

SAN FRANCISCO, SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 1898.

LAST FEAST OF THE FIJI ISLAND CANNIBALS.

By an Eye-Witness.

HAS JUST CONVERTED 1120 CANNIBALS.

REV. JOHN PATTON has just returned from several years of active and arduous missionary work among the savages of the New Hebrides Islands. Though he takes an immense pleasure in the large number of converts he made to Christianity, his greatest pride is that he was able to induce a very large number of cannibals to forsake the practice of eating their captured enemies.

Dr. Patton made a rough estimate of these converts and placed the number at 1120.



THERE has lately been placed on exhibition in the Academy of Sciences a genuine cannibal bowl from the South Sea Islands. It is an ugly, blood-soaked relic that it took days to scrub clean and rid of a sickening odor of human flesh. The bowl is about five feet across at the top, is hewn out of a single block of wood, and in days gone by was used for holding the cooked bodies of human beings after they were taken from the oven to be carved and served to the cannibal feasters.

Captain George E. Jackson, who spent years cruising among the South Sea Islands, on hearing of the arrival of this bowl a few days ago, at once hastened to examine it. He scrutinized it from all sides to assure himself that it was genuine.

"I've seen bowls of that kind used many a time," he said. "In fact, I was present at the last cannibal feast in the Fiji Islands, when several of them were in use. I never want to see such sights again."

"It is generally thought that cannibalism in the South Seas is at an end. But it was not stamped out in a day. The conversion of the Fijians was accomplished from the coast inland by missionaries. And so it was that the interior mountain people for many years captured victims for their feasts. Several attempts were made by white men to reach and punish these mountain cannibals, but it always resulted in loss of life followed by a feast of human flesh in the camp of the cannibals."

"The principal town and stronghold of the mountain people was Nivotheene, situated at the head of the Reeve River. The case of the last white man they captured and ate was very sad. The Rev. Thomas Baker, a Wesleyan missionary, with seven of his native teachers, attempted to reach Nivotheene, but when within a short distance of the place they were set upon by the Na-Vosa tribe, killed and eaten. Baker had been strongly urged by the coast natives against making the attempt, as it was well known the Na-Vosa tribe had long been eager to eat a white man."

"I was with an expedition that was bent on stamping out cannibalism when the report of this crime came to hand. Of course, it roused every white man in the party, and we redoubled our energies to round up the man-eaters and give them a lesson that should for-

ever end their appetites for that kind of food. Old Chief Thakambau of the coast tribe had loaned us a lot of his best natives as guides and soldiers. It was on this trip that I was forced to witness one of their horrible feasts.

"Well, we tracked the man-eaters to their villages after a deal of hardship, but invariably found the huts empty. The rascals, by some native wiles, were always warned of our approach in time to decamp. As if to taunt us they always left behind a pile of human bones and other signs to show that they were still man hunting and defied us.

"On our last advance, when we were quite deep in the mountains, one of our scouts came to us with the news that a missionary and his entire party of native followers had been killed by the inhabitants of a small village near by."

"Did anybody escape?" asked our captain.

"Three white men," answered the scout. "They had firearms and the cannibals were afraid to approach near them, so the white men backed away and escaped."

"After ascertaining the exact location of the village our captain decided to raid it and if possible prevent the forthcoming feast. To prevent any chance of its coming off he ordered another man and myself with several natives to go ahead with him and reconnoiter, while the rest of our company of seventy-five men should follow as fast as the rough character of the country would permit.

"It happened, however, that our guide was entirely mistaken in regard to the locality of the village. It was much nearer than we had figured, and before we expected it we heard distant shouting.

"Those are the cannibals," we all cried at once and ran for the nearest defense thicket. But this move brought us closer to the village. Then we found it advisable to climb into a cleft in a cliff to see and to prevent being seen. From this point we could look across into the village and see the women piling wood into the ovens and making other preparations for the coming feast.

"The distant shouting drew nearer each moment, and soon the most ferocious-looking crowd I ever saw came dashing into the village dragging the bodies of several dead men.

"Then the feast commenced and we could do absolutely nothing but stand and watch it, hoping against hope that our main party would hear the shouting and close up.

"The first thing the natives did was to prepare the bodies. This process was much as a housewife does in preparing a chicken for roasting. Then

they were trussed and tied into position, and after being placed on a long hardwood board, were shoved into the heated ovens. There they remained about eight hours. All the while the people of the village shouted, danced and yelled and drank large gulps of the island liquor.

"The scene at this time beggars description. It was one wild whirl of licentious debauchery.

"At a signal from the chief the dancing suddenly ceased and the ovens, made of bricks and stones, very much like a baker's oven, were opened and the bodies were dragged out and placed in the immense wooden bowls waiting for them. The same kind of a bowl as this," indicating the one on exhibition. "Then an official of some sort came before each bowl and with spear and knife cut the bodies into portions. These portions were quickly seized and greedily devoured.

"From our hiding places in the cliff we could catch the voices of the feasters, and our natives translated the Fijians' opinion of roast white man. It seems that this white man had been roasted in a special oven and special care had been bestowed on his preparation.

"There was, however, some disappointment among the feasters. They decided that white man was 'too salt' and not as good as they had expected. Some of them thought it would have been better to have kept him awhile and fattened him for the feast. It was decided that this should be done with the next white man they captured. But the chance never came to them.

"During the long hours we had been standing in the cleft of the cliff our company had been about a mile away waiting for the captain to return and give further orders. As he did not come the officer in charge became uneasy and reconnoitered himself a bit.

"Hearing the shouting he approached the village. When he saw the feast going on he concluded that we were the victims, and at once took command of the soldiers upon himself.

"He ordered an advance. It did not take our boys long to break up that cannibal feast. There was a short sharp resistance, but a few rifle balls created a panic and the cannibals fairly disappeared.

"The next day we were attacked by the same cannibals and it was a lively fight. Three of our men were killed, but we almost wiped the tribe out of existence. The few we didn't kill we captured, and since that time there has been no trouble over flesh-eating in Fiji.

"I forgot to say that the evening after we cleaned out that first village

the cannibals sent us a basket with about forty pounds of human flesh in it, with a taunting message to eat it and get some courage, as we should need it. That was the last act of defiance of that kind they ever had a chance to play on us.

"The question has been raised about women being allowed to eat with the men on the occasion of these cannibal feasts, but old Fijians told me it was not customary, although not absolutely forbidden, and it was usual for the men to eat their fill first; then women came in and took what was left. One old chief replied that he would like to see the woman 'who did not contrive to get her fill.'

"Another old chief when asked about pork and man, said there was no comparison between them, human flesh being so much the best.

"A man was called 'long pork,' while a hog was called 'short pork.'

"One custom of revenge and insult among warring cannibals was to collect the bones of the bodies thus eaten and reduce them to a powder. Then when peace was restored and the tribes feasted together this nice ingredient was added to some favorite pudding. Afterward should war again break out it was the height of triumph to taunt the late guests with having eaten the dishonored bones of their kindred.

"In the mad quest to satisfy their craving for human flesh these cannibals would often dig up the bodies of those who had died natural deaths.

"On a hill at the head of the valley, near Nivotheene, stands another town named Balavu (the long town), which in 1871 was surprised by neighboring tribes, who slew and ate 260 victims. This was the last great feast on the island, and it continued several days."

WEIRD FUNERAL RITES Over the HEAD CHIEF OF THE SIOUX.

RECENT dispatches announce the probably last illness of Red Cloud, the famous Indian chieftain. The last great chief to die among the Indians was Young - Man - Afraid - of - His - Horses, hereditary chief of the Sioux, who died of heart disease at Newcastle, Wyo., July 14, 1893. The incidents attendant upon his funeral will in all probability be repeated should Red Cloud die, as he is also held in

highest esteem among his tribesmen.

On Friday morning, July 14, 1893, the Indians of Pine Ridge agency became greatly excited, armed themselves and congregated in groups about the agency grounds. So great became the excitement that the whites became alarmed and inquired regarding the cause. The Indians said that Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses had been in trouble with the whites and had been killed. No explanation of this was offered, but the Indians insisted that it was true. For two hours the uncertainty continued, and then a telegram came from Newcastle, Wyo., 200 miles away, saying that the chief had dropped dead from heart disease that morning. The Indians had received the intelligence of his death, but not in the manner, two hours before the telegram brought the news. R. O. Pugh, who has been overseer and superintendent among the Sioux for more than twenty years, and who is thoroughly conversant with their affairs, says that he has known of several similar instances and in every case the news received by the Indians had been verified by courier or letter hours or days afterward.

The body of the dead chieftain was placed in a casket and sent to Pine Ridge agency, arriving there the Monday following the death. The camp of the chief was about ten miles from the agency and there the Government had erected a big council chamber for him. This was known as the chief's omaha, and here were held dances, councils and ceremonies of all kinds. To this omaha the body was taken and laid in state about the building. The east and the north are sacred points of the compass. The women and professional mourners began their howling and wailing early in the morning, and at times the sound was almost deafening in its intensity. Louder and louder would the sound grow, until it seemed as if pandemonium had come upon earth. Then the wailing would die away and grow fainter until but a solitary voice would be heard, moaning and sobbing in the intensity of grief. Then one after another would join until the whole body would be at it again, and so it continued as the hours passed by.

All about the omaha the warriors congregated, filling in and out and paying their respects to the dead chieftain, each leaving some tribute on the floor until there was a pile of fine blankets, robes, bridles, saddles, bolts of calico, ornaments, and, in fact, everything that an Indian possesses and deems valuable, covering the floor about the casket. As each Indian deposited his offering he designated to whom it was to go, and the one named

would accept, but would leave it on the floor. The acceptance meant that two years later, at the end of the mourning period, the recipient would return an equivalent to the donor.

Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses had two wives, one a full blood and the other a half-breed. When he died his full blood wife retired to her house and received no company. Neither did she show herself during all the rites and ceremonies attendant upon the funeral. The half-breed wife, however, not only came out, but showed such an excess of grief as is seldom seen as she appeared at the omaha she had her arms and legs bare and they were hacked and cut in a most horrible manner. As she walked every footprint was marked with blood, and it ran down from her arms. Her appearance at the omaha was a signal for the old women who were mourning for the chief, and they proceeded to inflict similar mutilations upon themselves. Howling and moaning, they ran about like so many escaped lunatics, all the while scourging themselves, while the men joined in the horrible chorus of wails.

This continued until late in the afternoon, when the Rev. Mr. Snavely, the Episcopal clergyman of the agency, appeared and prepared to conduct the ceremonies of that church over the dead chieftain. The blue cloth robe of state which had been worn on great occasions by Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses was laid in front of the casket, and in the presence of thousands of mourning Indians the beautiful ritual of the church was read in the Dacotah language, the clergyman being assisted by George Fire Thunder, an Indian catechist of the church. While these services were going on inside, thousands of Indians were moaning, wailing and howling on the outside of the omaha.

At the close of the services the Indian chiefs and warriors assembled inside the omaha, and one by one they recited the many brave deeds of the dead chieftain in which the reciter took part. When all had finished, the casket was carried to the hill northeast of the omaha, and there, by the side of his father, and children, who had gone before him, he was laid to rest with his weapons by his side.

After all the personal property of the dead chieftain was distributed among his friends, the relatives took upon themselves the badge of mourning which was to last two years. They covered their bodies with canvas, cut gashes in their arms and legs and then cut their hair short. According to the code of Indian ethics the hair is not touched during the entire time of

mourning. At the end of the period some friend is called in who combs and plait the matted mass, receiving a horse for his pay.

The most peculiar phase of the life of Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses was the fact that he could read and write English script, but was totally ignorant of printed letters. He was self taught in this, and would never attempt to learn to read print. The writer has in his possession a letter written to him by Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses a short time before his death. It was written in red ink and is a fair example of Indian expression in English. It reads as follows:

WHITE CLAY, S. D., March 1, 1893.

Dear Sir: Some years ago my father he was with the white man away. He wants to listen what our great father what he tells the Indian to do that the man, and he also listen to our agent what he said and he never say any wrong if the people have fight you must not go there because you are not a bad man, that's what the agent told my father, and they told my father that they going to give him a big foods to eat, sugar, coffee and cow, how long as the Indian live on earth and the soldiers told my that way again Black Beard and one other man then two man told my father that I going to eat cow away and big food to eat they told my father those. I hear so I want that way, and they told my father that I going to eat big food 17 years. So I heard all those things and all the soldiers my friends told me again that I going to eat live cow and big food to eat. All the soldiers and General One Star all those they are my friends so I listen to them what they told me and I help them also and if I am die I don't care for my soul. And those four new fathers that them soldiers going give us words that the reason I want to said something. All my parents, they children so hurry eat up their foods so hurry that the reason I want you to give them more foods to eat, they give them few sugar coffee four beans so they eat up soon, and our great father all this our must behalf themself. Now this time my parents and they children will go on what the white man tell them to do so I wish you would be kind to them if you please. That is all, I am glad to shake hands with you.

YOUNG-MAN-AFRAID-OF-HIS-HORSES.

General One Star, referred to in the letter, is General Miles and Black Beard is General Howard. The letter was written for the purpose of securing larger supplies for the Indians of the Sioux nation, and it was during the pendency of his application that the chief died. CHARLES HARLAND.