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REPORT ON RESEARCH WORK IN NAURU ISLAND, CENTRAL PACIFIC

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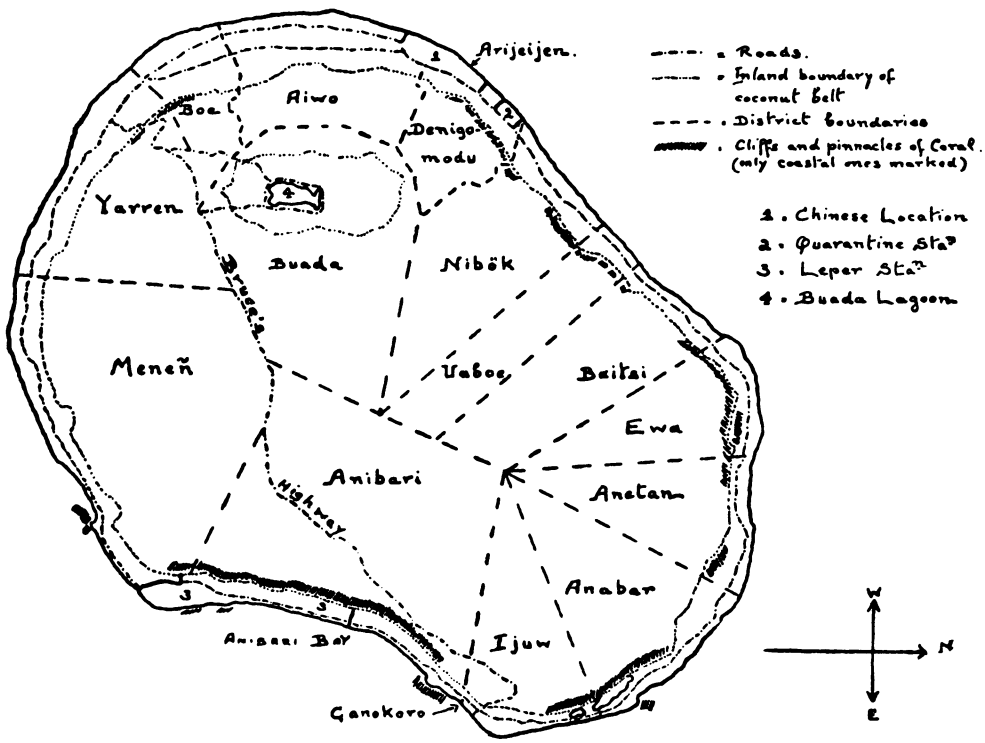
PART I

ON the invitation of his Honour Commander R. C. Garsia, R.A.N. (Ret.) the Administrator, with the authority of the Honourable the Minister for Territories at Canberra, I left Australia on January 3rd 1935 for Nauru in order to carry out anthropological investigations among the natives of this small island. This work was made possible by the generosity of the Government in defraying my travelling expenses as well as giving me hospitality while I was in Nauru, and also by the Australian National Research Council to which body I am indebted for a grant to cover all incidental working expenses as well as for a personal allowance.

The aim of my visit to Nauru was to learn as much as possible of the social, political and economic life of the people before they came under European control, and to study the effect upon it of the cultural contacts of the past fifty years. The changes which have taken place in Nauru since the end of the year 1888, when the Germans formally annexed the island, have been very far-reaching and profound, so much so that many of the young men and women of today know little or nothing of the life which their great-grandfathers (and even their grandfathers) led in their youth. The reasons

why the change was so rapid are probably many, but one or two of the more important may be mentioned here.

Nauru is a small island, only some twelve miles in circumference, inhabited by a people speaking a single language, and possessed of a single culture; for this reason any influence affecting any one part



SKETCH MAP OF NAURU ISLAND.

(*After* a map kindly supplied to me by his Honour the Administrator.)

The European settlement is almost wholly confined to the districts of Boe, Aiwo and the western end of Yarren. There is also a Roman Catholic mission station near the boundary of Yarren and Meneñ and another on the boundary between Ewa and Baitsi.

of the island, spread quickly throughout the whole. Furthermore, before the advent of the *Pax Germanica*, the Nauruans were by no means ignorant of Europeans. For many years escaped convicts, deserters from whaling ships and some men of more reputable origin had been living on the island; some of these had remained only for a short time, but others had settled down as traders and stayed there

until their death. From these men and from visiting whaling vessels, the Nauruans had acquired guns and ammunition and a taste for alcohol, as well as pigs, steel tools and other useful goods. Arising indirectly from these cultural importations, there developed in Nauru a bitter guerilla war between the inhabitants of different districts which lasted for about ten years. The result seems to have been that when the Germans took over the control of the island, the existing native culture had been so rudely disturbed by the long-drawn-out conflict, that it could offer but little resistance to new influences. Apart from the pacification of the island by the Government, the two most important of these influences were, in chronological order, the coming of missionaries and the discovery and working of the phosphates. There is not space here to enter into any detailed analysis of the effects of these two alien elements; suffice it to say that, between them, they wrought a great change in the social and economic life of the people in a very short space of time.

It is generally accepted by sociologists that, to be healthy, a culture must develop gradually, and that any great change in the cultural environment to which the society has to make a swift adaptation is liable to weaken that society, or at the least puts a very great strain upon it. To wipe away all that is old and native to a people, and to introduce or force upon them an alien civilization, may at first seem to be a successful venture, but it does not make for a stable or healthy society and lays up trouble for the future. This is the danger in Nauru. All too many of the young men and women of to-day assume that European customs are superior to Nauruan customs simply because they are European, and are contemptuous of the middle-aged and elderly people because of their interest in customs, sports and other activities which are native to them. This might not be so serious were it not that it is predominantly the material side of European culture in which the young Nauruans are interested; of the æsthetic and spiritual side (in the widest sense of the term spiritual) they are almost wholly ignorant because it is too culturally alien to them to be comprehensible. The modern young Nauruan is an imitator; a person without roots, and with but little sense of social responsibility. The great need in Nauru to-day seems

then to be a means of linking the past with the present ; of restoring that personal dignity and self-respecting mode of life for which the peoples of the Central and East Pacific have long been noted, while yet enabling the islanders to reap benefits from the complex European civilization with which they have been brought in contact ; to develop a people who will take a pride in being Nauruans and not in being imitators of Europeans. It was my work as an anthropologist to try to understand the life of the past, and to suggest how it could profitably be related to the present.

I arrived in Nauru on January 18th 1935 with the avowed intention of staying for three months and the private hope that I might remain for twelve. Actually I found it necessary to return to Australia when barely four months had elapsed and when, I may add, I felt that I was just beginning to learn something. From a personal point of view the conditions under which I worked were very much more enjoyable than usually fall to the lot of a field worker. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to his Honour the Administrator and Mrs. Garsia, who not only invited me to stay with them throughout my visit but gave me every assistance in their power to make my stay both pleasant and profitable. I am also most grateful to Mr. Cude, Head of Police, and Mrs. Cude ; to Dr. and Mrs. Clouston ; to Mr. Raines, the Director of Education, and his wife ; to Father Kayser of the Roman Catholic mission ; and to Sister Phyllis Murray of the Government hospital for their help and friendship. It is not possible for me here to mention individually all those to whom I am indebted for much kindness and hospitality, but I would like to express my thanks to Mr. and Mrs Christian, Mr. and Mrs. Bott and Sister Murray of the British Phosphate Commission.

From the point of view of an anthropologist, however, the conditions for field work were not very good. Living as I did with Europeans surrounded by all the pleasant distractions which such a life involves, and working among a people who have long been accustomed to Europeans, I did not find it possible to enter into the life of the Nauruans as, formerly, I had entered into the life of my native friends in New Guinea. Circumstances determined from first to last that I should be an outsider. Doubtless I could have done

much to counteract this had I ever been able to speak the language, even haltingly, but this I could not do. Nauruan is admittedly a very difficult tongue to master, and early in my stay I realized that, since I had in all probability a very short time in which to do my work, it was better to devote my energies to learning what I could through the medium of men and women who could speak English or through interpreters than to waste possibly fruitless hours in studying Nauruan.[1] For both these reasons I was forced to get most of my material from informants. Many of the disadvantages of this system were, however, counteracted by the excellence of the men and women who acted for me in this capacity. Their intelligence, their apparent desire to tell me what I wanted to know and their quick readiness to illustrate their generalizations with concrete examples, made it possible for me to learn far more than I had dared to hope in so short a time, and though I recognize only too well how incomplete my knowledge is, I am fairly confident that what I have obtained is substantially correct. In particular I must express my most grateful thanks for their help and kindness to Head Chief Detudamo who devoted his Sunday afternoons to my instruction; to the Chiefs Dabe of Aiwo, Scotty of Anabar, Bop of Meneñ and Denea of Anetan; to William Harris for the laborious hours he spent in translating Nauruan legends for me; to Aroi, head teacher of Aiwo School, and Lenina, head teacher of the Orro School for girls; to Bertha, daughter of Scotty, and her charming children, and to Tuti of Uaboe and her daughter Eimino, in whose houses I spent many pleasant and profitable hours; to Gideon, head teacher, and Japhet, under teacher of Baitsi School, who both helped me nobly by interpreting; to Damawaije of Anetan and his household; to Diakwen of Meneñ and his wife Dzina; to Ekimaroa of Boe from whom, in conjunction with Lenina, I got most of my information

[1] To-day English is taught in all the schools and the great majority of the population under twenty can speak English, though many of them, especially the girls, are too shy to do so. Of the people over this age only relatively few speak English, and, with a few outstanding exceptions such as Head Chief Detudamo, William Harris and Lenina, those who do so were not able to help me very much because they were ignorant and often contemptuous of the customs of their forefathers.

about women's affairs; to Simon of the Leper Station, and to Johannes, orderly to his Honour the Administrator.

In addition to the generous assistance which I received from the Nauruans, I also found a very useful source of information and suggestive hints in the old documents belonging to the period of the German administration, dating back to 1888, which his Honour the Administrator put at my disposal, and also in more recent reports of court cases which, with the permission of his Honour, Mr. Cude enabled me to examine.

Despite the close contact of Europeans with Nauru during the past forty years, relatively little of anthropological interest has been written about it. Dr. Paul Hambruch visited the island in 1910 and published the results of his researches there in his monumental work *Nauru*,[2] but since his visit to the island lasted only some six weeks his account of the social, political and economic organization of the Nauruans is necessarily incomplete and is even inaccurate. Two valuable articles have also been published in *Anthropos* by P. Kayser.[3] P. Kayser has lived in Nauru for over thirty years and is undoubtedly the greatest European authority on the island, but unfortunately, from the arduous nature of his work, he has had all too little leisure to give us more than short and unrelated accounts of certain aspects of Nauruan life. The only information about Nauru of interest to the anthropologist which has been published in English is found in records of sailors and others who visited the island during the nineteenth century, such as those of Commander Simpson, Captain Shewan, Mr. Moss, and of H.M.S. *Bacchante*.[4] Of these, the account written by Moss gives an interesting picture of the guerilla war which was raging at the time of his visit, and of the white men who were living on the island. The earliest description

[2] *Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition* 1908-1910, *herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. G. Thilenius. II Ethnographie. B. Mikronesien. Band I. Paul Hambruch, Nauru.* Hamburg, 1914 and 1915.

[3] P. Kayser, " Die Eingebornen von Nauru," *Anthropos*, Band xii-xiii, 1917-1918. pp. 313-337; " Der Pandanus auf Nauru," *Anthropos*, Band xxiv, 1934, pp. 775-791.

[4] T. B. Simpson, " Pacific Navigation and British Seamen," *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle*, London 1844. Andrew Shewan, *The Great Days of Sail.* F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea*, London. *The Cruise of H.M.S. " Bacchante,"* London 1886.

of the Nauruans seems to be that of Michelena y Rojas,[5] who landed on the island sometime during the third decade of last century, apparently before any white men had settled there. The most recent English work about the island is that by Mr. A. F. Ellis, entitled *Ocean Island and Nauru*[6] which, although it does not tell much about the Nauruans themselves is valuable to the anthropologist for the history which it gives of the growth of the phosphate industry, since this industry is so closely concerned with the cultural changes which have taken place in Nauru in the last thirty years.

The Land and the People

Spelling of Native Names and Words.

In the transcription of place names, personal names and Nauruan words I have departed from the usual practice of phonetic spelling because, for many years past, Nauruan has been a written language, and any attempt on my part to introduce a change of spelling now would only cause confusion. My only departure from the official Nauruan orthography is the use of the symbol *ŋ* instead of *ñ*. There are, moreover, in Nauruan three vowel sounds which are usually represented by *a*, *o*, and *u*, with the diacritical mark which is generally associated with nasality, but which in this context has no such significance. The first of these corresponds more or less to an open ɛ ; the second to the indeterminate ə both long and short ; and the last to a sound something between an *ö* and an *ü* slightly nasalized. Owing to typographical limitations these will be represented in the following pages by the symbols ɛ, ə and *ü* respectively, except in place names and personal names where the use of these symbols is not practicable.

The Land.

Nauru is situated on latitude 0° 20′ S., and longitude 167° 10′ E. It is a small elevated coral island, some twelve miles in circumference,

[5] Michelena y Rojas, *Viajes Scientificos en todo el mundo desde* 1822 *hasta* 1842, *etc.* Madrid 1843.

[6] A. F. Ellis, *Ocean Island and Nauru*, Sydney 1935. Mention must also be made of the account given by Professor W. J. Dakin of the *ibía* culture in Nauru, in his article " Science and Sea Fisheries " published in the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, 1934.

and rising at its highest point only to 200 feet above sea level. In some ways it is the most remote islet in the Pacific Ocean, for not only does its nearest neighbour, Ocean Island, lie 160 miles away to the east, but Nauru is encompassed by the equatorial current which normally flows strongly in a westerly direction making the navigation of light canoes at any distance from the land a matter of some danger, and the current has therefore prevented the Nauruans from becoming great seafarers. Indeed before the arrival of the Europeans, their only craft were light fishing canoes, and there is no record of any Nauruans having travelled for pleasure or on trading expeditions to other islands. Their only contact with the outside world seems to have been through drift canoes which reached Nauru from the Gilbert Islands, and which introduced many elements of culture to Nauru as well as new blood.

For the greater part of the year the prevailing wind is the easterly trade, which gives place to the westerly monsoon from November till February. There is however no fixed cycle for the weather, and the year cannot be divided into a wet and a dry season. Sometimes several years may pass during which there is little or no westerly wind; sometimes westerly gales may blow almost continuously for several weeks. When this happens the normal westward-bound current is sometimes beaten back and gives place to a strong eastward-bound one which brings to the island driftwood from the islands to the far west. The west wind also brings rain in great abundance, and although some rain usually falls throughout the year, a short or poor westerly season sometimes means a serious drought. Lack of a regular rainfall is all the more serious in Nauru because the soil is highly porous, and although I was assured that even in the past the people never suffered seriously from a shortage of drinking water, which was obtained from wells, they did suffer through the drought killing or checking the growth of their coconut and pandanus trees.[7]

In formation the island consists of a flat coastal belt from about 150 to 400 yards in width, thickly grown with coconut trees. The land then rises steeply to a height of about 100 feet, a cliff of coral

[7] To-day the Nauruans obtain fresh water from large concrete cisterns which are filled by rain water flowing from specially erected corrugated iron roofs. There is at least one such cistern to every district.

rocks often separating the coconut belt from the interior. It is in the interior that the phosphate deposits are found, and to-day one can see expanses of coral pinnacles which have been left after the phosphate has been worked out. Most of the interior, however, is as yet unworked, and is covered with a tangled but not luxurious vegetation, in which the rugged trunks and dark green leaves of the "tomano" tree (a variety of *Callophyllum inophyllum*) are the most striking features. The country is mostly undulating, with two or three hills and here and there rough coral peaks which tower, fortress-like, above the surrounding bush.

In many places in the coconut belt there are lagoons of brackish water; some of these are little more than pools a few feet in diameter, but one or two on the eastern side of the island are of quite considerable size (see Plate IA). The largest of these lagoons is found about a mile inland from the west coast; it is several acres in extent and around it has grown up the village of Buada. All these lagoons are of the greatest importance to the Nauruans, for they are the nurseries in which the *ibia* fish are raised. During periods of drought the smaller lagoons sometimes dry up, and even the big Buada lagoon sinks seriously, but according to the Nauruans the larger ones around the coast and all those in the interior are connected with the sea by subterranean channels (made in prehistoric days by mythological beings) up which during the spring tides the sea forces its way and so helps to replenish them.

Surrounding the island, broken here and there by a narrow passage, is a wide fringing coral reef, which juts out like a ledge from the land. At very low tide one can stand on the edge and look down into unfathomable depths. No vessel can anchor off Nauru, for bottom has never yet been found. In many places along the reef, or on the margin of the reef and foreshore, particularly on the north and east, there are coral pinnacles, standing singly or in clusters, which give a most forbidding and rugged appearance to the coastline. (See Plate IB.)

The People.

Whence the first inhabitants of Nauru came is not known; there are no legends telling of any original home overseas, and indeed their

origin myths seem to indicate that they believed themselves to be autochthonous. That they represent a mixture of physical types seems certain, for there are great varieties in pigmentation, in the character of the hair and lips and in the shape of the eyes. Hambruch distinguished between a " Melanesian " and a " Polynesian " type. Judging from the general build of the people the latter strain appears to be the dominant one at least in certain respects, for the tendency to put on flesh in middle life, characteristic of Polynesians but very rarely found in the West Pacific, is very noticeable in Nauru even in those who in other respects have " Melanesian " features.[8] (Plate IIA.) We know too, that there has been an infusion of Gilbertese blood dating from pre-European times, and since the coming of whaling boats into these waters intermarriage with Gilbertese and Marshall Islanders has, until recently, been on the increase. In addition to this there are to-day a large number of people with European blood in them (mostly from northern Europe) and some who are descended from two full-blooded American negroes who at one time took up their residence on Nauru. (Plate IID.) To anyone accustomed to the peoples of New Guinea, the Nauruans present a magnificent spectacle of physical fitness and strength. According to one of my informants, sickness was scarcely known before the arrival of the white man, though prior to this the Gilbertese had introduced some death-and-sickness magic into the island. Tradition also has it that the drinking of sour toddy was introduced by these people, and to this beverage as well as to the alcohol introduced by the white man the Nauruans took with enthusiasm, probably to the detriment of their health. But the serious diseases of tuberculosis, leprosy, dysentery and influenza seem to have made their first appearance soon after the beginning of the phosphate works, as a result of infection from indentured labourers from other Pacific islands and from China.[9] During this century there have

[8] The language of Nauru does not give any clue to the origin of the people. In its structure and in many of its words it does not appear to have any relationship to Polynesian and it has certain characteristics which distinguish it from typical Melanesian tongues.

[9] It was not until the British took over the government of Nauru that the imported labourers were quarantined for a week after their arrival to ensure that any diseases which they brought with them might be observed and those in danger

been three serious epidemics : one of dysentery in 1907 which carried off about 150 people ; one of infantile paralysis in 1910 from which about 50 people died outright, a few others succumbed from after effects, and several more remained permanently injured ; and finally the influenza epidemic of 1920 which resulted in about 100 deaths.[10] Despite their robust appearance, the Nauruans have little reserve vitality with which to combat disease when once they fall victims to it. Nevertheless, thanks to the medical work carried out by the Government, the population is now increasing and shows every sign of continuing to do so. This is particularly satisfactory when we compare the situation to-day with that reported by Hambruch. According to him the population of Nauru fell from 1550 in 1905 to 1397 in 1908 and to 1250 in 1910 ; between 1908 and 1910 the death rate exceeded the birth rate by 33 to 23, and in 1910 Dr. Müller stated that he considered the extinction of the Nauruans to be inevitable, principally as a result of tuberculosis. To-day the population has risen once more to over 1500.[11] Tuberculosis is undoubtedly still a serious menace to the people, but the establishment, by the present Administrator, of a Tuberculosis Settlement where patients can be isolated and receive treatment, as well as the training in hygiene which the children are given in the schools, may, it is hoped, hold this disease in check. There are at present about 64 people in the Leper Station, but the treatment which they receive there and the results which have already been achieved justify the hope that many of these may eventually be cured, while their

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of spreading them isolated. In Nauru the Phosphate Commission now only employs Chinese labour ; during the German régime Marshall Islanders also worked there, and once an attempt was made to use men from New Guinea but this proved a failure.

[10] These figures were given to me by one of my Nauruan informants.

[11] The census figures for the beginning of the year 1935 were as follows :

Total number of males under 16 years	369
Total number of females under 16 years	374
Total number of males between 16 and 60 years ..	423
Total number of females between 16 and 60 years ..	353
Total number of males over 60 years	20
Total number of females over 60 years	42

This gives a total population of 1581, of which 812 are males and 769 are females. It is significant that, of the total, 776, or nearly half, are under the age of sixteen.

isolation and the careful medical inspection which is held monthly in every district will probably ensure that this disease is eventually stamped out in Nauru. (See Plates I, C and D.) A third serious illness from which the Nauruans suffer is filaria. Other ailments typical of the tropics, such as malaria, frambœsia and ulcers are not found. Frambœsia was known at one time, as an introduced disease, but thanks to thorough medical treatment, it has now become entirely a thing of the past.

Social and Political Organization.

In this and the following sections I propose to give an account of the social and political organization and economic life of the Nauruans before the coming of the missionaries and of the *Pax Germanica*. The account will inevitably be brief and incomplete, and furthermore, it will not be possible to illustrate it with actual incidents so freely as I could were I writing of an unlettered people such as those of New Guinea. A very large number of Nauruans read English, and I am therefore constrained not to set down anything which if it came to their notice could be thought to be derogatory to any individual member of their community.

Nauru is roughly circular in shape. On the eastern side stands a rather large outcrop of rock (almost opposite where the Bruce's Highway meets the coastal road) at a place called Ganokoro. On the west coast, on the foreshore of what is now the cemetery of the Chinese location, is another place called Arijeijen. These two spots mark the two important points of the compass, the place of sunrise and the place of sunset. To go in the direction of Ganokoro is *apwijuw* or eastwards ; to go in the direction of Arijeijen is *apwewa* or westwards. There are no words to correspond with our " north " and " south," but the people always distinguish between going inland (*roga apoe*) and going towards the beach (*rodu apago*).[12] With the exception of Buada, all the settlements are situated along the coconut belt, though their territories extend inland. To-day the island is divided into fourteen " districts " or villages composed

[12] *Roga* is the word used for " ascend " ; *rodu* for " descend." It is interesting to notice that for going out into the open sea *roga* is used, while to return landwards is *rodu*.

of a number of scattered hamlets or homesteads. Each one is regarded as a distinct governmental unit, with its own chief and district constable. It is doubtful, however, whether this clear-cut division into districts existed in pre-European days, and it is probably significant that there is no genuine Nauruan word to denote such a local division ; *tekawa*, the term now used for it, has been borrowed from the Gilbertese, in which language it means " village." It seems rather that each small hamlet had its own name and that in virtue of noble birth or great military prowess a man (or woman) might become so important as to gain the following of men and women from neighbouring hamlets, and even sometimes to dominate the whole island. Nevertheless there does seem to have been in pre-European times though perhaps only during the last century, a tendency for the people occupying the land lying to the north of a line joining Ganokoro and Arijeijen to have united together against those occupying the land to the south of it. The former includes what are now the " districts " of Ijuw, Anabar, Anetan, Ewa, Baitsi, Uaboe and Nibök ; the latter comprises Anibari, Meneñ, Yarren, Boe and Aiwo. The thirteenth of the coastal districts, Denigomodu, lies partly to the north and partly to the south of Arijeijen, and, during the latter part of the nineteenth century at least, was generally allied in times of war to Buada, the inland district, and with it took sometimes one side sometimes the other, as policy or kinship filiations dictated.

To-day each hamlet or homestead (see Plate IIIA)is usually occupied by people who are near kin to one another, and this was it seems also the custom in the past. Formerly the dwelling houses were very large and accommodated two or three individual families, but it is a long time since any such buildings were erected, and now, to prevent overcrowding, it has been made compulsory by the Administration for each family to have a separate hut. It is probable however, that the homestead unit was never a very stable one. To-day it is not uncommon for one family to go away and live for a time in the hamlet of other relatives, and judging from tales of old Nauru, this was always customary in pre-European times. There are no economic bonds, such as common rights over a tract of land, to hold the members of a homestead together, for individual owner-

ship, not kin ownership, of both goods and land, is and apparently always has been the rule rather than the exception. It is probably safe to say therefore that local groups were never very clearly defined in Nauru, and were of relatively little importance in regulating the social life. In times of war, it is true, opposition seems to have been between two or more districts, but in war a man's allegiance was to an individual war-leader rather than to the members of his own locality. In every-day life it is kinship which was, and probably still is, of paramount importance.

The Kinship Organization.

The Nauruans were divided into twelve matrilineal, exogamous clans. Of these two, Irutsi and Iwi, have been extinct for some twenty years. The names of the remaining ten are: Eamwit, Eamwidumwit, Deboe, Eoaru, Emea, Eano, Emañum, Ranibök, Eamwidara and Iruwa. Of these the most important, because the largest, is Eamwit, with a membership of 392, and next in size are Iruwa with 328 and Eamwidumwit with 274. Historical legends show that Eamwit was for many generations the most powerful and influential clan in the island, though for perhaps a couple of generations, after the leading man of Eamwit had suffered a humiliating defeat in battle, Deboe rose to the position of greatest force and authority. To-day, Deboe has only 167 members.[13]

In Hambruch's opinion, the clans of Nauru were originally totemic, though, as he rather naïvely adds, the people do not recognize this fact and only traces of it are apparent.[14] It is certainly true that the names of the clans are such as one would expect to find associated with totemism: thus Deboe is a variety of large, black fish; Eamwit is an eel; Eamwidumwit is a small green grasshopper or locust; Eoaru is a plover and Iwi means "hair-louse." Furthermore, some of the clan origin-myths have a distinctly totemic flavour, as for example, that which tells of the two *deboe* fish which

[13] The membership of the other clans is: Emea, 107 males, 79 females; Eoaru, 55 males, 41 females; Emañum, 30 males, 21 females; Eano, 18 males, 18 females; Eamwidara, 17 males, 16 females; Ranibök, 19 males, 9 females.

[14] Hambruch, *op. cit.* I, p. 187. "Die einzelnen Sippen sind auf totemistischer Grundlage entstanden. Dieser Totemismus ist nur in Spuren nachweisbar; er ist den Eingeborenen selbst nicht mehr bewusst."

were stranded at low tide on the reef and out of which came two worms, which then gave place to two women, one of whom became the ancestress of the Deboe clan. Whether such names and such origin myths prove a totemic " origin " for the Nauruan clans is however a matter of only theoretical interest. To-day there is nothing to suggest that even in pre-European times the members of a clan had any ritual attitude towards the creature whose name the clan bore. It is true that I was told by one informant that the people of the Eamwit should not eat eels, but another elderly informant who was himself an Eamwit man, denied this. So much of the old ritual life of the people has gone during the past fifty years that it is very possible that typical totemic rites and tabus did once exist ; but their complete disappearance even from the memory of elderly men and women, strongly suggests that, even if they did exist at the beginning of last century, they were probably of little sociological importance.

Hambruch also suggests that originally the clans were probably local groups.[15] There is I think little evidence for this, although several of them are associated in their origin myths with particular places on the island. Thus, there is a spot on the beach of Nibök where, according to tradition, the ancestresses of Ranibök, Emea and Irutsi first came to land ; on the beach of Aiwo is another place where the two first women of the Deboe clan first appeared, and inland in Boe is the cave where one of them dwelt. But these places are not regarded as the property of the clans with which they are associated, nor of individual members of these clans. There is no

[15] Hambruch, *op. cit.* I, pp. 58-62. " Nauru zählt zeit altersher vierzehn Gaue, von denen jeder ursprünglich im Besitz einer Sippe war. Das hat sich heute geändert." At the time of his visit he reported that the clans and districts were associated as follows :

To Eamwit belong the districts Ijuw, Baitsi, Denigomodu, Buada, Menen.
To Emea belong the districts Boe, Nibök.
To Deboe belong the districts Yarren, Anabar, Anetan.
To Ranibök belongs the district Aiwo.
To Eamwidara belongs the district Ewa.
To Irua belong the districts Anibari, Waboe.

In saying, however, that these districts belonged to these clans Hambruch is certainly wrong ; actually these were no more than the clans to which the " district chiefs " of that time belonged, and by no means all of them were of true *temonibe* rank, though many of them were.

evidence even that they were ever venerated as places of ritual importance to the clansmen. On the other hand certain homestead sites are sometimes spoken of as " belonging to " a clan. Further questioning however, always revealed the fact that this was because in times past some leading member of the clan had dwelt there, and that the homestead had during his lifetime become a rallying point for all members of the clan. In no sense were such homesteads clan property ; they were individually owned and might even pass into the possession of a member of another clan—for in Nauru, both men and women own land and can give it while they are still alive or by will after death to both sons and daughters and even to unrelated friends. I was constantly assured that the clan as a group never owned any land ; that individual ownership, not merely tenure, was fully recognized and carried with it full rights of disposal. Furthermore, although it is usual in Nauru for marriage to be matrilocal, this is by no means the rule, and indeed in a community where a man could marry several women who were not necessarily related, it could never have been the rule. This in itself would militate against the localization of the clan ; for it was not the custom in Nauru, as it is in some West Pacific matrilineal communities, for children to return to their mother's homestead when they were grown up, and there live under the authority of their maternal uncle. Nauruan children live with their parents usually until they marry and they can then settle on land belonging to either their father or mother, or join the hamlet group of some other kinsmen or of their consort's parents. These facts support the assurances of my informants that from time immemorial clansfolk have been dispersed throughout the island.

Nevertheless, it must be observed that in certain parts of Nauru certain clans do preponderate. For example the powerful clan Eamwidumwit has 46 members (19 ♂, 27 ♀) in Yarren, 55 (28 ♂, 27 ♀) in Meneñ, and 64 (34 ♂, 30 ♀) in Boe, while in Anetan it has only 3 (1 ♂, 2 ♀), in Uaboe only 3 (1 ♂, 2 ♀) and in Aiwo only 8 (2 ♂, 6 ♀). It is true that the population of each of the first three districts exceeds that of each of the last three, for Yarren, Meneñ and Boe have respectively 202, 188 and 206 inhabitants, while Anetan, Uaboe and Aiwo have only 98, 100 and 130 ; but even allowing for

this, the proportion of Eamwidumwit clansfolk to the total district population is markedly less in these last three districts than it is in the first three. A similar inequality of distribution is noticeable in some of the smaller clans. Thus the people of Eoaru who total altogether only 96, are to be found mostly in Aiwo (8 ♂, 18 ♀), Boe (11 ♂, 7 ♀) and Buada (15 ♂, 8 ♀), while in Yarren and Meneñ, which are much more populous districts, there dwell respectively 2 and 1 members of Eoaru. I was told, moreover, of the two extinct clans, that the Irutsi were concentrated mostly in Aiwo and Buada districts, and that the majority of the Iwi lived in Aiwo. Why there should be this tendency for certain clans to be stronger in some districts than in others it is hard to say, but it is probably the result of historical accident rather than of any earlier clan localization. The history of the war which continued intermittently during the middle decades of last century, shows clearly that the distribution of the population was far from static. It had apparently always been the custom when a victorious warrior appropriated the land of his enemies, for him to establish his near kinsmen or clansmen upon it. At the same time prisoners of war were taken from their homes and transferred to the hamlets of their captors. Others of the vanquished who escaped from the field of battle, often sought the protection of some powerful man in another part of the island, where they settled as his dependants, and sometimes received gifts of land from him.

It is difficult to-day, when the cultural and social environment is so different, to understand fully the organization and function of the clan as it was in pre-European times. As I have mentioned already, there was no ownership of property by the clan as a social unit. Land, fishing places and lagoons, were and are owned by a single individual or by a small number of individuals (often but not always related), some of whom had absolute rights of ownership, others only a life interest; goods and chattels also were owned individually, and so too were such intangible possessions as songs, dances, legends, and the right to use certain ornaments and designs (*kirire*). It is sometimes said that a certain clan owns many *kirire*, but this means little more than that the women of that clan own many.

The bonds between fellow-clansmen certainly do not seem to have been as close as they are, for instance, among those West Pacific peoples who have a clan organization. I was told, however, that, generally speaking, during a war, a war leader could rely upon the support of his fellow-clansmen, and indeed throughout the internicine struggle which lasted from about 1878 until 1888, it was the size and consequent power of the Eamwit clan which gave it its dominance. It was explained to me that at that time it was a serious matter to kill an Eamwit man or woman, for to do so was to incur the anger of every Eamwit on the island, and the fate of the killer was almost a foregone conclusion. This strong cohesion of Eamwit was, however, probably greater than was usual of Nauruan clans, for during the nineteenth century the Eamwit had among them, for three generations, notable fighting men, around whom the whole clan had rallied. Clans which had no such war-leaders presented, almost certainly, a less solid front to the world. Furthermore conflicting loyalties inevitably tended to weaken a clan. Clan descent is matrilineal, but the most important man in a boy's life is his father, and I was told that it not infrequently happened that a man would refuse to join in some military expedition, because to do so would bring him into conflict with his father's clansmen. More usually, however, in a battle those who were bound together by any tie of clan or kin would only avoid fighting against each other in personal combat.

It was not only in war that the clan functioned. In ordinary every-day life fellow-clansmen recognized certain obligations towards each other, especially in the matter of hospitality. Whether the clan ever functioned as a ritual unit seems very doubtful. During the nineteenth century the dominant religious cult was that of Taburig, the God of Thunder and War, but he (like Bagewa the god connected with fishing and the sea), was an importation from the Gilbert Islands. I was told that the only genuine Nauruan cult was of Eijeboñ. Little is now remembered of her save that she had no priests and that offerings were made to her in certain places in the bush, each person for himself or herself. This indicates that the

clan played no part in this particular worship. Nor could I find any trace of a cult of the dead members of a clan.

In Nauru, as in so many parts of the Pacific, considerable stress is laid upon primogeniture, and the most important man in the clan is the eldest son of the woman who traces her descent back, through a line of eldest daughters, to its original foundress. Such a woman and her children are spoken of as being *temónibe*. People who belong to junior branches of the clan are *amenenyame*. Often it is very difficult to determine clearly whether an individual is *temónibe* or *amenenyame* for there is no hard and fast distinction between the two, and men or women whose position is on the borderline may be regarded as either, their personal character and popularity often helping to determine which. What power or influence the leading man or woman of the clan had we cannot now really tell. During the nineteenth century one who had a dominant personality and, if a man, was a noted warrior, could wield considerable authority, not only within his own clan, and also within his own locality, but even throughout the greater part of the island. Before this time, however, and especially before influences from the Gilbert Islands had introduced the God of War and the Gilbertese methods of fighting, it is probable that the head of the clan though respected on account of his or her birth, had little political importance, and it is interesting to notice in this context, that the word *temónibe* by which they are designated is itself of Gilbertese origin.

In the nineteenth century when warfare became increasingly important, certain men belonging to junior branches of a clan came to be regarded as *temónibe* on account of their valour and skill in fighting, and sometimes seem to have eclipsed in importance the true clan leader. Thus to-day, Meta is the senior woman of Eamwit, but a hundred years ago it was not her ancestress in the direct line nor the brother of this ancestress who counted most politically but rather certain members of a junior branch: Dagaidabara and his sisters' sons Agoijaruk and Ijibauwo, whose qualities as champions in war raised them to the status of *temónibe* and clan leaders.

Probably however they were never considered to be on an equal footing with the true *temónibe* by birth.[16]

The Kinship System.

The kinship system of Nauru is a variety of the so-called " Hawaiian " system. In Nauru, however, people do not address each other by kinship terms, but by their personal names, and it is not easy therefore to know what is the range of the terms. Generally speaking, it seems that they are only used for those with whom the speaker can trace a genealogical connection. It is possible that in pre-European days the range may have been wider, for to-day the rights and duties of kin towards one another are less important than they almost certainly were of old. It is probable, however, that the most important kinship group was always the *amenubwien*, or group of people related to an individual on both sides of the family, with whom a genealogical relationship can be traced. The word is used in very much the same vague way as we use the word " relative," and just as we distinguish, again rather vaguely, between close and distant relatives, so too the Nauruans distinguish between *amenubwien kər* and *amenubwien ogoijok*, and as regards the latter the kinship bonds and obligations are slight. Even those who are related by marriage are spoken of as *amenubwien*, but I am inclined to believe that primarily it is a word used for true relatives and not for affinals. It is probable therefore that the range of the kinship terms is the *amenubwien*, and that what relatives are included in this category is determined by circumstances rather than by rule.

Since the kinship terms are almost exclusively used in reference and not in address, they are given below in the form of the third person singular possessive.

[16] For a further discussion concerning the *temónibe*, *amenejame* and other social classes, see Part II.

It is significant that of the district chiefs who have held office since the coming of the white man's government many have not been of true *temónibe* rank, and I was told that when selecting a new district chief relatively little attention is paid to the rank of a man but rather to his suitability for the work which this office entails. The position is regarded as a European innovation for which there was really no parallel in old Nauruan society, and the district chief is never spoken of as *temónibe* but always by the English word " Chief," the status and function of each being regarded as absolutely distinct and dissimilar.

etəŋin : father ; extended to the father's brothers, the step-father, and the mother's sister's husband. Among the younger generation to-day there is a tendency to extend this term to the mother's brother, but this is incorrect. The real father is commonly distinguished from the other " fathers," by the latter being called *earetəŋin.*

in-en : mother ; extended to the mother's sisters, the father's brother's wife, and also to the father's sister. As with *etəŋ,* so with *in,* the true mother is distinguished from the other " mothers " by the latter being referred to as *earetinen.*

ŋain : child ; extended to children of siblings of the same sex as the speaker and by a woman to her brother's children. Again, the " classificatory " children are more specifically *erenŋain.*

aroen : this word is used reciprocally by a man and his sister's children, who are, of course of the same clan as himself. It is extended to all members of the same clan, and this kinship group is itself called *aroeni.*

etsin (1st sing. *idzu*) *:* sibling irrespective of the age or sex of the speaker or of the person referred to. If necessary the adjectives *eman* or *ien* can be added to distinguish between brothers and sisters respectively. Usually in the form of *earetetsin,* it is extended to step and half-siblings, and to both kinds of parallel cousins. Some of the younger people even use the term loosely to include cross-cousins, but this is incorrect.

atin (or *aut(i)en*) *:* this word is used reciprocally by cross-cousins of the first degree.

ibwin : grandparent and, reciprocally, grandchild, irrespective of sex or line of descent. It seems, moreover, to be extended to any one of two generations distant with whom genealogical relationship can be traced.

agen : consort irrespective of sex ; in the modified form *erenagen* this term is extended by a man to his wife's sister and by a woman to her sister's husband and husband's brother. Furthermore *ageo man* (male consort) is used reciprocally

between a man and his wife's brother, and *ageo en* (female consort) between a woman and her husband's sister.

ijuben : this word is used reciprocally between a man or woman and his or her child's consort.

eipwon : this term is used reciprocally between a man and his wife's sister's husband.

The word *eren* (*earen*) or *eret* (which is found in such terms as *eretino, earetəŋin, erenagen*) is interesting for the metaphorical use to which it is put here. I was told in explanation that *eren* is primarily the short piece of fine cord which connects a fish-hook to the main fish-line.

I was not able to learn much about the socially approved patterns of behaviour between relatives, for this can only be done by close and constant observation and the study of personal histories. One thing was, however, very apparent. Despite the fact that membership of the clan is determined through the mother, it is the father who is the most important man in a child's life. It is he who has authority and is responsible for the rearing of his children ; it is he who has the most important voice in the selection of their consorts, and he is the principal man from whom his children will inherit land and goods. The maternal uncle does not seem to have or ever to have had any special duties or privileges in relation to his sister's children, and on ritual occasions the *amenubwien* of both parents are seemingly equally to the fore.

Another interesting aspect of Nauruan kinship behaviour is the " avoidance " which is still observed between brothers and sisters and between a man and his sister's husband. Even in early childhood a boy was trained in this, in so far that he was taught that he should not be constantly in his sisters' company and should never complain of anything that his sisters might do. A girl was taught likewise not to complain of her brother. After puberty the " avoidance " was observed more thoroughly. Even to-day siblings of the opposite sex show respect for each other and do not speak to each other unless the matter is one of especial importance or urgency. If they wish to communicate with one another they should do so through an intermediary. Between a man and his sister's husband there is a similar " avoidance." They do not go about together and

only communicate with one another through a third party. If one of them be sitting with a group of people, the other does not come up and join them. On the other hand they are at liberty to use each other's goods, but it seems that whereas a man can take and use the property of his sister's husband freely, he may only use his wife's brother's goods after having asked and received permission to do so—though such permission could not be refused. Curiously enough the " avoidance " customs of Nauru do not involve any tabu on speaking the name of these relatives. I am not certain whether the " avoidance " between brothers-in-law lasts throughout life, or only until they are getting on in years, or until the death of the woman through whom they are connected; that between brothers and sisters is largely ignored when they are elderly. Nevertheless, despite these " avoidances " it is not at all uncommon for a brother and sister to live in the same homestead, even after marriage, though of course they occupy separate huts. This is not due to the weakening of the " avoidance " as a result of contact with Europeans, for I know of one man who, though a staunch upholder of this custom, is building a house for himself next door to his sister.

Marriage.

Marriage is regulated partly by the clan and partly by genealogical relationship. Even to-day the clan is an exogamous unit, and, although it would perhaps be rash to say that marriage or sexual relations never occur between members of the same clan, such occurrences are rare or rarely come to light. The only exception to this general rule of clan exogamy is that in the opinion of some of the Nauruans it is permissible for two people of the Iruwa clan to marry, provided that they belong to different branches of that clan. The Iruwa clan has no single ancestress; to it belong all those who are descended in the female line from some " foreign " woman. (In pre-European days these " foreign " women were Gilbertese, who from time to time had reached Nauru in drift canoes, but during the last fifty years a few women from the Marshall and Caroline Islands have come to Nauru and settled, and their offspring are also regarded as Iruwa). There is some reason to believe, however, that in olden days the rule of exogamy governed the Iruwa as it did

the true Nauruan clans. In one of the legends concerning the culture-hero Araimin, it is told that he gathered together all the people and established the law, enjoining upon them not to marry relatives nor within the clan. In accordance with this the people divided themselves into eleven clans according to their descent. Some time later, so the story runs, the Iruwa came and the people commanded them to do as the other clans had done.

Marriage with a member of the father's clan is entirely permissible, provided that the two people concerned are not *amenubwien*: marriage is prohibited between those who are *amenubwien*. As has already been mentioned what relatives are included in this category is rather vague, but it is probable that in its full stringency the rule only applies to those who are *amenubwien kər*, or close relatives. There is, however, one important exception to this rule: those who are cross-cousins may marry, and indeed this is a marriage which is warmly approved, since it makes for the greater strength and cohesion of the family. For the same reason brother-sister exchange marriage is favoured highly, and it is interesting to notice that the offspring of such an exchange marriage are not debarred from the usual cross-cousin union despite their doubly close relationship. Other permissible marriages are of two sisters with two brothers and of a man with two sisters (either in adelphic polygyny or consecutively). Marriage with the mother's brother's widow is not forbidden, but it is very uncommon and I only heard of one instance of it.

The remarriage of widows and widowers is approved. Normally, unless she be old, a widow marries her husband's younger brother. There is no prohibition against her marrying his elder brother, but, it was explained to me, since the reason for the woman's remarriage is primarily to provide her and her children with a guardian and economic support, the younger brother is usually more suited to the task than the elder. The levirate as it exists in Nauru is indeed an obligation laid upon the dead man's brother to care for the widow and children, and she would live with him even though there were no physical union between them. She is not, however, compelled to do so, and has the right to take another husband if she wishes. If she does this her children by her first husband remain as a rule under

the care of their father's brother but they do not lose touch with their mother. It is interesting to notice that it is the father's brother and not the mother's brother who becomes the guardian, despite the Nauruan principle of matrilineal descent.

In pre-Christian days polygyny was permitted to anyone who could afford the cost involved in rearing a large family. Generally only men of noble birth or wealth had more than one wife, and it was rare for even such men to have more than three. Occasionally a very exceptional person had four; such was Deijogar who distinguished himself in many ways, among them in marrying four women all of whom were *temónibe*. The first wife in a polygynous union was usually held to be the most important, but she had no authority over the others, and I was told that for all practical purposes co-wives had equal status as did also their children.

The relations between co-wives probably depended to some extent upon their relative rank and upon where they lived. If their husband's homestead were upon his land there may have been little distinction between them, but one informant made the significant remark that a man could only bring other wives into the home of his first wife with her consent; that she was " the key of the house." It was, however, socially recognized that co-wives should live together in amity, sharing each other's domestic labours and helping to tend each other's children.[17] That they did sometimes quarrel is more than probable, but society demanded that they should do so only in private.

In olden days there appear to have been three recognized ways of securing a spouse: by infant (or child) betrothal, by betrothal after puberty and by elopement. Most of my informants agreed that the first of these was only used by *temónibe*, and is now, I believe obsolete. I was told that formerly when a *temónibe* woman gave birth to a daughter, a man who was *temónibe* by birth might come to the hut where the infant was, and tie round its wrist a thread

[17] I was told by one of my informants that this was in marked contrast to the Gilbertese custom. Indeed in their whole attitude towards the relations of the sexes—in the importance which they attach to premarital chastity and the suspicious jealousy which is regarded as natural in a husband—the Gilbertese are almost diametrically opposed to the Nauruans.

taken from his pandanus-leaf petticoat (*ridi*). In this way he laid claim to the new-born girl as a future wife for one of his own grandsons or for the grandson of one of his near relatives. There was no public announcement of the betrothal, but the *temónibe* who had performed this rite, together with his *amenubwien kər* discussed the land, coconut trees and other goods which the infant girl would ultimately possess, and after a while the talk spread throughout the whole island and no little interest would be shown in amicable disputes as to which of the two contracting parties were of higher rank. During infancy and childhood the betrothed girl lived with her parents and received at frequent intervals gifts of mats and food from the mother and *amenubwien* of her future husband ; valuables were not given to her, since, it was explained to me, she was as yet only a child. After puberty she continued with her parents for a short while, and then visited the parents of her future husband for a few days. It seems that she did not take up her abode permanently with them, but that much of her time was spent in their homestead, for I was told that she helped her future mother-in-law, and that the latter " tamed " her and guarded her conduct. The final arrangement for the actual marriage was usually left to the initiative of the intended husband's people. There does not appear to have been any elaborate marriage ritual.

If a *temónibe* girl were not thus betrothed in infancy, it was customary for her to be so sometime during her childhood, and it would have been considered wrong for such a girl not to have had her hand promised by the time that she had attained puberty. This suggests that neither a girl nor boy of *temónibe* rank had much freedom in the selection of a spouse. It must be remembered however, that the engagement could be and sometimes was broken off. This was done generally by the parents and kinsfolk of the intended bridegroom if they had reason to believe that the future bride was indulging in love affairs with another man. The Nauruans did not set any great store by virginity in their women—indeed there is in Nauruan no word for " virgin," the word which they now use for this having been borrowed from the Gilbertese—but once a *temónibe* woman was

betrothed, at whatever age, she was expected to remain faithful to her future husband.[18]

Girls who were not *temónibe* appear to have had considerable freedom of selection. It may have been true, as I was told, that in the olden days no young woman was supposed to go about by herself and that if she wished to pay a visit to another homestead not in the immediate neighbourhood she was supposed to ask the permission of her father or husband, and take with her another woman, but it is clear from various stories and case histories that this rule was not observed very strictly or that the chaperonage was not very severe. It probably militated against the easy and approved sexual experimentation which is found in some parts of both the East and West Pacific, but opportunities were certainly not wanting for young men and young women to display themselves with advantage to each other. Life in old Nauru seems to have been enlivened at frequent intervals by dancing and athletic competitions. In the latter only young men took part, but women were among the audience. The dancing competitions were sometimes carried out by a team of women, sometimes by one of men, and such teams used to go from one part of the island to another, dancing and singing to the admiration of the beholders, each girl or man distributing gifts to her or his special admirers, and receiving food and entertainment from clansfolk and *amenubwien*. At such times young men and maidens could and did attract each other. Often a transitory amour would result, and little or no blame attached to an unmarried or unbetrothed girl who indulged in pre-marital sex relationships, always provided that she did not give birth to an illegitimate child. Actually it was not uncommon for a girl to become pregnant before marriage, but when they discovered her condition her parents would

[18] My evidence on this subject is by no means so clear as I could wish. Hambruch (*op. cit.* I, pp. 240-241) states that *temónibe* women were always expected to remain chaste until marriage; but two of my informants denied this, though one said that infidelity after betrothal would lead to the breaking off of the match. This same informant told me further that if an unmarried *temónibe* woman were to become pregnant she would abort, and that for a *temónibe* woman to be known to have had recourse to abortion or, still worse, to have given birth to an illegitimate child, was a very serious disgrace, and after having done so she could never hope to marry a man of her own rank.

assert their authority to make her marry the man who was responsible. I was told also that if a woman had given birth to an illegitimate child no man would want her as his wife, but another of my informants denied this, saying that in olden days no great disgrace attached to such a woman nor to her children, though the latter suffered from certain social disadvantages because, having no father, they were in a position of dependance on the *temónibe*, or headman of their mother's clan. Both my informants agreed that the mere fact of a girl being illegitimate would not be a bar to her chances of making a satisfactory marriage.

Sometimes during dances or athletic displays a deeper and more lasting passion was kindled and, if the young people met with or feared opposition from their elders, they eloped. The classic example of such an elopement is preserved in the story of Enuae of Eamwit (eldest sister and half-sister of the two famous Eamwit warriors Agoijaruk and Ijibauwo) and Akibwip of Eamwidumwit. She saw him with his elder brothers flying kites, and became forthwith so enamoured of him that she left her companions and, without saying a word to him, returned with him to his home in Yarren. Akibwip was below her in social status, and moreover she was already betrothed to Deijogar of Ranibök, a *temónibe*. But so great was Akibwip's beauty, so perfect was his body in every respect, that eventually Enuae's father was forced to submit to her choice, and he gave his younger daughter, Emañare, to Deijogar instead. If a girl and a young man eloped they ran the risk of forfeiting their inheritance, for angered parents could not only refuse to give them land or other property during their lifetime, but could also, after death, by testamentary disposition, alienate lands, trees and goods from disobedient children. I am rather inclined to believe however, that this was a parental right which, though it might be used as a threat, was seldom put into effect. I was never told any personal history which illustrated complete disinheritance. If a young man wished to marry a girl of whom his parents and kinsfolk disapproved he would leave the parental homestead and live with his wife's people; conversely, if a girl desired to marry a man in opposition to her parents' wishes, she would settle in his homestead; and sooner or later parental affection would overcome the desire to

enforce parental authority and the marriage would be accepted by both parties. It was perhaps rather more difficult for a girl to resist her parents by refusing to marry the man of their selection, since they could drive her from their homestead and disinherit her. But even then she could generally find refuge with some distant relative or clansman living in another part of the island, though her position in such a household might be the not enviable one of a poor dependant.

Among commoners the normal way by which a young man was supplied with a bride seems to have been somewhat as follows. When a youth has reached the age when it is right and proper that he should take a wife,[19] his parents and elder kinsfolk select from among the young girls one whom they regard as a suitable mate for him. If the girl has not yet attained puberty they wait until the ceremonies connected with her first menstruation are at an end. Then when she is once more living with her parents, they despatch the young male kinsmen and friends of the intended bridegroom to ask for her hand. The young man himself never accompanies this deputation. On seeing the company approach the homestead, the girl, knowing what is toward, leaves the house but remains near by to be at hand when sent for. The group of young men enter the house and after the usual exchange of courtesies one of them says to the girl's parents : " We have come to ask you for the outrigger of your canoe ; my canoe is drifting out to sea without an outrigger, and I want your new outrigger for my canoe." (In olden days the outrigger was often unlashed from the hull of the canoe and kept inside the dwelling house.) Thus, speaking in a recognized metaphor he asks for the girl. The girl's parents do not at this time discuss the matter but agree to the request. They give the visitors toddy to drink ; send for the girl, adorn her with garlands, and then despatch her with the young men back to the homestead whence they have come on their mission. The girl is always accompanied on this

[19] I did not get any clear evidence of the age at which it was usual for a man to marry, but I judge that it was in the early twenties. Girls of *temónibe* rank were married almost immediately after puberty ; those of lower status probably within two or three years of it. I have no data to show what the average age at which girls attain puberty, but it is probably about 13 or 14.

visit by an unmarried female companion, usually a first cousin (*earetetsin*) or close friend of about her own age.[20] It seems that the apparent conceding on the part of the girl's parents to the request for their daughter, without any discussion, is but in accordance with the courteous practice, so common among the Pacific Islanders, of never refusing anyone who asks for a gift. It is not that everything has been settled beforehand and that the making of the request for the girl is a mere formality, but that the time for discussion has not yet come. Sending their daughter away commits neither them nor her to anything. The girl and her companion go off and spend three days at the homestead of the man who wants her as his daughter-in-law, and during these days her parents tell her *amenubwien* of what has happened. They are however, still ignorant (at least officially) of the identity of the intended bridegroom. At the end of the three days the girl's parents and kinsfolk pay a formal visit to the homestead of the other party, taking with them gifts of food. They are now told who the young man is for whom the girl is wanted as wife, and a return visit is made: the girl and her companion go back with her parents and *amenubwien* to her home and with them go also the would-be bridegroom and one of his male *earetetsin* or friends. These young men spend two or three nights at the homestead of the girl's parents, sleeping with her brothers or male cousins. When the three days are over the parents and kinsfolk of the intended husband visit the girl's parents bringing food to them, and fetch the two young men away. The preliminaries are now over. Should the girl's parents and *amenubwien* approve the intended match, they will now invite the young man to come and stay with them, " in order to cut toddy for the girl "—toddy cutting being one of the characteristic services which a man is under an obligation to perform for his wife. If the young man also wishes for the marriage he accepts the invitation, lives in her parents' homestead, gets to know the girl and gradually comes to live with her as her recognized spouse. If he does not wish for the marriage, he excuses himself politely from accepting the invitation, saying that he is unable to leave his people, and this is

[20] It is interesting that this companion is never the girl's own younger sister.

understood as a rejection of the proposed marriage. Similarly, if the girl's parents and kinsfolk do not want the marriage they politely avoid inviting the young man to come and " cut toddy," and this is interpreted as a rejection of his suit. Sometimes a man would go and live in the homestead of his intended bride and later wish to break off the match. This he could do gracefully and without giving offence, by saying that he must return home for a while on account of his grandmother.[21] He would then depart and, of course, not return.

I was told that for a marriage to be arranged the sanction of the *amenubwien kər* of both parties to it was necessary, and that if proposals of marriage were refused in the way described above neither party could take offence. One informant from whom I obtained (in English) a considerable amount of information about marriage in Nauru said that " the whole family is *agen*." Since *agen* means, primarily, " consort," this remark is very significant as showing to what an extent the marriage of a man and woman is regarded as a union between the *amenubwien* of each.

As has already been mentioned there does not ever seem to have been any elaborate marriage ceremony in Nauru, but one informant told me that the real rite which established the husband and wife relationship was one wherein the bride's mother gave the bridegroom toddy to drink, oiled his body with coconut oil (made by herself) and combed his hair. I believe, however, that this cannot truly be regarded as a marriage rite, but rather, that when a woman performs such intimate services for her daughter's suitor, it is recognized that the son-in-law to mother-in-law relationship has now been finally established. I was told by the same informant that a woman might be as familiar in her behaviour with her daughter's husband as she was with her own husband, and that the latter had no right to feel any jealousy at this.

Divorce, so I was assured, was never common, for, were a man to cast off his wife or a woman to leave her husband, the man or

[21] I was told that he would always plead a duty or obligation to one of his grandmothers, but never to his father or mother. My impression is that only the need of a grandmother could be regarded as of sufficient importance to justify his departure ; the demands of parents being not pressing enough.

woman concerned would become the butt of a considerable amount of public ridicule.[22] It was held to be bad form for a man to be jealous of his wife or for a woman to be jealous of her husband, and it was a confession of failure for them to separate. Nevertheless from what I heard from divers people, I am inclined to believe that before the birth of a child divorce was not unusual. Perhaps, however, this should not be spoken of as divorce, but should rather be regarded as the cancelling of a betrothal. The usual cause for such a cancellation was that the girl proved unfaithful. I was also told that if, even after the birth of a child, a wife was discovered to be carrying on an intrigue with another man, or left her home for him, this would probably bring the marriage to an end. If the home were on the husband's land the wife would leave it; if it were on land belonging to the wife or her kinsfolk, he would depart; in both cases, however, he generally had the custody of the children—another curious feature in a, technically, matrilineal society.[23]

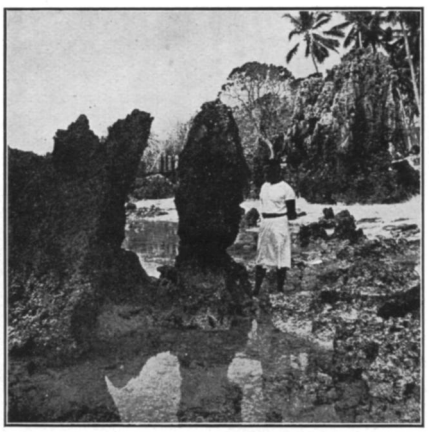
But just as a man might, with his first wife's consent, take a second wife, so might a woman with her husband's consent, take a second husband. Formerly, so I was told, this was quite common. Should a married woman and a man become seriously enamoured of each other the man would come to the house where she lived and stay there. At first he would pretend that his visit was only a brief one, but every day towards evening he would make some excuse to stay there for the night. This was a well recognized fiction; the husband knew what was happening but he would have been forever disgraced in the eyes of his fellows had he attempted to send the man away or to show any objection to his presence in the home. The two men continued to live together in the same house, and I was assured that they usually became the best of friends. The first husband remained the more important, and I heard of one instance of such a polyandrous union in which all the woman's children were regarded socially as the offspring of the first husband, although from

[22] The informant who told me this impressed upon me how very powerful was the sanction of public ridicule. To-day unfortunately it seems to be very much weaker than even fifty years ago.

[23] The economic aspects of marriage and divorce will be discussed in Part II in the section on Economic Life.

REPORT ON RESEARCH WORK IN NAURU ISLAND, CENTRAL PACIFIC.
PLATE I.

A. *Men fishing in one of the big lagoons of brackish water in Ijuw district, where the* ibìa *fish are raised.*



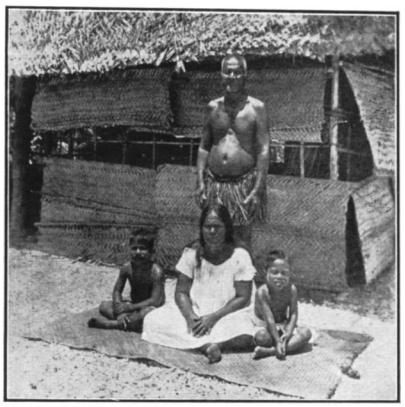
B. *A view of some of the coral pinnacles at the west end of Anibari Bay. The man is an inmate of the Leper Station, in the grounds of which these rocks stand. He is standing beside the rock which represents the first husband of Emenea, the mythological mother of all creatures in the sea and on land.*

C. *View of a part of the Leper Station, which is separated from the outside world by a double fence of barbed wire. The inmates dwell in native houses, and lead as far as possible a normal native life in the coconut lands and on the reef, which have been set aside for them.*

D. *All babies under the age of two years are brought once a week to one of the baby health centres, where they are weighed and examined by the Government nursing sister, who keeps a detailed record of their progress and gives instructions concerning their care. This photograph was taken during an attendance at the baby health centre in Anetan district.*

REPORT ON RESEARCH WORK IN NAURU ISLAND, CENTRAL PACIFIC.
PLATE II.

A. *A Nauruan woman of the "Melanesian" type.*



B. *A Nauruan, wearing the native pandanus leaf petticoat* (ridi), *with his daughter and her two sons. She has Gilbertese blood in her on her mother's side.*

C. *A group of young girls.*

D. *Chief Scotty with some of his children and grandchildren. He has negro and Scandinavian as well as Nauruan blood in him; his wife, sitting on the ground, is a pure blood Nauruan.*

REPORT ON RESEARCH WORK IN NAURU ISLAND, CENTRAL PACIFIC.
PLATE III.

A. *View of part of a typical homestead*

B. *The old dancing ground in Yarren district overshadowed by two large "tomano" trees. Dancing was prohibited by the missionaries and the old native dances are now forgotten.*

C. *A house of the old style, in the inland district of Buada. It has "blinds" of plaited coconut leaves which can be let down to form walls or pulled up to admit light and air. The floor is of coral gravel. The banana and pawpaw trees are introduced plants which the Nauruans have learnt to cultivate.*

D. *A house of the new style with concrete floor and walls of narrow wooden slats. This house won a prize in the house-building competition in 1934.*

their features it was plain that the second husband was their physiological father. This might suggest that we are wrong in regarding the second man as a husband and that he is rather in the position of a male concubine. The Nauruans, however, show from their attitude towards the custom that they regard the second man as truly a husband. I never heard of an instance of a married man attaching himself to the wife and household of another, and creating a condition of combined polygyny and polyandry, nor did I ever hear of brothers becoming co-husbands (unfortunately I failed to ask even if this were permissible), and I was told that there was no recollection of any woman ever having had more than two husbands simultaneously.

(To be continued.)

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