



Yates Stirling

*A United States
Midshipman
in the South Seas*

Yates Stirling

A United States Midshipman in the South Seas



Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4064066419394

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Illustrations

CHAPTER I THE RIVAL CHIEFS

CHAPTER II DISCORD AMONG THE WHITES

CHAPTER III PLOTTING FOR POWER

CHAPTER IV CAPTAIN "BULLY" SCOTT AND HIS MATE

CHAPTER V THE "TALOFA" IN UKULA

CHAPTER VI THE "TALOFA'S" CARGO

CHAPTER VII THE KAPUAN FIRM

CHAPTER VIII AVAO, TAPAU OF UKULA

CHAPTER IX O'NEIL'S OPINION

CHAPTER X RUMORS OF WAR

CHAPTER XI HIGH CHIEF KATAAFA

CHAPTER XII SMUGGLED ARMS

CHAPTER XIII UKULA ATTACKED

CHAPTER XIV COUNT ROSEN TAKES CHARGE

CHAPTER XV THE "DE FACTO" GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER XVI CARL KLINGER

CHAPTER XVII BEN STUMP LISTENS

CHAPTER XVIII A "CUTTING OUT" EXPEDITION

CHAPTER XIX A REËNFORCEMENT

CHAPTER XX THE TABLES TURNED

CHAPTER XXI A RECONNAISSANCE

CHAPTER XXII WAR IN EARNEST

CHAPTER XXIII CONCLUSION

Introduction

Table of Contents

In this story Midshipmen Phil Perry and Sydney Monroe, together with Boatswain's Mate "Jack" O'Neil, act through an historic drama of a South Sea war.

The same characters have seen active service in many parts of the world.

In "A United States Midshipman Afloat," life in a battleship of the Atlantic fleet, together with a typical South American revolution, furnished the setting. In "A United States Midshipman in China," the midshipmen and O'Neil help to rescue an American Mission and put an end to a "Boxer" uprising. In "A United States Midshipman in the Philippines," the same officers see very active service on board a gun-boat in coöperation with the army against the Filipino insurgents.

In "A United States Midshipman in Japan," they discover a plot to bring the United States and Japan into open hostilities over the purchase of some foreign war-ships. War is narrowly averted through the detective work of the midshipmen and their Japanese classmate at Annapolis, but now a lieutenant in the Imperial Navy.

The present volume carries the midshipmen through further thrilling scenes that occurred in an island of the far-away South Seas. The portrayal of native life is faithful and many of the incidents are historic.

Illustrations

Table of Contents

	PAGE
“ISN’T IT WORTH COMING FOR?”	
THREE AMERICAN OFFICERS WERE STANDING IN THE ROAD	51
“I WANT ABOUT A DOZEN SAILORS”	128
HE BEGAN AT ONCE TO WAVE IT	204
“YOU ARE SIMPLY A BULLY!”	281
“IS IT QUITE CLEAR?” THE ADMIRAL ASKED	329
HE DID NOT FIRE	385

A United States Midshipman
in the South Seas

CHAPTER I

THE RIVAL CHIEFS

Table of Contents

A MAN-OF-WAR boat propelled by six sailormen and with the flag of the United States flying from its staff navigated the tortuous channel through the fringing coral reef and landed upon the sandy beach of the harbor of Ukula.

Three American naval officers from the cruiser "Sitka" stepped from the boat upon the shore.

In the great public square on Kulinuu Point at one end of the town many thousands of the natives of the Kapuan Islands had gathered. They had come from all the villages of the islands by special invitation from the Herzovinian consul for the purpose of giving welcome to their great war chief Kataafa, who had but just returned from five long years of exile in a foreign land.

Toward this assemblage the three officers bent their steps. They were shown to their chairs by obsequious Herzovinian sailors and found themselves placed with the English officers from their war-ship in port. The Herzovinian officers sat close to their consul, who, in all the splendor of a court uniform, his chest covered with medals, was enthroned under a bower of freshly cut shrubs and flowers.

The American captain, Commander Tazewell, regarded the Herzovinian officials, a twinkle of merriment in his eyes.

"All their paint and powder is on thick," he said, smiling good-humoredly, to his two companions, Midshipmen Philip Perry and Sydney Monroe, who had accompanied him ashore to be present at this novel ceremony.

Phil was gazing with open-eyed admiration at the handsome islanders.

“I mean the Herzovinian officers,” Commander Tazewell added. “It’s a hot day for special full dress uniform, but ‘noblesse oblige,’ I suppose.”

The American consul, Mr. Lee, accompanied by the chief justice of Kapua, Judge Lindsay, walked solemnly behind their sailor escort and seated themselves in chairs reserved for them between the English and American officers. Their ladies were escorted to seats in another stand.

Mr. Lee remained standing until the two young women who had accompanied him had been shown seats, then he sat down with an audible exclamation of annoyance.

“Judge,” he exclaimed, “be prepared to be outraged. I know these pig-headed Herzovinians well enough to appreciate that they never do things half-way.”

“We were fools to come and be insulted,” the judge snapped, removing his soft “Panama” and wiping his moist forehead. “Look at that stand of theirs; looks like a Christmas tree—the very thing to catch the savage eye. Here are we in our democratic simplicity.”

The two midshipmen gazed about; the wonderful spectacle delighted them. Several thousands of Kapuan men and women collected in mathematical accuracy had formed a great square about the Herzovinian officials. In front were the women, garbed in colors of flaming hue, their dark hair loose over their shoulders. The scarlet hibiscus blossom woven into necklaces and entwined in their blue-black locks was both effective and startling. The men were

naked to the lava-lava covering about their waists, their copper brown skins glistening with coconut oil.

“There’s Kataafa,” Commander Tazewell said to his companions at his side. “He and Panu-Mafili are rivals to the Kapuan throne, and the final decision is now in the hands of Judge Lindsay.” The midshipmen had arrived in Kapua only that morning on the mail steamer from San Francisco.

“Kataafa is the high chief who has always rebelled against the king,” the commander added. “The Herzovinians deported him to one of their penal islands after his warriors had killed many of their sailors, and now they are giving him a royal welcome.”

“Where’s Panu-Mafili?” Phil asked excitedly, after he had feasted his eyes upon the high chief sitting next the Herzovinian consul.

Commander Tazewell indicated a small native squatting on the ground in front of the assemblage. He seemed dwarfed in comparison to the giant next him.

“The big one alongside of him is Tuamana,” the commander explained. “He has always been loyal to the legal king, and is a fine character and a great fighter. We’ll call upon him by and by.”

With a flourish of trumpets the ceremony began. The band then struck up the impressive Herzovinian national air, and all rose to their feet.

The Herzovinian consul, Mr. Carlson, moved forward after the music had ceased. He held in his hand a paper which he raised above his head, praying silence.

The midshipmen listened eagerly.

“What language is it?” Phil whispered. He could not recognize a word. From different quarters of the great crowd could be heard the native “talking men” repeating the words until they were heard by every native.

Phil riveted his attention upon the sea of native faces opposite him, endeavoring to surprise their thoughts, and thus obtain knowledge of what was being said.

“I can’t follow him,” Commander Tazewell whispered to Phil, “but I see it’s making a great impression.” He turned slowly in his chair to observe the effect upon Judge Lindsay and Mr. Lee, both of whom spoke Kapuan fluently.

Judge Lindsay’s under lip was noticeably quivering, while Mr. Lee ground his teeth in silent rage.

An exclamation from Phil caused the commander to turn again. The tall warrior and Panu-Mafili, the other candidate for kingship, had turned their backs upon the speaker and were talking to their followers behind them. Almost as one man they obeyed the call, and nearly five hundred natives slowly and with great dignity marched away, leaving a gaping hole in the symmetry of the square.

Mr. Carlson’s flow of native eloquence came to a sudden stop. He gazed in apparent bewilderment about him. Then from the departing natives came in melodious rhythm the words, sung over and over again—“Malea-Toa-Panu-Tupu-e-Kapua”—Malea-Toa Panu is King of Kapua.

“I’m afraid I can’t stand to hear the rest myself,” Judge Lindsay declared, unable to Control himself longer. He rose to his feet and walked away with great dignity. Mr. Lee and the British consul followed.

“I am going to stick it through,” Commander Sturdy, of the British war-ship “Hyacinth,” exclaimed as he changed his seat to one next to Commander Tazewell. “I can’t understand a jolly word, you know, but it’s as good as a musical opera at home.”

Chief Kataafa now stood beside Mr. Carlson, while Klinger, the manager of the Herzovinian firm’s plantations in Kapua, called the “Kapuan Firm,” called loudly to the natives for silence.

“The worst is yet to come,” Commander Tazewell laughed. The Herzovinian sailor company of a hundred strong, their rifles shining brightly in the sunlight, had smartly taken the position of “present arms.” “But quiet must be restored before the remainder of this impressive ceremony will be retailed out to us,” he added impressively.

Mr. Carlson solemnly placed a wreath of royal yellow about the chief’s neck. The assemblage suddenly burst forth in uncontrolled savage joy. Then as if by magic this demonstration was stilled by the music of a gun. The Herzovinian war-ship was firing a salute in honor of the returned exiles.

“Nineteen guns, I suppose,” Commander Sturdy said. Every one was counting, the natives most of all. The nineteenth gun had fired. All held their breath. This was the salute usually given a high chief. There seemed a perceptible pause and then another crash reverberated across the water, and yet another.

“A royal salute,” all gasped. Again pandemonium broke loose among the Kataafa adherents. Herzovinia had acknowledged Kataafa as king of Kapua.

Commander Tazewell's face suddenly dropped its joviality. The British captain said things under his breath, while the American and English officers gazed at each other, utterly speechless with surprise.

"Kataafa Tupu-e-Kapua[1]—ah," the song burst forth, drowning out all other sounds.

The stands were quickly emptied. The American and English officers joined the resident ladies of their nationality and escorted them in angry silence away from the scene.

Judge Lindsay and Mr. Lee were encountered only a few hundred yards away. Mr. Lee called Commander Tazewell to his side.

"We are waiting to hear from Mr. Carlson what is the meaning of this treachery," he exclaimed. "Judge Lindsay goes so far as to believe that now a war over the title of king of Kapua cannot be averted. It is outrageous."

Phil and Sydney gazed with interest at the daughters of the American consul, Mr. Lee, whom they had not met, and were greatly disappointed when they heard him direct them to return home immediately. The midshipmen remained behind with their captain.

The Herzovian consul, accompanied by Klinger and a stranger and followed by several naval officers, soon appeared. Their faces were wreathed in smiles and their shoulders were decorated with circlets of flowers placed there by the jubilant Kataafa adherents.

Judge Lindsay placed himself squarely in their path. His face was pale, and he held his cane clutched firmly in his hand.

“Mr. Carlson,” he exclaimed in a clear vibrant voice, “I desire you to state to me, as chief justice of Kapua, publicly and at once, your authority in making such a speech, acknowledging for Herzovinia the claim of Kataafa to be king of Kapua. Further, I desire to hear the authority for the salute of twenty-one guns, a salute given only to a king. As chief justice of these islands I represent the Herzovinian law as well as the law of England and America. Do I understand, sir, that you have set aside law, the law of the treaty between the three great nations, and have rendered a decision in favor of Kataafa, even while I am still deliberating upon the justice of these two claimant chiefs for the title of king?”

Mr. Cartoon’s face was a study. He looked appealingly to the stranger beside him as if for support. Phil was astonished to note the evident gleam of triumph in the stranger’s eyes. The lad regarded him closely. He was tall and finely built; his face was pale and highly intellectual in appearance. He appeared to be a man of great force of character.

“My dear judge,” Mr. Carlson floundered hopelessly. “Come with us to the consulate. This is really not the place for dispute.”

They had been surrounded by inquisitive natives of all sizes, who are quick to scent an altercation, and even though not understanding the words, like all nature’s children, can read the language of the eye, the face and the hand.

“Don’t dear me,” the judge exclaimed, even more angrily. “Your treachery was public; my condemnation of it shall be

public also.”

Mr. Carlson’s face streamed with perspiration. He was a big man and inclined to be fat. His gorgeous uniform fitted like a glove. Under a torrid sun he was a picture of woe.

The stranger whispered in the consul’s ear. Phil noted that the red face suddenly cleared.

“You have misunderstood, judge,” Mr. Carlson began, not at all certain of his ground, but his voice gained strength as he continued. “I did not say he was Tupu[2] of Kapua. That you must decide. I only hailed Kataafa as Tupu. Being the choice of so many villages makes him Tupu. That was my meaning. Kataafa and Panu-Mafili are both Tupu, but neither is yet Tupu-e-Kapua.” Mr. Carlson was now smiling benignly upon the judge.

Judge Lindsay made a sign of disgust.

“Do you take me for a babe in arms?” he exploded. “How dare you insult my intelligence by such an absolute and unnecessary falsehood! Whether you know what you read or not, I do know. I heard and understood. You did not mince matters there.” He drew himself up haughtily and glared defiantly and for the first time at the stranger and Klinger.

“The Kapuan language, to one who knows it, is not difficult. I advise you, Mr. Carlson, hereafter to stick to a language you know, otherwise your able co-conspirators will be putting embarrassing words into your innocent mouth.”

A ripple of suppressed merriment rose unrebuked at the judge’s sally. Mr. Carlson seemed too dazed and worried to make any reply.

The judge bowed ceremoniously, linking his arm in that of Mr. Lee, and walked away.

CHAPTER II

DISCORD AMONG THE WHITES

Table of Contents

THE day after the ceremony of welcome to Kataafa, Phil and Sydney again accompanied their captain on shore. Commander Tazewell took a lively interest in everything that was going on and was delighted to have such enthusiastic young supporters.

“You’ll find,” he said after they had landed and sent the boat away, “that the natives of both factions are equally friendly to us. That is a good sign and I hope it will continue.”

The highroad of Ukula was filled with half-naked muscular men and lithe, graceful, dark-eyed women. Every native exhaled the acrid odor of cocoanut oil. The men’s long hair was plastered white with lime and tied on top in the form of a topknot.

“The lime bleaches the hair red, you know,” Commander Tazewell explained, noting the lads’ curiosity at this peculiar custom. “The oil is to prevent them from catching cold. They go into the water, you see, any hour of the day, and when they come out they are as dry as ducks.”

The officers had landed at Kulinuu, the traditional residence of the Malea-Toa family, from which many kings had been chosen and to which Panu-Mafili belonged. On every hand they encountered good-natured smiling natives. “Talofa, Alii”^[3] was on every lip.

“Ten thousand of these fellows are encamped in the vicinity of Ukula waiting to see who the chief justice makes

their king," the commander said. "You see," he added, "strange as it may seem to us, two chiefs may rightfully be elected. Election depends upon quality of votes rather than upon quantity. So according to traditional Kapuan custom when two kings are elected, they decide it by having a big battle. That is the normal way, but we have persuaded the natives that arbitration is more civilized. Now the chief justice decides and the three nations support that decision."

"It looks rather as though Herzovinia would support the judge only in case he decides for Kataafa," Sydney said questioningly. "If that country refuses to back up the judge what will happen?"

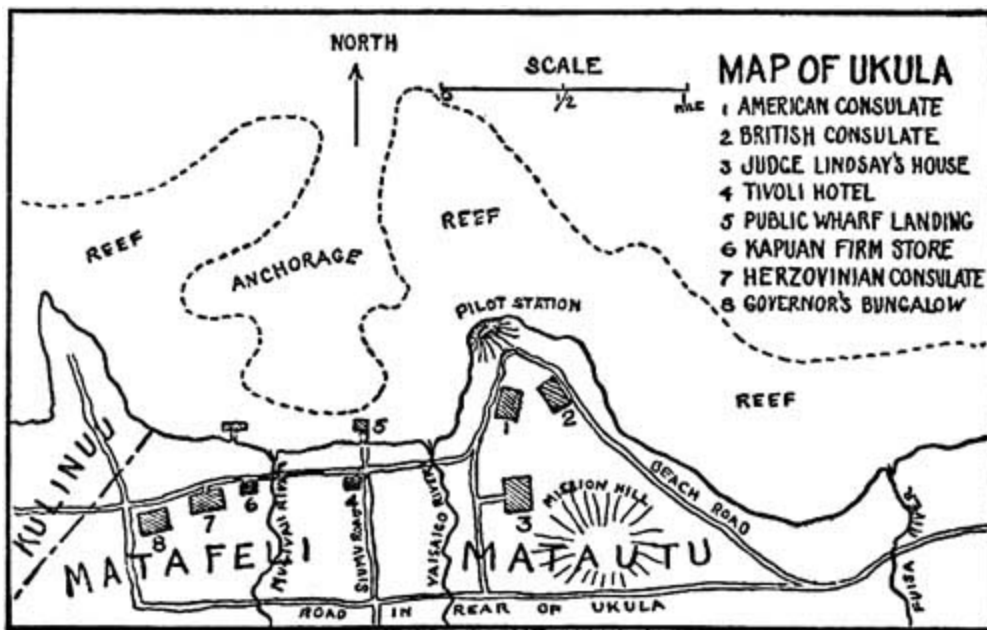
Commander Tazewell was thoughtful for half a minute.

"According to the treaty all are required to agree," he answered. "There is no choice. Once the decision is made that creates a king, all who oppose him are rebels. That is the law, and these foreign war-ships are here to uphold Judge Lindsay's decision, right or wrong."

As the three pedestrians, dressed in their white duck uniforms, white helmets protecting their heads from the tropical sun, reached the hard coral road leading along the shore of the bay, the panorama of the harbor opened and delighted the eyes of the young men.

The white coral reef, lying beneath scarcely half a fathom of water, was peopled by natives gathering shell-fish to feed the greater influx of population. On the bosom of the dark green water, beyond the inner reef, and almost encircled by spurs of a second ledge of coral, lay anchored the war-ships of three great nations. In the foreground, lying on their sides, two twisted red-stained hulls, the bleaching bones of

once proud men-of-war, told of the sport of giant waves that had hurled them a hundred yards along the inner reef and drowned many of their crews. This manifestation of the power of a tropical hurricane, that might come almost unheralded out of the watery waste, prevented any relaxation of vigilance. At all times the war-ships were kept ready to seek safety at sea, clear of the treacherous coral reefs. To be caught at anchor in the harbor of Ukula when a hurricane broke could mean only another red-stained wreck upon the reef.



MAP OF UKULA

The road soon left the water's edge. Now it ran several hundred yards inland through groves of cocoanut, banana and breadfruit trees. Fringing the road were many spider-like, grass-thatched native houses, similar to those they had seen among the groves at Kulinuu. Seated on mats under these shelters were numerous natives, and the Americans as they progressed received frequent cordial invitation to

stop and refresh themselves from the very hospitable islanders. Commander Tazewell, during his stay in Kapua, had acquired some facility in the language, which greatly delighted the childlike natives, and they lost no opportunity to engage him to join their meetings, in order that they might listen to their own language from the lips of a “papalangi”[4] chief. But apparently the commander did not intend to stop. Both midshipmen now eyed longingly the cool interior of a large and pretentious house which they were approaching. From the entrance a stately warrior beckoned them to come and partake of the milk of a cocoanut.

Commander Tazewell waved a solemn acknowledgment. “That’s Tuamana, the chief of Ukula,” he said to his companions. “We’ll stop for just a minute. It was he,” the commander added as they approached the delighted chief, “who saved so many lives during the hurricane when those two war-ships were thrown up bodily on the reef, and several others were wrecked at their moorings.”

Tuamana grasped each by the hand in turn and then led them to mats laid upon the pebbly floor. He clapped his hands, and almost at once from behind the dividing curtain of “Tapa”[5] cloth, two native girls glided, gracefully and with outstretched hands, to the side of the “papalangis.” Seating themselves the girls began industriously fanning the heated officers. Phil soon appreciated the reason for this delicate attention; swarms of flies hovered about them, to fight which alone would soon exhaust one’s patience.

Commander Tazewell and Chief Tuamana engaged in quiet conversation in Kapuan while the chief’s talking man,

a native educated at one of the mission schools, came frequently to their aid when the commander's limited native vocabulary gave evidence of being inadequate.

Phil and Sydney were thus left free to enjoy the novelty of their surroundings.

The two young girls fanned and giggled in turns until Phil, unused to such delicate attention from the opposite sex, insisted upon taking the cleverly wrought banana leaf fan, and much to the amusement of the two girls began fanning himself and the girl too. After a few moments this young lady arose, bowed and disappeared behind the screen convulsed with laughter.

"You've offended her," insisted Sydney. "Haven't you learned yet to give women their own way?"

But Phil's gallantry was to receive its reward. A third graceful Kapuan girl, her high caste face beaming upon them, glided through the tapa screen. Bowing low before Commander Tazewell, she took the vacant place at Phil's side.

Commander Tazewell made a jesting remark in Kapuan, which caused every one to laugh except the two midshipmen.

"This is Tuamana's daughter Avao," the commander said. "I told her she'd have a difficult time making a choice between my two handsome aides; but I see she has made up her mind already."

Avao had taken the fan from Phil's hand and was now efficiently fanning him.

A half hour later as they were standing, bidding good-bye to their hosts, Commander Tazewell announced to Phil that

the chief's daughter had paid him a signal honor.

"She wants you to be her feline,"[6] he said, his grave eyes sparkling. "It's a Tapau's[7] privilege to choose. Your obligation is to present her with soap, tooth powder, in fact, anything she fancies that you can get in the ship's store. For this you are privileged to drink as many coconuts and eat as much fruit as you desire at her father's house. She will even send you presents of fruit, tapa and fans. If I were Mr. Monroe, I'd envy you your luck, for Avao is the belle of Ukula."

Avao blushed under her bronze and playfully struck the commander with her fan.

"Leonga Alii!"[8] she exclaimed abashed.

"She understands and speaks English as well as I do," he said, laughing at the girl's sudden shyness. "Once I thought she'd make me her feline, but I suppose youth takes rank."

Once more on the road Commander Tazewell became again serious.

"That affair yesterday is taking on a darker aspect," he confided. "Tuamana says that every one knows among the natives that if Judge Lindsay decides for Panu-Mafili then Kataafa has been persuaded by the Herzovinians to make war.

"Tuamana, of course," he added, "is a loyal man. He is on Panu's side, but will be loyal to whom Judge Lindsay decides is really the king."

In front of the big wooden store in the Matafeli district of the town, Commander Tazewell stopped. Many natives were gathered there. The porch was crowded, while within the store there seemed to be only standing room.

“What mischief is going on here?” he exclaimed, a perplexed frown on his face.

Suddenly Klinger and the stranger of yesterday darkened the doorway. The stranger gazed coldly upon the Americans but gave no sign of recognition. He and Klinger continued to talk in their guttural Herzovinian tongues.

Phil suddenly observed that the air of friendliness they had noted earlier was now lacking. The natives no longer greeted them. Instead in the native eye was a sheepish, sullen look.

“That was Count Rosen,” Commander Tazewell said as they again moved onward. “Klinger, of course, is active and sides with Kataafa. Klinger’s wife is a native, you know, a close relative of the high chief. I suppose he’d like to have royalty in the family.”

“The store looked like a recruiting station,” Phil suggested.

Commander Tazewell nodded gravely. “It may be,” he replied.

The Matautu section of Ukula, set aside for the official residences of the consuls of England and the United States, was being approached.

At the gate of the American consulate, Mr. Lee hailed them. The consul was naturally a peace loving man, and the fact that he had with him in Kapua his two daughters was an added argument for peace.

“Come in, commander,” he called from his doorway.

They turned in through the gateway.

“All manner of war rumors,” Mr. Lee exclaimed, as he shook hands, “are going the rounds. The latest is that a

paper has been found written by Herzovinian statesmen some years ago declaring their country would never, never permit Kataafa to be king. The Kapuans believe that this will make Judge Lindsay decide for Panu-Mafili. Until that disgraceful affair of yesterday, and the rumor of this paper, we all thought that whatever the decision the three consuls would unite to prevent war. Panu-Mafili has said openly he and his followers would abide by the decision. Kataafa appeared willing, but has as yet made no statement.

“The situation is alarming, commander,” Mr. Lee added gravely, “and I for one am at a loss what should be done.”

“Arrest the white men who are inciting Kataafa to revolt in the event of an adverse decision and ship them from Kapua; that’s my remedy,” Commander Tazewell answered promptly.

“Count Rosen and Klinger,” the consul exclaimed. “Impossible!”

Commander Tazewell shrugged his shoulders.

“It’s the one way to prevent war,” he said.

“The Herzovinian consul, after agreeing to stand with us and prevent a war, has now assumed a mysterious air of importance and we can get nothing definite from him,” Mr. Lee complained bitterly. “If my advice had only been followed and Kataafa kept away until after a new king had been crowned, this perplexing state could not have existed.”

Commander Tazewell was thoughtful for several minutes.

“Mr. Lee,” he said gravely, “I believe that bringing Kataafa back at this time was a Herzovinian plan. The chief has been in exile for five years and in a Herzovinian colony,

and I hear was treated as a prince instead of a prisoner. Although his warriors killed Herzovinian sailors in the last revolt, now he favors that nation. Once he is king of Kapua he will advance all Herzovinian interests. They may hope even for annexation, a dream long cherished by Klinger and his countrymen.

“Yes, if the judge decides against Kataafa there will be war,” he concluded solemnly.

Phil and Sydney listened eagerly. Though these native affairs were not easy to understand, yet they could not interrupt and ask for explanations.

At this time there came an interruption in the serious talk between Commander Tazewell and Mr. Lee. It was the arrival of the two young ladies. They had been out in the “bush,” as the country back of the sea beach is called in Kapua. They appeared, their young faces glowing with health from their recent exercise and their arms full of the scarlet “pandanus” blossoms.

Margaret, the older girl, was a woman in spite of her nineteen years. She greeted the newcomers to Kapua with a grace that won the midshipmen at once. Alice, two years her junior, caught the boyish fancy of the lads instantly. She seemed to carry with her the free air of the woods, and exhaled its freshness. She had scarcely a trace of the reserve in manner of her older sister. Her greeting was spontaneously frank and unabashed.

While Margaret presided at the tea table, around which Commander Tazewell and the consul gathered, Alice impressed the willing midshipmen into her service, and with their arms loaded with the pandanus flowers, led them to

the dining-room. Here she placed the brilliant blossoms into numerous vases, giving to the room with its paucity of furniture a gala aspect.

“Do you care for tea?” she said questioningly, implying clearly a negative answer, which both lads were quick to catch.

“Never take it,” Phil replied quickly. “Do you, Syd?”

Sydney smiled and shook his head.

“Because if you don’t, while the others are drinking it, we can climb Mission Hill back of the town and enjoy the view of the harbor. It’s not far,” she added glancing at the spotless white uniform of the young officers.

She led them at a rapid pace across the garden and by a narrow path into a thickly wooded copse. The path was apparently one not frequently used and was choked with creepers and underbrushes. After a score of yards the path led at a steep angle up the wooded side of one of the low surrounding hills, which at Matautu descended almost to the harbor’s edge. Here the shore is rocky and dangerous.

Alice climbed with the ease of a wood sprite, while the midshipmen lumbered after her in their endeavor to keep pace.

“Here we are,” she cried joyfully as she sprang up the last few feet of incline and seated herself in the fork of a small mulberry tree.

Out of breath, their white trousers and white canvas shoes stained with the juice of entangling vines, and with perspiration streaming in little rivulets down their crimson faces, the two young men looked with amazement at their slim pace-maker; she was not even out of breath.

“Isn’t it worth coming for?” she exclaimed, perfect enjoyment in her girlish voice. “See, the town and the harbor and all the ships lie at our feet; and everything looks so very near;” then she added whimsically, “I sometimes pretend I am queen and order everything and every one about—no one else ever comes here,” she explained quickly. “My sister Margaret came once, but never came again.”

“It’s not easy to get here,” Sydney said, panting slightly, “but it would more than be worth the trouble if by coming one could really know the feeling of being a king or a queen. I haven’t sufficient imagination. What should you do if you were queen?” he asked of Alice.

She drew her brows down thoughtfully.

“I don’t know all that I should do,” she replied earnestly, “but the very first thing would be to send away every papalangi.”

“The war-ships too?” Phil inquired. “I call that hospitable!”

“I might keep you,” indicating both lads by a wave of her free hand, “as leaders for my army, but every one else would be sent away and leave these children of nature free to live their lives as God intended they should.” A deep conviction in the girl’s voice was not lost upon the midshipmen.

“Suppose you tell us of Kapua,” Phil said gently, after a short silence.

“Yes, do,” Sydney urged eagerly.

“Tell you of Kapua Uma,”[\[9\]](#) Alice said wistfully. “I have lived here now three years, and I feel as if the people were my people. They are gentle, generous and lovable, except

when they are excited by the papalangi. The white men have brought only trouble and sorrow to the islands. No Kapuan has ever broken his word, except when the white men have betrayed him. In all their wars they have been generous to their foes. They never harm women and children. The white men incite war, but are free from injury, except when they attack the Kapuans first.

“Once all the rich land near the sea belonged to Kapua. Now white men have stolen it away by fraud and deceit.” Alice’s eyes flashed indignantly, while her hearers were thrilled by the fervor in her young voice. “The foreign firm of which Klinger is manager, called the ‘Kapuan Firm,’ owned by Herzovinian capital, is no ordinary company of South Sea traders,” she added. “It is the feet of the Herzovinian Empire, holding the door of annexation open. The firm’s business grows greater every year. They import black labor from the Solomon Islands and hold them to work as slaves. The treaty gives the Kapuans the right to choose their king, but the firm will sanction no king who will not first agree to further the interests of the Kapuan firm.

“Kataafa once fought against the firm and won, but he was exiled by the Herzovinian government. Now a majority of people again wish him for king, and this time the firm is not only willing but anxious that he should be made king. England and America represented in Kapua see in this a bid for annexation. Judge Lindsay will soon decide between Kataafa and Panu-Mafili. Panu has given his word he will not fight. Kataafa signed a sworn agreement in order to obtain the consent of the three Powers to his return from exile, that he would never again take up arms.”

Alice stopped breathless. "There you have the full history of Kapua in a nutshell," she added laughingly as she slipped down from her seat.

"Poor Panu-Mafili is only a boy. His father, you know, was the late king Malea-Toa or 'Laupepe,' a 'sheet of paper,' as the natives called him, because he was intellectual. Panu begged to be allowed to go away and study," she said, "but our great governments need him as a big piece in the political chess game."

"More aptly a pawn," Phil corrected.

Alice was gazing wistfully seaward.

"Out there," she said after a moment's silence, "is a sail. It's probably the 'Talofa,' a schooner from the Fiji. The natives say 'Bully' Scott and the 'Talofa' sent out wars in the South Seas and arrive just in time to sell a shipload of rifles."

The midshipmen saw the tops of a "sail" far out on the horizon.

"If Kataafa needs guns to defy the chief justice, there they are," she added.

"Isn't it against the law to sell guns to the natives?" Sydney asked.

Alice regarded him with high disdain.

"'Bully' Scott knows no law nor nationality," she replied. "To give your nationality in Kapua is a disadvantage, because then your consul interferes with your business. When you're trading in 'blacks' and guns, it's best to deprive yourself of the luxury of a country. 'Bully' Scott is from the world."