CHAPTER VI--LAST EXPLOITS OF BECKER

September-November 1888

Brandeis had held all day by Mulinuu, expecting the reported real attack. He woke on the 13th to find himself cut off on that unwatered promontory, and the Mataafa villagers parading Apia. The same day Fritze received a letter from Mataafa summoning him to withdraw his party from the isthmus;

and Fritze, as if in answer, drew in his ship into the small harbour close to Mulinuu, and trained his port battery to assist in the defence. From a step so decisive, it might be thought the German plans were unaffected by the disastrous issue of the battle. I conceive nothing would be further from the truth. Here was Tamasese penned on Mulinuu with his troops; Apia, from which alone these could be subsisted, in the hands of the enemy; a battle imminent, in which the German vessel must apparently take part with men and battery, and the buildings of the German firm were apparently destined to be the first target of fire. Unless Becker re-established that which he had so lately and so artfully thrown down--the neutral territory--the firm would have to suffer. If he re-established it, Tamasese must retire from Mulinuu. If Becker saved his goose, he lost his cabbage. Nothing so well depicts the man's effrontery as that he should have conceived the design of saving both,--of re-establishing only so much of the neutral territory as should hamper Mataafa, and leaving in abeyance all that could incommode Tamasese. By

drawing the boundary where he now proposed, across the isthmus, he protected the firm, drove back the Mataafas out of almost all that they had conquered, and, so far from disturbing Tamasese, actually fortified him in his old position.

The real story of the negotiations that followed we shall perhaps never learn. But so much is plain: that while Becker was thus outwardly straining decency in the interest of Tamasese, he was privately intriguing, or pretending to intrigue, with Mataafa. In his despatch of the 11th, he had given an extended criticism of that chieftain, whom he depicts as very dark and artful; and while admitting that his assumption of the name of Malietoa might raise him up followers, predicted that he could not make an orderly government or support himself long in sole power "without very energetic foreign help." Of what help was the consul thinking? There was no helper in the field but Germany. On the 15th he had an interview with the victor; told him that Tamasese's was the only government recognised by Germany, and that he must continue to recognise it till he received "other instructions from his government, whom he was now advising of the late events"; refused, accordingly, to withdraw the guard from the isthmus; and desired Mataafa, "until the arrival of these fresh instructions," to refrain from an attack on Mulinuu. One thing of two: either this language is extremely perfidious, or Becker was preparing to change sides. The same detachment appears in his despatch of October 7th. He computes the losses of the German firm with an easy cheerfulness. If Tamasese get up again (gelingt die Wiederherstellung der Regierung Tamasese's), Tamasese will have to pay. If not, then Mataafa. This is not the language of a partisan. The tone of

indifference, the easy implication that the case of Tamasese was already desperate, the hopes held secretly forth to Mataafa and secretly reported to his government at home, trenchantly contrast with his external conduct. At this very time he was feeding Tamasese; he had German sailors mounting guard on Tamasese's battlements; the German war-ship lay close in, whether to help or to destroy. If he meant to drop the cause of Tamasese, he had him in a corner, helpless, and could stifle him without a sob. If he meant to rat, it was to be with every condition of safety and every circumstance of infamy.

Was it conceivable, then, that he meant it? Speaking with a gentleman who was in the confidence of Dr. Knappe: "Was it not a pity," I asked, "that Knappe did not stick to Becker's policy of supporting Mataafa?" "You are quite wrong there; that was not Knappe's doing," was the reply. "Becker had changed his mind before Knappe came." Why, then, had he changed it? This excellent, if ignominious, idea once entertained, why was it let drop? It is to be remembered there was another German in the field, Brandeis, who had a respect, or rather, perhaps, an affection, for Tamasese, and who thought his own honour and that of his country engaged in the support of that government which they had provoked and founded. Becker described the captain to Laupepa as "a quiet, sensible gentleman." If any word came to his ears of the intended manoeuvre, Brandeis would certainly show himself very sensible of the affront; but Becker might have been tempted to withdraw his former epithet of quiet. Some such passage, some such threatened change of front at the consulate, opposed

with outcry, would explain what seems otherwise inexplicable, the bitter, indignant, almost hostile tone of a subsequent letter from Brandeis to Knappe--"Brandeis's inflammatory letter," Bismarck calls it--the proximate cause of the German landing and reverse at Fangalii.

But whether the advances of Becker were sincere or not--whether he meditated treachery against the old king or was practising treachery upon the new, and the choice is between one or other--no doubt but he contrived to gain his points with Mataafa, prevailing on him to change his camp for the better protection of the German plantations, and persuading him (long before he could persuade his brother consuls) to accept that miraculous new neutral territory of his, with a piece cut out for the immediate needs of Tamasese.

During the rest of September, Tamasese continued to decline. On the 19th one village and half of another deserted him; on the 22nd two more. On the 21st the Mataafas burned his town of Leulumoenga, his own splendid house flaming with the rest; and there are few things of which a native thinks more, or has more reason to think well, than of a fine Samoan house. Tamasese women and children were marched up the same day from Atua, and handed over with their sleeping-mats to Mulinuu: a most unwelcome addition to a party already suffering from want. By the 20th, they were being watered from the Adler. On the 24th the Manono fleet of sixteen large boats, fortified and rendered unmanageable with tons of firewood, passed to windward to intercept supplies from Atua. By the 27th the hungry garrison flocked in great numbers to draw rations at the German firm. On the 28th the same business was repeated with a different

issue. Mataafas crowded to look on; words were exchanged, blows followed; sticks, stones, and bottles were caught up; the detested Brandeis, at great risk, threw himself between the lines and expostulated with the Mataafas--his only personal appearance in the wars, if this could be called war. The same afternoon, the Tamasese boats got in with provisions, having passed to seaward of the lumbering Manono fleet; and from that day on, whether from a high degree of enterprise on the one side or a great lack of capacity on the other, supplies were maintained from the sea with regularity. Thus the spectacle of battle, or at least of riot, at the doors of the German firm was not repeated. But the memory must have hung heavy on the hearts, not of the Germans only, but of all Apia. The Samoans are a gentle race, gentler than any in Europe; we are often enough reminded of the circumstance, not always by their friends. But a mob is a mob, and a drunken mob is a drunken mob, and a drunken mob with weapons in its hands is a drunken mob with weapons in its hands, all the world over: elementary propositions, which some of us upon these islands might do worse than get by rote, but which must have been evident enough to Becker. And I am amazed by the man's constancy, that, even while blows were going at the door of that German firm which he was in Samoa to protect, he should have stuck to his demands. Ten days before, Blacklock had offered to recognise the old territory, including Mulinuu, and Becker had refused, and still in the midst of these "alarums and excursions," he continued to refuse it.

On October 2nd, anchored in Apia bay H.B.M.S. Calliope, Captain Kane, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Fairfax, and the gunboat Lizard, Lieutenant-Commander Pelly. It was rumoured the admiral had come to

recognise the government of Tamasese, I believe in error. And at least the day for that was quite gone by; and he arrived not to salute the king's accession, but to arbitrate on his remains. A conference of the consuls and commanders met on board the Calliope, October 4th, Fritze alone being absent, although twice invited: the affair touched politics, his consul was to be there; and even if he came to the meeting (so he explained to Fairfax) he would have no voice in its deliberations. The parties were plainly marked out: Blacklock and Leary maintaining their offer of the old neutral territory, and probably willing to expand or to contract it to any conceivable extent, so long as Mulinuu was still included; Knappe offered (if the others liked) to include "the whole eastern end of the island," but quite fixed upon the one point that Mulinuu should be left out; the English willing to meet either view, and singly desirous that Apia should be neutralised. The conclusion was foregone. Becker held a trump card in the consent of Mataafa; Blacklock and Leary stood alone, spoke with all ill grace, and could not long hold out. Becker had his way; and the neutral boundary was chosen just where he desired: across the isthmus, the firm within, Mulinuu without. He did not long enjoy the fruits of victory.

On the 7th, three days after the meeting, one of the Scanlons (well-known and intelligent half-castes) came to Blacklock with a complaint. The Scanlon house stood on the hither side of the Tamasese breastwork, just inside the newly accepted territory, and within easy range of the firm. Armed men, to the number of a hundred, had issued from Mulinuu, had "taken charge" of the house, had pointed a gun at Scanlon's head, and had twice "threatened to kill" his pigs. I hear elsewhere of some effects

(Gegenstande) removed. At the best a very pale atrocity, though we shall find the word employed. Germans declare besides that Scanlon was no American subject; they declare the point had been decided by court-martial in 1875; that Blacklock had the decision in the consular archives; and that this was his reason for handing the affair to Leary. It is not necessary to suppose so. It is plain he thought little of the business; thought indeed nothing of it; except in so far as armed men had entered the neutral territory from Mulinuu; and it was on this ground alone, and the implied breach of Becker's engagement at the conference, that he invited Leary's attention to the tale. The impish ingenuity of the commander perceived in it huge possibilities of mischief. He took up the Scanlon outrage, the atrocity of the threatened pigs; and with that poor instrument--I am sure, to his own wonder--drove Tamasese out of Mulinuu. It was "an intrigue," Becker complains. To be sure it was; but who was Becker to be complaining of intrigue?

On the 7th Leary laid before Fritze the following conundrum: "As the natives of Mulinuu appear to be under the protection of the Imperial German naval guard belonging to the vessel under your command, I have the honour to request you to inform me whether or not they are under such protection? Amicable relations," pursued the humorist, "amicable relations exist between the government of the United States and His Imperial German Majesty's government, but we do not recognise Tamasese's government, and I am desirous of locating the responsibility for violations of American rights." Becker and Fritze lost no time in explanation or denial, but went straight to the root of the matter and

sought to buy off Scanlon. Becker declares that every reparation was offered. Scanlon takes a pride to recapitulate the leases and the situations he refused, and the long interviews in which he was tempted and plied with drink by Becker or Beckmann of the firm. No doubt, in short, that he was offered reparation in reason and out of reason, and, being thoroughly primed, refused it all. Meantime some answer must be made to Leary; and Fritze repeated on the 8th his oft-repeated assurances that he was not authorised to deal with politics. The same day Leary retorted: "The question is not one of diplomacy nor of politics. It is strictly one of military jurisdiction and responsibility. Under the shadow of the German fort at Mulinuu," continued the hyperbolical commander, "atrocities have been committed. . . . And I again have the honour respectfully to request to be informed whether or not the armed natives at Mulinuu are under the protection of the Imperial German naval guard belonging to the vessel under your command." To this no answer was vouchsafed till the 11th, and then in the old terms; and meanwhile, on the 10th, Leary got into his gaiters--the sure sign, as was both said and sung aboard his vessel, of some desperate or some amusing service--and was set ashore at the Scanlons' house. Of this he took possession at the head of an old woman and a mop, and was seen from the Tamasese breastwork
directing operations and plainly preparing to install himself there in a military posture. So much he meant to be understood; so much he meant to
carry out, and an armed party from the Adams was to have garrisoned on the morrow the scene of the atrocity. But there is no doubt he managed to convey more. No doubt he was a master in the art of loose speaking,

and could always manage to be overheard when he wanted; and by this, or some other equally unofficial means, he spread the rumour that on the morrow he was to bombard.

The proposed post, from its position, and from Leary's well-established character as an artist in mischief, must have been regarded by the Germans with uneasiness. In the bombardment we can scarce suppose them to have believed. But Tamasese must have both believed and trembled. The prestige of the European Powers was still unbroken. No native would then have dreamed of defying these colossal ships, worked by mysterious powers, and laden with outlandish instruments of death. None would have dreamed of resisting those strange but quite unrealised Great Powers, understood (with difficulty) to be larger than Tonga and Samoa put together, and known to be prolific of prints, knives, hard biscuit, picture-books, and other luxuries, as well as of overbearing men and inconsistent orders. Laupepa had fallen in ill-blood with one of them; his only idea of defence had been to throw himself in the arms of another; his name, his rank, and his great following had not been able to preserve him; and he had vanished from the eyes of men--as the Samoan thinks of it, beyond the sky. Asi, Maunga, Tuiletu-funga, had followed him in that new path of doom. We have seen how carefully Mataafa still walked, how he dared not set foot on the neutral territory till assured it was no longer sacred, how he withdrew from it again as soon as its sacredness had been restored, and at the bare word of a consul (however gilded with ambiguous promises) paused in his course of victory and left his rival unassailed in Mulinuu. And now it was the rival's turn.

Hitherto happy in the continued support of one of the white Powers, he now found himself--or thought himself--threatened with war by no less than two others.

Tamasese boats as they passed Matautu were in the habit of firing on the shore, as like as not without particular aim, and more in high spirits than hostility. One of these shots pierced the house of a British subject near the consulate; the consul reported to Admiral Fairfax; and, on the morning of the 10th, the admiral despatched Captain Kane of the Calliope to Mulinuu. Brandeis met the messenger with voluble excuses and engagements for the future. He was told his explanations were satisfactory so far as they went, but that the admiral's message was to Tamasese, the de facto king. Brandeis, not very well assured of his puppet's courage, attempted in vain to excuse him from appearing. No de facto king, no message, he was told: produce your de facto king. And Tamasese had at last to be produced. To him Kane delivered his errand: that the Lizard was to remain for the protection of British subjects; that a signalman was to be stationed at the consulate; that, on any further firing from boats, the signalman was to notify the Lizard and she to fire one gun, on which all boats must lower sail and come alongside for examination and the detection of the guilty; and that, "in the event of the boats not obeying the gun, the admiral would not be responsible for the consequences." It was listened to by Brandeis and Tamasese "with the greatest attention." Brandeis, when it was done, desired his thanks to the admiral for the moderate terms of his message, and, as Kane went to his boat, repeated the expression of his gratitude as though he meant it, declaring his own hands would be thus strengthened

for the maintenance of discipline. But I have yet to learn of any gratitude on the part of Tamasese. Consider the case of the poor owlish man hearing for the first time our diplomatic commonplaces. The admiral would not be answerable for the consequences. Think of it! A devil of a position for a de facto king. And here, the same afternoon, was Leary in the Scanlon house, mopping it out for unknown designs by the hands of an old woman, and proffering strange threats of bloodshed. Scanlon and his pigs, the admiral and his gun, Leary and his bombardment,--what a kettle of fish!

I dwell on the effect on Tamasese. Whatever the faults of Becker, he was not timid; he had already braved so much for Mulinuu that I cannot but think he might have continued to hold up his head even after the outrage of the pigs, and that the weakness now shown originated with the king. Late in the night, Blacklock was wakened to receive a despatch addressed to Leary. "You have asked that I and my government go away from Mulinuu,
because you pretend a man who lives near Mulinuu and who is under your protection, has been threatened by my soldiers. As your Excellency has forbidden the man to accept any satisfaction, and as I do not wish to make war against the United States, I shall remove my government from Mulinuu to another place." It was signed by Tamasese, but I think more heads than his had wagged over the direct and able letter. On the morning of the 11th, accordingly, Mulinuu the much defended lay desert. Tamasese and Brandeis had slipped to sea in a schooner; their troops had followed them in boats; the German sailors and their war-flag had returned on board the Adler; and only the German merchant flag blew

there for Weber's land-claim. Mulinuu, for which Becker had intrigued so long and so often, for which he had overthrown the municipality, for which he had abrogated and refused and invented successive schemes of neutral territory, was now no more to the Germans than a very unattractive, barren peninsula and a very much disputed land-claim of Mr. Weber's. It will scarcely be believed that the tale of the Scanlon outrages was not yet finished. Leary had gained his point, but Scanlon had lost his compensation. And it was months later, and this time in the shape of a threat of bombardment in black and white, that Tamasese heard the last of the absurd affair. Scanlon had both his fun and his money, and Leary's practical joke was brought to an artistic end.

Becker sought and missed an instant revenge. Mataafa, a devout Catholic, was in the habit of walking every morning to mass from his camp at Vaiala beyond Matautu to the mission at the Mulivai. He was sometimes escorted by as many as six guards in uniform, who displayed their proficiency in drill by perpetually shifting arms as they marched. Himself, meanwhile, paced in front, bareheaded and barefoot, a staff in his hand, in the customary chief's dress of white kilt, shirt, and jacket, and with a conspicuous rosary about his neck. Tall but not heavy, with eager eyes and a marked appearance of courage and capacity, Mataafa makes an admirable figure in the eyes of Europeans; to those of his countrymen, he may seem not always to preserve that quiescence of manner which is thought becoming in the great. On the morning of October 16th he reached the mission before day with two attendants, heard mass, had coffee with the fathers, and left again in safety. The smallness of his following we may suppose to have been reported. He was scarce gone, at least, before

Becker had armed men at the mission gate and came in person seeking him.

The failure of this attempt doubtless still further exasperated the consul, and he began to deal as in an enemy's country. He had marines from the Adler to stand sentry over the consulate and parade the streets by threes and fours. The bridge of the Vaisingano, which cuts in half the English and American quarters, he closed by proclamation and advertised for tenders to demolish it. On the 17th Leary and Pelly landed carpenters and repaired it in his teeth. Leary, besides, had marines under arms, ready to land them if it should be necessary to protect the work. But Becker looked on without interference, perhaps glad enough to have the bridge repaired; for even Becker may not always have offended intentionally. Such was now the distracted posture of the little town: all government extinct, the German consul patrolling it with armed men and issuing proclamations like a ruler, the two other Powers defying his commands, and at least one of them prepared to use force in the defiance. Close on its skirts sat the warriors of Mataafa, perhaps four thousand strong, highly incensed against the Germans, having all to gain in the seizure of the town and firm, and, like an army in a fairy tale, restrained by the air-drawn boundary of the neutral ground.

I have had occasion to refer to the strange appearance in these islands of an American adventurer with a battery of cannon. The adventurer was long since gone, but his guns remained, and one of them was now to make fresh history. It had been cast overboard by Brandeis on the outer reef in the course of this retreat; and word of it coming to the ears of the Mataafas, they thought it natural that they should serve themselves the

heirs of Tamasese. On the 23rd a Manono boat of the kind called taumualua dropped down the coast from Mataafa's camp, called in broad day at the German quarter of the town for guides, and proceeded to the reef. Here, diving with a rope, they got the gun aboard; and the night being then come, returned by the same route in the shallow water along shore, singing a boat-song. It will be seen with what childlike reliance they had accepted the neutrality of Apia bay; they came for the gun without concealment, laboriously dived for it in broad day under the eyes of the town and shipping, and returned with it, singing as they went. On Grevsmuhl's wharf, a light showed them a crowd of German blue-jackets clustered, and a hail was heard. "Stop the singing so that we may hear what is said," said one of the chiefs in the taumualua. The song ceased; the hail was heard again, "Au mai le fana--bring the gun"; and the natives report themselves to have replied in the affirmative, and declare that they had begun to back the boat. It is perhaps not needful to believe them. A volley at least was fired from the wharf, at about fifty yards' range and with a very ill direction, one bullet whistling over Pelly's head on board the Lizard. The natives jumped overboard; and swimming under the lee of the taumualua (where they escaped a second volley) dragged her towards the east. As soon as they were out of range and past the Mulivai, the German border, they got on board and (again singing--though perhaps a different song) continued their return along the English and American shore. Off Matautu they were hailed from the seaward by one of the Adler's boats, which had been suddenly despatched on the sound of the firing or had stood ready all evening to secure the gun. The hail was in German; the Samoans knew not what it meant, but took the precaution to jump overboard and swim for land. Two

volleys and some dropping shot were poured upon them in the water; but they dived, scattered, and came to land unhurt in different quarters of Matautu. The volleys, fired inshore, raked the highway, a British house was again pierced by numerous bullets, and these sudden sounds of war scattered consternation through the town.

Two British subjects, Hetherington-Carruthers, a solicitor, and Maben, a land-surveyor--the first being in particular a man well versed in the native mind and language--hastened at once to their consul; assured him the Mataafas would be roused to fury by this onslaught in the neutral zone, that the German quarter would be certainly attacked, and the rest of the town and white inhabitants exposed to a peril very difficult of estimation; and prevailed upon him to intrust them with a mission to the king. By the time they reached headquarters, the warriors were already taking post round Matafele, and the agitation of Mataafa himself was betrayed in the fact that he spoke with the deputation standing and gun in hand: a breach of high-chief dignity perhaps unparalleled. The usual result, however, followed: the whites persuaded the Samoan; and the attack was countermanded, to the benefit of all concerned, and not least of Mataafa. To the benefit of all, I say; for I do not think the Germans were that evening in a posture to resist; the liquor-cellars of the firm must have fallen into the power of the insurgents; and I will repeat my formula that a mob is a mob, a drunken mob is a drunken mob, and a drunken mob with weapons in its hands is a drunken mob with weapons in its hands, all the world over.

In the opinion of some, then, the town had narrowly escaped destruction,

or at least the miseries of a drunken sack. To the knowledge of all, the air of the neutral territory had once more whistled with bullets. And it was clear the incident must have diplomatic consequences. Leary and Pelly both protested to Fritze. Leary announced he should report the affair to his government "as a gross violation of the principles of international law, and as a breach of the neutrality." "I positively decline the protest," replied Fritze, "and cannot fail to express my astonishment at the tone of your last letter." This was trenchant. It may be said, however, that Leary was already out of court; that, after the night signals and the Scanlon incident, and so many other acts of practical if humorous hostility, his position as a neutral was no better than a doubtful jest. The case with Pelly was entirely different; and with Pelly, Fritze was less well inspired. In his first note, he was on the old guard; announced that he had acted on the requisition of his consul, who was alone responsible on "the legal side"; and declined accordingly to discuss "whether the lives of British subjects were in danger, and to what extent armed intervention was necessary." Pelly replied judiciously that he had nothing to do with political matters, being only responsible for the safety of Her Majesty's ships under his command and for the lives and property of British subjects; that he had considered his protest a purely naval one; and as the matter stood could only report the case to the admiral on the station. "I have the honour," replied Fritze, "to refuse to entertain the protest concerning the safety of Her Britannic Majesty's ship Lizard as being a naval matter. The safety of Her Majesty's ship Lizard was never in the least endangered. This was guaranteed by the disciplined fire of a few shots under the direction of two officers." This offensive note, in view of Fritze's

careful and honest bearing among so many other complications, may be attributed to some misunderstanding. His small knowledge of English perhaps failed him. But I cannot pass it by without remarking how far too much it is the custom of German officials to fall into this style. It may be witty, I am sure it is not wise. It may be sometimes necessary to offend for a definite object, it can never be diplomatic to offend gratuitously.

Becker was more explicit, although scarce less curt. And his defence may be divided into two statements: first, that the taumualua was proceeding to land with a hostile purpose on Mulinuu; second, that the shots complained of were fired by the Samoans. The second may be dismissed with a laugh. Human nature has laws. And no men hitherto discovered, on being suddenly challenged from the sea, would have turned their backs upon the challenger and poured volleys on the friendly shore. The first is not extremely credible, but merits examination. The story of the recovered gun seems straightforward; it is supported by much testimony, the diving operations on the reef seem to have been watched from shore with curiosity; it is hard to suppose that it does not roughly represent the fact. And yet if any part of it be true, the whole of Becker's explanation falls to the ground. A boat which had skirted the whole eastern coast of Mulinuu, and was already opposite a wharf in Matafele, and still going west, might have been guilty on a thousand points--there was one on which she was necessarily innocent; she was necessarily innocent of proceeding on Mulinuu. Or suppose the diving operations, and the native testimony, and Pelly's chart of the boat's course, and the boat itself, to be all stages of some epidemic

hallucination or steps in a conspiracy--suppose even a second taumualua to have entered Apia bay after nightfall, and to have been fired upon from Grevsmuhl's wharf in the full career of hostilities against Mulinuu--suppose all this, and Becker is not helped. At the time of the first fire, the boat was off Grevsmuhl's wharf. At the time of the second (and that is the one complained of) she was off Carruthers's wharf in Matautu. Was she still proceeding on Mulinuu? I trow not. The danger to German property was no longer imminent, the shots had been fired upon a very trifling provocation, the spirit implied was that of designed disregard to the neutrality. Such was the impression here on the spot; such in plain terms the statement of Count Hatzfeldt to Lord Salisbury at home: that the neutrality of Apia was only "to prevent the natives from fighting," not the Germans; and that whatever Becker might have promised at the conference, he could not "restrict German war-vessels in their freedom of action."

There was nothing to surprise in this discovery; and had events been guided at the same time with a steady and discreet hand, it might have passed with less observation. But the policy of Becker was felt to be not only reckless, it was felt to be absurd also. Sudden nocturnal onfalls upon native boats could lead, it was felt, to no good end whether of peace or war; they could but exasperate; they might prove, in a moment, and when least expected, ruinous. To those who knew how nearly it had come to fighting, and who considered the probable result, the future looked ominous. And fear was mingled with annoyance in the minds of the Anglo-Saxon colony. On the 24th, a public meeting appealed to the British and American consuls. At half-past seven in the evening guards

were landed at the consulates. On the morrow they were each fortified with sand-bags; and the subjects informed by proclamation that these asylums stood open to them on any alarm, and at any hour of the day or night. The social bond in Apia was dissolved. The consuls, like barons of old, dwelt each in his armed citadel. The rank and file of the white nationalities dared each other, and sometimes fell to on the street like rival clansmen. And the little town, not by any fault of the inhabitants, rather by the act of Becker, had fallen back in civilisation about a thousand years.

There falls one more incident to be narrated, and then I can close with this ungracious chapter. I have mentioned the name of the new English consul. It is already familiar to English readers; for the gentleman who was fated to undergo some strange experiences in Apia was the same de Coetlogon who covered Hicks's flank at the time of the disaster in the desert, and bade farewell to Gordon in Khartoum before the investment. The colonel was abrupt and testy; Mrs. de Coetlogon was too exclusive for society like that of Apia; but whatever their superficial disabilities, it is strange they should have left, in such an odour of unpopularity, a place where they set so shining an example of the sterling virtues. The colonel was perhaps no diplomatist; he was certainly no lawyer; but he discharged the duties of his office with the constancy and courage of an old soldier, and these were found sufficient. He and his wife had no ambition to be the leaders of society; the consulate was in their time no house of feasting; but they made of it that house of mourning to which the preacher tells us it is better we should go. At an early date after the battle of Matautu, it was opened as a hospital for the wounded. The

English and Americans subscribed what was required for its support. Pelly of the Lizard strained every nerve to help, and set up tents on the lawn to be a shelter for the patients. The doctors of the English and American ships, and in particular Dr. Oakley of the Lizard, showed themselves indefatigable. But it was on the de Coetlogons that the distress fell. For nearly half a year, their lawn, their verandah, sometimes their rooms, were cumbered with the sick and dying, their ears were filled with the complaints of suffering humanity, their time was too short for the multiplicity of pitiful duties. In Mrs. de Coetlogon, and her helper, Miss Taylor, the merit of this endurance was perhaps to be looked for; in a man of the colonel's temper, himself painfully suffering, it was viewed with more surprise, if with no more admiration. Doubtless all had their reward in a sense of duty done; doubtless, also, as the days passed, in the spectacle of many traits of gratitude and patience, and in the success that waited on their efforts. Out of a hundred cases treated, only five died. They were all well-behaved, though full of childish wiles. One old gentleman, a high chief, was seized with alarming symptoms of belly-ache whenever Mrs. de Coetlogon went her rounds at night: he was after brandy. Others were insatiable for morphine or opium. A chief woman had her foot amputated under chloroform. "Let me see my foot! Why does it not hurt?" she cried. "It hurt so badly before I went to sleep." Siteoni, whose name has been already mentioned, had his shoulder-blade excised, lay the longest of any, perhaps behaved the worst, and was on all these grounds the favourite. At times he was furiously irritable, and would rail upon his family and rise in bed until he swooned with pain. Once on the balcony he was thought to be dying, his family keeping round his mat, his father

exhorting him to be prepared, when Mrs. de Coetlogon brought him round again with brandy and smelling-salts. After discharge, he returned upon a visit of gratitude; and it was observed, that instead of coming straight to the door, he went and stood long under his umbrella on that spot of ground where his mat had been stretched and he had endured pain so many months. Similar visits were the rule, I believe without exception; and the grateful patients loaded Mrs. de Coetlogon with gifts which (had that been possible in Polynesia) she would willingly have declined, for they were often of value to the givers.

The tissue of my story is one of rapacity, intrigue, and the triumphs of temper; the hospital at the consulate stands out almost alone as an episode of human beauty, and I dwell on it with satisfaction. But it was not regarded at the time with universal favour; and even to-day its institution is thought by many to have been impolitic. It was opened, it stood open, for the wounded of either party. As a matter of fact it was never used but by the Mataafas, and the Tamaseses were cared for exclusively by German doctors. In the progressive decivilisation of the town, these duties of humanity became thus a ground of quarrel. When the Mataafa hurt were first brought together after the battle of Matautu, and some more or less amateur surgeons were dressing wounds on a green by the wayside, one from the German consulate went by in the road. "Why don't you let the dogs die?" he asked. "Go to hell," was the rejoinder. Such were the amenities of Apia. But Becker reserved for himself the extreme expression of this spirit. On November 7th hostilities began again between the Samoan armies, and an inconclusive skirmish sent a fresh crop

of wounded to the de Coetlogons. Next door to the consulate, some native houses and a chapel (now ruinous) stood on a green. Chapel and houses were certainly Samoan, but the ground was under a land-claim of the German firm; and de Coetlogon wrote to Becker requesting permission (in case it should prove necessary) to use these structures for his wounded. Before an answer came, the hospital was startled by the appearance of a case of gangrene, and the patient was hastily removed into the chapel. A rebel laid on German ground--here was an atrocity! The day before his own relief, November 11th, Becker ordered the man's instant removal. By his aggressive carriage and singular mixture of violence and cunning, he had already largely brought about the fall of Brandeis, and forced into an attitude of hostility the whole non-German population of the islands. Now, in his last hour of office, by this wanton buffet to his English colleague, he prepared a continuance of evil days for his successor. If the object of diplomacy be the organisation of failure in the midst of hate, he was a great diplomatist. And amongst a certain party on the beach he is still named as the ideal consul.