CHAPTER X--TYPEE

To the eastward Ua-huka was being blotted out by an evening rain-squall that was fast overtaking the Snark. But that little craft, her big spinnaker filled by the southeast trade, was making a good race of it. Cape Martin, the southeasternmost point of Nuku-hiva, was abeam, and Comptroller Bay was opening up as we fled past its wide entrance, where Sail Rock, for all the world like the spritsail of a Columbia River salmon-boat, was making brave weather of it in the smashing southeast swell.

"What do you make that out to be?" I asked Hermann, at the wheel.

"A fishing-boat, sir," he answered after careful scrutiny.

Yet on the chart it was plainly marked, "Sail Rock."

But we were more interested in the recesses of Comptroller Bay, where our eyes eagerly sought out the three bights of land and centred on the midmost one, where the gathering twilight showed the dim walls of a valley extending inland. How often we had pored over the chart and centred always on that midmost bight and on the valley it opened--the Valley of Typee. "Taipi" the chart spelled it, and spelled it correctly, but I prefer "Typee," and I shall always spell it "Typee." When I was a little boy, I read a book spelled in that

manner--Herman Melville's "Typee"; and many long hours I dreamed over its pages. Nor was it all dreaming. I resolved there and then, mightily, come what would, that when I had gained strength and years, I, too, would voyage to Typee. For the wonder of the world was penetrating to my tiny consciousness--the wonder that was to lead me to many lands, and that leads and never pails. The years passed, but Typee was not forgotten. Returned to San Francisco from a seven months' cruise in the North Pacific, I decided the time had come. The brig Galilee was sailing for the Marquesas, but her crew was complete and I, who was an able-seaman before the mast and young enough to be overweeningly proud of it, was willing to condescend to ship as cabin-boy in order to make the pilgrimage to Typee. Of course, the Galilee would have sailed from the Marquesas without me, for I was bent on finding another Fayaway and another Kory-Kory. I doubt that the captain read desertion in my eye. Perhaps even the berth of cabin-boy was already filled. At any rate, I did not get it.

Then came the rush of years, filled brimming with projects, achievements, and failures; but Typee was not forgotten, and here I was now, gazing at its misty outlines till the squall swooped down and the Snark dashed on into the driving smother. Ahead, we caught a glimpse and took the compass bearing of Sentinel Rock, wreathed with pounding surf. Then it, too, was effaced by the rain and darkness. We steered straight for it, trusting to hear the sound of breakers in time to sheer clear. We had to steer for it. We had naught but a compass bearing with which to orientate ourselves, and

if we missed Sentinel Rock, we missed Taiohae Bay, and we would have to throw the Snark up to the wind and lie off and on the whole night--no pleasant prospect for voyagers weary from a sixty days' traverse of the vast Pacific solitude, and land-hungry, and fruit-hungry, and hungry with an appetite of years for the sweet vale of Typee.

Abruptly, with a roar of sound, Sentinel Rock loomed through the rain dead ahead. We altered our course, and, with mainsail and spinnaker bellying to the squall, drove past. Under the lea of the rock the wind dropped us, and we rolled in an absolute calm. Then a puff of air struck us, right in our teeth, out of Taiohae Bay. It was in spinnaker, up mizzen, all sheets by the wind, and we were moving slowly ahead, heaving the lead and straining our eyes for the fixed red light on the ruined fort that would give us our bearings to anchorage. The air was light and baffling, now east, now west, now north, now south; while from either hand came the roar of unseen breakers. From the looming cliffs arose the blatting of wild goats, and overhead the first stars were peeping mistily through the ragged train of the passing squall. At the end of two hours, having come a mile into the bay, we dropped anchor in eleven fathoms. And so we came to Taiohae.

In the morning we awoke in fairyland. The Snark rested in a placid harbour that nestled in a vast amphitheatre, the towering, vine-clad walls of which seemed to rise directly from the water. Far up, to the east, we glimpsed the thin line of a trail, visible in one

place, where it scoured across the face of the wall.

"The path by which Toby escaped from Typee!" we cried.

We were not long in getting ashore and astride horses, though the consummation of our pilgrimage had to be deferred for a day. Two months at sea, bare-footed all the time, without space in which to exercise one's limbs, is not the best preliminary to leather shoes and walking. Besides, the land had to cease its nauseous rolling before we could feel fit for riding goat-like horses over giddy trails. So we took a short ride to break in, and crawled through thick jungle to make the acquaintance of a venerable moss-grown idol, where had foregathered a German trader and a Norwegian captain to estimate the weight of said idol, and to speculate upon depreciation in value caused by sawing him in half. They treated the old fellow sacrilegiously, digging their knives into him to see how hard he was and how deep his mossy mantle, and commanding him to rise up and save them trouble by walking down to the ship himself. In lieu of which, nineteen Kanakas slung him on a frame of timbers and toted him to the ship, where, battened down under hatches, even now he is cleaving the South Pacific Hornward and toward Europe--the ultimate abiding-place for all good heathen idols, save for the few in America and one in particular who grins beside me as I write, and who, barring shipwreck, will grin somewhere in my neighbourhood until I die. And he will win out. He will be grinning when I am dust.

Also, as a preliminary, we attended a feast, where one Taiara Tamarii, the son of an Hawaiian sailor who deserted from a whaleship, commemorated the death of his Marquesan mother by roasting fourteen whole hogs and inviting in the village. So we came along, welcomed by a native herald, a young girl, who stood on a great rock and chanted the information that the banquet was made perfect by our presence--which information she extended impartially to every arrival. Scarcely were we seated, however, when she changed her tune, while the company manifested intense excitement. Her cries became eager and piercing. From a distance came answering cries, in men's voices, which blended into a wild, barbaric chant that sounded incredibly savage, smacking of blood and war. Then, through vistas of tropical foliage appeared a procession of savages, naked save for gaudy loin-cloths. They advanced slowly, uttering deep guttural cries of triumph and exaltation. Slung from young saplings carried on their shoulders were mysterious objects of considerable weight, hidden from view by wrappings of green leaves.

Nothing but pigs, innocently fat and roasted to a turn, were inside those wrappings, but the men were carrying them into camp in imitation of old times when they carried in "long-pig." Now long-pig is not pig. Long-pig is the Polynesian euphemism for human flesh; and these descendants of man-eaters, a king's son at their head, brought in the pigs to table as of old their grandfathers had brought in their slain enemies. Every now and then the procession halted in order that the bearers should have every advantage in uttering particularly ferocious shouts of victory, of contempt for

their enemies, and of gustatory desire. So Melville, two generations ago, witnessed the bodies of slain Happar warriors, wrapped in palm-leaves, carried to banquet at the Ti. At another time, at the Ti, he "observed a curiously carved vessel of wood," and on looking into it his eyes "fell upon the disordered members of a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with particles of flesh clinging to them here and there."

Cannibalism has often been regarded as a fairy story by ultracivilized men who dislike, perhaps, the notion that their own savage forebears have somewhere in the past been addicted to similar practices. Captain Cook was rather sceptical upon the subject, until, one day, in a harbour of New Zealand, he deliberately tested the matter. A native happened to have brought on board, for sale, a nice, sun-dried head. At Cook's orders strips of the flesh were cut away and handed to the native, who greedily devoured them. To say the least, Captain Cook was a rather thorough-going empiricist. At any rate, by that act he supplied one ascertained fact of which science had been badly in need. Little did he dream of the existence of a certain group of islands, thousands of miles away, where in subsequent days there would arise a curious suit at law, when an old chief of Maui would be charged with defamation of character because he persisted in asserting that his body was the living repository of Captain Cook's great toe. It is said that the plaintiffs failed to prove that the old chief was not the tomb of the navigator's great toe, and that the suit was dismissed.

I suppose I shall not have the chance in these degenerate days to see any long-pig eaten, but at least I am already the possessor of a duly certified Marquesan calabash, oblong in shape, curiously carved, over a century old, from which has been drunk the blood of two shipmasters. One of those captains was a mean man. He sold a decrepit whale-boat, as good as new what of the fresh white paint, to a Marquesan chief. But no sooner had the captain sailed away than the whale-boat dropped to pieces. It was his fortune, some time afterwards, to be wrecked, of all places, on that particular island. The Marquesan chief was ignorant of rebates and discounts; but he had a primitive sense of equity and an equally primitive conception of the economy of nature, and he balanced the account by eating the man who had cheated him.

We started in the cool dawn for Typee, astride ferocious little stallions that pawed and screamed and bit and fought one another quite oblivious of the fragile humans on their backs and of the slippery boulders, loose rocks, and yawning gorges. The way led up an ancient road through a jungle of hau trees. On every side were the vestiges of a one-time dense population. Wherever the eye could penetrate the thick growth, glimpses were caught of stone walls and of stone foundations, six to eight feet in height, built solidly throughout, and many yards in width and depth. They formed great stone platforms, upon which, at one time, there had been houses. But the houses and the people were gone, and huge trees sank their roots through the platforms and towered over the under-running jungle. These foundations are called pae-paes--the pi-pis of

Melville, who spelled phonetically.

The Marquesans of the present generation lack the energy to hoist and place such huge stones. Also, they lack incentive. There are plenty of pae-paes to go around, with a few thousand unoccupied ones left over. Once or twice, as we ascended the valley, we saw magnificent pae-paes bearing on their general surface pitiful little straw huts, the proportions being similar to a voting booth perched on the broad foundation of the Pyramid of Cheops. For the Marquesans are perishing, and, to judge from conditions at Taiohae, the one thing that retards their destruction is the infusion of fresh blood. A pure Marquesan is a rarity. They seem to be all half-breeds and strange conglomerations of dozens of different races. Nineteen able labourers are all the trader at Taiohae can muster for the loading of copra on shipboard, and in their veins runs the blood of English, American, Dane, German, French, Corsican, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Paumotan, Tahitian, and Easter Islander. There are more races than there are persons, but it is a wreckage of races at best. Life faints and stumbles and gasps itself away. In this warm, equable clime--a truly terrestrial paradise--where are never extremes of temperature and where the air is like balm, kept ever pure by the ozone-laden southeast trade, asthma, phthisis, and tuberculosis flourish as luxuriantly as the vegetation. Everywhere, from the few grass huts, arises the racking cough or exhausted groan of wasted lungs. Other horrible diseases prosper as well, but the most deadly of all are those that attack the lungs. There is a form of consumption called "galloping," which

is especially dreaded. In two months' time it reduces the strongest man to a skeleton under a grave-cloth. In valley after valley the last inhabitant has passed and the fertile soil has relapsed to jungle. In Melville's day the valley of Hapaa (spelled by him "Happar") was peopled by a strong and warlike tribe. A generation later, it contained but two hundred persons. To-day it is an untenanted, howling, tropical wilderness.

We climbed higher and higher in the valley, our unshod stallions picking their steps on the disintegrating trail, which led in and out through the abandoned pae-paes and insatiable jungle. The sight of red mountain apples, the ohias, familiar to us from Hawaii, caused a native to be sent climbing after them. And again he climbed for cocoa-nuts. I have drunk the cocoanuts of Jamaica and of Hawaii, but I never knew how delicious such draught could be till I drank it here in the Marquesas. Occasionally we rode under wild limes and oranges--great trees which had survived the wilderness longer than the motes of humans who had cultivated them.

We rode through endless thickets of yellow-pollened cassi--if riding it could be called; for those fragrant thickets were inhabited by wasps. And such wasps! Great yellow fellows the size of small canary birds, darting through the air with behind them drifting a bunch of legs a couple of inches long. A stallion abruptly stands on his forelegs and thrusts his hind legs skyward. He withdraws them from the sky long enough to make one wild jump ahead, and then returns them to their index position. It is nothing. His thick

hide has merely been punctured by a flaming lance of wasp virility. Then a second and a third stallion, and all the stallions, begin to cavort on their forelegs over the precipitous landscape. Swat! A white-hot poniard penetrates my cheek. Swat again!! I am stabbed in the neck. I am bringing up the rear and getting more than my share. There is no retreat, and the plunging horses ahead, on a precarious trail, promise little safety. My horse overruns Charmian's horse, and that sensitive creature, fresh-stung at the psychological moment, planks one of his hoofs into my horse and the other hoof into me. I thank my stars that he is not steel-shod, and half-arise from the saddle at the impact of another flaming dagger. I am certainly getting more than my share, and so is my poor horse, whose pain and panic are only exceeded by mine.

"Get out of the way! I'm coming!" I shout, frantically dashing my cap at the winged vipers around me.

On one side of the trail the landscape rises straight up. On the other side it sinks straight down. The only way to get out of my way is to keep on going. How that string of horses kept their feet is a miracle; but they dashed ahead, over-running one another, galloping, trotting, stumbling, jumping, scrambling, and kicking methodically skyward every time a wasp landed on them. After a while we drew breath and counted our injuries. And this happened not once, nor twice, but time after time. Strange to say, it never grew monotonous. I know that I, for one, came through each brush with the undiminished zest of a man flying from sudden death. No;

the pilgrim from Taiohae to Typee will never suffer from ennui on the way.

At last we arose above the vexation of wasps. It was a matter of altitude, however, rather than of fortitude. All about us lay the jagged back-bones of ranges, as far as the eye could see, thrusting their pinnacles into the trade-wind clouds. Under us, from the way we had come, the Snark lay like a tiny toy on the calm water of Taiohae Bay. Ahead we could see the inshore indentation of Comptroller Bay. We dropped down a thousand feet, and Typee lay beneath us. "Had a glimpse of the gardens of paradise been revealed to me I could scarcely have been more ravished with the sight"--so said Melville on the moment of his first view of the valley. He saw a garden. We saw a wilderness. Where were the hundred groves of the breadfruit tree he saw? We saw jungle, nothing but jungle, with the exception of two grass huts and several clumps of cocoanuts breaking the primordial green mantle. Where was the Ti of Mehevi, the bachelors' hall, the palace where women were taboo, and where he ruled with his lesser chieftains, keeping the half-dozen dusty and torpid ancients to remind them of the valorous past? From the swift stream no sounds arose of maids and matrons pounding tapa. And where was the hut that old Narheyo eternally builded? In vain I looked for him perched ninety feet from the ground in some tall cocoanut, taking his morning smoke.

We went down a zigzag trail under overarching, matted jungle, where great butterflies drifted by in the silence. No tattooed savage

with club and javelin guarded the path; and when we forded the stream, we were free to roam where we pleased. No longer did the taboo, sacred and merciless, reign in that sweet vale. Nay, the taboo still did reign, a new taboo, for when we approached too near the several wretched native women, the taboo was uttered warningly. And it was well. They were lepers. The man who warned us was afflicted horribly with elephantiasis. All were suffering from lung trouble. The valley of Typee was the abode of death, and the dozen survivors of the tribe were gasping feebly the last painful breaths of the race.

Certainly the battle had not been to the strong, for once the Typeans were very strong, stronger than the Happars, stronger than the Taiohaeans, stronger than all the tribes of Nuku-hiva. The word "typee," or, rather, "taipi," originally signified an eater of human flesh. But since all the Marquesans were human-flesh eaters, to be so designated was the token that the Typeans were the human-flesh eaters par excellence. Not alone to Nuku-hiva did the Typean reputation for bravery and ferocity extend. In all the islands of the Marquesas the Typeans were named with dread. Man could not conquer them. Even the French fleet that took possession of the Marquesas left the Typeans alone. Captain Porter, of the frigate Essex, once invaded the valley. His sailors and marines were reinforced by two thousand warriors of Happar and Taiohae. They penetrated quite a distance into the valley, but met with so fierce a resistance that they were glad to retreat and get away in their flotilla of boats and war-canoes.

Of all inhabitants of the South Seas, the Marquesans were adjudged the strongest and the most beautiful. Melville said of them: "I was especially struck by the physical strength and beauty they displayed . . . In beauty of form they surpassed anything I had ever seen. Not a single instance of natural deformity was observable in all the throng attending the revels. Every individual appeared free from those blemishes which sometimes mar the effect of an otherwise perfect form. But their physical excellence did not merely consist in an exemption from these evils; nearly every individual of the number might have been taken for a sculptor's model." Mendana, the discoverer of the Marquesas, described the natives as wondrously beautiful to behold. Figueroa, the chronicler of his voyage, said of them: "In complexion they were nearly white; of good stature and finely formed." Captain Cook called the Marquesans the most splendid islanders in the South Seas. The men were described, as "in almost every instance of lofty stature, scarcely ever less than six feet in height."

And now all this strength and beauty has departed, and the valley of Typee is the abode of some dozen wretched creatures, afflicted by leprosy, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis. Melville estimated the population at two thousand, not taking into consideration the small adjoining valley of Ho-o-u-mi. Life has rotted away in this wonderful garden spot, where the climate is as delightful and healthful as any to be found in the world. Not alone were the Typeans physically magnificent; they were pure. Their air did not

contain the bacilli and germs and microbes of disease that fill our own air. And when the white men imported in their ships these various micro-organisms or disease, the Typeans crumpled up and went down before them.

When one considers the situation, one is almost driven to the conclusion that the white race flourishes on impurity and corruption. Natural selection, however, gives the explanation. We of the white race are the survivors and the descendants of the thousands of generations of survivors in the war with the micro-organisms. Whenever one of us was born with a constitution peculiarly receptive to these minute enemies, such a one promptly died. Only those of us survived who could withstand them. We who are alive are the immune, the fit--the ones best constituted to live in a world of hostile micro-organisms. The poor Marquesans had undergone no such selection. They were not immune. And they, who had made a custom of eating their enemies, were now eaten by enemies so microscopic as to be invisible, and against whom no war of dart and javelin was possible. On the other hand, had there been a few hundred thousand Marquesans to begin with, there might have been sufficient survivors to lay the foundation for a new race--a regenerated race, if a plunge into a festering bath of organic poison can be called regeneration.

We unsaddled our horses for lunch, and after we had fought the stallions apart--mine with several fresh chunks bitten out of his back--and after we had vainly fought the sand-flies, we ate bananas

and tinned meats, washed down by generous draughts of cocoanut milk. There was little to be seen. The jungle had rushed back and engulfed the puny works of man. Here and there pai-pais were to be stumbled upon, but there were no inscriptions, no hieroglyphics, no clues to the past they attested--only dumb stones, builded and carved by hands that were forgotten dust. Out of the pai-pais grew great trees, jealous of the wrought work of man, splitting and scattering the stones back into the primeval chaos.

We gave up the jungle and sought the stream with the idea of evading the sand-flies. Vain hope! To go in swimming one must take off his clothes. The sand-flies are aware of the fact, and they lurk by the river bank in countless myriads. In the native they are called the nau-nau, which is pronounced "now-now." They are certainly well named, for they are the insistent present. There is no past nor future when they fasten upon one's epidermis, and I am willing to wager that Omer Khayyam could never have written the Rubaiyat in the valley of Typee--it would have been psychologically impossible. I made the strategic mistake of undressing on the edge of a steep bank where I could dive in but could not climb out. When I was ready to dress, I had a hundred yards' walk on the bank before I could reach my clothes. At the first step, fully ten thousand nau-naus landed upon me. At the second step I was walking in a cloud. By the third step the sun was dimmed in the sky. After that I don't know what happened. When I arrived at my clothes, I was a maniac. And here enters my grand tactical error. There is only one rule of conduct in dealing with nau-naus. Never swat them. Whatever you do, don't

swat them. They are so vicious that in the instant of annihilation they eject their last atom of poison into your carcass. You must pluck them delicately, between thumb and forefinger, and persuade them gently to remove their proboscides from your quivering flesh. It is like pulling teeth. But the difficulty was that the teeth sprouted faster than I could pull them, so I swatted, and, so doing, filled myself full with their poison. This was a week ago. At the present moment I resemble a sadly neglected smallpox convalescent.

Ho-o-u-mi is a small valley, separated from Typee by a low ridge, and thither we started when we had knocked our indomitable and insatiable riding-animals into submission. As it was, Warren's mount, after a mile run, selected the most dangerous part of the trail for an exhibition that kept us all on the anxious seat for fully five minutes. We rode by the mouth of Typee valley and gazed down upon the beach from which Melville escaped. There was where the whale-boat lay on its oars close in to the surf; and there was where Karakoee, the taboo Kanaka, stood in the water and trafficked for the sailor's life. There, surely, was where Melville gave Fayaway the parting embrace ere he dashed for the boat. And there was the point of land from which Mehevi and Mow-mow and their following swam off to intercept the boat, only to have their wrists gashed by sheath-knives when they laid hold of the gunwale, though it was reserved for Mow-mow to receive the boat-hook full in the throat from Melville's hands.

We rode on to Ho-o-u-mi. So closely was Melville guarded that he

never dreamed of the existence of this valley, though he must continually have met its inhabitants, for they belonged to Typee. We rode through the same abandoned pae-paes, but as we neared the sea we found a profusion of cocoanuts, breadfruit trees and taro patches, and fully a dozen grass dwellings. In one of these we arranged to pass the night, and preparations were immediately put on foot for a feast. A young pig was promptly despatched, and while he was being roasted among hot stones, and while chickens were stewing in cocoanut milk, I persuaded one of the cooks to climb an unusually tall cocoanut palm. The cluster of nuts at the top was fully one hundred and twenty-five feet from the ground, but that native strode up to the tree, seized it in both hands, jack-knived at the waist so that the soles of his feet rested flatly against the trunk, and then he walked right straight up without stopping. There were no notches in the tree. He had no ropes to help him. He merely walked up the tree, one hundred and twenty-five feet in the air, and cast down the nuts from the summit. Not every man there had the physical stamina for such a feat, or the lungs, rather, for most of them were coughing their lives away. Some of the women kept up a ceaseless moaning and groaning, so badly were their lungs wasted. Very few of either sex were full-blooded Marquesans. They were mostly half-breeds and three-quarter-breeds of French, English, Danish, and Chinese extraction. At the best, these infusions of fresh blood merely delayed the passing, and the results led one to wonder whether it was worth while.

The feast was served on a broad pae-pae, the rear portion of which

was occupied by the house in which we were to sleep. The first course was raw fish and poi-poi, the latter sharp and more acrid of taste than the poi of Hawaii, which is made from taro. The poi-poi of the Marquesas is made from breadfruit. The ripe fruit, after the core is removed, is placed in a calabash and pounded with a stone pestle into a stiff, sticky paste. In this stage of the process, wrapped in leaves, it can be buried in the ground, where it will keep for years. Before it can be eaten, however, further processes are necessary. A leaf-covered package is placed among hot stones, like the pig, and thoroughly baked. After that it is mixed with cold water and thinned out--not thin enough to run, but thin enough to be eaten by sticking one's first and second fingers into it. On close acquaintance it proves a pleasant and most healthful food. And breadfruit, ripe and well boiled or roasted! It is delicious. Breadfruit and taro are kingly vegetables, the pair of them, though the former is patently a misnomer and more resembles a sweet potato than anything else, though it is not mealy like a sweet potato, nor is it so sweet.

The feast ended, we watched the moon rise over Typee. The air was like balm, faintly scented with the breath of flowers. It was a magic night, deathly still, without the slightest breeze to stir the foliage; and one caught one's breath and felt the pang that is almost hurt, so exquisite was the beauty of it. Faint and far could be heard the thin thunder of the surf upon the beach. There were no beds; and we drowsed and slept wherever we thought the floor softest. Near by, a woman panted and moaned in her sleep, and all

about us the dying islanders coughed in the night.