

Ratu David, the eldest son of Thackombau, was very hospitable, and invited us to drink kaava with him in the evening, when he produced a bottle of brandy also. We wished to see a dance, but this was not possible, because it was Saturday evening, which is by order of the missionaries kept in a certain way sacred, as a preparation for Sunday. For the same reason Ratu David dare not allow his retinue to sing a chant used during kaava drinking, and which we were anxious to hear.

We pitched a sort of tent on a very small islet, about forty yards off Mbau, and slept there. Ratu David sent us off a young pig and a couple of fowls all alive, a most welcome present. They were killed and consumed within an hour of their arrival. The islet on which we slept is made up of blocks of coral, weathered and bored by various animals, piled up by the waves. The blocks near tide-mark are so blackened by exposure, that I took them at first for vesicular lava.

Around Mbau are extensive shallow mud flats, the mud being brought down by the Wai Levu. Across these flats we sailed next morning, with scarcely a breath of wind, though our pilot, whom we christened "Joe," kept constantly calling for a breeze, using an old Fijian pilot's chant, "Come down, come down, my friend from the mountains."

As we drifted slowly away over the glassy water, the view behind us was beautiful. Far away, blue in the distance, was a long range of the lofty peaked mountains of Viti Levu, still the abode of the Kaivolos, the long-haired mountaineers, the cannibals. Nearer lay a streak of dark green undulating low country, bounded seawards by low cliffs, and showing near the coast the numerous cultivated clearings of the natives. Just off the cliffs of Viti Levu lay the small island of Viwa. In the foreground was the island of Mbau, with its crowded reed houses, its strange stone parapets, and its green hill topped by the missionaries' white house. From the centre of the village came the sound of what was the old cannibal death drum, beating now for morning prayers.

There were two of these drums (Fijian Lali) in front of the strangers' house. They are simply logs of wood, hollowed out above into troughs, and supported horizontally on posts at about three feet above the ground, looking like horse-troughs. One was larger than another. They were beaten with two wooden billets alternately, and gave out different low bass booming notes. Very similar drums are used amongst the Melanesians, as at Efate in the New Hebrides,* and at the Admiralty Islands, where, however, they are stuck upright in the ground,

* "A Year in the New Hebrides," p. 111, by F. A. Campbell. Melbourne, George Robertson, 1873.