name for entry on his record of service. In such a case he often adopts the subterfuge of getting another man to give his name for him.

Relationship—Language

Relationship is also a subject which is a fertile source of error, for the native classification is entirely different from ours; and then there is the subject of language, with the question whether it is better that the European officers should learn a native language or that the natives should learn English. The decision of this question depends, to my mind, entirely upon what kind of a language the native language is. For instance, if the native language were Malay I should say, " Make the European officers learn Malay," but in the case of Papuan languages I should say, " Teach the Papuans English." I admit that it is much easier to take a good and fairly simple language, as, for instance, the Motu language of Port Moresby, and to insist that this shall be used as a means of communication, than it is to attempt to teach the natives English; and in the transition stage which we are going through at present in Papua it is being brought home to us every day that things would be much easier if Motu were the common language. Motu is the native language of only a few villages, but, in a debased form, it is easily learned by others, very easily indeed by those whose native language is, like Motu, Melanesian —much more easily than English, even the horrible pidgin English which forms the *lingua franca* of the former German New Guinea.

During the present period of transition all the arguments seem to be on the side of making Motu the common language, but, as a matter of administration, I am convinced that, looking at the future as well as the present, we did right in electing to keep to

English. We came to this conclusion some time ago in Papua, and I was glad to see that the principle on which we acted was confirmed by so distinguished an anthropologist as the Reader in Social Anthropology at Oxford, in his little book in the Home University series (p. 151).

Native Psychology.

Dr. Rivers, in his book I have already mentioned, expresses his opinion that "it is not necessary to dwell upon the value to a ruler of a knowledge of the psychology of the people he is called upon to govern"; it certainly is not necessary to do so in addressing an audience like the present, and it ought not to be necessary to do so under any circumstances, for it should be obvious to any one that, if you are to govern a people justly and efficiently, the more you know about them the better. Unfortunately, however, it is a fact that, far from being obvious, this consideration never occurs to the majority of those who write and talk about native administration, and I take it that a knowledge of native psychology is about the last qualification which the man in the street, or the average elector, would ever seek in an administrator.

"Thinking Black" is a Gift.

And perhaps the man in the street is not altogether to blame; perhaps he realizes that we know little of the psychology of native races, and that what knowledge we have is largely intuitive and confined to but a few individuals. Eventually, perhaps, we may learn how to acquire this knowledge in the ordinary way, and to impart it to one another; and its practical value may then be made more obvious. But at present the art of "thinking black" is a gift, and a very rare one.

Lessons from the Central Court for Papua—Apparent Insufficiency of Motive.

Such opportunities as I have had of studying native psychology have come to me in connexion with the trial of cases in the Central Court of Papua, and, as I can not pretend to possess the gift which I have mentioned, I must confess that I have not formed any conclusions which are likely to be of great value. But I have at least seen enough to enable me to realize how valuabe a knowledge of the subject must be, and how great an assistance in administration. One must, of course, take certain precautions; one has to see that every one concerned, witnesses, prisoners, interpreters, and so forth, get rid of all fear and nervousness, and, above all, one must make them forget that horrible desire to please which stultifies so much of what they say. This, of course, is part of the ordinary duty of any magistrate or Judge who has to try native cases, and when one has cleared the air of all unnecessary complications introduced by courtesy, timidity, and other influ-

ences, and has got down to the bed rock of reality, one finds oneself occasionally in rather strange surroundings. The most disconcerting thing about it all is the appalling candour and truthfulness of all concerned, and the utterly insufficient grounds on which they sometimes act. "It is the New Guinea custom, sir," said the Court interpreter to me in the first case I tried in Papua. He was a highly-civilized man for a Papuan; he spoke English well—not pidgin English—and he could read and write. I had asked him why some man, who had absolutey no connexion with the matter in dispute, had joined in committing a murder. "It is the New Guinea custom, sir," he replied; "if a man asks you to join him in killing another man you cannot refuse." "But," I objected, "if some one asked you to come and kill a man, surely you would not go?" "Yes, sir," was the reply, "I should certainly go if he asked me." This "New Guinea custom" is dying out, of course, but we could make it die out very much quicker if we knew the reason that lies behind it. The interpreter almost certainly did not know, and could only say that it was a custom that had been handed down from his ancestors; but anthropology might be able to divine the cause and to help in its removal.

Murders by the Koiari Tribe.

Some murders which have been committed in the neighbourhood of Port Moresby in recent years have brought home to me how little we know about the Papuan, and how desirable it is that we should know more. There are some people at the back of Port Moresby who are called Koiari; they are essentially an inland people, though they come down, in places, to within a few miles of the coast. The Koiari language is Papuan, not Melanesian, and extends, with dialectical variations, across the main range and as far as Mount Scratchley. Government patrols going through the Koiari district have for years past met with no opposition, but the Koiari themseves, though they occasionally work for a white man, and even join the police, have been little influenced by civilization.

The Heera.

Murders among these people are frequent, and present certain peculiar characteristics. The vast majority of murders elsewhere are committed for the purpose of "paying back" for some previous murder, but with the Koiari this motive, though it exists, seems to have less influence. Sometimes it is what I suppose may be called a ritual murder, but at other times it is connected with the right to wear what the Motu people call Heera—that is, the feathers and other ornaments which are the insignia of one who has killed a man. This, of course, is clear enough, so far—we have the same thing ourselves on a less barbaric system—and it is common enough elsewhere in Papua; but elsewhere, so far as I am

aware, although a man may be anxious to win the glory and the ornaments of the homicide, still he will only (except in a personal quarrel) kill outside his village, and usually his object is to pay back for one of his own tribe.

But the Koiari will kill any one and anywhere; they do not kill so readily now, because they are invariably caught and hanged or sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, but, still, murders are not rare among them even now. It is generally assumed that the idea which is at the root of the Heera (as in our own system of decorations) either personal prowess or service to the tribe; but I have known the Heera to be bestowed upon a little boy who had killed his baby sister (appeasing the anger of their mother by the gift of a pig), and upon a child who had done nothing more than place two fingers upon another child who was dying. The child was dying a natural death—he had a snake inside him, I was told, which means that he was ill—and there was no suggestion that the other child had anything to do with it. It is possible that prowess or service was the original idea of the Heera, but that the system has degenerated, so that the original meaning has been obscured; but it is also possible that the original idea may have been something quite different, and may have extended to any close connexion with death, irrespective of the cause of death, and irrespective of whether the dead man was a friend or an enemy. In any case, I cannot help thinking that there is something behind it all which we do not understand, and which patient and skilled research might enable us to discover.

Importance of Discovering the Origin of Apparently Meaningless Customs.

It has been said that the study of anthropology induces a belief that there was a time when the whole of mankind was mad, and certainly many of the native customs which one finds in Papua are hard to reconcile with any degree of sanity. Yet the people who practise these customs are, in fact, quite sane. They go about their business in the ordinary way, they make their gardens, build their houses, and look after their children, just like any one else; and the point which I think we ought to realize more clearly than we generally do is that it is our duty to find out, so far as we can, the motive of these mad customs, for, unless we do, we can never understand the inner life of the people who practise them, and our progress in raising these people to a higher and more wholesome ideal will be all the slower. The customs may die out in time, as many native customs do, but the mode of thought, or mentality, or whatever you like to call it, of which the custom was a symptom, may remain, and we can hardly take effective steps to modify that mode of thought unless we know what it really is.

"Roasting Sago."

Sometimes one finds a phrase, a form of expression, which to the older men bears a meaning of which the younger men know nothing. I remember an instance of this which I thought rather interesting, and which came to my notice in a case I tried at Port Moresby. It was, of course, a murder case—they nearly all are in our country—and I suppose the murder might be called a ritual murder. There was a custom which allowed you, if you built a new house, to paint the posts red, with a mixture of cocoanut oil and clay, but only if you had killed a man. A prominent native had built a house, and wanted to kill a man, so he sent round a message to his acquaintances inviting them to assist—a little courtesy which, of course, they could not, by Papuan etiquette, refuse. The manner of his invitation was to ask them to come and "roast some sago," the recognised periphrasis, apparently, for killing a man; and what I thought was interesting was that the old men who got the message knew what it meant, whereas the younger men did not. Thus two men in Gaseri village received the invitation, and both went, one of them a middle-aged man, the other a youth. "Why have you not brought your club?" asked the older man, when the two had gone some distance. "Why should I?" said the other, "we are only going to roast some sago." "Go back and get it," was the reply, "you will find that you will want it." So, in an evil moment, he went back, and got his club; he found that he did want it, and he used it, and was arrested, and, though he escaped the gallows, he is, I think, still in gaol. For it was a white man who was killed, and where there is but a handful of Europeans among a large number of natives a white man's life must be held very sacred.

Now, if we had had enough knowledge to enable us to modify the ritual and substitute some other animal for the man who was killed, we could have prevented this murder, just as many murders have been prevented in the Gulf of Papua by the substitution of the pig. The practice of painting the house, so far as I know, has long since died out, and the phrase about "roasting sago" is probably forgotten. I should like to know its origin, but I never shall.

Ignorance of Natives of the Meaning of their Customs.

Occasionally the custom seems to be merely grotesque and to be incapable of any serious motive or meaning. I say "seems" advisedly, because all these queer practices must have had some motive at some time or other, though the motive may not be of the kind which we should call rational, and may rather be connected with the processes which originate from what, it appears, is called by psychologists the "collective unconscious," and which, to quote Mr. Marett once more, "seem to set the logic of purposive life at defiance" (Marett, *Psychology and Folklore*, p.

127). Hence it comes that in many cases the meaning is not, and, perhaps, never has been, clearly understood; natives tell you that they do these things because their grandfathers did them, and leave it at that It may be that in some cases they know more than they admit, and that the reason that they disclaim all knowledge is that they do not like, any more than we do, to discuss the mysteries of their religion with unsympathetic strangers, of atrocious manners, who will probably laugh at them; but as a rule I think that they really do not know. And it is, perhaps, not merely that the tradition has been forgotten; it is quite probable that in some cases the ancestors by whom the cult or custom was originated could not explain it either, for I suppose it could rarely, if ever, have originated in anything like the clear-cut expression of a definite idea. As Mr. James points out in his *Primitive Ritual and Belief* (pp. 5, 224), the primitve mind is incapable of grasping the abstract thought to any appreciable extent; the savage is a ceremonialist, not a dogmatic theologian. Religion to him is a matter of practice, not of theory—a thing, in other words to live out rather than to think out; and it may be that in many cases the ritual came first and that the interpretation, where there is one, came afterwards.

Artificiality of Savage Life—Dr. Rivers in "Science and the Nation."

Now, it may be argued that, by this admission, I am giving away the whole of my case; if the native does not know why a man must be killed when a house is built or a canoe is launched, if he does not know why the old man must not come down from the hill, or why the drum must not be beaten, it may be contended that these practices or prohibitions must remain only as isolated facts in his life, which can be removed without influencing in any way the remainder of his scheme of existence. But, in fact, one does not find that this is so in the case of a savage. though it may be true enough of civilized man. Savage life is intensely artificial, it is pervaded throughout by conventions of every kind; and though none of those who are bound by these conventions know anything of their origin, any more than we know the origin of the conventions which bind us, still, experience shows that they are so inextricably bound together that the removal of one apparently isolated custom may shake the whole foundation. For, to quote Dr. Rivers again in *Science and the Nation*, "We know that the disintegrating influence of European settlements becomes the greater the lower we go in the scale of culture, and it is largely through the greater interdependence of the different aspects of social life that this effect is produced." Dr. Rivers then mentions the instance of head-hunting, and continues, "Similarly, one who abolishes secret societies because he holds them to be 'hot-beds of superstition'

will produce effects he had never anticipated if, as is often the case, these societies provide the basis of the whole economic system of the people and embody religious practices of the utmost importance to their material and moral welfare."

Custom of Cannibals of the Purari Delta.

It must, however, be admitted that some of the practices one finds are so utterly senseless that one can hardly imagine that they ever had any real meaning. For instance, in the Purari Delta and in many other districts it was the custom not to eat the man you had killed—your friends ate him, and you ate the man your friend had killed. However, on the Purari there were certain conditions under which you might break through this rule, but the ritual was rather strict. You had to sit on a cocoanut (in itself not an easy task) with a cocoanut under each heel (a still more difficult thing); and, while so seated, you might get your daughter to boil the man's heart, and then you might drink the water in which the heart was boiled, and even eat a little of the heart itself —but you must be seated on the cocoanut all the time. It is a difficult act of faith to believe that this particular custom ever had any meaning; but, at any rate, whatever its meaning may have been, it was not a custom to encourage, so it had to go, and it went. But perhaps, if we knew the life of the Purari people more intimately, we should see that a lot of other things, good, bad, and indifferent, went with it.

The Nobo House.

Then there was the rather mysterious custom of the Nobo house, which came to light in connexion with the murder of a village constable called Papia, in the Boboi District, at the back of Mekeo. Papia belonged to one of the villages in the plain, and had gone to a dance in the Boboi Mountains, where he was killed and eaten. When the officer in charge of the police arrived at the village where the murder had been committed, he noticed the charred remains of a house at some distance from the other houses, and asked what it was. "Oh," said the villagers, "that was a Nobo house." "It seems to have been burnt down," said the officer. "Of course," was the reply; "we always burn down the Nobo house." "Well, what is a Nobo house?" he asked, and the matter was then explained to him. The Nobo house, it appears, is always built at some little distance from the village, and is used as a trap for unwary strangers—in this particular instance, for Papia. Papia, the culprits told me afterwards, "was a fat man with a light skin, and we wanted to eat him too much," so, when the conversation had turned upon the recent dance and upon feathers, and plumes, and other ornaments, one of the Boboi casually remarked that there were some very fine feathers in the Nobo house, and that if Papia would walk over there he would show them to him. The unsuspecting village constable fell in

with the suggestion, and entered the Nobo house, and was promptly killed, cooked, and eaten; the Nobo house was then burnt down, and a fresh one built in another place. Why they should take the trouble of enticing the man to the Nobo house instead of killing him out of hand was the point which one could not understand, and it was just the point which they could not explain.

At the trial the witnesses repeated the account which had been given to the arresting officer, and added that occasionally, I presume when there was a dearth of visitors, they succeeded in inducing some of their own village people to enter the fatal house. This seemed to me the most surprising thing of all, for, though it might be possible to entrap an unsuspicious stranger, I could not understand how a native of the village, who, of course, would know exactly what the house was built for, could ever be got inside it; but the only explanation I could get was, "Suppose we say, 'More better you go along Nobo house,' he go all right."

Difficulty of Fitting in Native Customs with European Ideas.

It is, of course, easy to enumerate the strange customs that one has met with, but it is very rarely that one can understand these practices of the Stone Age and modify them in such a way as to make them fit in with what has been called the "European epoch of the human mind"; though it seems clear that this line of investigation must in future play a very important part in the government of native races, however much it may have been neglected in the past. The difficulties, however, are very great. My experience in Papua is that if a native gives you a reason for any custom or belief you may be pretty sure that he has just made it up, and that, in fact, he does not know, but does not like to admit his ignorance; and, consequently, you find yourself reduced to conjecture, which can only be verified and checked by enormous patience and industry.

Difficulty of Grasping the Real Meaning of What a Native Tells You; Conversation with a Cassowary.

It is so difficult, too, sometimes, to know what a native means. When a witness gives you, for instance, an account of a conversation which he has had with a cassowary in the bush, and adds that he has always found a cassowary to tell the truth, it is really quite impossible to know what he means. One may say that he is mad, but the man I am thinking of most certainly was not mad, or you may say that his concept of personality is fluid (*vide* Hartland's *Ritual and Belief*, p. 30), and that he thinks that a man can change into a cassowary and a cassowary into a man without much difficulty; but, as a matter of fact, he does not think anything of the sort, and if he saw a man turn into a cassowary he would be just as amazed as you or I. Probably the man in question knew perfectly well that he had never had a conversation with a cassowary

wary at all, and perhaps he never imagined that I would be foolish enough to think that he really meant that he had—he may have meant something quite different, but I do not know what it was.

Many Inquiries Abortive.

This, I fear, has been the end of many such inquiries; they so often result in nothing. I remember once taking some trouble to investigate the action of a man whose wife had been murdered, and who summoned the neighbouring villages to "pay back" for her death by cutting off her hair and sending it round to them. The effect was magical; avengers simply swarmed to his assistance. But when I wanted to inquire into the meaning of what he did, and why he did it, I came full tilt against the inevitable brick wall. "We don't know why he did it," said the witnesses; "we think it must have been because he was a fool." And probably they thought me a still greater fool for troubling to inquire.

Anthropology has not yet been of Much Practical Assistance in Administration.

On the whole, I must, I suppose, admit that anthropology, so far, has not played an important part in administration, and I am, I think, fully aware of the many difficulties that must be surmounted before this science can come into its own as a practical guide to the government of subject races. It has, of course, often happened that an officer stationed in some unsettled district has had a taste for anthropology, and in that case, if the charms of this particular branch of learning do not cause him to neglect his other duties, his services will be all the more valuable; but there are dangers before him—there are lions in the path. The greatest danger is that he may become an unpractical doctrinaire—in other words, a prig; and a prig, as the governor of uncivilized races, is frankly impossible. Or, avoiding the Scylla of priggishness, he may fall into the Charybdis of inexactitude, and cease to be scientific altogether. And the temptation to be inexact in such matters is almost irresistible. You see, it is so easy. You are probably one of a very small number who know anything about the country in which you are stationed, so that you can practically say anything you like without much fear of contradiction—and, if you are contradicted, is not your word as good as another's? Thus, you are likely to weary of the careful collection of data, to generalize too quickly, and to jump at conclusions with results that may be quite the reverse of what you intend.

But is Likely to be of the Greatest Assistance in the Future when Initial Difficulties have been Overcome.

Still, in spite of all difficulties, and in spite of the fact that my own attempts to find an anthropological basis for my administration have often had but small result, I entertain no doubt whatever that administrators of the future will derive more and more advantage from encouraging the study of anthropology, either

by the appointment of specialists whose sole duty it will be to investigate these questions, or by encouraging the study of anthropology generally among Government officers. In Papua we have been fortunate in securing the services of Dr. Strong, who is not only well-known as a general anthropologist, but has made a special study of the languages of Papua, and was for many years a magistrate in the Papuan Service.

In conclusion, I may be allowed to quote a passage from a pamphlet which I wrote a few months ago, called *Review of the Australian Administration in Papua.*

"It is clear," I said, "that the Papuan cannot remain as he is; he must move along the path of civilization unless he is to die out altogether, and we believe that the path I have indicated is the safest and surest for him to follow. I do not think myself that argument and moral suasion have very much influence on a people at so low a stage of evolution; there must always be the power to compel, behind the exhortation and advice—a power which, perhaps, need rarely be exercised, but which must be there all the time. And for this reason the advance must be made under the sanction of Ordinances and Regulations which provide a penalty for disobedience. Still, progress will be more willing, and consequently more rapid, if the Papuan understands and concurs in what we are doing, and for this reason a knowledge of Papuan manners and customs and Papuan mentality generally is very desirable in those who undertake this task.

"The capacity of 'thinking black' or 'brown' is possessed by few, for this is an art which, it is said, 'requires more sympathy and insight than is given to most men.' It is an art, however, which is very necessary in dealing with native races, for there is always the danger that they may imagine that some policy, which has been adopted for their benefit, is really a device for their undoing; and there is also the danger that an officer, with the very best intention in the world, may deeply incense native feeling against him by a quite unconscious offence against some tribal tradition. The best remedy against such mistakes as these is to be found in a study (even a fragmentary and unsystematic study) of the science of anthropology, so long as the student does not allow the charms of that science to prevail over the claims of duty. And it is partly to encourage this study among our officers, and partly to assist the Government more directly, that arrangements are being made for the appointment of an officer to be Government Anthropologist.

"Incidentally, such an officer will be of assistance in collecting the various objects of interest which are generally passing out of use in the native villages, but this will not be his chief value. His chief value will be to help us in reconciling an intelligent, though very backward, race to the inevitable march of civilization, and in finding the easiest way for its advance."