THE MAJESTY OF COLOUR

A life of Sir John Bates Thurston

VOLUME ONE

I, the very bayonet



DERYCK SCARR

John Bates Thurston began life, he said, aboard a barque bound for India—as a 13-year-old apprentice in love with the sea. Some years later, marooned in the South Seas after a shipwreck, he elected to stay on in Fiji. From being Acting British Consul and cotton planter he rose to be Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, the office he held up to his death in 1897.

Dr Scarr has delved into diaries, private letters, official correspondence and newspapers to reconstruct the colourful life story of Thurston, one of the most personally compelling and historically significant figures in modern Pacific history. He succeeds in presenting him as utterly honest and forthright, touchy and arrogant, a man often between anger and laughter—above all, completely devoted to his adopted country and its people. At the same time he conveys something of the spell that Fiji cast over Thurston when he first went to the Pacific and which remained with him always.

In this book, the first part of a 2-volume work, Thurston is at odds with his own emigrant society and its racist views. But as intimate and supporter of the chiefs he is, to the Fijian élite, *Na Kena Vai*—the Very Bayonet, or, by free translation, the Pilot Fish. The second volume of the biography, *Viceroy of the Pacific*, will be concerned with Thurston as architect of policy after the Cession of Fiji to Britain in 1874, and with his role as Governor and High Commissioner.

I, the Very Bayonet will not only be valued highly by historians but also read with pleasure and profit by all lovers of the Pacific and of good biography.

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Aldenhoven.
Sydney.

THE MAJESTY OF COLOUR

A life of Sir John Thurston

VOLUME ONE

I, THE VERY BAYONET

By the same author

Fragments of Empire: a history of the Western Pacific High Commission 1877–1914 (1967)
Ed., W. E. Giles, *A Cruize in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas* (1968)
Ed. with J. W. Davidson, *Pacific Islands Portraits* (1970)

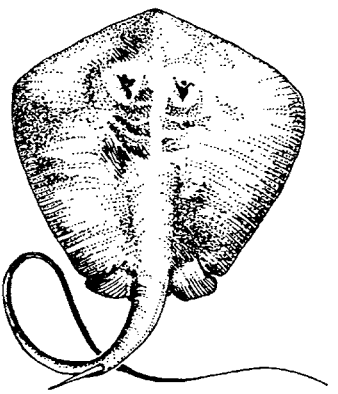
THE MAJESTY OF COLOUR

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For Elizabeth, Antonia, Nicholas

Indeed I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life, than not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought; by which mankind are enabled as it were to see him live, and to 'live o'er each scene' with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life.

James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*

Preface

THE overall title of this two-volume biography, *The Majesty of Colour*, derives from a phrase made in irony by its subject. 'Treason—high treason—against the Majesty of color', wrote J. B. Thurston, then Chief Secretary of King Cakobau's government, when his fellow Europeans in Fiji were accusing him of treason against their divine right of kingship over Fijians. 'Majesty' was the right assumed by a white minority to rule a black majority in accordance with whites' assumptions and interests. Thurston denied that such a right existed.

His denial itself, along with the unusual and varied character of the circumstances from which he issued it, makes his life peculiarly worthy of study when biographies of colonial governors, as a genre, are dead. J. B. Thurston became a colonial governor; but the path by which he attained the office and the use to which he put its power were unconventional. He rejected some of the most firmly-held tenets of his own society. He proposed to embody the values of another in the enactments of a colonial administration.

His own literacy and fecundity in private as well as official correspondence permit his biographer to attempt a closer approximation than is commonly achieved to the ideal set up by Boswell himself. Each chapter title in this first volume is a phrase of Thurston's own. And to live over each scene with him by interweaving what he privately wrote with what his own and other records show him to have done, is to open shafts into the history of Fiji—history about which much is assumed, somewhat less really known and understood. It is also to open similar shafts into the other islands of the Western Pacific; the second volume of this study—*Viceroy of the Pacific*—will in some parts throw further

light on matters treated, from different angles, in my *Fragments of Empire.*

The portrait of Fiji which is essayed in the following pages seems both worthwhile in itself and a necessary part of biography: it is an especially legitimate object for a biographer to evoke a sense of his central character's physical surroundings as well as of his times. But that portrait is subsidiary to the portrait of the man —to what he said, believed, and did. Nothing has been assumed here about Thurston or his context. I have examined parallel and conflicting testimonies more intensively and systematically than others have attempted hitherto. And yet I have tried to keep the major character in the centre of the stage. To borrow a phrase, I have written, not about a man *and* his times, but about a man *in* his times. That man's own angle and depth of vision, tested with initial scepticism, have proved wide and intensive, as well as true-sighted.

In that part of his life which will fall into *Viceroy of the Pacific*, enduring problems arise from the controversies aroused amongst both contemporaries and present-day observers by Thurston's view of Fijian societies. In *I, the Very Bayonet*, the interpretation is controversial towards the end; but the controversy involved is essentially that least valuable of debates wherein words have been committed to paper in ignorance of basic evidence and the history of an exotic country has been seen as from the steps of the Public Record Office in London. Some judgments reek of the lamp—even of the pulpit and pillory too.

I was, I believe, the first writer to publish the results of an examination of the records of the Cakobau government and to interpret them in relation to the tone of the newspapers published in Fiji. My fairly radical interpretation appeared in an article published in 1964—'John Bates Thurston, Commodore J. G. Goodenough, and rampant Anglo-Saxons in Fiji'. And my later, refining researches have shown them to be sound. The available material is rich, varied and complementary; at one point three journals written from differing viewpoints overlap, removing almost all shadow from where there has been, hitherto, dark speculation. If the effect is to show that a man whom historians, following contemporaries, have commonly supposed to be untruthful at the crisis of his career was in fact doing precisely what he always said he was doing, no observer of historians will be greatly

surprised. I have been able to write with confidence about this most debated period of Thurston's life—to write not from his point of view, but from that of a well-informed observer.

I have been, then, in no intellectual bondage to metropolitan repositories and views of events; but I have incurred an inestimable debt to an island repository—the former Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, now separated into the National Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific Archives. To their founder, Miss Dorothy Crozier, and to past and present Archivists, Mr A. I. Diamond and Mr S. T. Tuinaceva, I owe in the fullest measure the thanks rightfully due to one who planned and those who run a model archives office amid the importunities of invariably-unseasonable visitors. In my search for, then supposedly non-existent, private letters by Thurston, I was kindly received by Rhodes House and the Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, as well as by the Library of the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge. The National Library of Australia purchased what at the time was the only known body of Thurston private papers and thereby earned my gratitude—gratitude which it has earned on many other counts over a long period. So, too, the staff of the Menzies building of the Australian National University Library have been consistently helpful and forbearing, as have those of the Mitchell and Dixson Libraries. I have, though to a far lesser degree, burdened the staff of the British Museum and occasionally of the Public Record Office, London, itself. And I have long had reason to be grateful to the National Archives, Wellington, New Zealand, as also to the Turnbull Library in that city, the Hocken Library in Dunedin, and the Auckland Museum and Institute Library, while I was most hospitably received by the Marist Fathers in Sydney, Rome and Suva.

My personal debts are especially to my wife, who has lived enthusiastically with J. B. Thurston throughout her married life; to Dr Peter France, whose *Charter of the Land* I sometimes dare to disagree with but always admire; to Professor J. W. Davidson, whose criticism is constructive. And I am peculiarly grateful to Mrs Eliza d'Este Arieta Perrins, Thurston's eldest daughter and sole surviving child, who gave me letters and papers along with careful, often illuminating answers to many impertinent questions. In Thornbury, Gloucestershire, I was helpfully received at the

office of Messrs Thurston and Thurston, Solicitors; in London Mrs J. E. Egerton obtained birth certificates on my behalf; in Cambridge Mrs G. K. Roth has been kind on many occasions in providing access to documents and photographs in her care; from Stanford-in-the-Vale the Reverend H. Selwyn Fry, O.B.E., sent me a useful photostat; in Canberra Mrs Anne-Marie Jubb and Mrs Honore Forster checked quotations, while above all Mrs Rosamund Walsh, most tolerant of secretaries, reduced a notoriously indecipherable script to immaculate type with a dedication that it may not have deserved. Mr Keith Mitchell drew the maps. And I am grateful to the Australian National University Press, who were not alarmed by an ambitious project.

My other great and special debts are to people of and in Fiji—hosts, helpers, sounding-boards and friends. They are so numerous that it would be invidious to mention by name any at all. They look very much to the future now, but they are part of a past which Thurston made. And though this preface goes to the publisher from the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Australian National University in 1972, its genesis, like this biography itself, was in another place. It is appropriate, therefore, that it should be dated as at:

Levuka, Ovalau, Fiji
November 1971 D.A.S.

Abbreviations

Adm	Admiralty records, Public Record Office
AMIL	Auckland Museum and Institute Library
APM	Archivo Padri Maristi
BCS	Records of the British Consul to Samoa
BM	British Museum
C.O.	Colonial Office
COCP	Colonial Office Confidential Print
CP	Legislative Council Papers, Fiji
DL	Dixson Library
F1	Records of the Cakobau Government, Ad-Interim and Provisional Governments
F4	Records of the British Consul for Fiji and Tonga
FCSO	Records of the Colonial Secretary's Office, Fiji
FM	Fiji Museum
F.O.	Foreign Office
GBPP	*Accounts and Papers* of the House of Commons
HL	Hocken Library
LCC	Lands Claims Commission
M	Records of the Methodist Mission, Fiji
MAE	Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology
ML	Mitchell Library
MMS	Records of the Methodist Missionary Society
MOM	Records of the Methodist Overseas Mission
NAF	National Archives of Fiji
NAW	National Archives, Washington
NLC	Native Lands Commission
NSW	Archives Office of New South Wales
PMB	Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
PRO	Public Record Office
RH	Rhodes House
RNAS	Royal Navy: Australian Station: Records of the Commander-in-Chief
TL	Turnbull Library

Glossary

bati	the border people, owing mainly military service to the power-centre they followed
buli	to install a chief
iyau	valued goods
kai	people
lala	a service obligation due from people to chiefs
lewa	authority, hence, by extension, 'law'
lewe ni vanua	people of the land
lotu	the Christian religion
lovo	a pit oven
magiti	a feast presented to others
marama	a woman of rank, a lady
masi	cloth made from the paper mulberry
matanitu	a political confederation of *vanua*
matanivanua	a herald, ambassador, spokesman
matāpule (Tongan)	a chief's attendant
mataqali	after the classic model of 'Fijian society', the primary social division, with each *mataqali* deriving from the sons of the founder of a *yavusa* (the largest kinship and social group, its members supposedly descended from a common ancestor)
papalagi	foreigner
qali	descriptive of a town or people in subjection to another; also used at this time in the sense of a social group
qali lewe ni kuro	menial servants
qase	old man, elder
tabua	an article of special value used in exchange cycles; a whale's tooth is used now, as in the years under consideration here

takia	a small outrigger canoe
itaukei	the land-owners
turaga	a man of rank, a chief
vai	a stingray; hence, from the sting's shape, a bayonet
vakaroroqo	to go to as a subordinate to a leader, to follow
vakasaurara	tyranny
vakaviti	Fiji-fashion
valavala	conduct, disposition
vale	house
vanua	a land, a primary state
vasu	the sister's son
waqa tabu (*waqa ni Viti, drua*)	a double canoe, large, deep-sea sailing vessel, having one hull slightly smaller than the other

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Frontispiece is by courtesy of the National Archives, Fiji; plates 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are Thurston's own photographs enclosed in his letters to Captain Hope, and reproduced by courtesy of the Turnbull Library, Wellington; plates 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 are by courtesy of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge; plate 3 is by courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Sydney; and plate 18 is from the Perrins Papers (which also has the original of plate 3).

A Note on Orthography

The well-established, highly economical Fijian orthography is used:

b is pronounced as *mb* in *number*
c is pronounced as *th* in *that*
d is pronounced as *nd* in *end*
g is pronounced as *ng* in *singer*
q is pronounced as *ng* in *finger*

'K'oi Au, Na Kena Vai'

In colonial, pre-independent Fiji the photographs of former governors hung in a row in the entrance to the Legislative Council chamber. Only one was also prominent elsewhere, in the office of the Secretary for Fijian Affairs—appropriately prominent there since, for many people, that department symbolised the persistence of the nineteenth century into the twentieth. There, into the time when the European Secretary had been replaced by a Minister who was a member of the ruling house of Cakaudrove province, hung a studio portrait in profile of a small-boned, sallow man; the skin is drawn tight across the temples, the whole face fragile with the fragility less of years than of mortal sickness.

Sir John Thurston was in the grip of a disease that killed him within twelve months when, in 1896, he sat for and signed a portrait to leave in the colony which he had ruled intermittently for some fifteen years and lived in for thirty-two. But until the very end his hand-writing remained firm, heavy, squared—distinctive as ever. He had not adopted a style to give it up until failing muscular control was beyond all direction of the spirit. Then, having signed the portrait with the formal 'John B. Thurston', he allowed nostalgia to set in; and below the signature that had been familiar to an old and a new generation in Fiji he added a nickname that most men had probably forgotten in the twenty-odd years since it had been most apt, when he was assuring Fijians that British annexation was not their sole recourse in the white man's dawning age. *'K'oi Au, Na Kena Vai'*, he wrote: 'I, the very Bayonet'—or, according to a free interpretation that persisted in the family of Ratu Seru Epenesa Cakobau who gave him the name, 'I, the Pilot-Fish'.

'Pilot-Fish' to the sharks who were the chiefs of Fiji, the family

understood—the guide who reconnoitred, then recommended, alternative routes to men who wanted above all to retain control of their own political destiny. So in his time J. B. Thurston had been: but many other things besides. The man who died in February 1897 as Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in his second term had been merchant seaman, botanical collector and castaway, acting-consul for Britain in Fiji, planter, labour-recruiter, leader of a settler government that had confounded settler expectations, and then for thirteen years the dominant figure in the administration of colonial Fiji below the rank of governor until, finally, he achieved it himself.

He began life at sea, as he said; he died there; and the sea was a constant motif in his life. He had swum through Pacific breakers with a trading brigantine grinding to pieces on coral behind him, had sat with his foot on the tiller steering a cutter he had built himself down from a cotton plantation across an island-studded sea to a port where Europeans and Fijians expected from him things incompatible. In a small schooner, off an island north of the New Hebrides, he had probed with a pen-knife into the thigh of a Melanesian labourer after an arrow-head he believed to be poisoned. And in a Tongan's yacht, anchored in Savusavu bay, he had talked earnestly with Fijian chiefs—one a personal friend—whose actions he feared would break up the Kingdom of Fiji before a viable, acceptable alternative was in sight. The sea had been rumbling below him as he sat one night on his verandah at Levuka with lamps behind him and a row of Fijian sharpshooters lying in the garden in front, awaiting the flash that would have marked a shot fired by one of the fellow Europeans who were sworn to kill him before his policies, running contrary to the law of nature, made them poor whites in a Kingdom run by and for Fijians. It remained in his life when, as High Commissioner in a warship, he was visiting islands that he had known as mate of a trading-schooner or co-charterer of a recruiter—when he had acquired the sway and the *persona* of the Viceroy of the Pacific.

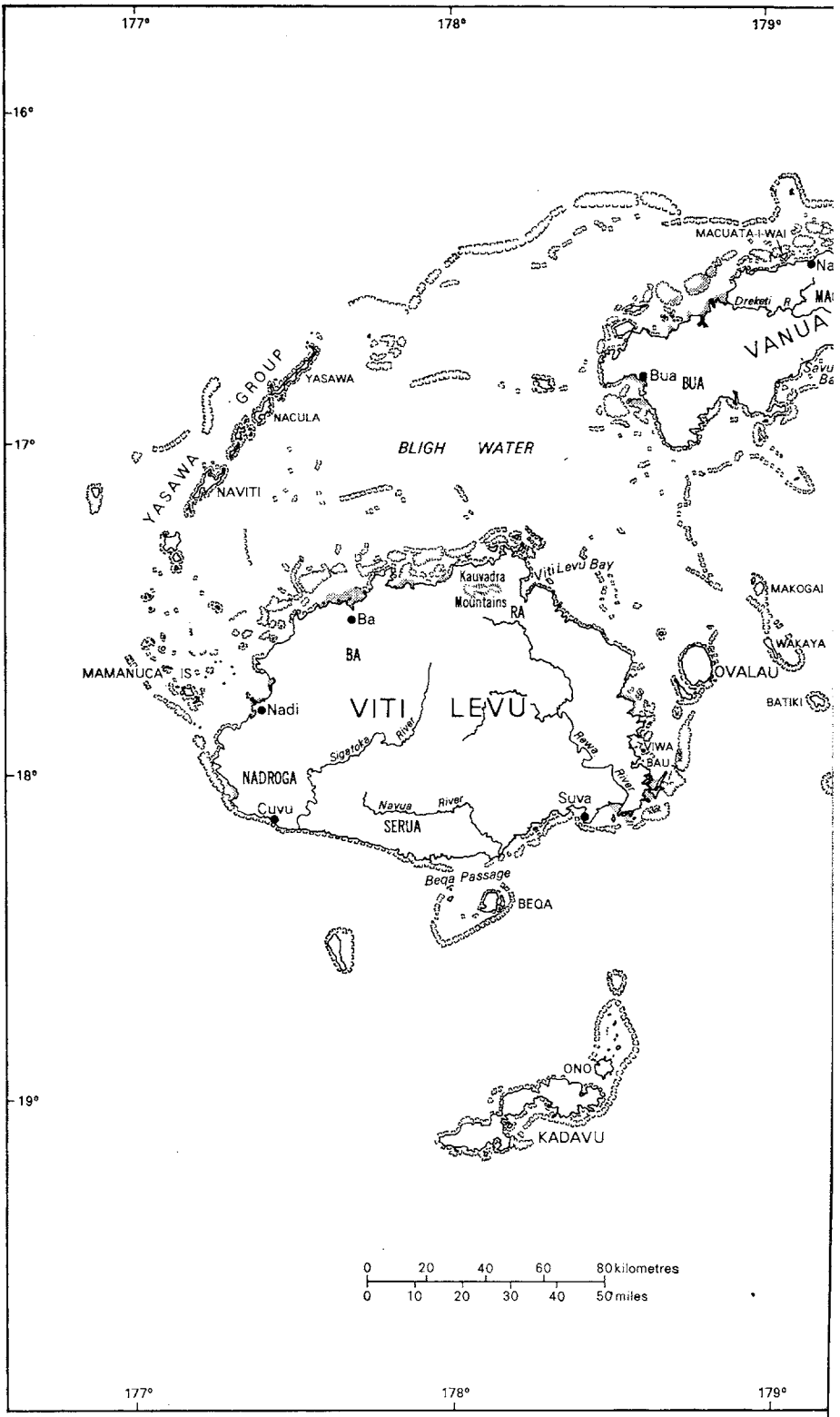
He commanded his world of islands, men of rank and white adventurers with the presence of a colossus, as contemporaries acknowledged, if not with the appropriate length of leg: a man physically small, rather grand in manner, with a mode of speech varying between the drily witty and the passionately vehement. He was a devoted gardener whose botanical letters to the Royal

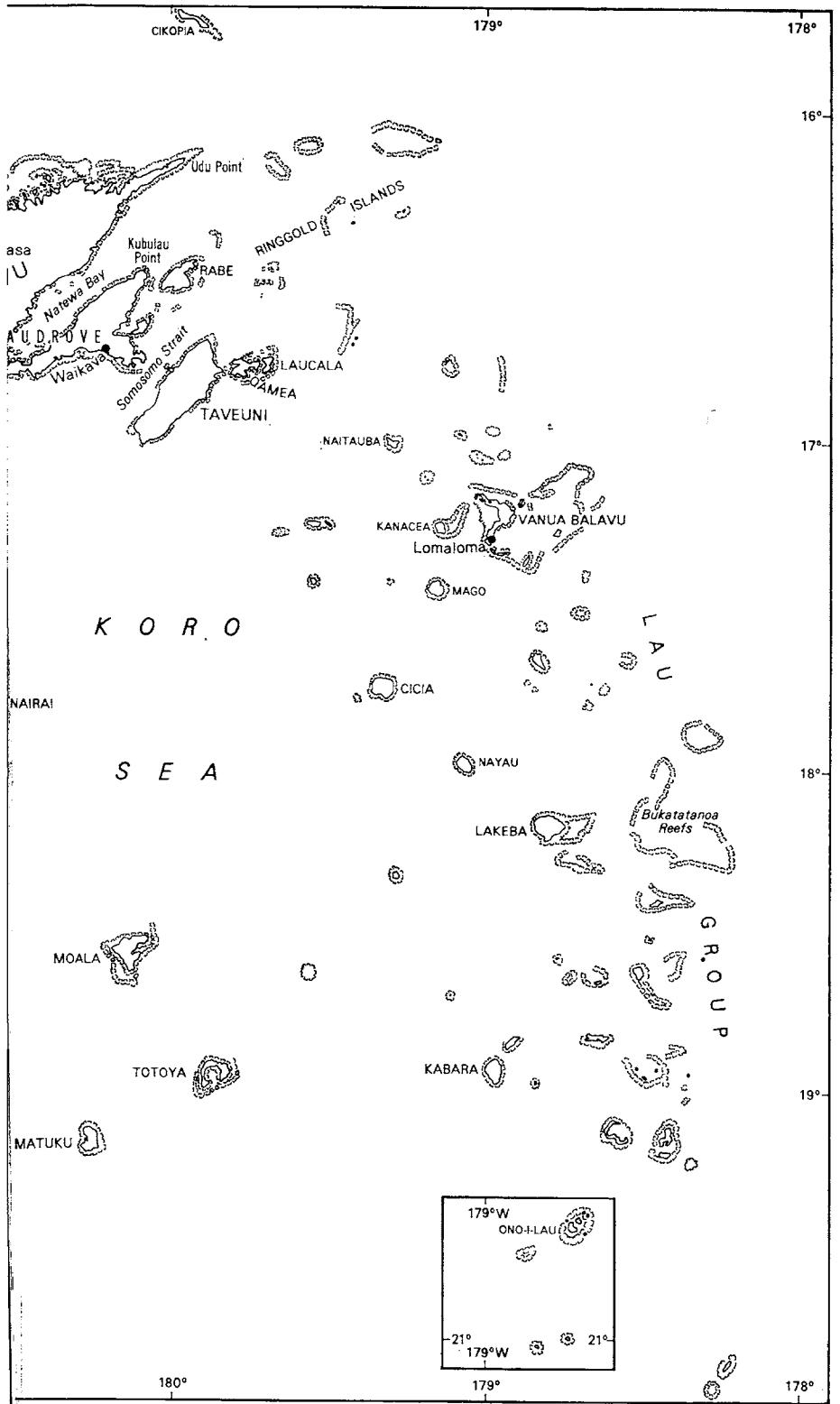
Gardens at Kew were equally concerned with the economic problems of a tropical dependency and the political crises that settlers might precipitate through pressure on a scarcely-comprehending Colonial Office. He was a colonial official of unknown background and character much blown-upon, whose despatches and whose own force of character, displayed in determined descents on Downing Street, had, even so, convinced officials that here was 'our own greatest expert' on the Western Pacific, without whom a system of government established in Fiji at Cession in 1874 could not persist and except over whose dead body it could not be altered.

'From Tahiti to New Guinea and from Hawaii to New Zealand and Australia, I am perhaps the best known of Her Majesty's servants', he remarked, with an accuracy to which the newspapers testify, 'and during the course of my public career have come into contact and at times into conflict with all sorts and conditions of men, who have seldom shown a disposition to favour me with over generous criticism.'[1] He was the embodiment of British imperial authority in the Western Pacific during the last nine years of his life, was Downing Street's principal adviser before that on the future of Samoa, for instance, the marking-out of Anglo-German spheres of influence, and, above all, on the preservation of Fijians as peoples. And it was equally a certainty that he excited many other men's animosity.

He reacted to criticism with a sensitivity derived partly from the feeling that, viewed against fact and logic, his views and actions were worthy rather of admiration and support than vituperative denigration. He invariably rose to the bait; but in his policies he remained unmoved. His method was, as it were, to draw a line in the sand behind which he would never retreat, while before it he conducted forays into the territory of the attackers—a disembowelling twist here, a head lopped off with a back-hand cut there, the bloody ruins set up on their feet again with a bow and a shrug. His skill in controversy was considerable; and though he deprecated the necessity, he took a certain grim satisfaction in putting the skill to use. 'I abominate fighting with anyone', he remarked when Robert Louis Stevenson was representing him as a callous tyrant in the London *Times*; 'but if a good solid row is

[1] Thurston to C.O., 12 September 1893, CO83/57.


177°
178°
179°
16°
17°
18°
19°
MACUATA-I-WAI
Dreketi R.
VANUA
Bua
BUA
YASAWA GROUP
YASAWA
NACULA
NAVITI
BLIGH WATER
Kauvadra Mountains RA
Viti Levu Bay
MAKOGAI
Ba
BA
WAKAYA
MAMANUCA IS
OVALAU
Nadi
VITI LEVU
BATIKI
Sigatoka River
Rewa River
VWA
BAU
NADROGA
Navua River
Suva
Cuvu
SERUA
Beqa Passage
BEQA
ONO
KADAVU
0 20 40 60 80 kilometres
0 10 20 30 40 50 miles


CIKOPIA
179°
178°
16°
Udu Point
RINGGOLD ISLANDS
Kubulau Point
RABE
Natewa Bay
TAUNI
Waikava
Somosomo Strait
LAUCALA
DAMEA
TAVEUNI
NAITAUBA
17°
KANACEA
VANUA BALAVU
Lomaloma
MAGO
K O R O
L A U
NAIRAI
CICIA
S E A
NAYAU
18°
LAKEBA
Bukatatanoa Reefs
G R O U P
MOALA
TOTOYA
KABARA
19°
MATUKU
179°W
ONO-I-LAU
21°
179°W
21°
180°
179°
178°

afoot, and the other side will have it—why then I say let the trumpet sound and let slip the dogs of war'.[2]

His life was even more a 'voyage to windward' than was the life of this brief adversary,[3] for the wind against which he was beating was that Anglo-Saxon racial prejudice which has long outlived his own time. As he wrote during the first great crisis of his life, when white settlers in Fiji were sworn to kill him and he knew it: 'fifteen hundred British and other Foreigners' living in Fiji 'conceive the idea they ought to rule the 200,000 Fijians, and the sympathy of race offers encouragement to the 1,500 in the commission of acts of a criminal and foolish character'.[4] Of romanticism in part, but of realism above all, was born in him the conviction that a society existed after its own terms and none other. Fijian society was the product of 'centuries and countless generations' and was not lightly to be recast after 'English ideas of the nineteenth century'.[5] When the political aspirations of his fellow European residents were restrained by Crown Colony rule, they sought to gain their ends by other means; they called for 'progress' and 'individualism', which would have lifted men from their roots, destroyed cultures and, as in New Zealand, left the white men enthroned upon the wreckage.

And Thurston rebelled. 'The central idea of English life and politics is the assertion of personal liberty', he wrote—and hence there was 'a morbid desire here to apply the prevailing sentiments of modern civilisation and liberty to the feudal and semi feudal despotic state which for years to come must exist amongst the Fijians'. 'He desires freedom—for himself to do as he likes', Thurston wrote of the European in Fiji; 'he desires freedom for others—that he may buy copra and profit by it'. And the end of the Europeans' desire that every Fijian should turn himself into an economic unit, working for white men's wages or to produce a product that the white trader could buy cheap and sell dear, would be 'the speedy ruin and extinction of the Fijian race'.[6] The

[2] Thurston to Cusack-Smith, 9 October 1893, BCS Series 2.
[3] J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: the life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London, 1952).
[4] *Fiji Gazette*, 15 November 1873.
[5] 'Minute by the Acting Governor upon a Petition from the Levuka Chamber of Commerce to Her Majesty's Government praying for the discontinuance of the Native Taxation Scheme . . .', Council Paper No. 11 of 1886, Colonial Secretary's Office copy with Thurston's amendments.
[6] *Fiji Argus*, 28 January 1876.

political economy of Fiji was *sui generis*. Europeans interfered with it at the peril of race-war. And the whole idea of implanting European values by enactment was absurd. 'What would be the value of individual rights, as understood by [Englishmen] . . ., to a Fijian whose stone axe is still lying about his house, who regards marriage between cousins on the agnatic side with horror and on the cognative side as an obligation, whose uncles are termed fathers, and whose aunts are mothers, and who only yesterday, worshipped some even in name forgotten dead chief as his ancestral god?' 'The force of custom and habit will continue though abolished by law, for no Statute can at once and effectively repeal it.'[7]

He was 'probably the most experienced Governor and pundit in things Fijian that has ever been', in the opinion of the least insignificant of his immediate successors at Government House, Sir Everard im Thurn.[8] His punditry was that of a practical man; his views on Fijian political economy were set out in no self-regarding papers delivered before learned societies, but in minutes and memoranda written hastily to meet crises and the demand for decision. On the eve of his return as Governor to the islands he had settled in after shipwreck, he came on a lecture on 'The Customs and Ideas of Savages' by Sir John Lubbock arguing for recognition of relative values in mankind and for an obligation on 'the heirs of an Empire which contains races in every stage of development' to respect it. He expressed agreement. 'The studies of Sir J. L. and my long personal contact and experience of semi-savage people have led each of us to the same conclusions.'[9]

As im Thurn said again, Thurston was the man 'whose clear brain and strong character exercised for very many years a most salutary effect on the affairs of Fiji'.[10] In his earlier years in Fiji, im Thurn believed after talking with survivors from that era, Thurston might have played Rajah Brooke's role, 'but that unlike Brooke in this, his strong personality was repellent rather than attractive to men of his own race'.[11] And though in later life his

[7] 'Minute by the Acting Governor . . .'
[8] Minute, 30 March 1906, FCSO 05/4118.
[9] *Evening Standard*, 23 November 1887; Thurston to Chesson, 23 November 1887, Rhodes House Brit. Emp. MSS. S18 C 149/370.
[10] Minute, 30 March 1906, FCSO 05/4118.
[11] Im Thurn's note on his copy of H. Britton, *Fiji in 1870* . . . (Melbourne, 1870), now in Alport Barker Collection, Suva, Fiji.

world included Samoa and Tonga, the New Hebrides, Gilbert and Ellice, Solomon and Cook Islands, its centre always remained Fiji. He ruled there almost as *primus inter pares* with men of another culture, most of whom he had known since their young manhood or before and one of whom owned him as adoptive father. He lived in a love-hate relationship with the archipelago whose climate and insects ruined his books, the defence of whose peoples' sovereign rights had cost him popularity with men of his own colour. For the strength that they saw in him had been attractive to Europeans until they found that he admitted rights in men of another colour —until he upheld those whom, after Waterhouse, he called 'the King and people of Fiji' against what, in a phrase of his own, he sneered at as 'the divinity of white skins'.[12]

When Fijians talked to him over their *yaqona* about their 'immemorial custom' he was discreetly cynical; he was inclined to suspect that a view of the past was being presented, not necessarily invented, in order to support one side in a current controversy. When they pleaded the practice of their forefathers he could mutter irritably of their going on 'at their own sweet will'. But for social change that was not self-generated he entertained the most profound reservations. He was steeped in British, ultra-conservative, values; but he was not drowned in them. An administrator in whose latter years paternalism was in vogue amongst his junior officers, he reserved the deepest of hostility for any vestige of it. It was destructive of the Native Policy—the government of Fijians by Fijians. With its subsidiary the Native Taxation System, their paying taxes in produce to obviate any direct necessity to earn cash by plantation work, this was amongst his major contributions to politics and society in Fiji. In the eyes of his fellow Europeans, and very often of present-day analysts, it was also his greatest offence: an offence against 'development'. He called it 'the Gordon-Thurston policy', giving credit for its initiation to the first resident-governor—Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, first Baron Stanmore. To himself, he took credit mainly for its detailed working out, its actual, day by day administration; and for its defence against the commercial interests and racist ethic of Europeans. Men were to see his success made manifest, to their own loss, in the policy of Sir Arthur Gordon. Even 'when he

[12] See, below, p. 314.

seemed to play second fiddle to the great Sir Arthur', an obituarist said, 'the hand was the hand of Esau, but the voice was the voice of Jacob'.[13]

He was reputed a hard man in life, was set down as vain and self-seeking by contemporaries who resented his rise while they sank into poor-white penury or, as in the case of a Commodore of the Royal Navy sent out as commissioner to Fiji, projected upon him failings of their own, in a glass silvered by their obtuseness. Thurston was acerbic. And he was also kind. He was arrogant. And he was humorous too. He had a farsightedness that burdened him, when his lot was cast in a settler community whose members could see little further than the beginning of next year. He had a grasp of principle that did not permit him peace of mind when others had none of the sense of history and of place from which his principles derived. He was a writer of verve, especially in private letters. And it was as impossible to mistake the authorship of one of his despatches, for its vigour of argument and command of cases, as to fail to recognise his normal handwriting. He expressed himself pungently, with vivid imagery, using allusion to history and literature in private correspondence to make a point without labouring it; he parodied unmercifully views he was attacking, gave full reign to a liking for irony and a malicious sense of humour.

Yet in some respects he was as much an enigma to his contemporaries as he has remained to history. His career was 'so well known throughout the Western Pacific that it is unnecessary for me to dilate upon it to any extent',[14] announced Joseph Chamberlain in the obitual despatch to the man who was being compared to Cecil Rhodes: very curiously compared, as Thurston himself might have thought. But the Secretary of State's assumption of public knowledge concealed a general ignorance beyond the formal array of dates, offices and honours, an absence of accurate personal information on the man. Ignorance was made more, rather than less, intense by the stories that for years had circulated about J. B. Thurston. He had murdered on Rotuma; he had blackbirded in the New Hebrides; he had aimed to play Rajah Brooke in Fiji; he had become a ruler when better men than he, former associates

[13] T. H. Pritchard, 'Sir John Bates Thurston: the Viceroy of the Pacific', *Review of Reviews* (Australasian Edition), 20 February 1897.
[14] C.O. to Administrator, 12 February 1897, *Fiji Royal Gazette*, 1897, III.

of his own, languished on plantations made bankrupt by the policies he pursued; he professed undying concern for the welfare of Fijians and they feared him personally like the measles.

He became a myth in his own time, a subject attractive to a biographer. Lord Stanmore himself thought of writing Thurston's life;[15] it was transitionally essayed, by another who knew him, in a short work that had his own cordial but infinitely restrained co-operation and revealed little;[16] but the supposed absence of private papers, coupled perhaps with the vast scale of the several official archives that bear the marks of his involvement, reduced the force of the attraction. With the exception of a slight, unpublished work written from inadequate sources in London,[17] no attempt has been made hitherto to write his life. Myth, with misinterpretation, still surrounds even fundamental facts about him.

His biography is a portrait of a man at odds with the ethic of his own society, whose perception of another became accepted as valid by a colonial régime and left, in turn, its mark upon that society—a perception that involved, through implementation, the danger of fossilisation for the Fijian society upon which it played. It is also a portrait of Fiji itself, the islands which he came to by chance but which were more than a backdrop to his life: of Fiji the Pacific Kingdom, for however short a time, whose right to recognition he defended against odds: and of Fiji the Crown Colony which, through him and through the then Sir Arthur Gordon, came to surprise the Colonial Office in its unusual character. For this was a part of the Empire where European interests and values were not major guidelines to colonial government.

The secondary portrait will begin with a view of the island of Ovalau as Thurston first saw it, from the sea. The main one opens, effectively, with a young merchant seaman in love with the colours and scents of the tropics.

[15] Stanmore to Arundel, 9 December 1897, J. T. Arundel Papers.

[16] C. Stuart Ross, *Fiji and the Western Pacific* (Geelong, 1909). A Presbyterian minister and fecund writer, Ross was patronised by Thurston during a visit to Fiji in the mid-1870s.

[17] John Millington, The Career of Sir John Thurston Governor of Fiji 1888-1897 (M.A. thesis, University of London, 1947). Mr Millington later obtained Thurston's journals, but had few standards against which to judge them.

I

'I began life at sea, and I preferred stormy to fine weather'

THE schooner *James* cleared Sydney Heads in May 1861, with several Pacific islanders among her crew to mark her as a South Seas trader. Her first mate was a European.[1] Small, slight, wiry, heavily-bearded, his mind stocked with passages from Dickens, Humboldt and Macaulay learned on previous long voyages, J. B. Thurston was returning to the sea after a lengthy spell ashore. He was returning to a life that he had originally embarked on twelve years before, at the age of thirteen, as an apprentice in a barque out of Liverpool bound for India. There had been romanticism in the decision that first sent him to sea, as well as his family's poverty. And while, now, he sailed again with a life ashore in financial ruins behind him, some romanticism remained. He chose a South Seas voyage in fulfilment of an old dream. Lying at anchor once on the coast of Brazil, he had thought that a life spent trading amongst the Pacific islands would suit him best.

John Bates Thurston was born in London on 31 January 1836, the second child and first son of John Noel Thurston and Eliza, née West.[2] He was called 'Bates' after a godfather who was not a post-captain in the Royal Navy, as the godson liked to believe, though he may have been a naval man of humbler rank; he was probably the husband of one of John Noel's many sisters. The parents came from Bath, where they had been married in February 1830; John Noel was then almost twenty-eight years old, Eliza a little younger. Eliza Thurston's father was a music teacher in the

[1] *Empire* (Sydney), 7 May 1861; Sydney Shipping Master's Office, Inwards Passenger Lists, names of crew on arrival, 15 March 1862.

[2] For this and what follows on the Thurston family, see notes in Perrins Papers by Thurston and his children, which have been used with scepticism and discretion and checked against birth certificates, the Bath business directory, census returns, Somerset House records, and my own local investigations.

city and she herself was listed in the Bath business directory after her marriage as 'Professor of Drawing'; her watercolours carried off a medal from a Paris exhibition. In the year of their marriage John Noel was in business as an auctioneer, as the directory also showed his father and at least one of his brothers to be.

Amongst John Noel Thurston's children developed a tradition that he had served in the East India Company at Canton. Near the end of his own life Thurston wrote of Canton journals kept by his father, lost in a flood in New South Wales.[3] When he knew him, however, John Noel was a commercial traveller; and the only document in his father's hand which the son is known to have preserved—a letter of 1843, which Thurston put aside for his own eldest son when the boy was ten months old—his father had sent him from Edinburgh where he was on a business visit.

'Johnny', aged seven, had had a fall. His father hoped it would be a lesson to him 'not to climb or jump about so much' and required him to 'be good and bear pain with fortitude and resignation, & be kind to all, not fretful or peevish & you will endear every one towards you'. John Noel wrote of Edinburgh Castle, of the book at home that would tell Johnny how its seemingly impregnable rock had been scaled, of barracks, garrisons and a regiment just back from China. 'I hope when I hear again from Mamma that you are going on well & good'.[4]

While John Noel travelled, his family moved between lodgings in Kensington New Town and Southampton until, in May 1846, the birth of a sixth child and third girl found them at Newington in Surrey. Itinerant though they were, their family circle was cultivated in its reading and accomplished in lace-making, for example, as well as painting. They were conscious of roots in land, even in the landed gentry. In the parish church of St Mary the Virgin at Thornbury in Gloucestershire were several memorials to their name and blood, while in the graveyard stood two Thurston family tombs. One bore the stork argent, legged azure and the three bugle horns, stringed or garnished azure which the family used as their own—arms granted in 1580 to a John Thurston of Suffolk in virtue of his descent from a Lancaster family of Thurstons. Another John Thurston, Gentleman, of Kington House, Thornbury, buried his wife in this crested tomb in 1780

[3] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[4] John Noel to John Bates Thurston, n.d. [1843], Perrins Papers.

and himself retired to the uncrested one nearby in 1788—'after upwards of Fifty years affliction of Body & Mind', his inscription reads. He was uncle to Horatio Thurston, upholsterer and auctioneer of Bath, the father, by the second of his three wives, of John Noel.

When, distinguished and honoured, J. B. Thurston came back at last to construct the genealogy of his house he found he could trace its Thornbury generations to the beginning of the fifteenth century. His then forebears were retainers of the Stafford Dukes of Buckingham. They were prosperous later in the seventeenth century but held their land only by copyhold, a tenure which accorded ill with coats of arms and the subscription 'gentleman'. 'Gentlemen' on their mortgages, the Thurstons of Kingston House were 'farmers' on their census returns in the early nineteenth century. Later, they kept a coachman in silver buttons ornamented with the stork, sent a son into the army, bought colonial stock and were 'quite the gentry' to their humbler cousins in the village—though in the county it may not have passed unnoticed that no reference book knew them.

They were a family that had perhaps aspired rather than achieved. Yet, for one of their members, there was always an existing coat of arms to be claimed when success in the world should have merited it. And long before J. B. Thurston knew them they were part of his imaginative life. His grandfather, their cadet, became wealthy gentry in legend; he was represented as 'well off not only as regards money but in land' and as being duped of most of it by a son-in-law who was partner in a Bath bank which defaulted to Horatio's loss.[5] Grandfather Horatio did indeed subscribe himself 'gentleman' on jurors' lists, his tradesman's status notwithstanding; but the figure at which his will was proved —£1,000 in house-property around Bath—seems the likely limit for a tradesman who had married three wives and sired twelve or thirteen children. The children named in his will or his Bible are an index, by their marriages, to the society their father had kept or aspired to: his sons-in-law included a London stockbroker, a Bath or London haberdasher, a Greenock shipowner, and Thomas Evans, gentleman, of Glastonbury, who was made an executor. This Evans was probably prototype of the banker 'Henry Evans'

[5] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.

whom legend represented as the ruin of Horatio Thurston's fortunes. A Bath bank did close its doors at about the appropriate time—Molger's, in 1825; but it would seem senility of a kind unlikely to go unchecked in a man with many children, to appoint as executor in 1833 a man who had abused his confidence in 1825. Molger's bank probably came in because J. B. Thurston's parents lived a few doors from it when they were first married.

And the legend of a banker son-in-law who made away with the trust-property of a landed grandfather perhaps originated in the suspicion that one of grandfather Thurston's executors had dealt unfairly with Eliza Thurston in his handling of the third share in Horatio's property which came to her on his death in 1833 and which, during the greater part of her children's life, was her only assured source of income. For John Noel Thurston died of tuberculosis in May 1847 at St Helier, Jersey, whose milder climate could not save him, 'leaving my mother with six children to the care of our relatives' as his eldest son recalled.[6] J. B. Thurston's early teens were passed in comparative poverty. Yet St Helier, where his family lived on, was never of melancholy memory to him. Years later he called a house he built in Suva 'Thornbury', after the Gloucestershire village that he liked to think of as home. But, long before that, he gave the name 'St Helier' to a South Sea island plantation where the sand gleamed white and the trades blew unimpeded enough to discourage all but the most persistent of mosquitoes.

Perhaps he did not stay on long enough in Jersey for his family's poverty to make him dislike the place. And a seaport had attractions for an imaginative boy. As a man of sixty with sons of his own, looking back upon the boy he thought he had been, he wrote that he 'had read voraciously and was mad either to go to sea, or go to America and fight red Indians', for 'Marryat & Fennimore Cooper possessed my soul'. The sea was the more practical alternative. He extracted what he remembered as reluctant consent from his mother, left the family in which he was something of a pivot, to judge from the later devotion of his younger sister Eliza and dependence of his youngest brother Henry, and became apprenticed to a firm of Liverpool shipowners, J. J. Melhuish & Co. On

[6] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65; and family legend.

20 April 1849 he sailed as a brassbounder on his first voyage to Calcutta.[7]

He had given himself to the life of the apprentices' half-deck, to sun and wind and the work of a big sailing vessel, to months at sea, and to bright foreign landfalls. Wet clothes, horseplay and yarn-spinning went together, and likewise bad food—'salt pork & duff', he wrote, 'with plums scattered like angels visits few & far between'.[8] There was much ship maintenance and, as the apprentices' main duty aloft, the handling of canvas on the royal yards, highest from the deck until skysails came in. Boys were light, agile creatures, or a rope's end would make them so. He was physically agile and active all his life, and took pride in it.

A youth older than he who had gone to sea some years ahead of him, but before the mast, and who was similarly well-read in *The Pirate*, *The Red Rover* and probably in *Peter Simple* too, had concluded that the work of handling, still more of maintaining, a deep-sea sailing-ship was 'privation, hardship, tyranny, and irksome and disgusting details'.[9] Familiarity did away with romance. R. H. Dana believed too that upbringing at sea bred a certain excess of manliness, something of which appeared in the first of Thurston's surviving journals: as, for instance, the remark that he 'once made a handsome breakfast off a couple of cigars & a glass of wine, but cannot say I relished it'.[10] Certainly the sea was likely to encourage forcefulness of character in an undersized youth like himself, to make up for the physical deficiency.

That forcefulness was cultivated in the man. 'I began life at sea', Sir John Thurston told a Melbourne luncheon-gathering in his honour, 'and I preferred stormy to fine weather'.[11] The moral courage for which he was to be remembered in funeral orations was not unconnected with physical courage learned in the rigging and on the decks of Melhuish barques during Channel fogs and blows off the Cape of Good Hope, while the propensity that he sometimes showed to talk big, with heavy irony, originated in the haze of cigar-smoke and bold words in half-decks and cabins. Years after

[7] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[8] *Arabia* journal, Thurston Papers.
[9] Quoted, from a letter, in Introduction to Richard Henry Dana, Jr, *Two Years before the Mast* . . . (New York, 1946), xiii.
[10] *Arabia* journal, Thurston Papers.
[11] *Argus* (Melbourne), 3 February 1888.

he had swallowed the anchor and made an indelible mark ashore, he commended the sea in conversation with an old shipboard acquaintance as a school for young men along with the army, though 'if he had remained at sea his ambition would have been to become a Samuel Plimsoll'.[12] When he complained of the sea while he still followed it, his complaint was more of boredom than of hardship—boredom less and less relieved, as he grew older, by omnivorous reading off-watch.

He made four voyages to India in Melhuish ships '& then passed one year in the building yard learning how to draft and build ships, how to draft sails, &c. &c', and learning the theory of navigation too.[13] Then he sailed again, from Liverpool to Adelaide in the Melhuish barque *Ann Holzberg*, of 347 tons. She was newly-built in Jersey, which helps to explain the presence aboard her as a supernumerary of his younger brother, Horatio.[14] She discharged the bulk of her cargo at Port Adelaide in August 1853 and, on 4 September, made Sydney where Thurston fell ill.

A sick sailor was a member of no man's mess. Thurston was put ashore and on 5 October the *Ann Holzberg* and Horatio sailed without him.[15] He passed his eighteenth birthday 'on the beach' in Sydney and was ashore for almost a year before he found another berth. Then, on 16 August 1854, he joined the 362-ton Sydney barque *Arabia*, as second mate, but doing duty as first, for a voyage with wool and tallow to London around Cape Horn.[16] He was young for the berth at eighteen and comparatively inexperienced, with only some four years' sea-time to his credit. Though the first part of the chief mate's job—the stowing of the cargo so that it would not shift in a sea-way—was substantially completed before he joined her, there remained the major task of working the barque across the world as the master's main link with her and the crew. Yet the journal that he opened on the day he joined the *Arabia* contains no hint of self-distrust.

He wrote, not a seaman's log of wind and weather, but a connected narrative of the voyage, with comments on his experiences in Australia. With his family in mind as readers, he was not

[12] J. [L.] Kealy to Editor, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 1897.
[13] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[14] Kealy, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 1897; Lloyds *Register of Shipping*.
[15] N.S.W. Shipping Reports, Port Master's office.
[16] *Arabia* journal, Thurston Papers.

lacking in the brashness likely to be exhibited by a youth assured of an admiring audience. He had spent his time in Sydney 'engaged like the venerable Pickwick "in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties" . . .'.[17] Whether the letters of introduction which, as he later recalled, he carried to eminent men were efficacious in providing him with hospitality cannot now be known, nor by whom they were given him. The young seafaring man named a clerk in a government office as one of his hosts, but not the lawyer Sir Alfred Stephen, the Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell nor Mr Fairfax the newspaper proprietor whom the distinguished colonial governor remembered as men to whom he carried introductions.[18]

He had still dined out; and, in the manner that died hard with visitors from the mother country, he was witty afterwards at the colonials' expense. 'The natives (I mean the whites) are a very nice people when you get to know them. But I cannot say much for first impressions. They are also very sociable, plenty of dinners and parties & so forth . . . not of course that I go for the dinner, I merely go there to observe the different characteristics of the human species . . .' Australia was 'a free independent and enlightened colony where one man is as good as another, & as an Irish orator once observed *a good deal better*'. It was '"de facto" a great country where formerly you could get as much land as you could shake a stick at for a mere trifle, now you can get little or none and buying land [at] even a reasonable price is merely a matter of history'. He had found Sydney 'a curious place, as curious as the country it is in'; and its commercial morality was not that of Liverpool or London. 'Men are there to make money and make money they will. They stick at nothing and would rob a church or their own father.' He had learned that he was a 'new chum' and had been advised how to amend his sad state. 'One great commodity appreciated there is *"Colonial Experience"*. I have often asked some of the leading merchants what they meant, or what was to be understood by it, but could never obtain a very clear definition; so many things come under the head of it, that it would puzzle a "Philadelphia Lawyer".' As one authority held, it was 'dam'd roguery'.

The bush was the best part of Australia, in his view. Its first

[17] Ibid.
[18] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.

human inhabitants, the Aborigines, had not impressed him; the men had 'a ridiculous notion of knocking out one tooth in front to show their Manhood & the Gins . . . cut of[f] their little finger at the joint because it is in the way reeling or winding up their fishing lines two remarkably foolish things in my humble opinion . . .'. But the bush itself and its animal inhabitants 'are of themselves sufficient to afford amusement and gratification to anyone, more especially to Botanists & entimologists', while of tea boiled over a fire at midday and a chop grilled in the embers 'I have often made a more comfortable meal than at the cabin table'.

As he sat now at such a table or lay writing in his bunk, with the discomforts inseparable from his profession around him, it was trees and shrubs that he thought of with most pleasure and wrote about it with unassumed enthusiasm:

> One of the most beautiful places in Australia is the [Sydney] Botanicall Gardens in fact though I have visited some of the finest Gardens in the East, including the H.E.I.C.'s Gardens in Howra-Bengal and wandered through the maizes of the Banyan Tree, or reclined under the shade of the mighty Baobab, the Sydney gardens always delighted me, everything is in such luxuriant disorder . . . weeping willows, and wild date trees, enormous Norfolk Pines, and tremendous aloes. Wild Olives & waving Bamboos—so intermingled with beautiful flowers and tropical plants of all Kinds as to make it perfectly delightful.

The *Arabia* had sailed from Sydney on 20 September and soon ran into bad weather. She was beating into it for almost a fortnight before she made South Cape, the southernmost point of New Zealand—'the land of savages, regular devils who like bull terriers would sooner fight than eat any day . . .'. Thurston congratulated himself that both barque and crew were good—although the barque, he added, was only good of her type and that type was not very special. The *Arabia* was described in the Sydney shipping columns as a fine clipper barque and so he remembered her years later; but when he was responsible under the master for her performance at sea he found her no clipper, and very short overall. She was only ten years old, classed A1 at Lloyds, but had knocked around a good deal. She had sailed last on a sandalwood voyage—out via the Isle of Pines and Tana for the sandalwood, on to China to sell it, and back with tea for Sydney—and she was looking worn.

The comparative comfort that Thurston was used to in Melhuish vessels was lacking in her cabin, the afterguard's quarters, which was '"pantry minus a steward"—& minus a good deal more, by the bye': to serve food there was only a fourteen- or fifteen-year-old pantry-boy, part-Irish, part-Maori, whose antics and criminal's haircut the master's wife, who was aboard with her two children, may have thought less amusing than did the mate.

He found the *Arabia* a slow sailer but comforted himself with the seaman's time-honoured reflection, 'more days more dollars'. On 1 October she was still off the tip of the South Island of New Zealand; with a westerly wind, the master bore away to the south a little to lessen his longitude. By about 8 October it was extremely cold. The decks, tops and yards were covered with snow; the canvas froze so hard that the crew could neither hand nor make sail. Thurston caught cape pigeons on deck in his hands. On 12 October at 61° South, sighting ice ahead, they hauled northward to avoid it, for 'an Iceberg is a very unpleasant neighbour', and kept on eastward for Cape Horn.

Another danger remained. They were sailing under dirty skies through seas which, on the charts, were littered with *vigias*, obstacles which had been reported by seamen but never accurately plotted and which might or might not exist. Late on 29 October—'not knowing our position with any degree of accuracy, on account of the thickness of the weather, and being approaching and [*sic*] island or supposed island reported by a Capt. Docherty in the year '41'—they doubled the watch but sailed on all night without sighting land or breakers. Thurston had the morning watch, from 4 to 8 a.m.

> About 4.30 a.m. I went below to take a cup of Coffee after relieving the watch but had scarcely got below before one of the men whom I had left on the quarterdeck ran to the companion and called out for me & that they had seen land close ahead. I ran on deck immediately & saw several large rocks in the shape of Sugar Loaves on the lee bow (We were going with the gale upon the port quarter from 7 to 8 Knots per hour & very thick mist at this time) the fog cleared up and I saw a bold & Bluff headland to the Nth of the group, but the water Between seemed Broken, I immediately put the helm hard up & she paid off & brought the wind on the starboard beam & ran [so close?] along the rocks that the surf was audible through the Gale to all hands.

They charted this hazard, named it after the owners—Thacker & Co. of Sydney—and, finding the sea open to the south, 'again bore away towards Cape Horn that bugbear of ancient mariners'. They rounded it on 9 November, 'much gladdened at getting over what we considered the worst part of the voyage'. They were hit by 'some tremendous squalls', though for his part Thurston had 'experienced far worse weather and sea off the Cape of Good Hope'. He thought of Magellan, tried to estimate the set of the currents, and talked about the habits of penguins with 'an old sailor in my watch who had been living on islands in the South Seas'; the former beachcomber swore that penguins swallowed pebbles as ballast before diving and regurgitated them on coming ashore again.

From Cape Horn their intended course was for the Falkland Islands to reprovision; but the wind disposed otherwise. They set course then for islands off the Brazilian coast whose reputation as a nest of slavers Thurston remarked on with romantic pleasure. Again the wind changed; after beating into it for two days and getting down to their last keg of beef they turned for the port of Bahia. On 21 December they were off the Brazilian coast, spent the night hove-to and at dawn came in on the land breeze towards the kind of coast that Thurston now delighted in:

> those who are unacquainted with the luxuriance of tropical vegetation can form no idea of a sun rise on the coast of Brazil (some parts of course excepted) the innumerable quantities of that beautiful palm the Cocoa Nut, waving with the light airs that extend over the land, & the peculiar odour of the trees & shrubs incidental to all hot climates more or less and those everlasting houses, that the Portuguese build, plentifully sprinkled amongst the foliage . . .

At Bahia, a slaving-port until the recent abolition of slave-trading to Brazil, the anchor went down 'a very respectful distance off the Fort', which to him looked formidably strong. He made its closer acquaintance, for some of the crew—'as good seamen as ever manned a ship'—became 'drunk and very fightable' after a carouse ashore and the Brazilian corvette which he boarded to borrow irons sent him on shore to get the port commandant's sanction.

> I accordingly pulled ashore and very much interested I was the town is built on the side of a hill which is very steep, so that the houses rise one above the other in a most picturesque manner, it was

about 9 in the evening, or perhaps not quite so late, & there were lights in almost every window, & as we came under the wall, frowning with cannon, that formed the Breastwork off the arsenal to Seaward, & the landing places for the officers, I sincerely regretted that I came on business.

He was impressed by the number of negroes in the town, whom he saw

seated outside the houses in groups . . . singing their songs, keeping time with something that sounded like castanets, their songs have a peculiar melancholy tone about them at least those I heard had and though sweet were very simple the chorus being the most remarkable [part] and were sung by a great many.

With a guide provided by the corvette he went on into the fort amidst 'challenges & signs & countersigns' through

many an arch & gate, up slopes and down narrow paved courts, in which we met many a portly 'Dinah' going for her evening promenade & gossip, they all carry themselves in a very stately manner & had on large white turbans & queer looking square parasols what they wanted with them on a calm cool night I don't know, probably to keep the flies off.

In the commandant's office—'which in the Brazilian interpretation of the word is a place to smoke & drink while they talk their business over in a very quiet manner'—he was decidedly the British sailor ashore, whistling loudly to attract attention when his first interviewer, unable to understand English or French, had given him up. From the interpreter who was eventually found—and 'who understood every 6th word I spoke'—he learned that he had missed the commandant, who was himself on his way to the corvette, 'so after a short cruise on my way down to the boat, where I saw all that I could see in such a short time, but could have passed another hour their, very pleasantly, I went on Board'. The trouble with the crew 'ended in putting them all in irons after which they behaved very well'.

He managed to see much more of Bahia, without their refractory assistance. During the four days that the *Arabia* lay there revictualling, her mate spent much of his time ashore, sight-seeing, shooting, and, by his own account, making game of sombre Brazilians. The town—

> swarmed with Monastery's & Convents which caused me to suppose that they were very religious, & I nearly got into trouble by proposing to a moustachoed senhor a wish that he would become president of a society for the suppression of vice amongst the 'Virgin Kaffres' . . .

He met an American ships' chandler resident for twenty years at Bahia—'a regular specimen of the driving American, half horse, half alligator and all the rest steam engine . . .'. In the manner of his generation, he was always fascinated by Americans, though he laughed at the slovenliness of their ship-handling and, when he visited their country, disliked their cities; already now the half-deprecating phrase 'as the Yankees say' appeared in his writing, probably in his speech too, as it was to do for the rest of his life. The American's store 'acted as office, store & general rendezvous for everybody connected with shipping . . .'. There he encountered again the customs officer who had boarded the *Arabia* on her arrival and at whose expense he had had some sport, both for his anxiety to press on the ship's company the services of his wife as laundress, arguing the excellence of her mangle, and for his appearance. 'There seemed a fine chance of his having a good stock of clothes next year those he had on having quite gone to seed . . .'. At the chandlery, 'having put our heads at half cock & then resumed their proper positions, and gone through the usual motions customary amongst this flowery people', they talked and Thurston learnt his ship had provided so much washing that the wife 'was completely knocked up, so much so that she could no longer perform upon her "mangle"'.

The streets of Bahia were 'narrow & very high, for the purpose so I thought of promoting sickness'; he rode through them in a *cadeira*, which he thought inferior to the palanquin of India, pitying the negro bearers:

> for it must be very hard work, the hills being so very steep there, & it generally causes them to walk on one side like a crab, & as the[y] go barefoot those member's generally have the appearance of a square foot of deal planking, & it [is] a perfect mystery how they get their trousers on, without they go over their head.

He was a facetious young man. A former shipmate in the *Ann Holzberg* wrote, forty-odd years later, of his 'French humour'.[19]

[19] Kealy, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 1897.

If by this was meant dry, sometimes acid wit, then Thurston's humour was 'French' until the end of his life. Once it had outgrown adolescent jocosity it was rarely unsuccessful. And yet at the most dangerous period of his life when men swore to kill him his private accounts of events were still facetious.[20] The *Arabia*'s mate lived on.

He was a little censorious now, as well as jocose. Brazilian sailors in the ships lying around his own were 'the most lazy, dirty and negligent lot of coons ever I came across'. But he enjoyed his time at Bahia. And he looked with an acquisitive eye at some vessels there. Lying under the guns of the fort were a great many condemned slavers, beautiful, rakish schooners for which he could see a use in other trades.

> I often thought that it was a pity to let such craft lie rotting under the scorching sun when with one of them many a man could make his fortune in 'Australia', where small craft with light draught of water and long heels are in great request.

He was thinking about his future, as his ship swung to her cable in Bahia harbour. The land breeze was full of tropical smells, the shore full of tropical colour. He had no thought but to spend his life within sight and scent of them. He was specific as to the part of the tropics that he hankered after, though it was one he had not visited. His ambitions accorded precisely with the recollection of his acquaintance from the *Ann Holzberg* that, when he left her, he had wanted to go trading in the South Seas:

> I often think what part of the world I should like best to live in, & always settle upon the South sea, & Pacific islands cruising from one island to the other, for to me there is a great charm in a primitive style of life.

On 26 December they sailed from Bahia; 'with a roaring song' they 'dragged our best bower from the sands of the bay' and, reprovisioned and with 'some two score of "Marmosets" as passengers', saluted the fort, cleared the harbour and beat up the coast against a moderate trade. For some days they kept the land in sight and, in fair weather, overhauled catamarans which Thurston sketched to show how simple and efficient their rig was.

[20] See, below, p. 247.

'All primitive and uncivilized nations rig their craft with simplicity & they make a bad boat sail well. The English & others rig their boats too heavy which [detracts from] their speed.'

After 'a few days good slashing' into the moderate headwind, they fell into a calm north of the Equator in which Thurston yarned about the African Squadron's anti-slave trade patrol with an old man o'warsman in his watch. Then they met the north-east trades and 'Good By to fair weather'. All the rest of the voyage home they were battling against high winds and heavy seas. They were hove-to off the Azores for nine days of a twelve-day gale, 'with the heaviest sea on that ever I experienced anywhere'. At the end of it their provisions were down to bread, or biscuit, and water with 'some Indian corn that we had on board for stock'; and they were looking out for a ship with provisions to spare as they made sail again and laid something like their course. They found one eventually, the brig *Grecian Queen* of London, which had plenty of salt pork and nothing else; her crew had been living on pork alone for seven weeks. The two casks that Thurston brought back from her in exchange for two bags of bread would have been less than appetising, for the brig was 150 days out from Hong Kong and the meat would have been even longer in the cask.

From the *Grecian Queen* they had news, third-hand, of the British victory at Inkerman and, more immediately to their concern, of cold and stormy weather in and around the English Channel. Rivers were frozen. Wrecks littered the coasts. They ran into it three days later on the Sole Banks, 250 miles south-west of the Lizard. 'We here got a terrific Gale of Wind with tremendous sea on & several ships in co[mpany] & Blowing so hard that a tarpaulin in the Mizzen was quite sufficient to heave her too.' Around them ships 'were losing masts & sweeping decks wholesale . . .'. When the weather moderated Thurston took a boat away to

> the 'Louise' of Havre . . . in the hopes of saving some of her crew, but there was not a soul left, her Mizen Mast was gone by the board & the spanker boom gone, the main-top mast gone & twisted the lower mast head off & the main had fallen forward in the starboard waist, the foretopmast was standing as well as the topsail yard, & the leech rope only of a close reefed-topsail remaining the fore yard was gone in the slings, the decks and Bulwarks were completely swept, Boats & all, & the stern windows stove in, finding this to be the case we bore away & shortly afterwards she foundered.

A few days later off Beachy Head, after sailing through a fog with horns and bells going all around and an occasional jib-boom poking over the *Arabia*'s taffrail out of the murk, he went away again, to the Liverpool barque, *Quito*, from Iquique, which had all hands down with scurvy and her first mate dead of it.

> . . . I boarded her with six hands & found . . . the ship in a most miserable condition, no cables up, anchors still stowed & all hands below in the Forecastle excepting the 2nd mate & Carpenter who also were very ill.

He and his men put more sail on the ship, took her clear of the Royal Sovereign Shoals, got the anchors on deck and hauled her up for Dungeness where she would meet with a pilot. Then he left four of his hands aboard to take her home and pulled back to the *Arabia*, warmed by a promise from the *Quito*'s master to see the *Arabia*'s people right in the matter of salvage. The promise had been broken, he complained as he wrote up the last part of his journal from rough notes. His disappointment added to the lack of pleasure with which he regarded the last stage of the voyage.

The labour of working the barque up channel in bad weather was heavy and disagreeable. They were themselves unable to make Dungeness, so they picked up no pilot and 'had to take the ship into the "Downs" ourselves which we did after getting very nearly ashore at Dover'. On 1 March 1855 the *Arabia*'s anchor went down at last off the North Foreland 'being 5 months & 11 days from Sydney', and her crew 'had all the news both of War & Weather, & sent ashore for the Good things of this life of which we stood in much need, & did full justice to'. They had another two days of 'great fatigue, horrible weather' bringing the barque up to Gravesend, and more work before the voyage was completed. Finally, 'at 3, on Sunday morning, we moored ship in the "West Indies Dock", & laughed at the wind, and went to bed—& so finished my passage from N.S.W. to London'.

According to this later recollection, he and the master had intended to join the navy on arrival in England, in the hope of advancement during the Crimean War. At Gravesend came news on the telegraph that Nicholas I of Russia was dead; and so, since 'it was soon seen that the war would terminate', they both 'gave up the idea of the Navy'. His journal shows him at a loose end and disenchanted with English weather, as well as with such English

society as he saw, after almost two years out of the country. 'Despite invitations to parties, etc., in the renowned City of Greenwich, I found England, very dull, & the climate, very unpleasant, after my long residence [in the tropics] (if cruising about from one tropic, to the other, can be called residing, in them)—I never once, in a space of three months, saw the sky clear . . .'

Huddled in his monkey-jacket, he spent his time making preparations to go back to Sydney. For he found that his mother, three sisters and his brother Horatio had all emigrated to New South Wales while he was on his way home; only fifteen-year-old Henry remained, to follow when he had finished school. Family recollection was that the widow and her three daughters had arrived in Australia on 23 December 1853; if the month was correct, this must have been a mistake for 1854. On 4 January 1855, aboard the *Wooloomooloo* from London, came one H. Thurston who may well have been the sixteen-year-old independent-minded Horatio.[21]

His mother had emigrated 'by the advice of friends', as Thurston later wrote.[22] Perhaps she went with their assistance too, for H. Thurston of the *Wooloomooloo* was a cabin passenger, not an assisted immigrant. She may have been prompted to precipitate action by the news of 'Jack' lying sick in Sydney; but her main motives for a move that was serious enough for a woman of about fifty are not hard to discern. She had three daughters, well brought up but without dowry, who might more readily find husbands to their taste in a new, socially less stratified country; similarly, her two younger sons might make their way further in the world there. She herself did find scenes around Sydney Harbour and in the Blue Mountains to bring out the delicacy and vigour of her brush.

Thurston rejoined his family late in 1855. As he recalled it, he sailed back to Australia in a vessel owned by his shipowning relations[23] with a cousin who was identified in family legend as one of the Thurstons of Kington House. A cousin is mentioned in his journal as having waited to accompany him should he be going back to Australia, though the entry is on the last page, which is not in his hand. But no J. B. Thurston seems to have arrived in

[21] Inwards Passenger Lists, 4 January 1855.
[22] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[23] Ibid.

Sydney as a passenger in the latter half of 1855. Almost certainly he was that John Thurston, age given as 20, who arrived there from Liverpool on 2 October 1855 as an able seaman in the 1,441-ton full-rigged ship *Hilton*, owned by W. F. Halhead & Son.[24]

He was at once, as he recalled, put under pressure by his mother to give up the sea, though he sailed again in January 1856 in the 130-ton schooner *Don Juan*;[25] her owner, Robert Towns, was engaged in enterprises in the South Seas but she was then on a humdrum coastal run between Sydney and Moreton Bay. Thurston gave up his journal in her after one entry, contenting himself with some paragraphs of purple prose about a flower bending its head to the gale and with sailing directions for the approach to Moreton Island. Whether he made further voyages in her or other coastal vessels is not known. His recollection was that at the end of 1856 he capitulated and sought a career ashore.

> I went up country (to get out of sound & speech of the sea) and became Superintendent of large runs on the Macquarie and Castlereigh Rivers. I did not know a ewe from a Wether & yet I took charge of over 60,000 sheep and 8,000 head of cattle, with the station manager, shepherd and stockman. I continued there until the end of 1859, and the owners said I was the best and most active Superintendent they ever had.

He saved money in these years; and in 1860 he rented 'Rosedale', a farm out of Sydney on the Georges River. He moved there, with his mother and his two younger sisters who had not yet found husbands; and he farmed till in his second year the river flooded, rose 'breast deep in my house, situated 45 feet above the ordinary level', and washed topsoil away with the stock. When he had paid his debts he had only a few pounds left to his name.[26] His mother and sisters probably went to live with the eldest child, Ann Maria, who was now the wife of Simon Zöllner, a corrugated-iron manufacturer in Sydney and prosperous, with a house in Macleay Street at Potts Point. He himself spent an uncongenial month as a clerk in the Sydney customs. Then he sought the sound and speech of the sea again. He found employment with J. C.

[24] Inwards Passenger Lists, 2 October 1855.
[25] *Don Juan* journal, Thurston Papers.
[26] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.

Malcolm, who had sent ships to the New Hebrides for sandalwood in his time and was now in the coconut-oil trade with the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.

The trade was almost twenty years old when Thurston sailed for the Line on 6 May 1861 as first mate of the 114-ton schooner *James*; he had tobacco, textiles and tools below hatches for sale to islanders who had been induced by these attractions to expand their production of a toilet and culinary commodity to meet the requirements of soap and candle manufacturers in Europe. His new owner operated at least one trading station in the Gilbert Islands and had another on the island of Rotuma, north of Fiji; for the rest, Malcolm's ships dealt direct with the islanders. Malcolm had put the *James* into the trade in 1860, transferring to her a master experienced in the business from his smaller *Clarence Packet*, W. H. Weiss.

Much later a seedier Captain Weiss, scudding into Levuka harbour in Fiji and falling foul of the port medical officer, referred him to the Colonial Secretary ashore 'as a friend that had known him for fifteen years'.[27] And having long since scented a rival in the Colonial Secretary, the ambitious doctor (who was to become Lieutenant-Governor of British New Guinea) saw this indication in him of a partiality for foul-mouthed seafaring men from wandering island schooners, as a stick with which to beat a man about whom the common talk ran that he was brilliant and amusing, of course—but what could his antecedents in the Pacific have been?

[27] MacGregor to Colonial Secretary, 29 July 1877, FCSO 77/980.

2

'A misfortune common to those who travel by sea'

As first mate in the *James* on two voyages between May 1861 and December 1862 Thurston lived a life 'cruising from one island to another' in the Pacific.[1] He saw the high, volcanic islands of the New Hebrides. Landing on the coral atolls of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, he found internecine warfare along with many signs of the impact of traders like himself. 'A stick of tobacco . . . will buy any common man's life' there, he wrote, 'or half a dozen women'. He landed, too, on high, verdant Rotuma, and likewise on Futuna where he talked about Rotuman language-structure with a Marist priest—perhaps one of the priests chased off Rotuma by a man who was now aboard the *James*.[2]

This was Riamkau, chief of the Faguta district, aspirant to dominance over all Rotuma, a passenger or seaman in the schooner on both voyages. He had driven away the Marists and the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries because, as Thurston wrote later, 'Family feuds, till then unknown, and Sectarian bitterness had exerted a dire influence among these excitable people . . .'.[3] Thurston became Riamkau's friend and was to remember him with gratitude. At a point of crisis in Thurston's life, Riamkau was to dispose of a story that, as mate of a ship aboard which in reality Thurston had never sailed, he had killed a Rotuman youth who had actually died of natural causes after leaving another of J. C. Malcolm's vessels. 'No Mr. Thurston', said Riamkau, near-kinsman of the youth, 'me know Mr. Thurston he very good

[1] *Empire*, 7 May 1861, 8 December 1862; Sydney Shipping Master, Inwards Passenger Lists.
[2] Commonplace Book, Thurston Papers.
[3] Memorandum, 10 October 1879, FCSO 79/1749.

man'.[4] Thurston was to remember him with sorrow, also, because Riamkau was to fall victim to hostilities exacerbated by the returned Christian emissaries.[5] Thirty years from their first meeting at the Sydney dockside, Thurston could not forget the violent death of Riamkau when Marist priest and Wesleyan missionary contended for what they called 'religious freedom' from him as Governor of Fiji.

Thurston first saw Fiji, too, aboard the *James*. From her deck, in August 1862,[6] he saw the island of Ovalau—a long line of rugged hills, softened for most of their two thousand feet by vegetation, scoured by streams, and their rocky pinnacles often lost in rain-clouds. He landed on the narrow coastal strip at Levuka where reed, thatch, weatherboard and tin buildings marked the presence of a handful of European residents—a merchant or two, missionaries, and a few old remnants from the days when Levuka was the settlement of beachcombers; deserters from whaleships, agents for *bêche-de-mer* traders, they had lived under the protection of Tui Levuka, the head of a chiefly clan residing at that point on Ovalau, who was called *Tamananivavalagi* (Father of the foreigners) for his kindness to them. The settlement was proof, in a sense, that Fijian societies were hierarchical, their structures functional and affording points of entry to Europeans according to the latter's skills and ambitions—as to boat-builders in the past, and to political advisers in the future. If the nature of these societies is to be sketched, biography must wholly give place for a short space to social and political analysis.

Fijian societies were in no way monolithic, and the plural is used here advisedly. The near hundred inhabited islands of the geographical expression 'Fiji' contained great diversity in cultures, as also in dialects.

A linguistic boundary, following the hills from north to south across Viti Levu, differentiates the westerners on that island from the rest of Fiji. Yet inter-connecting relationships held much of Fiji together. A sense of common identity widely existed, even as against visitors from neighbouring Tonga, professional mercenaries, to whom the peoples of coastal Fiji had long played host and with whom they had intermarried. And almost everywhere

[4] Encls Simpson to Thurston, 13 October 1873, F1/11.
[5] See, below, pp. 336-7.
[6] *Empire*, 30 August 1862.

the concept of rank was recognised, the authority springing from rank accepted—without all of the distinction in this between 'Polynesian' eastern and 'Melanesian' western Fiji which has become an article of faith with commentators. There were enduring political relationships too, no less real and understood for being open to interpretation at times by one or other partner. Fiji of the coasts and smaller islands could be seen as divided into states (*vanua*), even if their boundaries were not always to be delineated without ambiguity. Some established, others were absorbed into wider political configurations (*matanitu*). And perhaps the most useful political distinction between the west coast of Viti Levu and the rest of Fiji is that, in the former place, the configurations were smaller and less enduring.

Endurance was to be the keynote of much in Fijian societies. Almost fifty years after the defeat of the Rewa *matanitu* in the 1840s, and after nearly twenty of colonial rule, observers (of whom one was a Fijian) were to find old internal ties strong and functioning there: as, for instance, between the Roko Tui Dreketi, title-holder and ruling chief, and the chiefs of Burebasaga who installed him, the *Kai* Nuku who were the main military allies (or *bati*), the *Kai* Nadai through whom all orders of the ruling chief were transmitted to the people, and the trades-clans—fishermen, carpenters, sailors.[7]

In each entity, *vanua* or *matanitu*, the essence was the existence of a prestigious political centre, seat of a ruling chief like the Roko Tui Dreketi, the Vunivalu of Bau, the Tui Cakau—a chief who had come to such a title, first, in virtue of his right by descent from the founding ancestors, who watched still over the fortunes of land and people, and second, ideally, by formal installation. Rank was taken from the mother as well as from the father and descent was fluid within accepted conventions. A dead chief's brothers were likely to be in the grave, or senile, before his eldest son by his highest-ranking wife acquired his title. Theory was that unless a man of the true blood presided over the ceremonial observances (*kavakavanua*) that ensured fertility in gardens, or the rising of fish, those observances would be made in vain.

It remains true that in the study of Fijian societies the concept of flux is sometimes as appropriate as that of structure. Oral

[7] Thomson and Ratu Marika Toroca to Colonial Secretary, September 1893, NLC Outwards Letters and Reports 1890-1900.

tradition reveals frequent fission of social groups, many local migrations. The traditions themselves do not extend so far into the past as, for instance, those of Tonga; and Fijian genealogies are shallow. Convention and legitimacy, too, were not less frequently outraged than in other societies. And in Fijian, also, much pragmatism was displayed, the active and able youth installed in a moment of crisis above his slumbrous senior in the caste—and even a Tongan adopted into a chiefly family, if the genealogy of the Ka Levu of Nadroga may be accepted.

Yet still the sense of legitimacy most patent in Fiji derived from descent in western Viti Levu as elsewhere. And descent provided some of the most enduring political ties, through the *vasu*—the sister's son, who had rights of levy upon his mother's brother. If the genealogical evidence were available much of the history of Fiji, as of the Roman revolution, could be written in terms of the political relations of kinship. A man's political behaviour was not necessarily conditioned by the fact that he was *vasu* to Bau, or to Cakaudrove; but the relationship opened up a particular set of alternatives and meant that others were inaccessible or unattractive to him.

To the seat of the ruling chief went tribute in food and valued goods (*iyau*); honour, precedence and substantial obedience were accorded to it, whether directly or through immediate superiors. The concept of being tributary to (*qali*) was recognised. So was that of *vakaroroqo*, 'going to', 'following'. People without a chief of their own might install a scion of a line established elsewhere; and lesser chiefs might themselves seek the prestige and protection of serving a greater one—or, conquered in war, might hold by the conqueror until the moment struck to break free.

If he were a Tui Cakau, the ruling chief drew on the resources of Taveuni, northern Lau and the Cakaudrove coast of Vanua Levu, while if he were the Tui Nayau at Lakeba the wealth of central and southern Lau was his to call on by despatching the appropriate *matanivanua* to the island or people whose assistance he required. Their counterpart in Macuata was the Caumatalevu clan, divided between Macuata islet and the mainland town of Naduri, while along the southern coast of Viti Levu and its islands the influence of the Roko Tui Dreketi stretched as far as Nadroga where the Ka Levu had claimed a hundred dependent towns in

1843,[8] entertained ambitions up the Sigatoka river, and jostled with other claimants in the Yasawa Islands for *lewa* (authority). Inland behind the south coast there was, if not a *matanitu*, then at any rate a powerful chiefly kin-group in Namosi. Beyond Namosi all authority was fragmentary; but there were notable *vanua* on the west coast at Ba, while on the northern (Ra) coast, in the home of the snake-god Degei and the region of the Kauvadra mountains to which a culture looked in its myths as the origin of life, were *vanua* that followed Viwa.

Viwa had become *bati* to its companion islet, Bau—those twenty acres of partly reclaimed land off the eastern coast of Viti Levu, the precise position of whose thronging, seafaring people in the political systems of Fiji was occupying so much foreign attention when the *James* brought Thurston to Fiji.

For Thurston's trading schooner shared the Levuka anchorage with a British warship; she had come with the formal refusal to an offer of cession originally made to Britain four years previously by the Vunivalu of Bau, as 'Tui Viti' with 'full and exclusive Sovereignty' over the whole group.[9] The Vunivalu of Bau had in fact assumed such a title in the 1840s, but it was not indigenous nor wholly backed by actual authority; and to the British commissioner whose report on the offer had been written at Levuka in 1861 he seemed 'only one, although probably the most influential, of the numerous independent chiefs of Fiji . . .'.[10] Already when Colonel Smythe wrote this, the British Consul who had taken home the offer had retracted his initial representation of the Vunivalu of Bau. Consul W. T. Pritchard argued that the powerful Wesleyan Mission, eagerly preaching obedience to the Christian Bauan as the power that was, had misled him, as new to Fiji, by representing the Vunivalu of Bau as legitimate Tui Viti. Falsely represented him, wrote Pritchard, proceeding to put back almost as much as he retracted,

> For though the Island of Bau unquestionably has full right to be regarded as the native Metropolis of Fiji; though the people of Bau have a recognized superiority throughout the group,—though the Chief of Bau receives, in one form or another, and at one period or

[8] Hunt to General Secretaries, 8 June 1843, Letters from Fiji, ML A2811.
[9] F4/Temp. 1 Vol. I, 12 October 1858.
[10] Smythe to C.O., 1 May 1861, CO83/1.

another,—tribute from various districts of Fiji,—though every district, every town has a Mata-ki-Bau, (or ambassador to Bau,—a circumstance of which no other Chief and people can boast)—the Chief of Bau can in reality successfully claim to be little more than the most powerful, the most influential, the most dignified Chieftain of his race—the only Chieftain whose words and acts are circulated with any appearance of authority, and heard with any degree of authority and respect.[11]

Defensive though this might be, it was by no means a bad statement of the position of Bau and its ruling chief, allowing for exaggeration as to the number of districts and towns in Fiji which had a *matakibau*.

The Bauans were originally inland people from up the Wainibuka river in the Kauvadra mountains of north-eastern Viti Levu. Now they were seafarers, their islet 'a town of chiefs abt 1000' strong to a European resident in Fiji in 1850[12] and they themselves 'as genuine an aristocracy as ever existed in any country' to a friend of Pritchard's in 1862.[13] So they certainly were in the islands of Lomaiviti. They had intermarried with chiefly clans there and, in some places, had established people from other islands who served the Bauans thenceforth.[14] To a regretful member of a *mataqali matanivanua* (herald, executive clan) it was to seem that, in the days of his own youth, 'their principal work at Bau' had been levying root-foods, turtles and *iyau* from Lomaiviti[15] in the great, 100-foot-long *waqa tabu*—the so-called 'double canoes', with vast leg-of-mutton pandanus-matting sails and paddlers, in serried ranks, drawn from the fishermen clan of Bau, the Lasakau people. There was contemporary evidence to support him, along with genealogical material.[16] From their allied *vanua* on Viti Levu, too, the Bauans levied for house-building, garden-making and the preparation of feasts—though always with an offering in return, and by approach with due formality through the *mata* of the *vanua* concerned living at Bau and the *matakibau* in the *vanua* itself.[17]

[11] Pritchard to Smythe, 14 January 1861, FO 58/108.
[12] Joseph to Jabez Waterhouse, 13 November 1850, Waterhouse Papers, ML Uncat. MSS. set 192, item 2.
[13] Berthold Seemann, *Viti* . . . (Cambridge, 1862), 79.
[14] NLC report, 16 November 1916, CP 14 of 1917.
[15] Ratu Tevita Toganivalu, 'The Customs of Bau before Christianity', *Transactions of the Fiji Society for the year 1911*.
[16] See, e.g., the evidence from Lomaiviti in the Lands Claims Commission records, NAF.
[17] Valuable evidence is collected at FCSO 17/5947.

These were the heartlands of a Bauan power that extended into all coastal Fiji. This was an upstart power according to such older, eclipsed states as Verata and Vuna; Bau could claim none of that precedence in legend which they adhered to themselves. But the social and political dominance of Bau was well-established in the first decade of the nineteenth century when Europeans drifted into Fiji; it was established on force, the ties of blood and the magnetic attraction of the bold, arrogant, hungry and successful.

Through their *bati*, Viwa, the Bauans could call on the great man-power resources of Ra where the Roko Tui Viwa was an ally to some and a conqueror to others. And with this army the Bauans, under the second recorded Vunivalu, Banuve, had established themselves over southern Lau by interfering in a succession dispute at Lakeba and taking away a woman of rank (*marama*) to share the Vunivalu's bedplace. In the period known directly to documents, from the 1830s, their grandson (Ratu Mara Kapaiwai, whose own mother likewise came from Lakeba) was a power in Lau as *vasu* to Tui Nayau. The standing of Bau had been high.[18] 'If Bau fights any land, and the land is victorious, yet the land makes offering for peace to Bau, as a mark of subjection', the Reverend James Calvert had written at Lakeba in 1842.[19]

The Bauans' standing was such that they had actually been able to reverse the privileges of the sister's son. Bauan *marama* were married into other chiefly families; their sons should have had similar rights in the Bauan heartland as Ratu Mara in Lau; and the Roko Tui Viwa from the late 1850s, Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro, was able from his position in Ra to exercise them fully; but others who were *vasu* to Bau took goods to, not from, their maternal relations.[20] The Tui Cakau's people brought tribute to Bau, sitting to paddle their canoes in a mark of subjection, and sleeping outside for their first three nights on the islet. Legend explained the practice: the Somosomo god, in the shape of a rat, had swum to Bau and been warmed there three nights beside a fire before it could stop shivering. But there were marriage ties between

[18] See, for this and general events in Fiji at this time, Deryck Scarr, 'Cakobau and Ma'afu: contenders for pre-eminence in Fiji', in J. W. Davidson and Deryck Scarr (eds), *Pacific Island Portraits* (Canberra, 1970).

[19] Calvert to General Secretaries, 14 November 1842, ML A 2811.

[20] See, e.g., evidence of Edward Martin, FO58/108: the condition still obtains.

Cakaudrove and Bau; and Ratu Lalabalavu (commonly called Tui Kilakila), fifth Tui Cakau, was *vasu* to Bau.

Authority in Fiji was subject to ebb and flow. In the mid-1850s his authority sapped by rebellion on the part of Ratu Mara Kapaiwai, the present Vunivalu of Bau had been saved in a great war with Rewa only by massive aid from King Siaosi Tupou I of Tonga. And Bauan authority, more than any other, depended on the absence of a powerful competitor to whom subordinated *matanitu* could turn in refuge from exactions which, if Bauan, were never light. The Tongans themselves were such competitors. Regular visitors for generations, they had begun to establish permanent settlements outside their normal place of congregation at Lakeba. Their relations with Fijians were such that where they lived, there they were likely to rule. Nominal Wesleyans, their idleness, plundering life and immorality scandalised even the Wesleyan missionaries, who yet put up with their burning and killing in Fijian fights because their influence was extended under John Wesley's banner. The hypocrisy in them was used as an argument against Christianity by several Fijian chiefs who preferred their own old gods, those Homeric heroes of creation and the marriage bed, spirits of mountain and sea. The Tongans held Moala and Matuku now, the former taken from its older allegiance to Bau. They held Vanua Balavu too, where their leader, Enele Ma'afu (son of Siaosi's predecessor in the title of Tui Kanokupolu) had interpreted Tui Kilakila's open-handed offer of chiefly levying-rights as a territorial claim and had established himself by military action.[21]

Thurston did not see Ma'afu now but doubtless heard of him: the tall, well-built, light-skinned Ma'afu, with heavy-lidded eyes and high cheek-bones, the lover of boats and good living: the effective ruler whom Thurston was to come first to admire, then to deplore. Certainly there was much else to see at Levuka in August 1862, for Consul Pritchard was on trial before commissioners brought down from Sydney in H.M.S. *Miranda*. A one-time missionary's son, Pritchard had come to the newly-established British Consulate in 1858 after political intrigue and mercantile speculation at the side of his father, then British Consul in Samoa. Pritchard had offered the Vunivalu of Bau escape under

[21] 'Cakobau and Ma'afu.'

British rule from the pressure of the Tongans. More immediately, he had offered protection against the threats of American naval commanders who had fastened upon him, as Tui Viti, a debt for damage to American trading interests; inflated out of all proportion to the losses actually suffered through Fijian depredations, the American debt was to loom as the darkest cloud on the Vunivalu of Bau's horizon for many years. Pritchard had also advertised the commercial possibilities of Fiji, had sought to profit from his own advertisements by speculating in land. And so a political manipulator was on trial as the *James* did her business at Levuka, a man whom Thurston followed in being regarded as a pundit in Fijian affairs—and in being investigated by a commission based in a warship in Levuka harbour.

Possibly, too, Thurston saw some remnants of the boom which Pritchard had created in European enterprise in Fiji. The first great land purchases had been made. Europeans were confident that coffee, sugar, cotton and tapioca would thrive; at eighty trees to the acre, coconuts would yield £4 per acre in copra, the dried flesh of the nut that was replacing coconut-oil at the point of shipment; some investors, infatuated, even believed in sheep.[22] Visions of tropical luxuriance had brought men down to marvel at the fertility and deplore their predecessors' slothful subjection to climate, sad acceptance of another culture's traits:

> There will be a rush here as soon as it is known what kind of place it is the old hands have never done any thing to make the place go ahead while they can get plenty to eat and plenty of grog to drink they care for nothing else, none of them have got any gardens which they might of had with the greatest ease, the white men here never do any thing they make the niggers do every thing.[23]

The writer was lost at sea before he had time to discover that, as an older resident was saying, 'all who now come to these Islands must be prepared to exercise great self denial and endure many hardships, for which there is nothing to remunerate them'.[24]

Remuneration would come from cotton, in the opinion of Pritchard's fellow enthusiast, the botanist Berthold Seemann.

[22] Joseph to Jabez Waterhouse, 13 September 1861, ML Uncat. MSS. set 192, item 2.
[23] H. Thomas to his parents, 17 November 1860, LCC P39.
[24] Binner to Egglestone, 30 July 1861, MOM 165.

Cotton would make rich men of pioneer settlers who, having little capital, were willing to settle in river-bank and sea-coast clearings while they adventured their digestions upon the yams, coconuts, pork and imported preserved foods of the European resident, their temperatures to a range of 'fevers' (though excluding malaria), and their self-esteem to the uncertain reception and demands of 'savages' but recently Christianised. Seemann had encouraged a partnership between Pritchard and his own assistant Jacob Storck; as a result, Storck was to spend the rest of his life in Fiji, a living example of the planter who, too crushed by climate and lack of capital to do much planting, took refuge in dreams and in gin when he could get it, *yaqona* when he could not.[25]

Thurston did not yield to any pull he may have felt now to settle in Fiji. When the *James* sailed from Levuka for the Line, he was still aboard her; and there is little evidence to show how much he had seen and heard in Fiji to serve as background to what he later knew and felt. All the themes in the affairs of Fiji that were to occupy his life had been under inquiry, however, hence to some extent on display: the nature of rank and of allegiances, of power and legitimacy in Fijian society; the lines of succession to titles, especially in Macuata where Pritchard had supported the heathen Ritova, most compelling of the candidates by descent and ability, against his cousin Bete, who was favoured by the Tongans; and the power of the Wesleyan Mission. The rights of the Tongans in Fiji were discussed, and the ways of escape open to the Vunivalu of Bau from the American debt. The results of the inquiry were printed in New South Wales. Many of its statements translated from the Fijian, its contents vivid and suggestive, the print may well have lain later on Thurston's shelves beside the ruined Pritchard's *Polynesian Reminiscences*, while the men whose names appeared in both publications passed through his house. Here were Ma'afu and the puzzled, half-Tongan Tui Bua, the *yaqona*-sodden Tui Nayau, Ritova, 'hot like fire', with his bloody-handed sons, and the aloof, sardonic Vunivalu of Bau himself, who was seeking now to come to terms with what threatened to be a European-dominated age by earnest attention to Wesleyan Methodism.

Certainly Thurston knew well the earlier report of Colonel Smythe. As a text for his own political conduct, he was to quote

[25] See letters from Seemann and Storck: Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Smythe's conclusion that, 'Judging from the present state of the Sandwich Islands, and the former condition of Tahiti, it would seem that the resources of the Pacific Islands can be best developed and the welfare of their inhabitants secured, by a native government aided by the counsels of respectable Europeans'.[26]

Now Thurston remained a seaman. He left the *James* on her return to Sydney in December 1862 only to move into another ship. Yet his early love, the sea, became a tiresome mistress when romanticism ebbed with youth. In the journal that he opened as mate of the 170-ton brig *Kestrel* in February 1863 his comments indicated a preference for the land.[27]

He sailed on a nine-months' voyage in a short-handed ship between places as distant in space and ambience as Mauritius and Otago.[28] He reached Mauritius on 15 May after a tedious 28-day passage with timber and horses from Fremantle. If he felt nostalgic for yet more distant places in his past when he sighted a full-rigged ship 'bound cheerily away to northward very likely for Calcutta', he had the Pacific islands still in mind also. As Mauritius rose under the foresail's foot out of a tumbled sea he was reminded of the New Hebrides, for this new landfall was 'so peaked and craggy, indicative of its volcanic origin and with the same black basalt cliffs & mountains'. He enjoyed Mauritius, once ashore. He found cheap cigars and good pastry to be had through careful employment of his 'bad French'. If his pace was more sedate than it had been eight years before at Bahia, he again sought out the opera—'to have a closer view of Society, and the different shades of coloured beauty'. Yet he spent some time wandering in a graveyard, 'a perfect flower garden', thinking of mortality and loneliness with a melancholy that was more than conventional.

Its origins came up from the past to face him squarely when he chanced on an acquaintance alongside a quay, the old *Echo*, of Jersey, and went aboard to yarn with her people:

> Many times, as a schoolboy, have I idled upon the pier, at St Helier, watching the men, on board of her & wishing I was a sailor—I have had my wish & many times, have regretted I ever entertained the idea—but I might have done no better—Quoi Save?[29]

[26] Smythe to C.O., 1 May 1861, CO83/1.
[27] *Kestrel* journal, Thurston Papers.
[28] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 October 1863; Sydney Shipping Master's Office, Inwards Passenger Lists, 26 October 1863.
[29] *Kestrel* journal.

His inclination now was for a life ashore. After his return to Sydney, he had the opportunity to go 'into Station life again'. He had saved money, and proposed to go into partnership with a squatter friend who himself had expectations of inheriting more. In the meantime he 'determined to make one voyage to the South Seas *for my own pleasure*', having been at sea so much for other people's. But the squatter's horse rolled on him, their joint plans died with him, and when Thurston sailed again for the South Seas there was no 'station life' awaiting his return.[30]

Botany was the lure that took him back to the Pacific, for the joy in plants which had taken the youth rambling through the East India Company's gardens and Sydney's Botanical Gardens remained strong in the man. In a few years he liked to link far parts of the world through the profusion of plants beyond his shutters. He put a flowering branch of logwood before an audience of Fiji planters and remarked that in it they saw distant places brought near. 'The Bay of Campeachy has shaken hands with the Bay of Suva.'[31] Now he laid in a stock of trade-goods, acquired a supply of the plant cases which strewed his various homes for the rest of his life, and took lessons in photography.[32] And he renewed acquaintances with his former owner, Malcolm, who had sold the *James* and put the master of his *Clarence Packet* into a newly-acquired brigantine, the *Star of Eve*.[33] With Captain Albert Ross Hovell Thurston sailed again from Sydney on 30 September 1864 as a passenger in the 126-ton brigantine,[34] heading into a gale which threw the old *James* ashore on to the New South Wales coast, a total wreck.[35]

Thurston was bound for Rotuma again, the 'garden of the Pacific' to his mind,[36] where a collector with no formal training might find new specimens. There, moreover, he had friends. He knew Malcolm's resident trader, the Swede Eric Lomberg—'a plain, blunt sailor and very excellent fellow' in Thurston's eyes[37] —and they were much about the island together over the next nine

[30] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[31] *Agricultural and Industrial Association of Fiji: Inaugural Address by the Hon. J. B. Thurston, C.M.G., F.L.S., &c, &c.* (Suva, 1887).
[32] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[33] *Empire*, 2, 3, 6, 7 September 1864.
[34] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September, 1 October 1864.
[35] *Empire*, 4 October 1864.
[36] Memorandum, 10 October 1879, FCSO 79/1749.
[37] Undated fragment of letter, *c.* mid-1869, NAF MS17.

months, photographing and plant collecting.[38] At Faguta he found Riamkau again, his prohibition on Christian missionaries lately broken by his rival Marafu, who had made land available at Noatau for the Reverend William Fletcher to proselytise from.

Now Thurston established himself at Faguta, in a low-built house thatched with the fronds of the sago-palm and set on a rubble plinth; from it he explored Rotuma. He examined trees from whose bark cloth had formerly been made and regretted that, with the introduction of Manchester goods, the manufacture was being given up:

> In a few years many branches of native industry will be forgotten & lost. Old men have told me that when they were boys the women were constantly employed cultivating the plant and working up the bark—but now the younger women never attempt such a thing notwithstanding that their own manufacture was everlasting in its durability compared to the flaming-gaudy-cotton of the traders and far more graceful—I was fortunate enough to procure two very fine specimens of their work . . .[39]

He went fishing, too, baiting sharks near the islet of Hatana to which, after legend, the founder of Rotuma had retired and now lay buried. For he was observing the people and making chief-lists, inquiring into legends and seeking answers to a table of inquiries about custom. He recalled that in the Gilbert Islands he had learned of the veneration accorded to house-posts and found that it existed on Rotuma also. Here, too, it was prohibited 'for a married woman to sit upon a fishing canoe—or in a canoe at all'. He noted the existence of totemism: 'they believe that did a . . . fish—the taboo of a person in a fishing canoe, become caught in the net it would immediately swim to that person who would connive at its escape'. He found the dead 'buried in vaults made of flat stones', with enormous covering stones; he observed the striking physiognomy of the living, whose 'inner angle of the eye is slightly depressed and the features are generally somewhat flat'; and he noted the difference in their language from that which he was accustomed to hear in the central Pacific. In a few years he was linguist enough to recognise that the difference was one of pronunciation, not structure.[40]

[38] Journal of E. W. Lomberg, *passim*, ML B519.
[39] 'Ramble on Rotuma', Commonplace Book, Thurston Papers.
[40] Ibid.; memorandum, 10 October 1879, FCSO 79/1749.

He recorded the legend of Raho, the founder of Rotuma, and of Tikanuia who had followed him. He reported accurately on the Rotumans' political structure, with full recognition that considerable changes had been and were still taking place. He described at length the institution of the *Sau*, the titular, ceremonial chief of the whole island whose annual or biennial election he later described as 'the *root* of the principal customs and usages of the island'. The *Sau* was a pivot of ceremonial and a buffer to ambition; he was nominated from untitled men by one of the chiefs who, without him, might have been a contender for the mastery of the island; but, as Thurston believed, 'not infrequently he is a thorn in the side of the man that appointed him'.[41] This he may have gathered from Riamkau, who had chosen the present *Sau*. Thurston had detected the fact that a name like 'Marafu' was a dynastic title and that there was still a 'Tikanuia' on the island. 'In fact, the names of all the old chiefs are extant and held by persons of meaner extraction but the people respect the name more than the person.'[42]

He found the *Star of Eve* returned from her rounds to collect him for the return passage to Sydney on 14 March 1865. Next evening, having sent off his plant-cases, he went out to her as she lay in the open bay on the north-west coast within sound of the sea breaking sullenly over the inshore reef. He slept on deck until driven below at 2 a.m. by light rain and was up again in a little over an hour, having heard the second anchor let go and 'all hands' called; he found that a heavy squall had hit the brigantine from the north-east and the main cable had parted. She brought up briefly on the second anchor, then it dragged and she began driving towards the reef. As a last resort, wrote Thurston in the journal[43] that he kept over the next three days,

> Capt. H. determined to slip and make sail. The wind at this time was from the N.E., with which she would bear right out. Sail was made with rapidity the cable slipped and the ships head canted to the westward but as the fore-yard went round and the sails filled; the wind died away to a calm, and the heavy swell drove the ship rapidly ashore.

[41] 'Ramble on Rotuma.'
[42] Ibid.
[43] 'The Wreck & Plundering of the Brig[antine] "Star of Eve" At the Isld of Rotumah, South Seas', Thurston Papers; see also Lomberg, Journal.

She struck lightly at first, then was caught by the swell and driven broadside on the reef. The foretopgallant mast fell and Thurston expected the rest of the spars to follow it, so violently she rolled in the breakers and ground on the coral. Most of the hands took to the surf and he went after them to make for the shore some four hundred yards away, with the ship breaking up behind him.

> On taking to the water I discovered that the ship had opened from the rolling over in the surf, the cocoa nut oil was floating so thick that it not only blinded me for the time but nearly destroyed my presence of mind by the intense pain it caused. After a severe struggle I passed the reef and reached calmer water and found myself in company with most of the white crew with whom a little before daybreak I reached the village of 'Maftoa'. The chief of the village at once set about launching his canoe—and I borrowing a mat from a native set off for our trading station in the bay and reached it in time to see our trading master W. Lomberg—going out in a large canoe.

From the wreck Thurston somehow saved his camera, with its equipment, and his papers; his botanical specimens were lost. Of his own loss he made no mention. Its severity was perhaps reflected in his anger on Malcolm's behalf at the Rotumans' plundering of the wreck. He spent the three days following the wreck trying, with the crew, to recover the oil-casks from the ship in competition with the people of the bay and incensed with the insouciance of the chiefs, to whom the brigantine's people appealed for protection with offers of a dollar per cask handed over. 'He is one of those highly conceited Polynesians who uniformly treat whites with contempt', Thurston wrote of one, 'excepting they intend begging for something'. A chief who plundered considerably argued that he was justified in doing so because his aid had not been sought, thus 'admitting his knowledge of right and wrong in the affair'. He put the argument through his beachcomber friends, whose adherence to their host's point of view—in this as in other matters —increased the distaste that Thurston felt for them. They were, he noted, 'some of those renegade Europeans found on nearly all S.S. islands who having for years identified themselves with the heathenism and sensualities of the natives, are entirely lost to any feeling or sympathy for their own race'. He was very conscious of his race as he sought flotsam amongst the rocks of the shoreline—at one point falling foul of visitors to Rotuma from another island

who swore that they knew him, the 'writer' (from his habit of taking notes), and would be revenged. In return for that pleasantry he clapped a cutlass to the ringleader's throat and, the *Star of Eve*'s crew coming up, doubled him across a cask and thrashed him.[44]

Now more than ever, however, he was dependent on the islanders' goodwill. On 28 May there were two miserable men from the wreck at Fletcher's door, complaining of the Rotumans' exorbitant demands in return for what help they gave, and in time to share his supper.[45] Thurston may have been one of them; he later wrote warmly of Fletcher's hospitality. But on 18 March, after the episode with the cutlass, he had intended going back next day to Faguta on the other side of the island; there he lived once more for most of the time, under Riamkau's protection, but brooding where lately he had looked jauntily around him.

He had three months to wait before rescue came; the *Star of Eve*'s loss was apparently not reported in Sydney before early August and none of the three ships that called at Rotuma in April and May was bound south. Rather than go a-whaling, or trading back on the Line, the castaway stayed where he was; but time dragged for him. Even in January the plant collector had been growing tired of coconut trees and would willingly have exchanged tropical luxuriance for 'the fair woodland scenery of our northern clime'.[46] He borrowed books from Fletcher to replace his own; and some of them were fit furniture for a missionary's embattled dwelling or a castaway's embittered hut. Earlier Thurston had written a short paper, 'Remarks on Polynesian Pronouns', in which he had noted how 'beautifully complete' those pronouns were, 'having remarkable and beautiful distinctions unknown to us' in their duals and trials. 'The Polynesian dialects are remarkably rich', he had written, 'admit of great variety of phraseology, abound in terms of peculiar nicety and are spoken in strict conformity to the most precise grammatical principles'.[47] Now, he gave way to feelings that he was to spend his life attacking in others. Reading French's *Language of Savage Tribes*, he agreed that such a language was necessarily always 'the *remnant* and *ruin* of a better

[44] 'Wreck . . . of the . . . "Star of Eve" . . .'.
[45] Fletcher's Journal entry, 29 May 1865, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, April 1866.
[46] 'Ramble on Rotuma.'
[47] Commonplace Book.

and a noble past', with 'fearful degradation' stamped upon it.[48]

He had fallen amongst fundamentalists; he had encountered their archpriest Richard Whately, late Archbishop of Dublin, whose lecture to the Young Men's Christian Association *On the 'Origin of Civilisation'* led Thurston into a long, bitter essay, based on Whately's text: 'The liberty enjoyed by the savage consists in being left free to plunder and oppress those weaker than himself . . .'. To throw overboard the Rousseauesque state of nature by the evidence of case histories, he took examples from the central and northern Gilbert Islands where he had 'had much experience, and communication with the people'. A high chief of war-torn Tarawa who had come aboard the *James* 'covered with terrific scars' to buy fire-arms provided him with a counterpoise to the image of the 'noble savage'. For an example of a man 'happy in the state of nature' he drew on a henchman of Te-Kaia, high chief of Abaiang, who had been sent off in the *Star of Eve* 'to "look out more land" . . . as they express it' to which Te-Kaia might retire from Abaiang's troubles. After a few weeks wrecked amongst the Rotumans, 'who tried to make a slave of him', Te-Kaia's emissary had concluded 'as many of our readers have perhaps done That "there's no place like home"'.[49]

Then, on 11 June 1865, an unexpected sail proved to be the mission brig *John Wesley*, come down from Fiji with the Reverend James Calvert on a farewell visit before his final retirement from the South Seas.[50] Two days later Thurston left Rotuma in her with the rest of the *Star of Eve*'s people for Fiji.[51] He came aboard barefoot and then put on a pair of socks to walk the deck, Calvert confided to a correspondent, and so the missionary felt obliged to give him a pair of old shoes.[52] He watched the brig's hands muster aft daily for prayers—'quite an unusual sight to me'[53]—until, on 16 June, he saw the coast of north-east Vanua Levu through the morning haze in a final, fateful landfall.

[48] 'Remarks written after reading a lecture *On the "Origin of Civilisation"* . . .', ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Fletcher's journal entry, 11 June 1865, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, April 1866.

[51] Lomberg, Journal, 11-14 June 1865; 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji on Board the Brig John Wesley', Thurston Papers.

[52] Calvert to Rowe, journal letter begun 20 June 1865, MMS.

[53] 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.

3

'The Devil's luck'

THURSTON was four months past his twenty-ninth birthday in June 1865 when he landed again in Fiji. He was a near-penniless castaway, fully conscious that he had achieved nothing and uncertain as to his immediate future. His companions from the wreck were sent on to Sydney next month, except for three who chose to remain in Fiji.[1] He, a passenger, could not as of right expect to be treated as a distressed seaman in the same way—though indeed, since they went in the *John Wesley* and supposedly at Malcolm's expense,[2] doubtless he could have gone too. Here was a place with a market for his seaman's profession, however; nothing required or invited his rapid return to New South Wales; and if Berthold Seemann had scooped the botanist's field in Fiji, there still remained fine studies for the photographer. Thurston sold Calvert photographs taken on Rotuma, thought of sending to Sydney for fresh chemicals,[3] and put his camera to use as he came down Somosomo Strait for Levuka.

His ship was bound immediately for Kioa, the high, wooded island in Buca Bay which the then Tui Cakau, Tui Kilakila, had sold in 1853; the price was a passage to Bau for himself, his entourage and two hundred tons of produce and property for presentation to the Bau chiefs.[4] Calvert wanted to go more rapidly to Levuka. Like the rest of the *Star of Eve*'s people, Thurston left

[1] Jones to Board of Trade, 4 July 1865, F4/1.

[2] Rabone to Boyce, 21 September 1865, MOM 33. Malcolm made difficulties over paying: besides the *Star of Eve* he had lost the *Margaret Thompson* and a third, larger ship on passage from California, the *All Serene*, and his affairs were probably in disorder. He died in 1867, but an acquaintance with him served as an introduction to Thurston for years.

[3] Calvert to Rowe, journal letter begun 20 June 1865, MMS.

[4] F4/Temp. 1 Vol. I, 21 November 1853.

the brig with him and ran down in the *John Wesley*'s boat upon the coast of Taveuni.

It rose high and bold, Thurston noted in his journal, achieving 1,500 feet from its narrow coastal strip; its slopes were patched with coconut groves and pillared at intervals with the smoke of villages, its mountain-tops were cloud-covered. Taveuni's fertility was proverbial; the 'garden of Fiji' it became popularly known to the European planters who paid high prices for land there; and Thurston was to know it well, for he made it his home. As Conrad depicted his first sight of the East in his short story 'Youth', so in Thurston's imagination over the next thirty years may have lingered an etching of this, his own final descent upon Fiji—an open boat with the black-coated missionary in the stern-sheets and the castaway seamen on the thwarts, high mountains, and the feel, if not of the tiller, then of the gunwale under his hand, and the shadow of the canvas as the sail came down.

He was ashore at Wairiki on the evening of 16 June, to spend the night in a mission-teacher's house. He found the town built above a steep ascent, well walled and moated, with a pair of handsome nine-pounders at the gate. He noted particularly that the houses were round-ended after the Tongan style, not squared off in the Fijian.[5] Tongan influence was strong on Taveuni, as elsewhere in eastern Fiji; their canoes were frequent visitors and their women had been taken by the chiefly clans—though not, probably, as principal wives whose sons were likely candidates for installation as ruling chiefs. Wairiki was a seat of the Tui Cakau, who was in residence; and Thurston called on him.

This was probably the first Fijian of high rank with whom Thurston had spoken. And he remained the one for whom Thurston retained the strongest affection. Thurston was to be remembered in history as Minister and confidant of the Vunivalu of Bau. But all his affection was given to Ratu Goleanavanua, Tui Cakau. To Thurston, in memory, he was 'with all his faults—the boldest, proudest, truest spoken chief in Fiji'.[6]

'A large, powerful man', Thurston found Ratu Golea now, 'about 30 yrs of age—or less—grave demeanour & rather good

[5] Calvert to Rowe, journal letter, begun 20 June 1865, MMS.; 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji On Board the Brig John Wesley', Commonplace Book, Thurston Papers.

[6] Thurston to Gordon, 27 April 1879, Stanmore, *Fiji: Records of Private and of Public Life 1875-1880* (Edinburgh, 1897-1912), III, 560.

looking: a fine Tongan girl sat on the mat with him, one of his concubines'.[7] He enjoyed about thirty wives, Thurston learned; the senior was Adi Elenoa Mila, a daughter of the line of the Vunivalu of Bau, who had formerly been a wife of the Roko Tui Suva. Ratu Golea's eldest son by her, Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu, came later into Thurston's household as his foster-child.

Thurston and Ratu Golea were of an age. But the one, towering massively beside the slightness of the other, was already established as a man—a proven warrior, his chiefdom won in blood from rival candidates. His father, Tui Kilakila, had died violently by night in his house at Somosomo eleven years before, waking in time to ask whether the figure standing over him intended death. The answer, like the blow, had come from a son or his agent; for Tui Kilakila fell victim to the jealousy and ambition within lineages which, perhaps above all, made a chief's life uncertain. Yet his claim to the title had been good, and he had assumed it with discretion. His death was remembered with pain for over fifty years. 'The earth . . . had drained his father's blood', Ratu Golea told Thurston.[8]

Ratu Golea had succeeded out of turmoil in which many of his brothers died. He and his full brother, Raivalita the leper, were *vasu* to Tuniloa, of no great rank on their mother's side as chiefly birth was measured in Fiji. But Golea, the younger, was bold in fight, effective master of Cakaudrove even when Raivalita held the title. Now the leper was dead and Ratu Golea ruled, still with one of his father's murderers alive in Ratu Kuila (son of a younger brother of Tui Kilakila who had been lost at sea years before) but apparently without rival.

Ratu Golea had charisma. No man became so well as he the Tui Cakau's familiar title *Ra Turaga*, Great Lord. Yet he was a drunkard, subject to spasms of intermittent withdrawal and, alternately, bursts of wild, sometimes inane activity. He sold more land to Europeans than perhaps any other chief in Fiji, rarely consulting the occupants first; and though doubtless the latter murmured, they never resisted him and rarely opposed the Europeans who came to settle. On an occasion when he had been

[7] 'Diary of a Passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.

[8] Thurston to Gordon, 27 April 1879, loc. cit. The tradition was heard by A. M. Hocart at Somosomo in about 1912, though he got the historical details wrong: A. M. Hocart, *The Northern States of Fiji* (London, 1952).

resisted over another matter, his punishment was savage; when Thurston met him he had not long sold three fine islands in northern Lau, along with the fertile Laucala near Taveuni itself.

He had received arms for them, useful in wars with the Tongans whose forces, led by Ma'afu's lieutenant Wainiqolo, he had defeated near Wairiki. He showed Thurston the graves of Wainiqolo and many other attackers, amongst them a son of the influential Tongan Assistant Minister of the Wesleyan Mission, Joeli Bulu. There were Fijians too, from those islands that Ratu Golea had later sold. Traditionally they followed Tui Cakau; he had alienated them in anger at their people's going against him. Unexpectedly, war with Ma'afu had not followed Wainiqolo's death. Ma'afu, away in Tonga at the time, had found his cousin Siaosi unwelcoming and had come back to Fiji wanting nothing so much as peace in plenty. But the effects of Wainiqolo's attack remained in Cakaudrove for years.

Its origins had been in Christianity as well as politics. Ratu Golea had been involved in a campaign on behalf of his fellow pagan Ritova, whose father was a Cakaudrove chief. And the Laucala people, Christians and no sympathisers of Ritova's, had refused to follow their chief to Macuata on Ritova's behalf. Then, in fear, they had sent to Wainiqolo on Vanua Balavu for help. Towns had gone up in smoke. The dying Raivalita, captured, had been inducted into biblical mysteries after the Wesleyan interpretation. And Ratu Golea had turned Catholic in protest, which made him unique amongst the great chiefs of Fiji.[9]

Much of this Thurston heard from him now. The breach with Ma'afu was healed; they were allies hereafter, the Fijian following the Tongan's more assured understanding of the new times that were coming to Fiji; but Tui Cakau's wounds received in the fighting had not healed. His right arm was broken, Thurston noted, '& the bone suppurating he has lost the use of it'.[10] Perhaps echoes of his friend's past resentment, his ever-present pain, returned to Thurston years later when, having come to deplore the Tongans when Ma'afu had finally given in to European pressure to save himself, he wrote that Wainiqolo had been 'a cruel & treacherous Tongan Marauder, a Polynesian Algerine whose

[9] See, generally, Scarr, 'Cakobau and Ma'afu'.
[10] 'Diary of a Passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.

whole career was one of torture, mutilation and murder . . .'.[11]

Thurston had two days at Wairiki now, his first experience of Fiji outside Ovalau, observing the irrigated hillsides and the wild air of the Cakaudrove people—their great manes of hair, all carefully dressed, their houses piled with clubs and war-axes. When he left on 18 June the wind was foul for the straight run to Levuka and the boat stood over instead for Waikava on Vanua Levu, whence the Tui Cakau's clan had come scarcely three generations before: so people sought the honour and protection of a chiefly line. Lately Waikava had been the site of a Methodist Mission station. From here, after three years in Fiji and with another five before his martyrdom in central Viti Levu, the Reverend Thomas Baker had written gloomily of a European's life in Fiji, without 'society except what we find among the natives and this is not very comforting, as they have but one power which they can exercise, namely to hear all you say, for they cannot tell you anything to inform you'. In Thurston the ability to listen was never wanting; and, after he had helped to put Baker's deserted house into order for the night, he showed in his journal that landscape and vegetation had recovered for him the magic they had lost during his enforced residence on Rotuma.[12]

Still windbound from Levuka by Calvert's caution, he rejoined the *John Wesley* at Kioa with his fellow castaways. The island was 'no doubt admirably adapted for the growth of cotton, coffee, & cocoanut oil', he decided, 'but as for its fitness for sheep & cattle—the idea is absurd—& in that respect the proprietor of the Company an imposition'. His mission transport had commercial business with the impractical proprietors of this company formed to develop Kioa; he was detained there another four days. A diversion was provided by Tui Cakau, who called in 'on his way to settle some disturbance in Natewa Bay' with a flotilla of canoes—'157 well armed natives on board of his—and a quantity of oil for the station'. The Fijians earned Thurston's admiration as they came ashore for the night. They 'went up to sleep in holes in the rocks & every man beside his arms—carrying a mat & a pillow (bamboo)'. Their

[11] Minute for Native Commissioner, n.d. [January-February 1886], Government House, Fiji, Miscellaneous Papers.

[12] 'Diary of a Passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'; Baker to his brother, 24 February 1862, MOM 126.

master sat for a photograph, the first ever taken of him so Thurston believed—'not very good but he was impatient—and only gave me one sitting'. Then, at last, the brig got under way again. And after two more days drifting down Somosomo Straits in a calm, Thurston left her for a two-hour pull to Levuka.

He waded ashore there in the late afternoon of 27 June with his possessions under his arm, saw the consul and found himself a bed in 'a blackguardly hole' of a hotel—one of the half-bar, half-boarding house establishments in which Levuka came to abound over the next five years, having none of the amenities Europeans provided themselves with in India. For the rest, he saw an improvement in European life on Ovalau. There were 'more respectable people' than in 1862.[13] It was impossible not to regard the new British Consul as anything but an improvement on his original, with all Pritchard's ability and none of his corruption—though none of his commitment to the country either.

The new incumbent was Captain H. M. Jones, veteran of the Crimean War, with a Victoria Cross won on the Alma. To a *matanivanua* of the Tui Cakau Jones was memorable as 'the Consul who had been shot through the thigh & side', while to the Reverend Lorimer Fison, Calvert's young colleague, an amateur anthropologist and correspondent of Lewis Morgan and Goldwin Smith, he had 'the Victoria Cross on the outside of his coat, & the heart of a snob on the inside'. British settlers remembered him as the martinet who kept behind his office door a—presumably figurative—cat-o'-nine tails for their chastisement when they broke his consular rules.[14]

And between the distinguished old soldier and the castaway from the mission brig's boat emerged an affinity. The two men shared similar assumptions about men and things; both enjoyed tramping in the bush; and they had some experiences in common. Thurston was a raconteur. A story he told about duck-shooting on the Hooghly whilst he was on his first voyage to Calcutta led to the discovery that Jones had been going up the river at the same time, in another ship, to join his regiment as a young ensign. And Jones, who disliked Fiji and soon left for London to seek promotion

[13] 'Diary of a Passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.
[14] LCC R960; Fison, 'Extract from Letter to my Sisters', 14 October 1866, Fison MSS.; *Fiji Times*, 21 May 1870.

to a post better suited to a man of culture, first made Thurston his consular clerk, then left him as acting-consul.[15]

So Thurston told the story in Fiji, before fellow Europeans who had known him since his arrival and who would have taken a malicious pleasure in contradicting him. As it was they could do no more than mutter that he had 'had the Devil's luck as well as his own'. This was substantially true, so far as concerned the steps from castaway to acting-consul. Only lack of advancement in life, coupled with an amateur interest in botany, delight in the tropics, and bad luck, had brought him back to islands wherein, if he had desired it, he might have settled in 1862. In later years he was less conscious of the luck that lay in Jones's distaste for the sweat, cockroaches and boredom of a South Seas exile than intimately aware of the abilities in himself which had never found an opening; and he would not admit that luck in after life, though he felt it at the time. He liked to see a smoother progression than actually took place from the protégé of Calvert that he had scarcely been to the successor of Jones that he was to become. In recollection he telescoped the events of several months, dropping from view circumstances disagreeable to him. When he first saw Jones, the consul already had a clerk who served also as his Fijian interpreter; and Thurston's first job in Fiji involved him in a return to the sea as master of the Wesleyan Mission's small schooner, the *Dove*.

His new ship had picked Calvert up at Waikava and landed the missionary at Wakaya, whence he came on to Levuka with Wakaya's American owner, Dr Isaac Mills Brower, the United States Commercial Agent.[16] Brower had arrived in the group via Samoa aboard his own schooner in 1857, had bought Wakaya and was now planting there and trading generally in windward Fiji. With him from Apia had come Robert Sherson Swanston, who for a while was his partner in Wakaya;[17] and, like Swanston, he had been an associate of Pritchard's in land speculation, which association had not prevented Brower's declaring after Pritchard's departure that he had never met a man 'so utterly destitute of all moral principle'. The testimony was thought the more telling because Brower, like both his speculating associates, had been in

[15] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[16] Calvert to Rowe, journal letter begun 20 June 1865, MMS.
[17] Journals of R. S. Swanston, I, FM.

California and 'known many thorough scamps'; he had been credited with introducing talk of the lynching methods of Californian vigilantes into Levuka squabbles soon after his arrival.[18] He had succeeded to the commercial agency when J. B. Williams died of dysentery in 1860. And he had decided views as to where his official duty lay. 'You and I are here, not for Tongans, or Fijians, but for the benefit of our own countrymen',[19] he had told Captain Jones, who disagreed. He had inherited this general view from Williams who had been a trader like himself. He had similarly inherited the American debt, both officially and as trustee for Williams's heirs who were now the main beneficiaries. It was to be rumoured that he had acquired a yet closer personal interest; and this scandal was supported by his official imperviability to well-founded criticism of the debt's *bona fides*. All aspersions cast on the integrity of Williams and the American naval commanders who had adjudicated on the claims emanated from Britishers jealous of the great republic, he hinted to his government.[20]

One such Britisher—Calvert—had lately benefited from Brower's obsession with the debt, in his efforts to restrict the Tongan presence in Fiji; for King Siaosi Tupou, threatening to avenge Wainiqolo, had been in great part deflected by Brower's promise to see him saddled with the $43,564 due to American claimants, if he interfered with Fiji's ability to find the produce to pay.[21] As Brower had told Jones—even apart from the debt Europeans' interests 'are best promoted by their obtaining large tracts of country, as cheap as they can, from the natives: and the Tongans always prevent that'.[22] Political necessity made strange bed-fellows in Fiji, for the missionary could not approve of the trader's motives. Strange ones, too, were made by the exigencies of social life in a small ethnic group. Men blackguarded each other on paper for weeks on end, and drank together when they met.

Making a faster passage to Levuka than Thurston, Calvert

[18] Calvert to Egglestone, 5 March 1863, MOM 99; Binner to Calvert, 29 October 1858, MMS.

[19] Calvert, Notebook, 5 November 1864, quoting the conversation as he had it from Jones, MMS.

[20] See Brower's despatches through the 1860s, in Despatches of U.S. Commercial Agency Laucala, NAW.

[21] Brower to Siaosi Tupou, 31 December 1862, encl. Brower to State Department, 31 December 1862, U.S. Commercial Agency Laucala, IV.

[22] Calvert, Notebook, 5 November 1864, MMS.

landed a day before him to eat an 11 a.m. breakfast with Captain Jones. The offer of the *Dove*'s command was probably awaiting Thurston when he arrived. Two days later he left Levuka and, until the schooner should arrive from windward, rejoined the *John Wesley*. She was lying at Bau, where he landed on a Sunday to find the islet's ruler in church, very attentive to the Reverend Frederick Langham's service in white shirt and spectacles.

Faced with a man whom the published writings of missionaries and of a naval captain had prepared him to find impressive, Thurston was disappointed. Ratu Seru Epenesa Cakobau, Bible in hand, seated on a mat under a roof whose intricately-worked sinnet seizings Thurston greatly admired, was 'not the man I expected to see—old—expression more of low cunning'.[23] Fijians often appeared older than their years and Cakobau was probably not much over fifty; but he was old in experience and, latterly, had been growing older in compromise. For most of his life he had been the ruling power in Bau. Over thirty years before, with the help of the Lasakauans, he had restored to power his exiled father Tanoa Visawaqa by a *coup* that bathed Bau in blood and brought him many nicknames; thereafter he had virtually ruled in Tanoa's name until the latter's death in December 1852. Six months later he had been formally installed as Vunivalu, about the fifth holder of the title so far as the genealogies go and the fourth since his grandfather's half-brother, Nailatikau, who seized the islet from its fisherfolk.[24] Cakobau had also taken the title Tui Kaba, which was his by descent. And in his possession of both titles he was now fairly secure.

His last and most potent rival had been his cousin in the male line, Ratu Mara Kapaiwai. He had executed Mara at Bau in 1859, with two Wesleyan missionaries present to give the propriety of a new age to a deed which, according to a colleague of their own, was founded in treachery.[25] On his death-bed Cakobau himself recalled it with pain, Ratu Mara's son was to claim. Cakobau blamed the lesser chiefs of Bau. The collateral branches whose members could hope for little precedence except by causing dissension among the great, and the *matanivanua* whose proper function was to keep the peace between the brothers, half-brothers

[23] 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.
[24] Scarr, 'Cakobau and Ma'afu'.
[25] Waterhouse to Williams, 4 October 1859, ML A855.

and cousins whose very kinship made for jealousies—they had all helped to cause bad blood between himself and Ratu Mara.[26]

In Bau he now had nothing more dangerous to face than the irritations provoked by his audacious *vasu* from Viwa, Ratu Isikeli, and an occasional quarrel with a half-brother's son, Ratu Puniani Vukinamualevu who as *vasu* to the *vanua* of Sawaieke in the island of Gau was well-placed in one of the centres of Bauan riches. The institutional rival of the Vunivalu, the Roko Tui Bau—personification of the founding ancestor, now deified—had been broken in the days of Naulivou. The title had been given to obscure members of a minor sub-division of the Roko Tui Bau's *mataqali*, Vusaratu.[27] The true blood flowed more strongly in the veins of Cakobau's three sons by his principal wife, Adi Litia Samanunu—'awfully fat & not at all interesting', Thurston found her at this first meeting[28]—who was from a senior branch of the Vusaratu. Thurston met the eldest of those sons now, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, but had nothing to say about him; they were to grow old together, in a growing mutual disesteem.

Thurston recalled how Cakobau took him now to the hill-top of Bau and showed him, on the mainland, the fences and warflags put up against him by the *Kai* Vugalei and their allies, who had resisted his efforts to convert them to Christianity in the previous year. The fighting flowed across land on which the Vunivalu Naulivou had settled the *Kai* Nabosa, a border division of the *Kai* Vugalei inland who quarrelled with their main body and sought his shelter. So he had also settled the *Kai* Namata when they moved from the hill-country of Waimarou, after taking umbrage at an insult in the disposal of turtle at their own place. Much of the area opposite Bau, in fact, was occupied now by people who recognised that their place of origin was elsewhere but had held their then residence for three or four generations, acknowledging some tie with Bau. The history of land settlement in this part of Tailevu argued a good deal against any view of Fijians as a long-settled people in deep symbiotic relationship with a particular area of land.[29] Thurston, who had occasion to attempt to unravel that

[26] Ratu Jone Madraiwiwi to Governor, 26 August 1913, FCSO 14/1795.
[27] Statement by Ratu Orisi Ravuso, 28 June 1917, FCSO 17/2086.
[28] 'Diary of a Passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.
[29] On this general question, see Peter France, *The Charter of the Land . . .* (Melbourne, 1969).

history, was led by it to the conclusion that the 'memory of the Fijian is for most things very short or weak . . .'.[30]

Thurston took command of the *Dove* on 2 July. Soon afterwards he sailed her up to Levuka to unload her cargo of coconut oil, presented by Fijian church members as their contribution towards the upkeep of the mission; casks had been loaded at Waikava and another 320 gallons, worth some £48 in Sydney, had been presented at Bau.[31] He had under hatches a commodity for which his employers' concern brought them into much public odium. Seven years hence they were roundly denounced as 'canting sharks'. And Thurston himself summed up the Wesleyan Mission not only as 'a political power in Polynesia' but also 'a clever commercial concern'.[32]

The mission authorities in Sydney placed great emphasis on the financial necessity for island converts to give generously, urging on Fiji in 1858 the example of devoted Tonga.[33] Their missionaries exerted themselves accordingly. Matuku gave 1,670 gallons in 1862 and 1,910 next year; 1,260 gallons came from four islands of Lomaiviti in 1864 and 1,000 from the Yasawas in 1866.[34] The Wesleyans could argue that they genuinely needed the income for their work, that their public collection (*vakamisioneri*) was of the nature of a *solevu* and rooted in the custom of the country, and that their financial success was a measure of the Word's acceptance. But a Marist priest, on behalf of his own—admittedly few—converts, could refer to 'cette cupidité effrayante qui a fini par leur rendre odieuse l'hérésie'.[35]

There was no doubt that the godliness of a circuit came to be measured by its generosity. 'People go to your Meetings *to hear speeches*: *here* they come *to give money*', the head of the mission in Australia was told in 1874 by the missionary in Lomaloma. 'The Collection is the main business of the Meeting—the very aim, end, & object of the Meeting.' He had just collected £355 from 1,550 adults at three places in northern Lau.[36] Next year his own and the Lakeba circuit gave £1,200 and he was 'almost ashamed to see the

[30] Minute of 26 February 1887, FCSO 88/2078.
[31] Calvert to Rowe, journal letter begun 20 June 1865, MMS.
[32] The Earl and the Doctor, *South Sea Bubbles* (London, 1872), 274; Thurston to Gordon, 13 October 1878, Stanmore, *Fiji*, III, 430.
[33] Egglestone to Fiji mission, 24 April 1858, MOM 32.
[34] *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, April 1864, April 1865, July 1867.
[35] Montmayeur to Yardin, 12 February 1870, APM OF208 *Epistolae*.
[36] Rooney to Chapman, July 1874, MOM 98.

people giving so liberally', after nearly twenty years of Wesleyan exhortation to that end. 'I am afraid in many cases they give more than they ought to give.'[37]

It was second nature for the Wesleyans to think much in commercial terms. If they did not actually come from trade then often they aspired to rise into it. To the mission's school-teacher at Levuka in the late fifties and early sixties it had seemed natural to launch into the oil-trade.[38] Calvert himself had a well-developed business sense.[39] And the Reverend Francis Tait, to whom Thurston was responsible for the running of the *Dove*, established an investment company in Australia after his retirement.[40] There were aspirants to gentility among them, men who sent off for 'breakfast services' finely patterned when, to the certain knowledge even of the Mission Secretary in Sydney, they would have felt more at home with tin pannikins.[41] They were professionals, and some of their professional assumptions were utilitarian in the extreme. A wife, for instance, was primarily a necessary part of missionary equipment; only pained surprise was in store for a candidate who, having no wife in prospect and 'regarding it as a hardship he should be forced to marry in a hurry', declined to 'marry but by the clearest indication of Providence'.[42]

There was enough in them to excite the amusement or repugnance of an intellectual, a rationalist, or a snob. And Thurston was something of all three. He was also an Anglican, for reasons falling in part under the third head, but on aesthetic grounds too. He found the measured cadences of the Prayer Book more agreeable than the *ex tempore* preaching of the sects. Above all, he felt that the Calvinist sense of election to which some Wesleyans subscribed permitted them to act in ways repellent to other men who did not profess to walk and talk with God. Though he came to respect the Wesleyan Mission's success in conversion, he thought that success was relative, superficial. He would probably have sympathised with the most sensitive amongst the Wesleyans themselves, the Reverend John Hunt, who had been

[37] Idem, 10 December 1875, MOM 165.
[38] Binner to Egglestone, 13 October 1859, 3 October 1860, MOM 165 and 98.
[39] See, e.g., Joseph to Jabez Waterhouse, 18 April 1851, ML Uncat. MSS., set 192, item 2.
[40] Fison to Calvert, 22 February 1884, MMS.
[41] Rabone to Fison, 16 September 1868, ibid.
[42] Rabone to Lee, 17 July 1867, MOM 35.

conscious twenty years before of the duality of belief by which Fijians resolved the tensions inherent in the religious options now open to them. 'In some instances when people renounce heathenism', Hunt had written, 'they are not so much convinced that their gods are false as that ours is true'. As for those Fijian teachers who, since this time, had been working amongst their people, their own understanding of their newly-acquired jewel as displayed in their sermons had seemed 'to consist in doing well, and expecting the reward partly in this world, partly in the world to come, and if they don't do well they may expect to be punished in both worlds, and that's about all'.[43]

After ten years in Fiji, and when the Wesleyans had been there almost forty, Thurston too referred to 'Christian duties, recently learned' by Fijians 'and as yet reaching very little below the moral surface of the people . . .'.[44] He grew still more sceptical later. But he was to be more concerned with the oiled mechanism in race-relations which a shared religious faith provided. He became sufficiently enthusiastic about the Wesleyans' success in providing this to enable his most bitter enemy amongst the white Wesleyans to quote him in the mission's defence as one whose 'intimate acquaintance with our Wesleyan people' qualified him to speak. And he deprecated the attempts made by the Anglican clergyman at Levuka to poach the Wesleyans' Fijian congregations.[45]

Much of the missionary aura was always repellent to him, however—the self-congratulatory propaganda, for instance, and the professional obsession with sinning, which he thought inconsistent with feverish concern to hush up instances of sinning within the white missionaries' own ranks. And he did not find the social mores of lower middle class Englishmen necessarily appropriate to Fijians. He thought the *vakamisioneri* incongruous and wanted to put it down. He was to declare the marriage fee of £1 reportedly extracted from couples in Lau to be 'if true . . . nothing short of robbery'. He came to deplore 'the infamous principles of Mosaic law' after which offences against the Christian sexual code

[43] Hunt to General Secretaries, 2 December 1847 (journal extract, 30 April), ML A2813; Hunt's journal, 27 May 1845 (typescript), ML A 3350.
[44] Memorandum by Thurston, 4 October 1875, F1/Temp. 18.
[45] The Reverend Frederick Langham, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 1877; Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals of Captain C. W. Hope.

were made criminal offences in Fiji.[46] He regarded the white Wesleyans' intellectual honesty as less than immaculate, found their transports of evangelical fervour distasteful. On the fly-leaf of his Bible he copied a pointed quotation from the church historian, Thomas Fuller: 'Grant that I may never wrack a scripture simile beyond the true intent thereof, lest, instead of sucking milk, I squeeze blood out of it'.

But his first breach with the Wesleyan Mission was wholly personal, and in the style of the man who on Rotuma had brooded savagely about 'savages'. He unloaded the *Dove* at Levuka (and in the course of it 'had a specimen of Fiji activity—lazy rascals'). He lay there a few days, then took the schooner back to Viwa for a refit. He had to cut and stitch a new mainsail single-handed, for Tom, his part-European mate, had 'left the schooner after making some trouble with the natives'. As the month drew on his spirits grew blacker. He had no one 'either to loose a skein of twine or hold a tape line'; every morning he had to interrupt his work to row out to the schooner, pump her dry and wet her deck against shrinkage in the sun. He could see 'very little chance of any assistance indeed anything but every prospect of my time being fully occupied in various ways, in forty jobs for the mission'. He was alone on Viwa much of the time, for Tait who was stationed there was intermittently away and no invitation to visit came from Langham on Bau—'which does not say very much for the courtesy of the mission . . ., but I am very much afraid courtesy is but very little cultivated in the Fiji's, although in that quarter professional consistency would seem to demand it'.

He was being treated as the needy castaway he was, not the man of parts he felt himself to be; and he resented it. 'The fact is most certainly that when they have got a man to take charge of their boats, they dont know how to treat him.' Men around him were busy about matters which were interesting to him, but in which he had no part. The Roko Tui Viwa was away at Ba to assist Tawaki (Momo Levu of the *vanua* of Ba, self-styled Tui Ba) against his relative and rival, Nabeka. On 11 July came Tait with news of four hundred killed and five towns taken. With Tait was David Wilkinson, formerly an employee on Kioa but since about

[46] Minutes on Emberson's memorandum of 23 February 1875 and Emberson to Secretary for Native Affairs, 19 February 1875, F1/41.

April 1865 secretary and factotum to Tui Bua. Thurston had thought Wilkinson's position worth noting a week earlier at Levuka. He could not but compare it with his own, confined as he was to sail-making and the circumference of one small island.[47] On 25 July Commodore Sir William Wiseman in H.M.S. *Curaçao* anchored off Bau and, fuming at the absence of Captain Jones on a tramp through the mountains of central Viti Levu, haled Cakobau aboard for a lecture on the manner in which British subjects must be treated.[48] Thurston let the visit pass unrecorded in his journal. So far as it concerned himself there was nothing to record. In his insecurity he looked for comfort to the freemasonry of country and colour, and found himself excluded from it.

On 1 August he had a note from Tait telling him that the missionary had got Tom and a Fijian hand to return to help him refit the *Dove*. '"Has got!!" the vagabonds left the schooner and went to Ovalau and broke their liberty for three weeks and then they are asked to return as a favour; and "mirabile dictu" the bare breeched rascals consent. After this "vivent les sans coluttes"'. Tait's note confirmed him in the impression 'that the mission as a body have a greater regard to the natives and the half castes than to their own race'. He and Tom were 'evidently associated in the Rev. gentleman's mind, like a span of horses or other beasts in a drag—when if one is suspected of being a little better bred than the other the proprietor adopts certain artful dodges in the hope of his adapting his pace to that of his brother hack'. His racial pride was injured and his professionalism as a seaman outraged. 'The idea of giving a person charge of a vessel . . . and then *their* telling his crew what duty to carry on is sufficient proof that no one with the slightest self respect can submit to continue in their employ.'

He replied that he could not accept 'a divided command'. He had already hinted to Tait 'my disapprobation relative to "Tom" (as relative to myself) he having treated me with some impertinence and more malice'. Tait's note had exhibited 'a wish "that we should sail comfortably together", and also that you will tell *him* to get the vessel cleaned painted &c'. This indicated 'that I am simply a co-partner with a man I have reason for objecting to'; and he would have none of it.

[47] 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'.
[48] Wiseman to Admiralty, 8 August 1865, extract encl. Admiralty to Foreign Office, 11 November 1865, FO58/106.

A misfortune common to those who travel by sea, has placed me for a moment in an unpleasant position, but I cannot allow that to influence me in retaining the berth under such circumstances.

I therefore beg to resign any command I may have had of the 'Dove'. I shall consider it a point of duty to finish the sail for her, & I shall be happy to do anything for you personally that I am able to, for I trust this need not interrupt our friendly relations in any manner.[49]

He did remain on good terms with Tait; they corresponded, shared passages by small boat in the future; and this episode was never mentioned by the mission, which came to look on him as an enemy.

For the six months after his leaving the *Dove* Thurston's movements cannot be checked accurately, but clearly his friendship with Jones ripened quickly. They had laughed together at Bau over 'the joke of King Georges fat Queen—and the stays' which Jones picked up in Tonga on his way down to Fiji.[50] King Siaosi Tupou was widely recognised as a remarkable man, but their respect for him did not prevent even well-disposed Europeans from laughing among themselves at what they considered the propensity of him and his to ape European ways. In October Thurston and Jones went up the Sigatoka river together until, as Thurston noted, they were stopped 'by intertribal hostilities'. Revisiting the Sigatoka twenty years later, Thurston vividly recalled his three-day pull up the deserted river and the day or two he had spent in the embattled town of Beimana before turning back to the sea:

Beimana and every other town was fortified by strong fences, moats and outer earthworks. No man stirred beyond his war fence after sunset. The quiet of night was broken by the sounds of the 'Derua' (a peculiar beat of the native wooden drum when some slaughtered enemy was brought in front of the heathen temple) and in Beimana itself three human bodies were eaten during my stay, and the 'forks' (ai thula) used upon the occasion were presented to me.[51]

Evidently a member of this October 1865 party had been with Jones in July on his trip up the Navua river and across Viti Levu to the Ra coast; for the journal kept on both trips by this individual

[49] 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .', with draft of letter.

[50] 'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji . . .'; he did not elaborate the joke, but its general character seems clear enough.

[51] Note on map encl. Young to C.O., 3 October 1867, CO201/543; Thurston to C.O., 11 January 1886, *GBPP*, 1887, LVIII.

came into Thurston's hands and, after his death, was published in good faith by his youngest son as Thurston's own.[52]

After his return to Levuka Thurston sold photographs for a living. Langham and Tait were his customers, and so too, amongst missionaries, were Jesse Carey and Joseph Nettleton: Nettleton, no friend to Langham's domineering ways, to whom Thurston wrote for help when he was trying to steer Fiji through breakers; and Carey, who attended the erstwhile photographer's state funeral and was now collecting material for his rhyming history of Fijians, *The Kings of the Reefs*. There was also Otty Cudlip, the Levuka business factotum from New Brunswick, a political enemy-to-be, whose widow Thurston was to defend against what he took to be injustice on the part of Langham. There were Frederic William Hennings, eldest of three brothers from Bremen who constituted the trading and planting firm of F. & W. Hennings, buying perhaps a photograph of his store at Totoga through whose doors passed the greatest single share of the business done in Fiji; and Charles Rebman, planter, of Kanacea, one of the many men indebted to F. & W. Hennings for the wherewithal to grow cotton. The brothers Hennings, in their turn, were indebted for the credit they so lavishly dispensed to J. C. Godeffroy & Son of Hamburg and Apia, the firm which had started Frederic in business in Fiji in the late 1850s, shipped his produce to Europe and gave him the financial backing that made him and his brothers the creators of large-scale European commerce in Fiji, in the eyes of consuls and planters alike. Some of these and other purchasers had reason in the future to feel that their photographs were dearly bought, when the continued presence of the photographer in Fiji was counted in the price.

The principal step that kept Thurston there was taken on 15 January 1866 when Captain Jones applied to the Foreign Office for transfer to a consulate in Persia or Turkey. He was probably already contemplating the request he made in the following June for leave of absence from the end of 1867. In this June despatch he recommended as his acting successor—'Mr John Thurston, a

[52] Bassett Thurston, 'The First Crossing of Fiji', *The Geographical Journal*, LXIV, 1924. The original manuscript is in the library of the Royal Geographical Society; the writing is clearly not his, nor are the drawings; and the dates of the Viti Levu crossing conflict with those of his authenticated diary.

gentleman who has been employed in this Office for some time past . . . .'[53]

As Thurston remembered it, he had been working for Jones since December 1865, inspecting islanders from the New Hebrides brought in for work on European plantations in schooners smaller, less graceful than those he had seen at Bahia—smaller even than his old *Don Juan*, now taking similar cargoes to Queensland. He looked over islanders as they came ashore from the stinking holds, to be clad and set to clear and plant during three or five years in return for a boxful of trade-goods. He was to employ some himself, building up more varied experience than was fully realised by the Downing Street officials who, thirty years later, read despatches in which he advised an end to this recruiting on all possible grounds.

Then, on 27 January 1866, Jones's clerk and interpreter William Scott bought Viro plantation at the back of Ovalau for £255 from G. A. F. Mockler, who had paid Fred Hennings £200 for it seven months earlier and did not expect Fiji's climate and living conditions would let him live to see it appreciate further.[54] Scott resigned, though he continued to act as consular interpreter. And in February Thurston's thick, bold handwriting made its appearance in the registers and letterbooks. One of his first tasks was to copy into the archives the will of the dying Mockler with its curious and cruel reference to Mockler's mother-in-law, the woman whom in less than eighteen months Thurston made his own wife.[55]

[53] Jones to F.O., 15 January 1866, FO58/109, 12 June 1866, F4/1.
[54] F4/Temp. 1 Vol. I, No. 421.
[55] Ibid., No. 425; see, below, pp. 62-3.

4

'I am the law here'

WITH his appointment as clerk to the British Consul for Fiji and Tonga at about £100 a year, Thurston found at last a stage wider than a ship's deck. It was a stage the more attractive to him from the paraphernalia of state which, however tattered and incongruous in such a place, adhered to those who performed upon it. The consul was arbiter for his nationals when they fell out substantially amongst themselves or with their fellow foreigners of other nations. He was their resort when Fijians disputed their boundaries, broke into their houses, trampled on them or their cotton, or declined to pay the coconut oil due for trade-goods landed on river banks and beaches as payment in advance.

Consular enthusiasm was likely to be tempered by the fate of Pritchard, whose awful example the Foreign Office had held up to Captain Jones, in the despatch conveying to him the unwelcome news of his posting to Levuka, and had elaborated on in a second of the same date.[1] The reckless and overweening predecessor, amongst his several improprieties, had established a magisterial court without solid legal basis. Though this despatch contained an order to inquire into the need for such a court, which order Jones in due course had obeyed, the question of establishing one was still not finally decided when the last British Consul to Fiji hauled down his flag nine years after Thurston became clerk.[2]

Still the vacuum remained. Custom was that the consul filled it. And custom would not be denied. If the consul had no court, he still had 'public opinion' amongst Europeans to assist him (though

[1] F.O. to Jones, 14 September 1863, FO58/98; idem, FO58/124.

[2] Jones to F.O., 6 October 1864, FO58/129. The question of conferring magisterial powers on the Fiji consul is discussed in J. D. Legge, *Britain in Fiji 1858-1880* (London, 1958).

Jones believed that the best augury for peace between British residents was that they mostly lived widely separated from each other).[3] And he could hope for support from visiting naval commanders. Face to face with local necessities and expectations, the consul often acted with more freedom than he was entitled to. Some four months after becoming consular clerk Thurston wrote to his family in Sydney and, lightly, fell back on the *Pickwick Papers* to explain the nature of his doings. 'You recollect what Mr. Grummer said to Messrs Pickwick, Tupman & Snodgrass! I am the law! Well—I am the law here.'[4]

It was strictly true, for Jones, who had left on a visit to Tonga in July, was not back until October.[5] Thurston was left master of the consulate, the thatch and timber cottage behind a picket fence that he had photographed the year before, with its flagstaff before it, consular notices posted up on the verandah, a *takia* lying on the beach in front for fishing expeditions to the reef, and the mountains of Ovalau brooding over all. Or, perhaps, a building like it, for the consul had no permanent home at Levuka. He moved from one insubstantial dwelling to another as his short leases fell in. But the sense of well-being that Thurston had in his post was proof against any attendant discomfort. As he told his family, 'although only 12 months ago I landed here a total stranger & having lost all I had with me in the shipwreck: I am now one of the busiest of men acting for the Consul, am generally constantly engaged & often sit up until midnight'.[6]

Besides a fresh and agreeable sense of identity, he had found a place where he could live with profit as well as pleasure. Trade reports in the archives told him that Fiji was 'going ahead'. Exports for 1865 had been worth £24,175 against £19,800 in 1864.[7] The bulk of them were still in the typical island products of coconut oil and, in smaller quantities, *bêche-de-mer* and turtleshell, purchased, as for years past, by a few score Europeans with trade goods supplied by one or other of the four merchants with warehouses in Levuka.[8] Profit margins were high, little capital was required, and

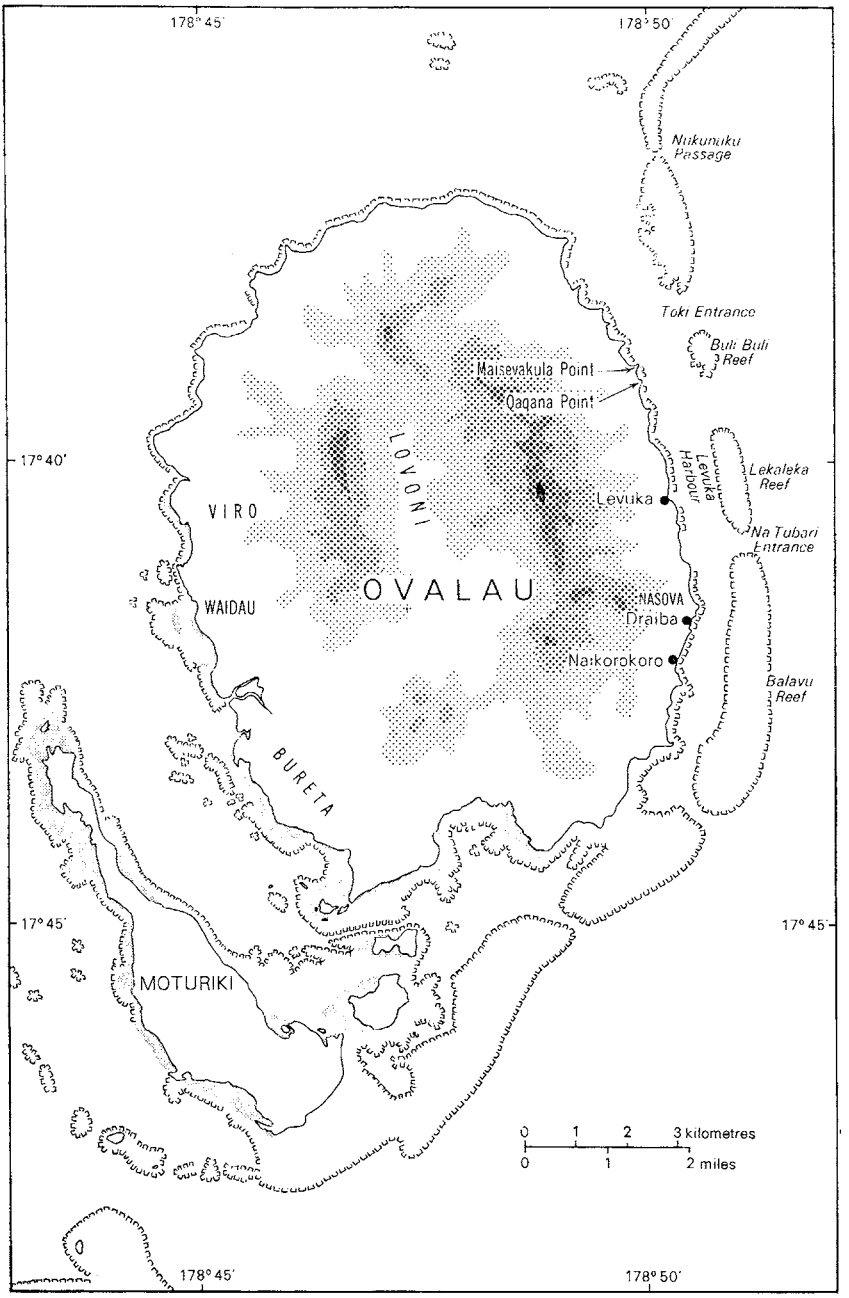
[3] Jones to F.O., 24 November 1865, FO58/124.
[4] Quoted in biographical sketch (probably by his sister, Mrs Eliza West Morton), Perrins Papers.
[5] Luce to Lambert, 12 December 1866, Adm. 1/6008.
[6] Quoted in biographical sketch, Perrins Papers.
[7] Jones to F.O., 26 December 1865, F4/1.
[8] Jones to F.O., 31 December 1864, F4/1.

probably more money was made over the next forty years in trading than ever was by planting. But the largest single increase during 1865 had been in cotton exports, which at £6,000 were worth twice their value for 1864. The Manchester market was starved by the Civil War in America; and cotton, if not yet king in Fiji, was already crown prince. The brothers Hennings invested most heavily of all in cotton; their enthusiasm, made manifest as it was by injections of money, was peculiarly practical. Even Jones, not a man given to indiscriminate enthusiasms, had faith in cotton. 'Anyone possessing five hundred pounds sterling and sufficient energy to superintend his affairs in person', he believed, 'can hardly fail to succeed as a planter in Fiji'.[9]

Thurston probably had little beyond his salary and did not intend to give his whole attention to planting. But his brother-in-law Simon Zöllner had means and Thurston knew a man who could run a plantation under his occasional supervision; for Lomberg was at a loose end in Sydney.[10] On 18 July 1866, not daunted by the hurricane that struck the Rewa at the beginning of the year, Thurston paid £30 for Lawaki-Toki, a block of land north of Levuka between Qaqana and Maisevakula points. The European vendor had purchased it from Tui Levuka and others in the previous October and had grown cotton for a while, not without some trouble from his immediate Fijian neighbours who claimed an interest which had not been satisfied. Thurston built on it, as a base within easy reach of Levuka; he made it over to his infant nephew Martin Zöllner in November but retained occupation, constructing a road, planting yams, corn and bananas.[11]

Ten days after this purchase he made a second, paying another £30 to Robert Spowart, planter and cotton-ginner, for the plantation that was to be his home over the next three years when his duties allowed it. It was Bureta, on the south-west coast of Ovalau.[12] To the north-east was the Bureta river, beyond which lay land bought by Spowart in 1859–60 and worked now by him; beyond that again was Scott at Viro. Thurston bought cheaply, but most of his land was as yet untouched by European cultivation and there was no European-style wooden cottage, such as Spowart, for

[9] Ibid.
[10] Lomberg, Journal, 4 February 1866.
[11] LCC R316.
[12] LCC P74.


178° 45'
178° 50'
Ntikunuku Passage
Toki Entrance
Buli Buli Reef
Maisevakula Point
Qaqana Point
17° 40'
LOVONI
VIRO
Levuka
Levuka Harbour
Lekaleka Reef
Na Tubari Entrance
OVALAU
WAIDAU
NASOVA
Draiba
Naikorokoro
Balavu Reef
BURETA
17° 45'
MOTURIKI
0 1 2 3 kilometres
0 1 2 miles
178° 45'
178° 50'

Map 2 Ovalau

instance, had on his own plantation. Thurston never built one but contented himself with a Fijian house, roof of thatch and walls of reeds, with a separate cook-house; to the basic Fijian structure he probably added only a boarded floor, wooden shutters over the holes that served as windows, and a verandah such as a visitor to the plantation in 1869 found 'covered with the granadila'. On the Rewa next year such a house, 56 by 24 feet, cost £6 10s.[13] It was typical of the newly-arrived planter with little capital to spare for home comforts. Its furniture generally was rough, made on the spot; and Thurston was voicing the general opinion when, after three years' experience of a planter's life, he remarked that it was 'well in Fiji to proceed upon the principle of "every man his own carpenter"'. He was voicing it again when he advised a concession to the country in the matter of bedding. 'I believe the native style —a dozen or two of soft mats placed one upon the other—at once— elastic, airy, and clean—to be the most healthy and best suited to the country.' 'I use nothing else', except '*a large* mosquito curtain'.[14]

So slept the planter, cheaply and comfortably, though the rats might rustle in the thatch over his head. Let the merchant at Levuka, if he must, lie on springs that rusted, in sheets that held the damp which was the inseparable accompaniment to life in Fiji during the steamy months from December to April when the trades stopped blowing.

From the ridge where his house stood Thurston looked out to the peaked and hollowed mass of Viti Levu. Just before him was the sea, patched green where it shallowed over the many reefs, and scattered with the canoes of the Bauans whose territory this was. And below the ridge he planted cotton. He used at first the labour of men from the Ra coast, who made up the bulk of the workforce on many plantations at the time; then, from October 1867, he supplemented them with six Tongoa men, brought in from the New Hebrides by the recruiting brig *Reliance*.[15] There were about four hundred such New Hebridean labourers in Fiji by the middle of that year, imported under the general supervision of the consulate; according to Jones they seemed 'willing to change the misery and uncertainty of their life at home for the comparative

[13] *Fiji Times*, 30 October 1869; F. J. Moss, *A Planter's Experience in Fiji* . . . (Auckland, 1870), 41.
[14] Memorandum of Outfit for Fijian Planter, *c.* 1869, NAF MS17.
[15] Lomberg, Journal, 2 October 1867.

security and plenty they find in Fiji'.[16] Thurston's cost him £3 10s apiece in passage money. He paid them about ten shillings a month each, as he did his Ra men. When he calculated the total cost of his labour force he had to include the price of the two or more yards of calico that made them decent to a European's eyes, the expense of such food as they did not grow for themselves, and the present which he had almost certainly made to some Ra chief—probably Ratu Isikeli, as master of that coast—when he first obtained the Fijians. It was gardening on a grand scale, and he worked himself and watched his labourers work, remarking how they insisted on squatting to swing a knife rather than stand to use spade or hoe. 'Nevertheless a fair amount of work is done provided they are judiciously managed, well fed and cared for', he reported officially.

After about eighteen months as the owner of Bureta plantation, growing the Sea Island cotton which was faster than either Kidney or Egyptian and averaged twelve pence a pound at Levuka, he had hopes of a handsome profit. 'Assuming that each tree would produce on an average three pounds of seed Cotton = one pound of clean fibre = one shilling and that an acre of land planted 6′ × 6′ carries 1031 trees the gross value annually per acre would be £51.11.0.' Some four months later he could have expected Bureta to yield a gross annual income of about £1288 15s if it had proved accurate, for by April 1868 he had about 25 acres planted. It was a very high estimate, however; the normal reckoning was not above 250 pounds of clean cotton per acre. Yet his plantation gained a reputation for producing particularly fine cotton; and it may have been Bureta that a planter-publicist, a friend of Thurston's, quoted as having been started with very little capital and having yielded upwards of £2,400 in under thirty months. When Thurston sold the place, three years after buying, it fetched £1,000.[17]

As others were slower to do, he recognised now that the demand for Sea Island was uncertain, dependent on the aftermath of the American Civil War. He yet believed that 'the disorganization of labour' in the southern states would 'probably afford the Fijian Planter an opportunity of selling all he can produce at a remunera-

[16] Jones to F.O., 18 July 1867, F4/1.
[17] Thurston to F.O., 31 December 1867, F4/1; Moss, *Planter's Experience* . . . , 45; F1/Temp. 3/2.

tive figure for some time to come'. And though by the end of 1867 definite report from the cotton brokers in Europe on the quality of the Fiji-grown fibre was still awaited, he knew from observation that, so far as quantity went, it was reasonable to expect three crops of Sea Island in the year from Fiji's soil. 'I have observed the first blossoms upon a tree one month after planting at the end of the second month the blossoms fell and the bolls appeared at the end of the third month the bolls reached maturity and the cotton was ready for gathering.'[18]

So bushes turned white in January or February, May or June, September or October in clearings becoming widely-scattered through Fiji, from the islands of northern Lau along the coast of Vanua Levu, and to the river valleys of Viti Levu. By the end of 1867, as he recorded, there were 4,700 acres under cultivation by Europeans, of which 2,400 were in cotton and the rest in minor crops. Over and above this area, Europeans claimed to own another 155,300 acres purchased from Fijians but not yet worked;[19] and the discrepancy between area claimed and area cultivated was a cause of resentment to the erstwhile possessors, who were often still actually on the land and would not readily leave it. Planters were sometimes content to accept the Fijians' presence, using them as a reservoir of labour and accepting a quit-rent, when they could get it, in recognition of white ownership; but often, as a threat to that ownership, they wished them removed. Thurston's neighbour, Scott, had found Fijians living on Viro plantation when he bought it: there was none there eleven years later and the concern he showed in 1871 to keep other land he owned 'free from the natives' indicates that the Viro people had not necessarily left willingly.[20] Spowart had had villages removed from Waidou, his land north of the river.[21] And Thurston, too, made Fijians leave Bureta.

His land was the northern part of the block for which Pritchard had paid Ratu mai Bureta, head of the chiefly clan in the *vanua* of Bureta, an estimated $500 in muskets, axes and cotton prints. Given the mark-up customary in trading, the goods were worth perhaps half that sum in Levuka and less outside Fiji. Pritchard bought the block as the site for his rival township to Levuka, Port

[18] Thurston to F.O., 31 December 1867, F4/1.
[19] Ibid.
[20] LCC P21; Scott to Woods, 30 June 1871, F1/Temp. 13.
[21] LCC P20.

Kinnaird, which, the title deed ran, was to be 'a Settlement of Whites where they shall live in Peace with the Natives and their Titles to Land shall be undisputed'.[22] Pritchard's practice was rarely in accord with his public principles and vagueness in the deed left ample room for dispute over boundaries. Thurston took trouble over his boundaries, walking the southern one with Otty Cudlip, his neighbour there; and in December 1866 he secured confirmation from Cakobau of his claim to land on the coast where the Bureta people were still planting.

Cakobau had sent his *matanivanua* to order them 'to give up the land'—wrote his secretary, the American trader and planter, Samuel A. St John—'and to remove there food planted thereon as soon as ripe and to plant no more'.[23] The *vanua* of Bureta followed Bau and Cakobau's word was likely to be obeyed. Doubtless he did send this message. But he was personally opposed to the alienation of land in which the Bauans had any interest. It was in relation to land sales in Lomaiviti that he afterwards referred to 'the evil day when the whites came to Fiji'; and Spowart then remembered his anger about the Waidou sale: 'he was going to chop my head off about this land as he had always been opposed to the original sale'.[24] When the title to Bureta was inquired into he denied that so much was sold as the deed had been interpreted to indicate. 'It was a strip of Forest on the sea which was sold. A forest they do not plant in. The forest they planted in was not sold.'[25]

The son of Ratu mai Bureta, though generally uncertain in his evidence, agreed: 'Mr. Thurston took our land from us where we planted dalo, via yams, etc'.[26] And a man then living in the town of Tai, on Thurston's southern border, who claimed to be the owner of the ridge on which his house stood, acknowledged that he had shared in the trade originally paid by Pritchard but denied that the ridge was included: 'I remember when Mr. Thurston lived there. He was strong handed to us about the land, and the town was removed.'[27] The dispute over areas of planting land was still alive when Lomberg took up residence as Thurston's overseer at the beginning of 1867: 'To day I found some of the [cotton] plants

[22] LCC P74.
[23] St John to Thurston, 17 December 1866 (copy), F1/Temp. 3/2.
[24] LCC P93A, P74.
[25] Ibid.
[26] LCC P20, P74.
[27] Ibid.

pulled up and left I believe by some of the Fijians', he noted in February. 'I only wish I could get hold of any of them who done it.' Again in April, with his labourers employed burning off and replanting, he 'had a row with a native about some land he said it belonged to him—ordered my men to go on and clear away'.[28]

Thurston's own recollection was that he had met with no particular trouble over the land. He had the Vunivalu of Bau's formal support, however much Cakobau might harbour private reservations. And whatever Ratu mai Bureta's son might say later, he was a familiar of the planters in the 1860s, running their errands to Levuka and providing local labour for housebuilding;[29] his interests then were divorced from his people's. Thurston ran little risk from the exiles at Tai, even though his then manager may have had them in mind late in 1869 when he began throwing up a redoubt around the house on the ridge after Archie Boyd, Spowart's successor, was burnt out at Waidou.[30] Certainly Thurston did not hesitate to bring home to Bureta a newly acquired wife.

He had established conventionally enough a plantation home on Ovalau, a place away from Levuka but not so far distant that travelling would be a burden, where a man who enjoyed books and was now acquiring law books and statutes could build shelves for them, while one who also loved gardens could cultivate to his financial benefit. If it was conventional also to add a wife to his establishment, the choice he sealed at the consulate on 20 July 1867[31] was not, by onlookers' common consent, one to which the epithet applied.

He married Marie Valette Olsson, née Prince, widowed in Mauritius of a Frenchman, again, of Mr Olsson, in Australia, and now bereft of the daughter and son-in-law with whom she had probably come to Fiji. The son-in-law, Mockler, had died forbidding his executors to let her come near his two infant orphaned daughters: 'It is my express wish and in fact the only restriction I lay on my two friends . . . that they do not at any time during the term of their guardianship employ permit or allow Mrs. Olsson the grandmother of my two Children to interfere in any way with their care or education but in all cases to keep them aloof and apart from

[28] Lomberg, Journal, 12 February, 19 April 1867.
[29] Evidence of F. W. Hennings, 2 October 1877, LCC P20.
[30] Consul's daily proceedings, 25 April 1870, F4/12-7; Boyd to Layard, 8 June 1874, F4/10.
[31] Lomberg, Journal, 20 July 1867.

her and if possible in ignorance of the existence of such a person'.[32] The resentments of a son-in-law dying, probably of dysentery, far from his Irish birthplace are difficult to assess. At a guess, Mockler's mother-in-law had made his life miserable by dominating her daughter in his house; for there is ample evidence from the years of Thurston's marriage to her that she was a very formidable woman.

Marie Thurston was certainly ten, and perhaps fifteen, years older than her third husband, who lived with her with every sign of devotion for fourteen years whilst successive fresh additions to the European community in Fiji marvelled at their alliance. She had a violent temper and no respect for the social conventions. And the two things most likely to provoke her were attacks on John Thurston and outsiders' sneers at Fiji: 'she is *very* Fiji, and takes the mere going away as an aspersion cast upon her adopted country', observed a rueful visitor who lived as a guest in her house for three weeks and incautiously complained about the country, while a paymaster in the Royal Navy who, at the crisis of her husband's life, criticised Thurston at a dinner-party found himself savagely dealt with by Marie.[33]

Those guests at her table who accepted with pleasure the local delicacies that she put before them and enjoyed informed talk about the country, seem to have found no fault with her. She shared Thurston's interest in botany. Her life in Mauritius, her remnants of French culture, were attractions to a man who remembered the Channel Islands with pleasure and was a friend of Père Breheret, the gentle, retiring, constantly seafaring head of the Marist Mission. Though the Christian name of her brother who looked after one of Thurston's plantations for years was English enough—Sidney—her own may indicate that she had a French mother. To Thurston she was 'my dear little wife' for whose garden he collected plants and for whom he made sketches. She was the only person in the world he thought would care greatly if he was taken off in the New Hebrides by an arrow.[34] She was to die after an accident, in 1881. The Wesleyan missionary-companion of his rambles in the valleys of Ovalau whom Thurston

[32] F4/Temp. 1 Vol. I, No. 425.
[33] Diary of Richard Philp, FM; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 25 November 1873, for the crisis, see below, pp. 253 ff.
[34] 'Journal of a Voyage from Ovalau . . . to the New Hebrides . . .', 19 June 1871.

summoned to be with him at the end found him 'labouring under deep emotion'.[35] Unless Mrs Olsson was simply very pressing about an earlier promise, it was presumably in an accession of another emotion that he took a wife only two days after his salary rose to the £250 of an acting-consul.

His duties as clerk involved him variously: surveying house-sites at Levuka where boundaries conflicted; sitting with Cakobau's half-brother Ratu Savenaca Naulivou in a land dispute between Fijians and an Ovalau planter. He granted this planter part of the land he claimed, resisted his later attempts to get the whole of it, and regretted afterwards that he had even allowed him so much. 'I never thought Captain Bateman was entitled to any part of the land . . . I think I did very wrong in giving him any by that confirmation deed.'[36] It was the only occasion when he had to make such a confession. Title-deeds occupied much of his time. He made careful drafts of the phrases required, in an ornate hand appropriate to legal documents. And he learned the forms of official correspondence.

What he owed intellectually to Jones, if anything, is not clear. His style on paper was already his own—pungent, vivid, allusive, and invariably half-humorous if also, at times, a little long-winded and self-conscious. His despatches were models of the objective, balanced yet incisive, his private letters were full of laughter. He had good models for the despatches in Jones's letterbooks, indeed; and from one despatch in particular something entered into his own official *persona*—a half-cynical detachment which in him was yet often punctuated with bitter anger. Though Thurston's cynicism was real his detachment was never perfect. He was a sceptic, but a passionate one.

In this despatch he found Jones entertaining doubts about the advantage of white civilisation to Pacific islanders. 'In endeavouring to lead the South Sea Islanders on the path of progress the chief difficulty is to find some motive to induce them to advance, it is not an easy matter to prove to them that it is for their advantage to adopt the civilization of the Whites', so he read his consul.

> The Polynesian gains little in his contact with Europeans. His hut built of reeds is well suited to the climate and sufficiently commodious in his Eyes. When he has exchanged his stone hatchet for

[35] Journal of Rev. A. J. Webb, 14 December 1881, ML B573.
[36] LCC R300, R302.

an iron one, his club for a musket and his paper cloth for Calico—civilization can offer him nothing further which would compensate him for the labour required as an equivalent.[37]

Where Jones seemed to regret this, Thurston came to accept and rather approve of it.

From the beginning he often had sole charge of the consulate. After Jones's return from Tonga in October 1866 he had only a fortnight in Levuka before leaving again on journeys around Fiji which occupied him until April 1867.[38] Thurston accompanied him on one, a tramp from Suva point inland to the Waimanu, then eastward to cross the Rewa itself between Navuso and Davuilevu and emerge on the Tailevu coast opposite Bau.[39] While Jones was away, Thurston took a firm line of his own when, for instance, an employer broke faith with his imported labourers.[40] Then came the Secretary of State's acceptance of Jones's proposal to go on leave and put the consulate—not merely the archives, as they had been confided to Calvert when Pritchard left—in the temporary charge of that 'Mr John Thurston' of whom the office in London knew nothing but his name.[41]

It probably arrived aboard H.M.S. *Falcon*, in which Jones sailed on 18 July leaving the 265 British residents in Fiji to Thurston's care. Jones regarded the consul's task as difficult enough to require magisterial authority such as exercised by those 'in Turkey and the Barbary States'.[42] And he was confident enough of Thurston's ability to deal with it to leave him no formal instructions. He merely wrote him letters of introduction to the American Commercial Agent, Thurston's sole consular colleague, and to the Vunivalu of Bau. Thurston was soon an obstacle to some of Brower's own pursuits. The former merchant seaman had what, to his fellow Europeans, was often an offensively twisted sense of 'justice'. With his own self-confidence re-established, he thought poorly henceforth of any fellow-European who looked for comfort to the freemasonry of colour as he himself had done on Rotuma and Viwa. He had put impartiality on with his consular uniform;

[37] Jones to F.O., 17 July 1865, F4/1.
[38] Thurston to F.O., 19 May 1869, FO58/115.
[39] Marked map, encl. Thurston to F.O., 25 May 1868, FO58/113.
[40] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1867, letter by Thurston of 2 April forwarded by the Rev. W. Moore.
[41] F.O. to Jones, 20 November 1866, FO58/109.
[42] Jones to F.O., 18 July 1867, F4/1.

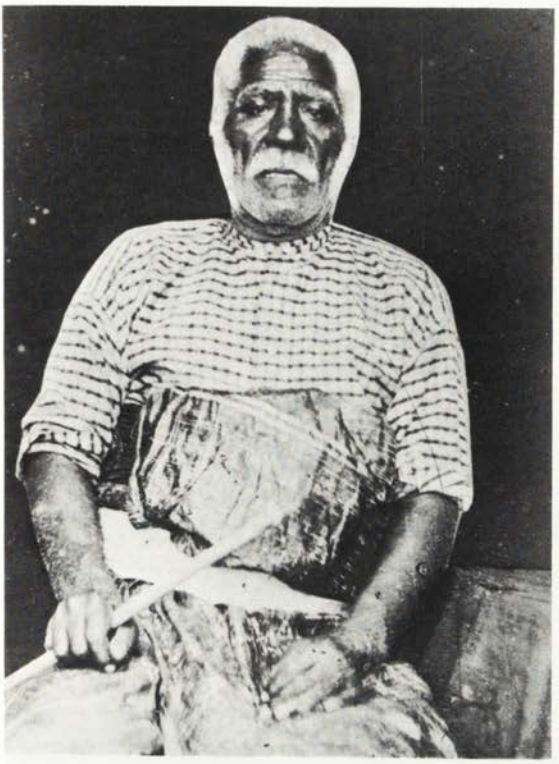
before long he was a partisan. Only the previous month the benign, eminently respectable Brower had been admonished by the British consulate that its officers' object in seeking his assistance was 'less . . . a desire for the interests of the whites than the interests of justice, a far more important and frequently a very different matter'.[43] The style was Thurston's. And for Cakobau, torn from his own pursuits and pace by the demands and hurry of intruders, he was a thorn in the flesh.

If the departing consul's plans had gone aright, Cakobau or some other chief could have been looked to for redress wherever in Fiji British subjects were injured by Fijians or even Tongans. A universal chain of political communication was obviously desirable in the eyes of a foreign official responsible for his own nationals' well-being. Asked by his superiors to report on the matter of sovereignty in Fiji, Jones had been Pritchardian enough to attempt to create a seat for it in reply. In mid-1865, just before Thurston landed, he had succeeded in getting a constitution written for Fiji.

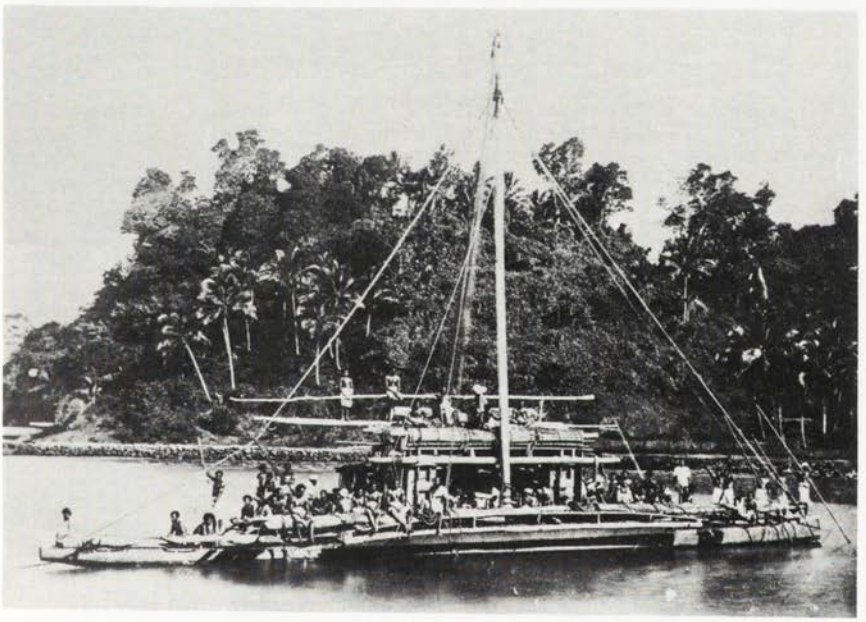
In Tonga, as he came down, Jones had seen government functioning well, with a European façade of written laws and regular parliaments, under the authority wielded by Siaosi Tupou both in the legitimate right of his own lineage, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, and by entrenchment on those of the more senior Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Ha'a Takelaua. In Fiji, by disagreeable contrast, Jones had found emulation between and within chiefly clans. There was 'no Sovereign Chief over the group although each of the Petty chiefs allows a nominal superiority to Bau'. He had also found a Tongan presence in the windward islands of Fiji which he had some reservations about. Tongans entertained 'an overwhelming sense of their own superiority'; they were idle in comparison with the Fijian commoners, on whose industry indeed they battened; and their 'pride leads them to choose being the first of savage races rather than the last of the civilized communities'.[44]

So Jones had written, looking fixedly into a cultural gap which the Tongans saw no good reason for attempting to cross on the terms that Europeans like himself offered them. Notwithstanding, he had believed that justice demanded recognition of Enele Ma'afu's claim to territorial rights in Vanua Balavu. He regarded Ma'afu as potentially a model ruler, one who might yet prove his

[43] Jones to Brower, 25 June 1867, F4/1.
[44] Jones to F.O., 6 October 1864, 17 July 1865, F4/1.



1 Ratu Seru Epenesa Cakobau, photographed by Thurston in August 1869



2 Cakobau's double canoe, *Na Vuki ni Vanua* (Upsetter of the Land)



3 British Consulate, Levuka, 1865



4 'On Levuka Beach, 1869. For Captain C. W. Hope from J. B. T.'

'superiority in civilized ideas' to the Fijian chiefs and be an example to them. 'You must decidedly separate yourself from their barbarous practices and the degr[a]ding indolence that characterises them', he had told Ma'afu, reminding him that he was one of the few friends the Tongan had in Fiji. 'The Fijian habit of making the people only work, and the Chiefs eat is disgraceful and foolish.' 'Refrain totally from meddling with the miserable little quarrels of the native chiefs in Fiji . . . .'[45]

Even though, thus adjured, Ma'afu had still not come to the meeting called by Jones at Levuka for May 1865 to discuss a government for the whole group, formal success had been achieved. All the great Fijian chiefs of central and eastern Fiji had attended. Even the Tui Nayau, congenitally lethargic and directly under Ma'afu's influence, had sent his heir (half-brother's son's son) Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba to Bau afterwards at Cakobau's summons. Cakobau was elected first annual president of a confederation of chiefs whose members, while each was to remain master in his own land, all agreed to recognise a common code of laws and fly one single flag.[46] Stability within chiefdoms was to be achieved. To that end Cakobau had Tui Cakau and Tui Bua go up to see who should be Tui Macuata, Ritova or the son of the Bete whom he had killed, Ratu Kinijaoti Katonivere. When they had weighed the merits of age, vigour, and the claims of descent, they chose Ritova and saw him formally installed. Reluctant though Katonivere and his supporters were, they accepted Ritova. Their recognition was important when Europeans began buying land under his patronage. 'Certainly Ritova was angry with me when he desired me not to interfere with the whites', Katonivere was to recall. 'How should he not be? We had "buli'd" him Tui Macuata and he was not likely to ask us in terms of entreaty.'[47]

The meeting had shown the prestige that still adhered to Bau. And on to Bau, as a core, Jones had tried to graft chiefdoms from the west: Ratu Kinijaoti Gagabakola, Vunivalu of Serua, and Kuraduadua of Namosi were both to be sent to learn the statecraft of a new age at Cakobau's knee.[48] A circular that Jones drafted,

[45] Jones to Ma'afu, 12 April 1865, F4/1.
[46] Jones to F.O., 24 November 1865; FO58/124; Calvert to Rowe, 20 June 1865, MMS; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 August 1865.
[47] LCC R783A, R1197.
[48] Jones to Kuraduadua, 4 September 1865, and to Cakobau, 4 October 1865, F4/2.

summoning the chiefs to the meeting of 1866, indicates his concern: they would

> do well . . . to bear in mind that it is most probably the last chance that the Chiefs of Fiji will have of securing for themselves a national representation, and that if they choose to remain in their present condition . . . there can be no doubt that their power will pass away before any people who have learnt to appreciate the benefits of union and civilization.[49]

It was not their last chance. That came later, with the help of Thurston. But the meeting of chiefs at Bau in May 1866 was the last of the confederacy.

As Bauan prestige remained pervasive, so Bauans' appetite for power was still strong. Cakobau declared himself chief of all Viti Levu and prepared to conquer it. Elsewhere, Thurston wrote, Bau 'broke through every rule and fostered faction & rebellion in every state'. 'At the same time Thakobau's sons and young Chiefs, half beggars, half thieves, swarmed from Bau and oppressed all the coast villages of its allies.'[50] In February 1867 Thurston saw the result in documents on his table; in Lau and Vanua Levu, the secession of Tui Cakau and Tui Bua to join Ma'afu in the *Tovata i-Lau*, a defensive alliance against the marauding Bauans; in Rewa and Tailevu, the Kingdom of Bau declared at the behest of planters.[51]

And so there was no single chain of political communication throughout Fiji for Thurston to use, when Jones left, while in the report that Jones wrote before sailing Thurston found Fijian political behaviour characterised gloomily. 'The Fijian idea of sovereignty', wrote Jones, 'is simply an unlimited privilege of plundering and spoilation which every Chief in Fiji exercises to the utmost on those weaker than himself', while the 'bad faith of both Chiefs and people' was 'a great hindrance to the establishment of steady Government . . .'. Thurston found him noting, also, the comparative 'indifference of the Chiefs to mere territorial jurisdiction' and 'the ease with which any petty chief can renounce the . . . authority of his superior . . .'.[52]

All this was now within Thurston's own experience. So, too,

[49] Countermanded circular, 22 January 1866, F4/2.
[50] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, Lang Papers, ML A2229.
[51] Swanston to Jones, 26 February, 1 March 1867, F4/12-1(3); St John to Jones, 15 February 1867, F4/10.
[52] Jones to F.O., 18 July 1867, F4/1.

were the enumeration of other circumstances which, in Jones's opinion, would ensure that he had no sinecure. The introduction of the labourers from the New Hebrides had given rise to no scandal, since Jones began issuing sailing licences to recruiting-vessels late in 1864 on condition that the men were paraded for his inspection on arrival. But if their numbers increased so might the danger of ill-treatment. At the end, Jones doubted what value the inspections were, without interpreters. And Thurston knew already that employers had sometimes to be threatened with consular displeasure; in April that year, finding that men were not being returned on time, he had stopped ships sailing for fresh supplies until Jones should return to Levuka. As for Europeans' relations with their Fijian labourers, 'cases of injustice are not rare', he found Jones concluding. 'One might suppose that . . . a harsh master would find no one to serve him, but unfortunately wherever the Chiefs are sufficiently powerful they can force their people to labour for the whites . . . as long as the white employer pays the chief for their labour.'[53]

Thurston watched Jones sail for the pleasures of London, the congenial hazards of Persia. Then he married and, rowing around to Bureta, had six days with his wife at 'The Retreat' before news broke that Thomas Baker, proselytising westward through interior Viti Levu, had been clubbed at Naqaqadelavatu near the head-waters of the Sigatoka river. Thurston had very little rest for the following two and a half years. He had never enjoyed himself more thoroughly.

He was off to Rewa next day, in the schooner-rigged, half-decked boat he had acquired, to learn the story from the Fijian survivors and Jesse Carey's breathless lips: and, on the version he sent to the Governor of New South Wales, to add his own, cooler correction on a small point of fact. The man 'taken to his Heavenly home on Sunday July 21st about 7 o'C A.M.' had set off in the wake of teachers lately despatched to the Viria, Soloira, Navunidakua and Dawarau people at their request. He had been killed in a village of the Navosa district, beyond Dawarau, where Jones's party had slept two years before, by men who may have feared him as a forerunner of the Bauan power that was associated with the coming of Christianity inland.[54]

[53] Ibid. [54] Thurston to Young, 16 August 1867, encl. Young to C.O., 3 October 1867, CO201/543; Carey to Rabone, 5 August 1867, MMS.

Some of the hotheads amongst the Rewa Planters' Association's membership were disposed to arm their labourers and march on Naqaqadelavatu, a proposal which, Thurston made it known, he considered illegitimate and unwise, 'certain to lead to the slaughter of natives belonging to unoffending towns, and in any case likely to form a dangerous precedent'.[55] He took some comfort from the fact that the leaders, Messrs Storck and Luks, were not British subjects, 'which is a negative proof of the wisdom of the latter'.[56]

'The situation is one the feeblest mind could grapple with and understand', he told a Rewa planter,[57] in the manner that saw him set down as 'a very self conceited man'.[58] The essence of it was that action against the murderers 'is entirely and especially in my hands'; and he held Cakobau responsible for their punishment as 'Supreme Chief of Viti Levu'. But the confidence in the Bauans' willingness to act which Thurston felt in August evaporated in October when he called at Bau with Captain C. W. Hope, R.N., sent down from Sydney with H.M.S. *Brisk* to support the consulate. The Vunivalu of Bau was then more realistic about the extent of his power in the interior. 'The Chief denied any responsibility in the matter and said—he was not Chief of Viti Levu—only of Bau—not connected with Navosa or responsible for the acts of that tribe.' This was true, as Thurston knew; but Cakobau had declared himself supreme chief of the whole island and Thurston would hold him to it. The warship's presence enabled him to carry the point; but on 9 November, accepting Cakobau's promise to attack Navosa, Hope sailed in the *Brisk*; and 'with her departure Thakobau subsided into his previous state of apathy'.[59]

Thurston had made a friend in Captain Hope. He relished naval company and, needing an outside correspondent in his isolation, found one in the gregarious naval captain, seven years older than himself, who was to die a Rear-Admiral and had contacts at home in the Conservative Party. Thurston wrote Hope long, wry, descriptive letters, spilling out his involvement in Fiji's affairs with mingled anger and laughter. He wrote late at night when his office door was closed, sometimes changing his handwriting to ease

[55] Thurston to Belmore, 16 August 1867, F4/1.
[56] Thurston to Sherwood, 14 August 1867, F4/1.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Philp, Diary.
[59] Lambert to Admiralty, 24 October, 13 December 1867, Adm. 1/6008; Thurston to F.O., 31 December 1867, F4/1.

fingers cramped by a day spent locked around an official pen. He constantly revealed his feeling that the European was a creature of strange manners in the South Seas. And, keeping up in the newspapers with the political events of Europe, he told Hope of his distaste for all that Mr Gladstone stood for.

Now he probably talked about the *Star of Eve*, for in the previous year Hope had investigated the plunder of the wreck at Rotuma. As acting-consul, through an agent on the island, Thurston was administering the reparation in oil which Hope had imposed on the Rotumans—only a quarter of the amount which the owners had claimed.[60] So far as the evidence goes, Thurston himself recouped nothing of his own losses under Hope's award, perhaps had never attempted to; but the naval officer's experience of the inflated claims made in this case served Thurston in his new role, for it made Hope more ready to accept the iniquity of the American claims in Fiji as Thurston related them.

He travelled about Fiji in the *Brisk*, entertained her captain in return at Bureta plantation. His care for his forty-odd labourers passed muster. Fijians and New Hebrideans alike were 'well-housed and fed' there, they looked 'healthy and contented'.[61] His marriage, four months old, seemed curious to his visitor: 'she is not by any means "dans sa première jeunesse", while he is still a young man'. He impressed Hope with his 'great energy, determination, and decision of character'; 'much tact and discretion' appeared in him too, and were advanced by Hope years later as fitting him for re-employment as consul.[62]

He nurtured a viper in Hope's innocent company at Bureta on 2 November: T. W. White, Colonel of Volunteers in New Zealand, who had come down as Hope's guest in the *Brisk* to settle in Fiji. With the deceased estate of the old beachcomber Charlie Pickering to dispose of, Thurston sold White land from it on the island of Ono, Kadavu, to which White next year added a much larger block which he purchased from Ratu Veceli Namusadroka, Vunivalu of Rewa. Thurston and White were to have reason to regret that land from Pickering's estate had been available, White because he lost money at Ono and Thurston because the 'Colonel'

[60] Adm. 1/5969.

[61] Extract from copy of a letter by Hope, 9 January 1868, Selwyn Papers (by courtesy of the Rev. H. Selwyn Fry).

[62] Hope's journal letter begun 26 December 1867, Letter-Journals; Hope to Hammond, 3 February 1872, FO58/133.

became a political opponent of his. White, as Thurston later told Hope, 'tried to live on gin with the usual result—got into low company and, revolver on hip, became the leader of the roughs and blackguards'.[63]

While he waited for Cakobau to act, Thurston was busy about the routine affairs of the consulate. Planters brought him title-deeds for formal engrossment; though he could not possibly inquire into the *bona fides* of every deed in the manner that Jones had lain down, he refused registration in one case where he thought the deed imprecise. 'Upon the subject of Land Purchase I may take this opportunity to remark that if worth buying at all it is worth the trouble to secure a good title', he told a Rewa purchaser, 'and that as the transactions in lands in this country frequently entail considerable inconvenience upon this Office as well as injury to the Vendors—No recognition or Record will be given to any Titles whatever by this Office that do not bear evidence to the care taken in defining the lands and to a clear understanding upon the part of the late native proprietors'.[64]

A number of labourers newly arrived from Tana came before him for engagement in October 1867. Worried by the known, almost insensate cruelty of their employer, G. R. Burt, he added a written warning to his verbal one that in case of ill-treatment he would remove the men. He could do so, and later did remove some of them, though Burt and his partner Achilles Underwood were Americans, because the Tana men had been brought in aboard a British ship. He was to have Burt before him again two years later when Fijians had driven the American off his Sigatoka plantation with fire and blood. 'Burt asked me to give him an interview', Thurston was to tell Hope in November 1869 when Burt was trying to fasten responsibility for his Sigatoka losses on Cakobau. 'I . . . contrived by accident to have the Chief call.' 'Burt said—"Shall I bring this charge against the Chief . . .". "No" said I. "I think you had better not for the Chief is going so he tells me to charge you with nine distinct & separate murders, and wishes me to charge you with being the cause of several murders of Tanna men, caused by your arming them against Fijians" . . . .'[65]

[63] Lomberg, Journal, 2-5 November 1867; LCC R1292, R1294; Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

[64] Thurston to Levesy, 26 August 1867, F4/1.

[65] Thurston to G. R. Burt & Co., 3 October 1867, F4/1; Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, Letter-Journals.

And in December 1867, finding that the reprobate son of a missionary to Tahiti, G. M. Henry, was making political play against Ma'afu at the American commercial agency with a deed to Vanua Balavu which Jones had pronounced invalid, Thurston haled Henry into the consulate and, with threats of deportation, made him tear up the deed.[66] At the same time he wrote to Ma'afu on a counter-complaint of Henry's that his pigs, put to root on one of the reef islands, were being enjoyed by the Vanua Balavu people: 'I cannot permit any injury to be inflicted upon the property of any British subject by the people of any Island in Fiji no matter what relation or attitude the former may have assumed toward the Chief of the latter'.[67]

Now in September 1867 he received from Ma'afu a letter on another subject—Ma'afu's explanation that he had withdrawn from the *Tovata* (temporarily, it turned out) because Tui Nayau had left it, Tui Cakau was wavering, and 'because of the continued outcry raised against me by many of the foreigners . . . , that I am the root of all evil in Fiji'.[68] The existence of that feeling had been brought painfully to Ma'afu's attention in July that year when the U.S.S. *Tuscaroa* appeared off Lomaloma and, on information from Brower, had ordered him to hand two of Vanua Balavu's dependent islands to their American claimants.[69] European suspicion of the Tongans found a powerful exemplar in the American Commercial Agent. When old residents exchanged reminiscences at a banquet to Fred Hennings, whose brother William thanked the American for having saved Fiji from 'a horde of savages' from Tonga, Brower agreed that he had managed it—partly through the threat of the debt 'and partly by "bounce"'. 'He thought and he believed old residents would bear him out, that the end justified the means. The people of Fiji could be managed, but Fiji was threatened with assimilation to another group, where a white man could positively not live.'[70] Thurston, on the other hand, gave Ma'afu the countenance that he had had from Jones. In January 1868 he told Ma'afu that his right to enforce the laws of Lau 'in all cases and

[66] Thurston to Henry, 2 December 1867, F4/1; Thurston's note, 5 December 1867, F4/Temp. 1 Vol. I.
[67] Thurston to Ma'afu, 5 December 1867, F4/1.
[68] Ma'afu to Thurston, 13 September 1867, F4/12-1(4).
[69] Stanley to Admiral Commanding Pacific Station, 10 August 1867, U.S. Consular Agency Laucala, IV.
[70] *Fiji Gazette*, 7 March 1874.

irrespective of nationality' could not be doubted, 'provided always that such laws are not in violation of civilised ideas'; and no man could escape them by hoisting the British flag, though his doing so would justify a consul in investigating the case.[71]

By the same mail from windward as Ma'afu's own letter, probably, Thurston had one from its actual writer, the European secretary to the *Tovata* and Thurston's future colleague and enemy, R. S. Swanston, who deplored the *Tovata*'s temporary collapse. Swanston wrote that Ma'afu's influence was so great 'and his ideas as to what will be for the weal of Fiji so correct' that he would continue to work with Ma'afu—'but only in a private capacity', for Swanston was 'so utterly opposed' to the extension of Tongan political power in Fiji 'that I cannot act officially with a man who . . . from the force of circumstances must now represent Tongan interests only'.[72] As he read it, Thurston may have been puzzled to see how Swanston could distinguish in practice what was 'private' and what 'official'. He had formed the opinion that 'R.S.S. is a perfectly hopeless individual' long before he expressed it years afterwards.[73] Swanston's best friends did not claim for him consistency of opinion: 'a clever, jolly, good-natured fellow', he was described, in a newspaper that was usually well-disposed towards him, 'but too erratic ever to do any good for himself or anybody else'.[74]

For his part, as he himself struggled to establish a plantation without benefit of an official salary, Swanston may have resented a man eleven years his junior, and a comparative newcomer to Fiji, occupying a post in which he had once acted for Pritchard. Swanston was a sociable, drinking man, a jotter of wise saws in his journal, son of an Indian army officer and Australian pioneer; his family had settled in Tasmania and had given its name to one of the main streets of Melbourne. He had knocked around a good deal himself, between Cape Town, Tasmania and California, had picked up a Samoan wife whilst acting as American consul to Samoa in 1856, and had been a merchants' agent in Fiji.[75]

[71] Thurston to Swanston, 14 January 1868. F4/2a.
[72] Swanston to Thurston, 25 September 1867, F4/12-1(5).
[73] Thurston to Gordon, 14 April 1880, Stanmore, *Fiji*, IV, 270.
[74] *Fiji Times*, 10 June 1874.
[75] *Statement of the Services of Captain Charles Swanston . . .* (Uxbridge, 1891); autobiographical note by R. S. Swanston for E. J. Turpin, Brewster Papers, MAE.

He was Thurston's interpreter during the *Brisk*'s visit and their relations outwardly were cordial. Thurston heard from him again in February 1868, with news of a chance meeting between Ma'afu and Cakobau at which the latter had bemoaned the trust he had put in the whites in Pritchard's time, when he had rejected the Tongan's offer to help pay off the American debt. Cakobau still owed $43,564. Aboard the *Tuscaroa* he had engaged to pay it off in four annual instalments and had mortgaged the islands of Moturiki, Batiki and Nairai, to be sold in case he failed. If her commander had not remitted eight years' accumulated interest on the debt, contrary to all Brower's ideas of right and justice, Cakobau would have had to pay $20,000 more. 'The whites were going to do great things for me, and see where they have placed me.'[76]

Led by Thurston, the whites were about to push Cakobau into war—and war more ambitious than any he had ever undertaken. By January 1868 Thurston had lost all patience with Cakobau's delay in punishing the Navosa people and told him so, in a letter which clearly he enjoyed composing:

> The blood of a murdered man—still cries to you, morning and night and from night till morning, cries to you incessantly from the hillside of Dela Vatu—but you answer wait—His bones hanging in a temple as offerings to a heathen God, or Devil cry to you a Christian Chief for Christian burial. How long shall they cry? How long shall all these cries be made to you? How long will you wait?
>
> You wanted to plant Yams—the planting is long finished. You wanted to plant cotton the season is now over. You wanted fine weather. All last month the heavens were clear and bright, and inviting you to action.
>
> But you answer to heaven as you do to man—Wait—[77]

If he was drawing a little on the cadences of scripture in the first paragraph here quoted, he was offering a dangerous precedent in the veiled threat to call in Ma'afu which he went on to make; he was horrified to find this threat repeated next year by planters on the southern Viti Levu rivers when he himself refused to hold Cakobau responsible for the losses of Burt and Underwood.[78]

In March 1868 Thurston himself went inland to within ten miles of Naqaqadelavatu, mapping a route by which the town

[76] Quoted Swanston to Thurston, 29 February 1868, F4/16.
[77] Thurston to Cakobau, 7 January 1868, F4/2.
[78] Thurston to F.O., 2 February 1869, F4/1.

might be approached by a force of bluejackets if the Commodore should be inclined to risk them ashore.[79] But in April Cakobau moved. The scale of his campaign made it clear that he intended to act on his boast of May 1866 and bring into direct political relations with himself all inland Viti Levu—'where tribes exist who have never recognised his authority', as Thurston said, 'or know him save by rumor'.[80] He launched a two-pronged attack, taking one into the hills from the Ra coast and sending the other up the Rewa under his half-brothers, Ratu Savenaca Naulivou and the young Ratu Dranibaka, and his eldest son Ratu Epeli Nailatikau.

Thurston marched with this second wing, originally a force of some 2,000 men which grew on the march as other contingents came in, their skins blackened for war, streamers flowing from knees and ankles, to pass in review before Ratu Savenaca. The very scale of the campaign was self-defeating, for it brought many of the hill-people in on Navosa's side to resist the Bauans; at Waikalou on 10 April the Rewa wing learned that Kuraduadua of Namosi had joined against them.

By 15 April, after some nine days with the army in broken country, Thurston was campaigning without pleasure, burdened by his revolver and ammunition belt. Three of four European settlers who joined him on 13 April had temporarily fallen out exhausted next day. The army was making for Naqaqadelavatu through the Dawarau district, leaving hostile towns on either side to be dealt with later. The main town of Dawarau fell that day, with eight others, and 230 women and children were taken prisoner.[81] Thurston was there, officially, to prevent unnecessary bloodshed; but he was more aggressive in the field than the deliberate Ratu Savenaca who proceeded without haste, according to the rules of Fijian warfare, opening up paths for retreat through the bush before he attacked a stronghold; and Thurston's impatience was shared by Ratu Dranibaka, younger and better-born than Ratu Savenaca through his Cakaudrove mother, a man who died of alcoholism before he was four years older.[82]

Thurston joined him on 17 April at an outpost he occupied

[79] Thurston to F.O., 28 March 1868, F4/1.
[80] Thurston to Lambert, 29 January 1868, F4/1.
[81] Thurston to Moore, 22 and 25 April 1868, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, July 1868.
[82] *Fiji Times*, 22 November 1871.

before the fortress of Korokula, to which the Dawarau men had retreated; 'an almost inaccessible mountain top', Thurston found it on a reconnaissance, but with no war-fence, and he had no doubt it would fall to an assault. He had earlier arranged with Ratu Savenaca that the main force would come up. He agreed now with Ratu Dranibaka to attack immediately before daybreak and had just got back to Ratu Savenaca's camp when sharp bursts of firing broke out. Some of Ratu Dranibaka's reckless young men, pushing up to the fortress, had fallen into an ambush in the scrub. Thurston had to stand by in impotent anguish while they were cut to pieces. 'Ratu Dau-ni-Baka, the young chiefs of his party, and myself desired an instant attack of the whole force', he wrote from the field to the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji, 'but the chief Savenaca, and Ratu Epeli, vetoed our proposal, so I have no doubt that many wounded men were carried in from the bush and eaten, by the wretches, who were lighting their "lovo" ovens, and challenging in our sight.' He 'returned disgusted to our camp and set a strict watch for the night, and waited anxiously for the morning, when Ratu Savenaca promised faithfully to ascend the hill . . . and attack Koro Kula with an overwhelming force'.

Next morning no attack was made, nor was there any prospect of one either here or on Naqaqadelavatu itself in the definable future. And with this loss of fifty-nine men vivid in his memory, Thurston was in no state to dispute strongly with the more experienced commander. Ratu Savenaca's caution was justified, he now saw. He might as well leave the Bauan to it, though his explanation to the Reverend William Moore indicated that he felt to leave was tantamount to deserting.

> Seeing I could be of no possible use, and that Fijian warfare must be conducted according to custom, I determined to return; having now been eleven days on the march, sleeping in war-sheds on wet grass, and damp sand, little to eat, and still a long way from Qaqadelavatu, which place it is doubtful our force will ever reach. Other circumstances did not warrant my remaining, with few whites in a country where should our allies fail five more lives would be placed to the credit of these wretched cannibals. Ratu Savanaca explained, that in a country like Dawarau, his people would eat up the food before they cared to proceed, and he thought it would be better for me to return. We gave him all our ammunition except three rounds each, and encouraging him to prompt and sudden action, I left him. Of the general good sense of the chiefs themselves, and of their kindness

and courtesy I cannot speak too highly, and I shall anxiously await further reports from them.[83]

Those reports reached him on Ovalau, whence on 28 April he wrote hasty despatches to Commodore Lambert. The fate of the fifty-nine men 'lost in about forty minutes' before Korokula was still shocking to him in the calm of the consulate, and he had to report the withdrawal of both Bauan wings from the hills. Their nominal allies there in Soloira and Matailobau, only lately brought into political relations with Bau, had been wavering. 'Had Bau not retreated in time I do not think a man would have returned.' Cakobau's own wing, ambushed, had suffered heavy loss in its turn; thirteen chiefs were amongst the fallen.[84]

Now Thurston was concerned about the fate of settlers on the upper Rewa. Living, as planters there did, on lands which had often been sold during earlier fighting, they depended heavily on what protection Bau could afford them through Ratu Timoci Vakaruru, Qaranivalu of the *mataqali* Matanikutu at Navuso, who had long had links with Bau through which he had both maintained himself in family feuds and extended his influence upriver; lately he had carried off Cakobau's daughter, Adi Arieta Kuila. Even Ratu Timoci's protection was dearly bought, for he made free with settlers' goods;[85] but still, the 'authority of Bau such as it is—is the only authority in that part of Fiji most thickly occupied [?] by British subjects and any diminution of it would greatly prejudice their interests'. So Thurston told the Commodore, with the hope of eliciting at least a show of naval support.

Meanwhile Cakobau was engaged in raising fresh forces by levies on Lomaiviti for a second attempt on the hills; and Thurston went back to Bureta. It was five years before that attempt was made, in the event; for almost immediately other matters drew the Vunivalu of Bau's attention and disturbed the acting-consul's domesticity.

At Bureta on 22 May 1868, not four weeks after his return from Colo, Thurston had a note from Moore asking him to come at once to Levuka where two delegates from a company projected in Melbourne, Messrs I. L. Evans and W. H. O'H. Brewer, had

[83] Thurston to Moore, 25 April 1868, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, July 1868.
[84] Thurston to Lambert, 29 April 1868, F4/1.
[85] Thurston to Cakobau, 4 August 1868, F4/2a.

arrived in the *Albion* steamer for negotiations with Cakobau whom they were to see in the morning. 'I can give you more information when you come', wrote the missionary. 'They have come prepared to settle the Amn. debt.'[86]

This note arrived by road at eight in the evening, Thurston wrote back, and his boat was away. Since the matter was urgent he would walk round in the morning. 'For reasons that are known to you I am very disinclined to leave home at the present moment and shall feel obliged by your requesting Messrs Evans & Brewer to hold themselves disengaged until my arrival in Levuka in order that their business may be brought forward without delaying me.'[87]

Coupled with earlier intimations to Moore of a pressing domestic concern, his phrasing was delicate enough to invite a suspicion that Marie was pregnant or thought to be so. He had no plantation cares, for in April his brother Henry, six years his junior, had arrived to manage Bureta. At his wife's age symptoms of pregnancy might have been considered hysterical, had she not borne children before; but a birth would have been a serious affair. No child was ever born; but his disinclination to leave home at night, whether on these or other grounds, gave Thurston time to ponder the message.

Cakobau's position in relation to the debt was desperate, Thurston knew. Only ten days before, he had reported to the Foreign Office that the Bauans had been able to raise a mere $1,373 of the $10,891 due as the first instalment at the beginning of the month. He believed Nairai, Batiki and Moturiki would be put up for sale in Sydney.[88] As an inveterate subscriber to newspapers, living four weeks at the outside from an Australian port, he also knew of the meeting held in the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce on 6 February to arouse interest in a banking and trading company which, in return for paying off the whole debt, should obtain concessions that would secure the bulk of Fiji's trade for Victoria. Its representatives were to be in Fiji to treat with the American warship daily expected to take possession of the mortgaged islands.

In an editorial of 4 February, the Melbourne *Argus* had enlarged on the danger to Australia of an American presence in Fiji

[86] Moore to Thurston, 22 May 1868, F1/Temp.20.
[87] Thurston to Moore, 22 May 1868, encl. Thurston to F.O., 27 May 1868, FO58/113.
[88] Thurston to F.O., 12 May 1868, F4/1.

along with the prospect that such a company as this, offering shipping and credit facilities to existing planters as well as planting itself, might become the Pacific islands equivalent of the East India Company.[89] To the United States Consul in Melbourne, who attended the meeting, the proposed company was a politically-motivated venture aimed at keeping America out of a potential naval base.[90] To Thurston, as he read the *Argus*, the company was at best a grandiose speculation, at worst a swindle aimed at a credulous colonial investor. Undoubtedly it was a danger to racial peace in Fiji.

He was not encouraged to a different view by the assurance of one of the promoters that Mr Commercial Agent Brower had been in favour of the company. And those promoters themselves added nothing to its *bona fides* in his eyes: in particular W. H. O'Halloran Brewer, a Victorian country storekeeper who had come down on a visit in 1867 to spy out the commercial prospects and who now, at the Melbourne meeting, misrepresented the trade statistics that Thurston had then given him in a manner 'highly calculated to mislead the Colonial public'.[91] Nor was Thurston reassured to find mention of a letter read in support of the company from the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji in his *alter ego* of trader and land speculator.

He already had reservations about this man who summoned him to Levuka: the Reverend William Moore, forty-seven years old, 'convinced of sin', as Moore himself testified, since the age of seventeen when he 'obtained pardon', and for eighteen years now a missionary in Fiji. Moore had been heard to preach a powerful sermon on the theme 'that every man ought to do his duty in the position it had pleased Providence to place him in'. He retired in February 1870 remarking to the public, perhaps a little defensively, 'I may say, without egotism, that I am conscious of that grace and guidance, which calls more for thankfulness than regret'.[92] He had been belatedly got away, Thurston wrote then, the 'Society to

[89] *Argus*, 4 and 7 February 1868.

[90] Latham to State Department, 18 February 1868, Despatches from U.S. Consul, Melbourne. He encouraged the company and became a director a few months later, having found that his government saw it as no danger to any interest the United States might take in Fiji.

[91] Thurston to Lambert, 1 June 1868, F4/1.

[92] Moore to General Secretaries, 25 June 1853, Letters from Fiji, ML A2815; Seemann, *Viti*, 219; *Fiji Times*, 5 February 1870.

which he belongs finding his longer residence in this country likely to result in unpleasant reflections upon their whole body'.[93]

This was a resisted discovery for the Wesleyans, but even to some of these missionary colleagues it had long seemed by 1868 that the positions Moore was occupying were mutually incompatible. They had questioned whether the springs of his guidance were not rather in Mammon than in God. His superiors in Sydney had known since 1864 that he was buying up land in Fiji for the purpose of advancing colonisation as he said. They had not been convinced by his claim that, since he bought only from existing European owners, he did not contravene mission regulations forbidding its purchase from islanders.[94] Yet they had done nothing. As the senior missionary, he had succeeded to the local chairmanship when Calvert left. Early in 1867, when the importation of labour from the New Hebrides was under clerical attack in the Sydney press, he had defended it in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*—'the Chairman's Semi-pro-slavery' letter, one of his colleagues later called it[95]—and had called for an influx of settlers. 'We want more *good, moral, moneyed* men amongst us.'[96] By August 1867 he owned almost eight square miles at Vuna point, some of the finest land on the most favoured island in Fiji, which his son would soon be selling off to planters or, on credit raised with a Wesleyan merchant in Sydney, developing himself.[97]

The evidence of Moore's land-buying was in the consular archives for Thurston to see. He knew from Moore himself that Brewer, on his previous visit, had actually discussed with the missionary such a company as that now proposed—whereupon 'Mr Moore at once built a house in this Port suitable for Offices . . .'.[98] So Thurston told the Commodore on 1 June when he had taken action which he felt he needed to justify. All the evidence of events both preceding and ensuing supported him, while his action was in itself likely to commend him to the Foreign Office superiors he wished eventually to impress rather than expose him to their censure.

[93] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.
[94] Egglestone to Calvert, 29 March 1864, MOM 33.
[95] Carey to Nettleton, 1 February 1869, ML B440.
[96] Moore to Editor, 8 April 1867, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 1867.
[97] LCC R14, P104; F4/Temp. 1 Vol. II, No. 550; for a defence of the father, see William Marshall Moore to Colonial Secretary, 29 October 1877, FCSO 77/1472.
[98] Thurston to Lambert, 1 June 1868, F4/1.

If he walked the twelve miles around to Levuka with well-established doubts on 23 May, what he found there after his arrival at 10.30 a.m. convinced him that the proposed company was a fraud, a danger to Fiji and to British official relations with the group, and that Moore's involvement with it was discreditable to the missionary. From the clerk he had lately appointed (Edwin J. Turpin, to be dismissed for petty defalcation in April 1869)[99] he learned that a meeting had actually begun aboard the *Albion* half an hour before. Cakobau was attending with four missionaries to advise him. Thurston hoisted his flag to indicate that he had arrived 'or that courtesy would suggest the propriety of awaiting my arrival to an appointment requested by themselves'; but he heard nothing except rumour from the steamer until mid-afternoon when Cakobau landed, 'came to my Office remained seated in silence for five minutes and then left'.[1]

Half-seas-over from a champagne breakfast, Cakobau had given to the proposed 'Polynesia Company', a charter drafted in Melbourne by which, as Thurston learned when he finally boarded the *Albion* that evening, he granted it jurisdiction over Fijians and foreigners in his dominions, the right to levy taxes and other dues, and to issue currency, as well as a banking monopoly and 200,000 acres of land on the south coast of Viti Levu from the Rewa west to the Navua and stretching inland to the Waidina. Not one acre of them, in Thurston's opinion, had he any title to; much of that area was in the hands of Kuraduadua. As Thurston wrote, feelingly enough: 'the natives of Viti Levu would not submit to the rule of Messrs. Brewer and Evans and Thakobau dare not attempt to enforce it'.

A clause providing that the company would assist in upholding Cakobau's kingdom he thought particularly suggestive. 'The meaning of this', he gathered from the conversation around him in the steamer's saloon, 'is—That the Company having purchased the prerogatives and powers Thakobau may really enjoy—minus his responsibilities is prepared to accept the Chiefs own statement as to the boundaries and limits of his Kingdom and under the shadow of his name to take it for themselves by any filibustering measures they may be able to command or permitted to exercise'.[2]

[99] Thurston to Turpin, 24 April 1869, and to Campbell, 24 May 1869, F4/1. Turpin became a Greek chorus to Thurston throughout his life—see, below, p. 246.

[1] Thurston to Lambert, 1 June 1868, F4/1.

[2] Ibid.

With his future sunk in Fiji, he deplored a company with unrealistic pretensions whose delegates struck him as 'mere adventurers endeavouring with others to float a bubble speculation for their own interests . . .'.[3] As acting-consul he feared the involvement it would mean for his government. For a British company to assume responsibility for the American debt under such a charter was 'simply transferring . . . the onus of an unpleasant procedure from American to British authority amplified also by unprecedented conditions containing the germs of trouble and dissension fatal to the future peace and prosperity of these Islands'.[4]

He was not mollified when Brewer, seeing his disapprobation, intimated that 'a number of shares in the Company would be reserved for *my acceptance and on the successful termination of the Company's negotiations I should receive a more material recognition* of *their regard*'.[5] He let the next day pass, a Sunday, then sent his brother to Cakobau with an official protest. An injunction went off to the *Albion* for the delegates to stay proceedings until the acting-consul could consult another British officer. He was expecting a visit from Commodore Lambert. He took steps, too, to let his attitude be known on the beach, where the established merchants were concerned about the rumoured threat of massive, monopolistic competition. He had pronounced the concessions null and void, he told Fred Hennings, 'in consequence of the manner of their acquisition'; and, he wrote on to the German merchant, in rising anger,

> I deprecate in the strongest terms the actions of all persons therewith connected as highly improper presumptuous and injurious And the endeavour of British subjects to Conclude a Treaty of Commerce including Belligerent obligations offensive and defensive Without my privity and Knowledge to be irreverent and offensive to the Honour and Dignity of Her Majesty the Queen of England.[6]

Though he was writing mainly for public information it was utterances of this sort that enabled men to represent him as moved

[3] Thurston to F.O., 19 October 1868, F4/1.
[4] Thurston to Lambert, 1 June 1868, F4/1.
[5] Thurston to F.O., 19 October 1868, F4/1.
[6] Thurston to Fred Hennings, n.d. [c. 25 May 1868], F4/1. Evans tried to assert that Thurston had initially approved the charter, promised to help by pointing out desirable land, and only later changed his mind. But he can receive no more credence on this than he had from Commodore Lambert on other points. (Evans to Lambert, 8 July 1868, and Lambert to Manners-Sutton, 14 July 1868, Governor's Correspondence, Victoria, Bundle 11, item 12.)

by vanity, when he was not so much vain as thin-skinned, the victim at times of an obsessive vulnerability. Some of its origins may have lain in his lack of inches. His step was at once measured and springy. He was assured of the importance of the post he now held, in Fiji at large but on that beach particularly. He was in no doubt, too, of his own abilities and the value of his own opinion. And he expected that other men by their actions should recognise it also. Yet his vulnerability seems rarely, if ever, to have been at the origin of action or judgment in him. Only afterwards, in recollection of failure or misconstruction, would he show his hurt in correspondence or conversation. He lived much of his life under personal and political attack. When he had gained recognition and was dead, a detractor of many years standing, a professional journalist, wrote that to all abuse he 'opposed an inflexible, if not an imperturbable, front, and held the even tenor of his way'.[7] Vanity might have been more easily swayed. In the present instance, moreover, he had no other recourse than the role of outraged official if he was to hold off Evans and Brewer, with their sympathiser 'the very Reverend Mr Moore'.

Thurston's letter to the delegates of 25 May was a temperate protest; he pointed out that the charter purported in effect to give the Polynesia Company—not yet incorporated—absolute control of the Bau Kingdom, and, since it had been presented at 10 a.m. and signed at noon, he was 'morally certain King Cakobau has only a vague and imperfect conception of the obligations incurred'.[8] His protest was read to Cakobau by Moore who, it was proved, to Cakobau's remark 'the consul hates it' replied 'the consul hates it, but never mind'—'*Sa cata ga na Konisela, ia sa vinaka gao*'.[9] It gave the negotiators pause, nonetheless; and Thurston left Levuka until Lambert arrived in the *Challenger* on 9 July, preceded by the *Brisk* which, homeward-bound for Devonport to pay off, anchored off Bureta on the third to visit old friends;[10] Thurston conducted some private business in land with one of her officers. With the *Challenger*'s arrival stalemate was broken in favour rather of the company than the acting-consul. Though the Commodore haled

[7] T. H. Pritchard, 'Sir John Bates Thurston: The Viceroy of the Pacific', *Review of Reviews*, Australasian edition, 20 February 1897.
[8] Thurston to Brewer and Evans, 25 May 1868, F4/1.
[9] Langham to Moore, 8 September 1868, MOM 103.
[10] Lambert to Admiralty, 4 August 1868, Adm. 1/6054; Lomberg, Journal, 3 July 1868.

Moore aboard before four of his colleagues and agreed with Thurston that 'from interested motives [he] had lent his influence as a missionary to promote . . . an undertaking which he must have known was highly improper',[11] he could not advise Thurston that either of them had authority to prohibit the revised charter for which the delegates were demanding the consulate's sanction. Thurston's replies had to be simple refusals to comment beyond the reminder that he had already declared such charters illegal. 'I cannot understand why these people persist in treating or endeavouring to do so with a Chief who can void his contract at any moment on account of his moral and physical incapacity to perform', he remarked to the Commodore on 18 July. And so, three days later, he told the delegates.[12]

Yet still they persisted. On 25 July Thurston left Levuka for the Rewa in the *Challenger* and, in collaboration with Brower, they secured Cakobau's signature to a charter alienating land on Suva harbour with Beqa, on the Ra coast, and in Natewa bay, as well as confirming a banking monopoly for twenty-one years. 'This document obtained', wrote Thurston sardonically, in a despatch asking for instructions how to deal with the troubles he was sure would arise when attempts were made to settle these lands, 'they left Fiji for the Colonies in the Mission barque "John Wesley"'.[13] There, by misleading reports about the tropical planters' paradise they were promoting, they set about raising shareholders, issuing scrip —in defiance of their undertaking in the charter—before the debt was paid.

The masterstroke of promotion in all the annals of their company, Thurston thought, was that of an early settler and shareholder, Mrs FitzGibbon, who had a hired buggy sent down to advertise the existence of beautiful roads on the undeveloped shores of Viti Levu Bay. 'Shares went up like smoke on a calm day —and—dame Fitz—sold out—absolutely', Thurston, with mock admiration, told Hope. 'To what uses after this may not a "buggy" be put? Who in England would think of using a buggy for bait?'[14]

[11] Thurston to F.O., 8 September 1868, F4/1; Lambert to Manners-Sutton, 14 July 1868, Governor's Correspondence, Victoria, Bundle 11, item 12.
[12] Thurston to Lambert, 18 July, and to Brewer and Evans, 21 July 1868, F1 Temp. 20.
[13] Thurston to F.O., 8 September 1868, F4/10. His old friend the brig had found a coral grave.
[14] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.

5

'Shall the two races quarrel?'

As he watched the activity around the *Albion* late in May 1868, Thurston was conscious that he was facing a new eddy of indirect emigrants from the British Isles. Some, spilling especially this year out of war-torn New Zealand, seemed determined to make Fiji another colony of white settlement, equally war-torn, with all speed. Less than four months later, he had in mind the rowdiness that had characterised the early settlement of New Zealand by Europeans as the example of what might happen in Fiji, if the power to control incoming British subjects should exceed 'that held by, or unanimously yielded to the British Consul'.[1] He saw New Zealand as the immediate example of race-war too.

It was an example of which Fijians themselves were very conscious. In mid-1868, when Cakobau was told that 5 million acres of land had been confiscated from the Maori, the figure was beyond his comprehension but the implications were not unreal to him. Learning that four seats in the House of Representatives had been allotted to Maori members, he seemed to doubt that he himself would have been considered, by white men, fit to occupy one. He knew his European.[2]

In September 1868 Thurston wrote of 'the singular impression prevailing that Fiji is a "Colony" ';[3] and at the end of December he recorded statistics which gave colour to that impression. The white population stood then at 1,288 adults, as against 329 when he succeeded to the consul's flag and 837 at the beginning of the year; ships' visits had been recorded to a total tonnage of 7,000, almost double the tonnage of 1867 and quite double the number of

[1] Thurston to F.O., 27 May, 8 September 1868, F4/1.
[2] *A Month in Fiji. By a Recent Visitor* [F. J. Moss] (Melbourne [1868]), 29-30.
[3] Thurston to F.O., 27 May 1868, F4/1.

vessels; and if the value of exports at £39,918 was fractionally down, a considerably smaller weight of cotton had brought in little less money than had been realised in the previous year. Reports from Liverpool and London brokers were excellent. Sea Island shipped from Levuka in February and March 1868 fetched from thirty pence per pound to the forty-seven pence which Brower received,[4] while late in 1867 the brothers Ryder had sold thirty bales from their island of Mago at forty-two pence and grossed £2,100 on the shipment.[5]

The fortunes seemingly to be made in cotton, then, were bringing settlers into Fiji—and were to do so for another two years until, by late 1870, the European population stood at about 2,000. Cotton had brought Thurston's brother Henry who doubled the cultivated area of Bureta, added a paved road up to the houses from the landing place, with bananas lining it,[6] and who was an embarrassment to brother Jack for almost twelve years.

As an acting-consul, without magisterial powers, left quite without instructions since he had held the office, Thurston watched the influx with an apprehension which he took care to communicate to the Foreign Office. 'The determination . . . of Australian Colonists to invest their Capital in Fijian enterprize is so evident that I feel it my duty to submit the facts to your Lordships Notice without loss of time', he wrote in May. In September he was more pointed in his request for particular instructions, for though it was 'due to the community to state that the greatest respect and observance is paid to the ruling of this Office' he still could not 'disguise from myself that among the numerous settlers arising are many lawless persons who may at any moment resent authority in matters upon which the General Instructions do not touch'.[7]

He made friends from amongst these settlers who came down in the crowded little schooners to wonder, first, at the greenery of Levuka, then at the monotony of life on that narrow coastal toehold, and who then, puzzled by old hands' conflicting advice about where to settle, went out perilously to see for themselves in cranky small-craft with part-European interpreters. He corresponded regularly hereafter with F. J. Moss, veteran of the Kaffir and the

[4] Thurston to F.O., 31 December 1868, F4/1.
[5] 'Pioneering in the South Seas. Being Reminiscences of G. L. Ryder . . .', ML FM3/241.
[6] *Fiji Times*, 30 October 1869.
[7] Thurston to F.O., 27 May, 8 September 1868, F4/1.

Maori wars, refugee from a broken career in New Zealand provincial politics. He supplied Moss with a copy of his map drawn to show the Foreign Office where Baker was killed (and found his walk with Jones from Suva point misdated in the version Moss published).[8] His letters to Moss before 1880 are not extant, nor do those survive that he wrote before 1874 to Moss's brother-in-law, the confirmed bachelor Walter Carew who stayed on as a planter up the Rewa after illness drove Moss away and who, in his isolation, learned to speak Fijian as well as David Wilkinson and drink like Robert Swanston. Thurston found another friend in one of the newly-arrived merchants who came to share with F. & W. Hennings the planters' business and the Fijians' trade—the Orkney man, parson's son, J. C. Smith, who was Thurston's banker for years and whom outsiders to Fiji tended to approach when they wanted to know what Thurston was about. He was really close to no man, shared in few of the attitudes that were *de rigueur* in the white community—except the cutting-off of part-Europeans from it, the duties of hospitality, and the acceptability of cards to wile long dark evenings away. Looking back over thirty years' residence amongst Fiji's Europeans he wrote: 'Of course I made many enemies, but I made no familiars—not one. And this was one of my strong points'.[9]

He may have learned something from Smith about the mercantile affairs of the brothers Hennings, who remained the largest merchants, the heaviest creditors in Fiji. Certainly he knew them well. When the senior partner of Rabone, Feez & Co.—the Sydney firm which replaced J. C. Godeffroy & Son as backers of F. & W. Hennings—caught dysentery on a visit to Fiji in 1869, Thurston and Marie nursed him. Their home was more suitable to a dying visitor than the quarters of Fred Hennings, still a bachelor at thirty-six, who perhaps lived in a couple of rooms at the back of his store as he had done in Apia, weighing cotton in his pyjamas.[10] Thurston came to hold that the reckless credit which, like other firms, F. & W. Hennings made available to planters was the curse of economic life in Fiji. The Hennings brothers' confidence in cotton was such that they were not difficult men to convince that money borrowed would be repaid. Their popularity with incoming

[8] F. J. Moss, *A Planter's Experience in Fiji* (Auckland, 1870).
[9] Thurston to Stanmore, 15 January 1896, CO83/65.
[10] Thomas Trood, *Island Reminiscences* . . . (Sydney, 1912), 31.

Europeans swelled in proportion with the names on their books—names against which, in 1872, thousands of American dollars were being written off as bad debts.[11] Even at 1 January 1869 they were playing with some $140,000 of Rabone, Feez & Co.'s money, $142 of them lent to Thurston;[12] and three years later they were reported to have twice as much business thrust on them as their credit would allow them to undertake.[13]

They borrowed with one hand, lent with another, and showed less discretion than J. C. Smith who was credited with having left all the bad 'marks' to Hennings.[14] 'Any man can now obtain from F. W. H. a case of muskets, powder, lead, and an iron pot or two, for the purpose of buying land', recalled Thurston of these cotton-booming years. 'Upon getting a paper of some sort signed, it is deposited with H. as equitable security for the repayment of original and future advances.'[15] The surviving records of the firm support him generally. And the anguish of Rabone, Feez & Co. by November 1871, when the Fiji debit balance with them stood at £36,900,[16] was soon to have its counterpart in other Australian merchant-houses which, having put money into Fiji, came to doubt whether they would ever see it again.[17]

The economic sub-structure of developing European society in Fiji was dubious, in its heavy dependence on credit and a single major crop; but it was the human environment that had worried Thurston as he awaited the *Challenger* in mid-1868. The readiness of Fijians to accept, and their capacity to absorb, Europeans who settled among them (hitherto a marked feature in the recent history of Fiji) were showing signs of dissipating with the increase in the number of those to be accepted and, it may be, with their own disinclination to be absorbed. 'Incendiarism, assault, theft, and systematically violent and inhospitable conduct towards British settlers' had been reported to him from Namosi and the Rewa.[18]

Thurston was mainly concerned about the Rewa settlers. Sixty

[11] See fragments of accounts in Hennings Papers, NAF.
[12] F1/Temp. 31.
[13] Phillips to Macfarlane, 19 May 1872, Coleman Phillips Papers, 72.
[14] Coleman Phillips Papers.
[15] Thurston to Gordon, n.d., extract, encl. Gordon to Fuller, 26 December 1882, CO83/31.
[16] Sahl to W. Hennings, 2 November 1871, Hennings Papers.
[17] See, for instance, the letterbooks of James Graham & Co., in the University of Melbourne Archives.
[18] Thurston to Lambert, 11 July 1868, F4/1.

miles upriver at Nailega J. G. Pfluger was in particular trouble. Pfluger had bought Nailega from its people late in 1866 as they retreated before a Bauan thrust. He paid a royalty on it to Cakobau. Then he had been bothered by Bauan allies, the *Kai* Lutu of Deoka nearby, whom he tried and failed to dislodge by buying Deoka from the people the *Kai* Lutu themselves had seized it from, the *Kai* Tai. 'We said, let us sell it to a white man, these strangers . . . are . . . coming on it, and planting on it', remembered Ra Bulu of the *Kai* Tai.[19]

The *Kai* Lutu were not mollified by Pfluger's vain attempts to dispossess them of their conquest in this way. Rumour was that they were organising an attack on all settlers down river. Although he had warned his fellow whites against occupying land so far from the sea, Thurston had to act. 'The correction of these people alone would in my opinion restore order and create a proper respect for the persons and property of British Settlers', he told Lambert.[20] Consular lecturing backed by a show of force upriver was all he thought required. The four armed boats which left the *Challenger* with him on 27 July 1868 went on their two-day pull up the Rewa with orders not to kill.

Thurston had Ratu Savenaca Naulivou with him, and Scott to interpret. But Ratu Savenaca discreetly left the boats upriver and the messengers Thurston sent to the Deoka people found them armed and in force, indisposed to talk. Many settlers were already gathered at Pfluger's; Thurston called in the rest; and, with the planters aboard, the expedition fell back down river under heavy fire from the banks, leaving Deoka burning behind them but seeing Pfluger's homestead in flames before they had rounded the first bend. At Viria Thurston landed for a conference with Tui Viria, whose continued friendship was vital to other settlers on the river. Four bluejackets and a settler were wounded; the latter preferred to die in Fison's house at Davuilevu rather than undertake the passage to Marie's care.[21]

'The natives seem to consider that they have beaten the boat party', Thurston was told by Fison, who was busy strengthening

[19] LCC R346, R345; memorandum by Thurston, FCSO 82/663.
[20] Thurston to Lambert, 24 July 1868, encl. Lambert to Admiralty, 4 August 1868, Adm. 1/6054.
[21] Brownrigg to Lambert, 31 July 1868, encl. Lambert to Admiralty, 4 August 1868, Adm. 1/6054.

Tui Viria's resolution to protect the whites by sending him *tabua* to press down those that came from the people upriver who wanted leave to pass. 'Of course they can only look at it from a Fijian point of View.'[22] Had Thurston's arguments prevailed and direct fire been ordered at the Fijians, according to his later tales of the *Challenger* expedition, they would have been heavily defeated.

But the repulse of the naval expedition sobered him, following so soon after that of the Bauans. Settlers could henceforth expect to be reminded of his warning-notices against pressing into the interior and to receive hints that their troubles were of their own making. 'I am well aware settlers in many parts of Fiji have much unpleasantness to submit to at the hands of Fijians', Thurston told an upriver planter, 'and equally aware the latter are not without cause of complaint'. 'Shall the two races quarrel because of the foolishness of a few men', he asked of Roko Tui Dreketi, inviting him to report to the consulate whenever Fijians were aggrieved. He wrote the same day to the Rewa Planters' Association, deploring the reported 'almost daily acts of violence towards the natives' by some planters on the river. 'At the present moment, this at any time improper conduct is mischievous in the extreme, and if true, can surely only originate with some person or persons who have nothing to lose.'[23]

Somewhat more of a Fijian point of view was disagreeably forced on Thurston's attention when, smarting from this public exposure of his fallibility, he arrived at Bau from Rewa on 4 August. With him was Tui Levuka, lately a prisoner of Cakobau's; rescued by an unauthorised British subject, *Tamananivavalagi* was supposed to be returned to Cakobau's hands but then, after a promise to Lambert, shortly sent home. Alone with his interpreter, the *Challenger* departed, Thurston found Bau crowded with chiefs called in from Tailevu in the aftermath of the naval repulse. And Cakobau was furious at the expedition's being undertaken without reference to himself. In 1870 he claimed that Thurston had been asked at Levuka by Ratu Savenaca to contact the Vunivalu of Bau before leaving and had replied that it was a purely British affair.[24] Now Cakobau was indisposed to be reminded of what he had

[22] Fison to Thurston, 'Thursday', F4/10.

[23] Thurston to Ford and to Rewa Planters Association, 31 and 7 September 1868, F4/1; to Roko Tui Dreketi, 7 September 1868, F4/2a.

[24] Cakobau to March, 26 December 1870, F4/10.

undertaken to do with Tui Levuka—whose part of Ovalau he probably already intended to take into his own hands at *Tamanani-vavalagi*'s obviously incipient death.

'The Chief interrupted me in the rudest manner', wrote Thurston to the captain of H.M.S. *Charybdis* on her arrival later in the month, 'and told me . . . that it was sufficient for me to rule white men, he did not want my assistance to manage Tui Levuka'. 'Tui Levuka was in Bau and by and bye he *might* return to Ovalau or perhaps stay at Bau.' Cakobau would not allow a letter of Lambert's reminding him of his undertaking to be read; he declared it 'a lying letter and at once poured forth such a torrent of abuse against the Commodore and myself that I was compelled to withdraw at once from his house'.

In the end Thurston had extracted a promise that Tui Levuka should leave Bau after two days and himself had sailed the same afternoon. As he had secured a public apology three months before when Cakobau was insulted in Levuka by a British resident, so he was determined that he himself would now have satisfaction for Cakobau's 'insulting bearing towards me in my representative capacity . . .'. If the nickname Thurston acquired, *Na Kena Vai*, was meant in its probable sense of 'Bayonet', it may well have been ruefully thrown out by Cakobau at his chiefs as Thurston's back vanished through the low doorway after such a confrontation as this. Cakobau had a quick, dry humour and a ready turn of phrase. Not for another two years was he 'my old friend', and then only when Thurston was no longer responsible for securing from the Vunivalu of Bau 'that attention to the interests of British subjects . . . which their position and his obligations demand'.[25]

For his part, Cakobau resented the $500 bond which Thurston now forced him to give as pledge for future conduct; he held it against Thurston even when their relations had changed; he brought it up, all confused with his other grievance over the Bureta land, when the latter's title was under investigation nine years later. And Thurston, for his, used his own earlier insistence that the affair was one for British intervention as a shield for Cakobau when settlers tried to fasten responsibility for their losses upon him.[26]

[25] Thurston to Lyons, August 1868, F4/1; Lambert to Admiralty, 9 October 1868, Adm. 1/6054.

[26] LCC P74; Minute by Thurston, 13 March 1874, FCSO: Papers relating to German Land Claims.

With the warship to carry him Thurston went now to western Viti Levu to exact a fine in land, after Jones's example, as punishment for depredations on a European's property, and then north-east to Bua. There, in support of the Bua government, he witnessed the hanging of a Fijian for a trader's murder. Poorly as he thought of Wilkinson's financial fecklessness, Thurston sympathised with the attempts of him and Tui Bua to establish a centralised, territorially-based 'kingdom'. He had supported it against Bau earlier in the year, when Bauan emissaries were busily encouraging the chiefs of Vuya and Solevu to resist the claims to pre-eminence of the junior kinsman, Tui Bua, 'Bau used to say to Vuya & *Solevu* why do you listen to *Tui Bua* he is only a foreigner a Tongan', Tui Bua later recalled.[27]

Thurston had tried to arrange a meeting between Tui Bua and Cakobau. He had written encouragingly to the former, with less concern for the legitimacy of his ambitions than for the stability which their accomplishment might bring to the western end of Vanua Levu.

> My advice is Go on—and try to introduce law and order into your country in spite of all difficulties. Fiji will not be very long in its present state—do not be cast down by clouds. You will succeed at last. Among White Nations men have tried like you and have never remitted their exertions, but often dying at their posts, have left their sons to finish what they began I know it is very difficult for you and I am very sorry I cannot give you immediate help instead of words. I believe however that Bau will soon find enough to do in her own lands.[28]

Now he encountered what he agreed with Tui Bua and Wilkinson in considering an affront to the Bua government's sovereignty from a different source: a protest against the hanging from the resident Wesleyan missionary, the Reverend S. W. Brooks. Brooks wrote that it was 'an act which has brought a deep stain on the Bua Govt. and is one which probably finds no parallel in Modern History'.[29] The missionary's objection was apparently that the man had not received the consolations of religion from himself, although a teacher had been with him from the moment he was sentenced and Brooks had been invited to attend the trial of an accomplice.

[27] LCC R586.
[28] Thurston to 'King George of Bua', 7 January 1868, F4/2.
[29] Quoted Thurston to Wilkinson, 31 August 1868, F4/1.

In reply, the missionary had inquired whether he was asked 'as a private person or officially'.

'Mr Brooks', concluded Thurston, 'evidently mistakes his position in Fiji'.[30] Brooks had already made himself objectionable to the Bua government on other grounds, as refusing to pay poll-tax and advising Fijians to do the same. To Thurston he was particularly deplorable as one of the witnesses to the Polynesia Company's charter. Thurston did not spare Brooks now;[31] and when Brooks attempted a defence characteristic of his profession by redefining what he had said, he was told (in a manner no less characteristic of the acting-consul) that Thurston concluded 'the mis-apprehension arose by your employing a word the value of which is antithetical to the idea you wished to convey'.[32]

This affair brought Thurston into reintensified odium with Brooks's fellow missionaries, although they knew Brooks's capacity for writing sarcastic, overblown letters. Later they had cause for mortification in the adultery Brooks committed on Taveuni after his removal there. They were in difficulties now. Tui Bua wanted Brooks out of the chiefdom, and they feared scandal. Their instinct was to prevaricate and counter-attack. For Carey, writing to Brooks himself, 'helpless Tui Bua' was to be regarded 'simply as a tool in the hands of men who have not the interests of Mission work at heart, and therefore deserving our pity'.[33] The acting-consul was one of those tools[34]—probably the chief one in the missionaries' eyes. They had not forgiven him his dwelling on their chairman's involvement with the Polynesia Company. Frederick Langham, the new chairman, bestirred himself to get Brooks's letters and Tui Bua's complaints out of the consular archives, to erase the record.[35]

The brethren, each isolated on his station, drawing essential strength from professional bonds with colleagues whom he did not necessarily like as men, habitually closed ranks against critical outsiders. Fison remarked: 'Taken severally we are decent fellows enough. It is only when lumped together as "The Missionaries"

[30] Ibid.
[31] Thurston to Brooks, 1 September 1868, F4/1.
[32] Thurston to Brooks, 26 November 1868, F4/1.
[33] Carey to Brooks, 26 April 1869, Letterbook of Rev. J. Carey, ML B440. See also Rabone's correspondence in MOM 35.
[34] Carey to White, 27 April 1868, ML B440.
[35] Langham's note with Langham to Rabone, 6 August 1869, MOM 103.

that we become the abomination of desolation.'[36] He was complaining about a form of criticism which had its springs in their own cliquishness.

They were still closing ranks around Moore, whose replacement as chairman by Langham had surprised them.[37] Langham himself had taken notes of the inquiry into Moore's conduct aboard the *Challenger*, with the concern for the written record that Thurston came to know well in him. He had conducted Moore's defence, with a degree of casuistry which was also characteristic and an asserted belief in Cakobau's ability both to cede 200,000 acres in Viti Levu and protect settlers on them which late events in Colo hardly justified.[38]

Even now, and in face of concern in Sydney that they should act, the Fiji brethren would still not deal with Moore's land-buying at their District Meeting. Carey for one felt that they would be justly disgraced if they did not notice it. 'And do you think I shall attempt to deny that we have at the head of this District a "land-buying and trading" Chairman?', he wrote to a colleague with an unwelcome accession of candour. 'No! I will honestly confess it.'[39] As a body they were readier to fall in with Moore against Thurston; they were more eager to concur in the justice of the comfort that their Secretary in Sydney gave Moore himself and probably passed on to his powerfully-placed correspondents in England. 'As to the "Charter"', he told Moore in December 1868, 'I quite believe that all you have done in the matter you did from the purest motives & with the single aim to help the chief in his troubles the mischief seems to be that you acted apart from the Consul, and as he now makes it appear in opposition to his views, and of course the Commodore could not do other than stand by the Official of Govt, even though you & others should go to the wall.'[40] The missionaries' intention was that Thurston should go there.

With the arrival of those '*good, moral, moneyed* men' for whom a secular prayer had been uttered, Thurston found that settlers with a little capital and the expectation of making the fortunes that would allow them to retire comfortably to less steamy, socially

[36] Fison to *Daily Telegraph*, 29 April 1872, Press Copy Book of the Rev. L. Fison, ML.
[37] Carey to White, 27 April 1869, ML B440.
[38] Notes with Langham to Moore, 8 September 1868, MOM 103.
[39] Carey to Nettleton, 15 September 1868, ML B440.
[40] Rabone to Moore, 10 December 1868, MOM 35.

more varied climes—settlers, moreover, secure in their own respectability—were actually less amenable to consular influence than the bobtail seamen and small cotton-growers of the past had been. This became especially clear to him in connection with the importation of those labourers from other island groups without whom large-scale cotton planting could not be carried on.

He was defending this trade to Commodore Lambert in September 1868, and the more vigorously because members of the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission, publicising occasions when as they asserted islanders had been taken against their will, had cast reflections on the Fiji consulate for its countenancing the traffic. When Jones first began issuing sailing licences, Thurston pointed out, he had asked the Presbyterians to keep him informed. Having failed to do so, they were now regaling public meetings in Sydney with 'the statement of some jocose or mendacious ship master that his schooner flew the British or American flag as occasion required and further she was from Fiji and was the Consul's yacht'.[41] At such a meeting the consul in Fiji had been described as a 'tool' of kidnappers. The acting-consul resented it.

To the best of his knowledge, he told the Foreign Office in December, no labourers had been introduced since the end of 1865 without passing before himself—'and in no case did the result of my examination warrant a supposition the people had been enticed away or embarked with violence'. The consul saw to it that the engagements which employers entered into before him as to food, pay, clothing and general treatment were observed. If labourers were aggrieved, he remarked drily, 'they troop off in a body to lay a complaint at this Consulate, or return direct to their own island not hesitating to use any boat or small vessel they can obtain possession of'.[42]

Behind the acting-consul, the planter in him had appealed to Lambert: 'A body of natives arriving in Fiji and engaged by a respectable planter are clothed housed and fed well, and taught habits of cleanliness. If, as many of them are, the planter is a married man the natives observing and imitating the manners and customs of civilised life rapidly improve and outwardly appear as civilised as the Fijians.'[43] But by early 1869 he knew that consular inspection of new arrivals was no safeguard at all.

[41] Thurston to Lambert, 4 September 1868, F4/1.
[42] Thurston to F.O., 1 December 1868, F4/1.
[43] Thurston to Lambert, 4 September 1868, F4/1.

One of the recruiting captains whom he had licensed and whose recruits he had passed was Ross Hovell, master now of the Sydney barque *Young Australian*. She was back in Levuka in November 1868, landed her recruits before Thurston, discharged three foremast hands and sailed for Sydney where news of shootings aboard her was soon made known through the New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission's channels. Kidnapped 'recruits', running wild, had been killed in the hold. In January, independently of this, Thurston heard similar reports in Fiji, interrogated some of the recruits and the Rotuman boats' crew, and sent off to Sydney first their depositions and later nine of the witnesses themselves.[44] Hovell was sentenced to penal servitude for life, then freed on the legal quibble that a Rotuman witness could not fully understand the nature of his oath. Thurston found the case a revelation of the inadequacy of consular inspection on arrival.

And even as he set about interrogating the *Young Australian*'s people in January 1869, he knew that shippers in Levuka were intent on evading this minimal supervision. A schooner had lately landed labourers from the Gilbert Islands direct on Makogai where he knew that Fred Hennings's manager was a hard man with the workforce, quick and heavy handed with a stick to the point of manslaughter.[45] Now he heard it said that these 'recruits' had merely boarded her at Nikunau for a night in the way of islanders accustomed to doing business with trading-vessels. 'This story (knowing the confiding nature of these people) appeared to me not improbable', he told the Commodore.

He was wholly against even honest recruitment of Gilbertese as plantation labourers, for he doubted that they could comprehend the nature of the work. 'They are far less likely to leave their Islands for the purpose of working with Europeans than the New Hebrideans who for years past have migrated from Island to Island with the Sandalwood traders.' The whole labour traffic, he now felt, should be either suppressed or put under effective control.[46] He favoured suppression, for ships were now taking refuge—much as the 'jocose shipmaster' had told the missionaries—under a foreign flag.

In March 1869 Thurston withdrew his six months' old state-

[44] Thurston to Nettleton, 12 January 1869, and to Lambert, 17 January 1869, F4/1.
[45] Thurston to F. & W. Hennings, 1 May 1869, F4/1.
[46] Thurston to Lambert, 12 January 1869, F4/1.

ment claiming ability to control the importation of labourers. 'The influx of population, capital and the firm determination of the settlers to procure labour from other Islands, at any hazard—even in effect dissimulating the national character of their ships has placed this system quite beyond my powers of surveillance or control.' For some time he had been suspicious when local British residents put their ships under the American flag. Now he was given proof of collusion. Marshall Moore, son of the missionary and once a manager of the Polynesia Company but now planting on his father's land, purchased the schooner *Mary Ann Christina*; then he purported to sell her to Achilles Underwood who was in Moore's debt for large sums invested in the ruined Burt-Underwood plantation.

The economics of the schooner transaction seemed implausible enough to Thurston: 'no sane man would buy a ship for £750 cash and sell her immediately to a pauper for the same amount, accepting a Bill in payment . . .'. But Brower was satisfied and was not visibly concerned at the prospect of his fellow citizen's being involved with recruiting labourers, though Underwood's floggings were notorious and the manner of his death—at the hands of labourers on his partner Burt's Kadavu plantation, within twelve months—might reasonably have been foretold. 'Men with a little money are arriving so rapidly', wrote Thurston, 'that no difficulty is likely to be found in procuring unscrupulous persons to obtain natives at any risk—if well paid for it . . .'.[47]

There was a trap set at Levuka for vessels like the *Mary Ann Christina* next month: H.M.S. *Rosario*, sent down by Commodore Lambert for whom, as for his officers, the labour traffic had overtones of the African slave trade against which their service had been so long employed. The trap was sprung by the schooner *Daphne*. Owned by a group of Victorians who were opening plantations on Tana and attempting to finance them by running labourers to the most profitable market, she had a licence to recruit fifty New Hebrideans for Queensland; and she anchored at Levuka, miles to windward, with a hundred Banks Islanders crowded into her sixty foot length, with no interpreter, a falsified logbook, and the name of a notorious kidnapper on her articles as recruiter.[48] She was arrested as a slaver by the *Rosario* but evaded

[47] Thurston to Lambert, 23 March 1869, F4/1.
[48] Thurston to Lambert, 26 April 1869, F4/1; to F.O., 23 August 1869, F4/1.



5 *Kai Colo*, mountaineers, photographed by Thurston



6 Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, photographed by Thurston



7 Ratu Tevita Tavanavanua, photographed by Thurston



8 'View of one end of the church at Bau. It will accommodate about 800 persons. The distant land is the mainland of Viti Levu and the largest of the group. Beyond the church are seen some native houses overshadowed by bread-fruit trees.'



9 A plantation at Lomaloma

sentence in the New South Wales courts on the argument that the slave-trade statutes did not apply when men were under formal agreement stipulating payment and a defined term of service. And the *Mary Ann Christina* escaped to land her first consignment of Gilbertese at Vuna in May, safe from Thurston's questioning; her owners tried then to get his formal sanction to the labourers' engagement, and failed.[49]

For Thurston, the *Rosario*'s visit meant talk with her captain such as he had enjoyed two years before with Hope but not, apparently, with the less genial Lambert. It was a chance to walk over his flourishing plantation with a man of consequence, to exhibit his trader's Gilbertese and to sit with cigars on the consulate verandah 'relating all his difficulties in keeping all the rowdies in order'. He had 'about as difficult a billet as any gentleman in the diplomatic line, or indeed any other', so it seemed to Commander Palmer, with whom he corresponded for a while after the *Rosario* had left. 'Great rascality is going on in the Kingsmill Islands, and *must be stopped*', he wrote in May, pausing for correspondence after getting the ketch *Barb* away to the New Hebrides with forty-two of F. & W. Hennings' labourers paid off before him and satisfied. Probably his correspondence with Palmer ended when it had become clear that Thurston would not succeed in raising evidence to convict the *Daphne*.[50] He was dealt with fairly and favourably in *Kidnapping in the South Seas*, which Palmer published in 1871; and the picture given of him there as an honest man amongst rogues was some comfort to one who, when the book reached him, had long lost the office which it portrayed him in.

The 'rogues', for their part, had cause for complaint; for though, as the planters Fred Hennings, Scott, Rupert Ryder and others, they had doubtless truly hungered after the windfall of labourers in the *Daphne* and would willingly have paid her supercargo his price for them, it was the acting-consul's plantation and those of his neighbours Scott himself and Boyd which actually received them, without payment of passage-money at all.

Thurston sent the *Daphne*'s recruits to Bureta, Viro and Waidou, to earn their keep by plantation work for pay until the Foreign Office should direct how they should be returned home.

[49] Thurston to Moore and Smith, 28 May 1869, F4/1.
[50] Captain George Palmer, *Kidnapping in the South Seas* . . . (Edinburgh, 1871) 81-103, 143-4; Thurston to F. & W. Hennings, 5 May 1869, F4/1.

He returned his own thirty-five men in September 1871, under instructions from the Foreign Office; and the rest followed next year.[51] His conscience was clear for it was probably true that, as he said, Bureta had never wanted for labourers. And from the moment of their arrival he had tried in vain to get the New South Wales government to pay for the *Daphne* men's return. They were an undoubted source of profit to him; and when they were returned he was promised that others should come to work in their place.[52]

[51] Thurston to Henry Thurston, 26 April 1869, F4/1; March to F.O., 20 September 1871, FO58/129, 14 June 1872, encl. F.O. to C.O., 31 March 1873, CO83/3.

[52] Thurston to Belmore, 26 August 1869, F4/1; Belmore to Thurston, 26 October 1869, F4/8; Thurston to Boyd, 2 June 1872, Place Papers.

6

'We are aliens domiciled in the country'

On 19 May 1869 Thurston applied to be confirmed as consul. He knew that Jones had been consul-general for Persia since about June 1868 and did not think the Levuka post had been filled. He felt that he merited it, from his record. If he had known that his former travelling-companion Calvert had just laid it down that the Fiji consulate needed a man 'who can be contented and happy anywhere, and who knows more than anyone else there—and who can manage well all the affairs brought for his decision',[1] he might have thought that he came closer to that impossibility than most men.

He had equipped himself by reading. He was not to be thrown by any point of law or procedure relating to the running off with ships, say, or the dismissal of seamen without their wages, the dishonouring of promissory notes, or the handling of deceased estates. He had mediated in many trade disputes, settled others over land. He knew both the limitations on his authority and the value of the official record: when the brothers Hennings, having no consul of their own, came to him with the record of an agreement by which Tui Nayau agreed to pay them a fine in oil for his breach of contract over a ship, Thurston registered it and then entered his objection to its 'letter and spirit'.[2]

He enjoyed life in Fiji. He loved sun, reef, and tropical vegetation; he could put up with blinding rain and humidity; he had books and Marie with which to combat the *ennui* that drove many Europeans to the bottle. Indeed he found much more of charm than of boredom in the country, with its 'rounded ridge', its 'deep timber-clad gorge', its ravines marking mountain streams. He had

[1] Calvert to Erskine, 5 March 1869 (private, not sent), MMS.
[2] F4/Temp. 1, Vol. II, No. 553.

a sense of involvement with its future, which he thought must see rapid changes. And he feared what that future might hold: 'adventurous whites ambitious, warlike Tongans, and savage desperate Fijians are preparing to put, sooner or later their interests, passions, and rights to the issue of war'.[3]

He drew pleasure from his contacts with Fijians. He liked being in a position where men of authority must needs hear what he said. If his relations with Cakobau were still uneasy, his friendship with Tui Cakau had warmed and grown, though its development cannot be documented nor its quality fully assessed. To his fellow Europeans Thurston spoke in terms of the 'influence' he had with Ratu Golea. 'I have always been on very good terms with Tui Cakau. I have considerable influence with him as with other chiefs in Fiji.'[4] Unlike many whites who prided themselves that their advice was thought valuable by Fijians of rank, Thurston did not deceive himself. And he admired this curiously vulnerable Fijian, who was so attractive even to members of his own race. The fact of Thurston's pinning into his Bible a letter he received from Ratu Golea through the latter's European 'secretary' in May 1867 is more significant than are the terms of the note:

> i send you this to let you know that I am all redy i am goyng to loma-loma to see Mafu to let him know that I am going to bua also about my Canoe if you are in a hurry send me a letter by the first chance I also send my kind love to you no more at present.

Thurston was a serious student of ethnology. He read the *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* of Lewis Morgan, anthropological master to Lorimer Fison. He could refer then to 'the highly elaborate Fijian system of relationships' with its direct resemblance to that of some American Indians on the one hand, and on the other, that 'of the people of South India, speaking the Dravidian language'.[5] He was an acute observer too, though in some instances his stance was at one with that of the chiefs amongst whom he moved. When he noted that the *Kai* Bureta were *qali lewe ni kuro* to the Bau chiefs, he knew it because he had sat beside the latter as the food was prepared for

[3] Thurston to F.O., 2 February 1869, F4 1.
[4] LCC R126.
[5] 'Memorandum . . . upon the Ownership of Land in Fiji by J. B. Thurston', *GBPP*, 1875, LII.

them by their menial servants from around his own plantation. It was due to his sense of his own personal status that he should sit with the chiefs, issue commands to others. The romantic in him always responded to the aura that surrounded the greatest of the chiefs, thin though romanticism was to grow at the last. He was to give Tui Cakau a ring, as pledge of confidence until death; and he perhaps found a certain melancholy satisfaction in the words with which it was eventually returned to him: 'Sa mate ko Ra Turaga'—'*Ra Turaga* is dead'.[6]

He talked with *matanivanua*, as well as read the mission histories; and he would have learned from their lips the chiefly view of things. Observation may have shown him the other side—that men of no account often brought goods for sale to Europeans secretly, for instance, so that they might keep the proceeds from chiefs who were likely otherwise to assume possession. He may have noted too the care of the chiefs to do precisely this, for fear that their people would otherwise get out of hand.

Conservative that he was, he sympathised with the chiefs. He feared that without them 'the rapidity of future changes—if not moderated—may demolish the very basis of Fijian civic, or social, polity . . .'. Without their 'controlling power' the 'common people . . . will indulge largely in the "luxury of idleness" and become useless, perhaps, troublesome'. Yet his view of the relationship between chiefs and people was realistic. *Lala*, the service-obligation, was he thought equivalent to rent; but it became *vakasaurara* tyranny, if exacted beyond certain limits; and then it 'produces upon Fijians the same results as tyranny does among other people, —conspiracy and rebellion, with secret murder or open war'.[7] He believed in the essential reciprocity of obligation between chiefs and people. But he was certain that power lay with the chief—who, even if he was clubbed, fell by no commoner's hand but by that of a member of his own caste. No chief had looked to his people for 'support' in the way Swanston, for instance, once supposed: 'but on the contrary he made himself dreaded—and he lived and ruled just so long as his people feared him and no longer, for some one whom they feared more then took his place'. The Fijian chief 'of a few years ago manifested his power as a ruler' by launching his great canoe and setting up his house-posts 'on the

[6] Thurston to Gordon, 27 April 1879, *Fiji*, III, 560.
[7] 'Memorandum . . . upon the Ownership of Land . . .'.

bodies of men—his own men, not enemies—clubbed for the occasion'. 'His wealth as a man resulted from the exercise of his authority as a monster.'[8]

Thurston was drawing on his observations since 1865 when he wrote these comments, hastily and without time to consider deeply, in the 1870s.

Now in May 1869 he urged on the Foreign Office, as grounds for confirmation in the consul's job, his tenure of it in 'a most trying and difficult period, during which I have succeeded in maintaining order among a large body of British subjects in an anomalous position and of a class not easily kept under control'. He argued his knowledge of the country, his 'acquaintance with the tribes and Chiefs with their present and antecedent relations'. And he stressed the claim that, though he understood the Foreign Office did not require acting-consuls to give up private business, he had actually 'little private interest in Fiji, having since my connection with this Consulate kept myself sedulously aloof from any mercantile or trading transactions'.[9]

Apparently he felt able to draw a distinction between running a trading business and owning a plantation, 'the smallest perhaps in all Fiji' as he described Bureta to the Governor of New South Wales three months later,[10] which yielded thirteen bales worth £25 apiece in that year's final picking.[11] It was true that his possession of Bureta had been in no way the obstacle to even-handed consular justice that an earlier acting-consul's trading interests seemed to have been. And he may have known through Hope that the Admiralty was pressing on the Foreign Office an unreasonable prejudice against him on this score, amongst others. He was 'probably a trader', the First Lord, H. C. E. Childers, had remarked privately to Lord Clarendon in February 1869.[12]

Thurston was being depreciated by his old companion Calvert, in the interests of the Wesleyan Mission. A chain of communication which ran from Fiji mission stations through Rabone in Sydney and on, via Calvert's present field of service in Kent, to men of influence in the Commons and the Aborigines Protection Society was being used against him. In his distaste for the

[8] Minute by Thurston, 22 March 1876, FCSO 76/1699.
[9] Thurston to F.O., 19 May 1869, FO58/115.
[10] Thurston to Belmore, 26 August 1869, F4/1.
[11] Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, Letter-Journals.
[12] Childers to Clarendon, 15 February 1869 (private), FO58/116.

Reverend Mr Moore's anomalous pursuits he had not shown the concern to hush up scandal in the Mission that the saints, as he called the Wesleyans, thought their due. 'Things are in a very awkward state in Fiji', Calvert reminded the Fiji Mission's main English correspondent, the Reverend W. B. Boyce, in March 1869, 'and Moore and Thurston are at loggerheads—and the latter does us no good. Besides, he has been long enough as Acting Consul. He is brother in law to Zolner of Sydney—and so far as I could learn, has always been at loose ends—and the place is too big for him.'[13] He was after all merely 'a person who went to the South Seas, as photographer in a trading vessel, and was wrecked, and . . . has probably done as well as could be expected'.

Calvert had already discussed the Fiji appointment with Boyce; and Boyce had advised him to see Boyce's connection by marriage 'Mr Alderman' McArthur—as the Member of Parliament for Lambeth, city and colonial merchant, pillar of Wesleyanism and future knight and Lord Mayor liked to be called. 'But he said he was not much in with those in authority', reported Calvert, 'yet he would have an eye to the appointment'. Calvert had then tried another channel. 'Thinking it might be done without any one knowing anything about it but the parties immediately concerned', he had approached Admiral J. E. Erskine, M.P., Senior Officer on the Australian Station and visitor to Fiji in the late forties (when he 'took a great deal of pains to serve us') with a view to getting Thurston removed.

Already Calvert had fed Erskine in conversation with a version of Thurston's doings: the binding over of Cakobau by a sum of money placed in the consulate, the hanging at Bua, the flogging of a Fijian aboard the *Charybdis* in part-punishment for theft from a settler on the Wainunu.[14] He did not bring up the events that worried Thurston himself, whereby a fine of land granted in favour of this settler had come into Thurston's own hands by purchase from the European. He had acted in the latter's interests when he needed money, as Thurston reminded the settler, a little uneasily. If his enemies had thought dishonesty could be alleged, they would not have omitted to do so.[15] On Calvert's recital,

[13] Calvert to Boyce, 4 March 1869, MMS. Boyce was the father-in-law of William McArthur's brother, Alexander.

[14] Ibid., and Calvert to Erskine, 5 March 1869 (not sent), MMS.

[15] Thurston to Laing, 29 December 1868, F4/1; Thurston to Blyth, 19 July 1877, Department of Lands Records, 77/98, NAF; evidence on Land Claims in Fiji (print), R251.

Erskine had gone to Childers with a threat to raise questions in Parliament.

Now Calvert proposed to damn Thurston further in a letter to Erskine with a recital of Cakobau's failure in Colo, the Polynesia Company, the *Challenger* expedition, and a version of the Bua execution. Calvert had no desire to accuse or justify anybody, he said, but merely stated facts. He stated the facts about the Polynesia Company so flatly as almost to imply that Thurston was responsible for it.[16] And he found no necessity to mention Moore, though he had been bombarding the Sydney elders with details of Moore's involvement and calls to action against him for months.[17] His diplomacy may have seemed beyond the permissibly disingenuous even to Boyce, for Boyce kept the letter. In June another, milder one from Calvert was communicated to the Foreign Office through Erskine.[18] And the earlier approach through Childers would have ruined Thurston, had his superiors been interested in keeping him.

He probably never knew Calvert's part in all this. The former missionary remained 'my old friend' in his letters to Hope and, seventeen years later, readily accepted his eager hospitality at Government House.[19] But the method employed was one that Thurston became familiar with and set himself to counteract by getting his name known in London. In later years even the then Sir William McArthur, whom he had come in the interim to regard as a gullible tool and almost professional funnel for misinformation, was to be 'my old friend'.

He was not harmed now. He had no interest at the Foreign Office. He was seen there as a man who had filled an inconvenient gap vigorously, ably,[20] as a windfall in an intermission that would otherwise have been embarrassing, but as having no claim on official charity. He could be defended against Childers the more unconcernedly in that the office he solicited had already been disposed of in the normal way of patronage.[21] The consulate was offered first in December 1868 to Leopold March, an old soldier who had been vice-consul at San Sebastian and Santander since

[16] Calvert to Erskine, 5 March 1869, MMS.
[17] Rabone to Calvert, 31 July, 4 December 1868, MOM35.
[18] Calvert to Erskine, 25 May 1869 (copy), FO58/116.
[19] Calvert, Journal 'To Fiji, Tonga and back', 19 July 1886, MMS.
[20] Minute of February 1870, FO58/115.
[21] F.O. to Admiralty, 17 February 1869, FO58/116.

1852; then, sixteen days later and clearly at the candidate's request, to March's son, vice-consul at Missolonghi,[22] who left for Sydney in July 1869.

This loss of a post 'for which', as Thurston remarked, 'I have tried to qualify myself'[23] was a blow which did not strike him in full force until, with others in Fiji, he had taken the measure of the man who superseded him. On 30 September he wrote that he had heard of March's appointment and offered 'to remain at the Office until my assistance is no longer required'; at the same time he urged his claim to full salary from 1 July 1868 when the substantive post had become vacant—and next year the Foreign Office duly paid him another £250 as gratuity, being moved more by the reflection that there would still be a saving of £600 than by the arguments he advanced: the change of emphasis since July 1867, with his consequent 'entire surrender of all private considerations' and a vast increase in the cost of living and of land. As he later wrote in a report for which his successor took the credit, the Criterion Hotel had sold for £2,500, one-third cash and the rest in bills, though it was merely 'a long low weather board built house with detached billiard room and having a frontage of 265 feet and depth of 132 feet'.[24]

Five days before applying for his gratuity Thurston had made permanent arrangements to live in this place of expense by purchasing land for a cottage, high up on a hill at Kalaba—though he disliked panoramic views and probably took greater pleasure in the fast-flowing creek nearby.[25] Nevertheless, he looked out from his home to the reef and the loom of distant islands, across crowded shipping and the Levuka beach which he photographed for Hope. Levuka boasted five hotels and a boarding-house in 1869, eleven stores and three steam-driven cotton-gins; in a couple more years it had a jetty or two and began as he said then 'to wear very much the manner and appearance of an outer coast settlement in some British colony'.[26]

[22] F.O. 58/113, 3 and 19 December 1868.
[23] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals.
[24] Thurston to F.O., 30 September 1869, FO58/115; F.O. minutes, ibid.; March to F.O., 17 December 1869, FO58/126; Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, Letter-Journals.
[25] LCC R111.
[26] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals.

Already it had a newspaper, a more viable production than the one that had become defunct after thirteen numbers in 1868. The *Fiji Times* published its first weekly issue on 4 September 1869, became a bi-weekly from 21 December 1870, and from practically the date of its inception almost until the end of his own life put before Thurston facts whose accuracy he contested and opinions which he felt bound to controvert.

He had an initial antipathy to the paper from his knowledge that the jobbing printer G. L. Griffiths, its proprietor, had been set up in business by 'that wolf in sheeps clothing' Moore who, as he told Hope, was presently trying to show that Cakobau should be held responsible and made to pay for the destruction of the Burt and Underwood plantation, situated on the Sigatoka far beyond even the most sanguine limits of the Bau Kingdom.

> You will enquire, why?—Because Moore through the son advanced money, trade, horses and implements . . . to Burt. Burt is ruined—if Thakobau is made to pay Burt, or suffer more land confiscation, Burt *may* pay Moore. The beauty and simplicity of the reasoning is only equalled by its righteousness.
>
> . . . One might write a book entitled 'Thakobau the Great of Fiji. How he benefitted by Civilisation and Wesleyan Missionaries'.[27]

In the *Fiji Times*'s opening issue Thurston could read his successor's official instructions and observe that, not only was the consul still not given magisterial powers, but also the Foreign Office's view of the situation in Fiji was a year out of date even in March 1869 when they were signed. From pure perversity, it seemed determined to keep even farther behind events than slow communications could warrant. 'I wonder how long our Govt. is going to let things run on in the present abnormal manner', he complained to Hope in December. 'Population is rapidly increasing —land sales are daily effected, and capital is augmenting every month. In fact an unrecognised settlement of the country by British subjects is no longer a matter of doubt—but a fact.'[28]

He found the *Fiji Times*'s first editorial singing a hymn of confidence in European enterprise and King Cotton:

> From the North Coast of Vanua Levu there are reports of large blocks of land being bought by speculators, and we hope the natives of Macuata will find healthy employment in planting and picking

[27] Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, ibid.
[28] Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, ibid.

> cotton for industrious and enterprising settlers instead of catching dysentery through exposure and cold, in diving for beache de mer. The Drekete is a noble river, and will be still nobler when it glides over its pebbly bed through plantations white over with cotton. When, instead of the jungle, the forest, and the prarie, there is the puffing engine merrily driving the gin, and the punt floating down the stream, loaded with well-pressed bales, that are to be borne by favoring breezes to the mills of Lancashire.[29]

For him this enthusiasm was depressing. He had little real power to refuse registry of title-deeds brought him by these speculators. Yet the Dreketi purchases were the most dubious so far made in Fiji.[30] Warfare was endemic along the Dreketi valley. The chief at the seaward end, Turaga Levu, gladly sold blocks stretching for miles inland to get munitions against the mountaineer neighbours whom he thus purported to dispossess. Up the coast at Naduri (Katonivere's town) dwelt Ratu Mudu, son of a Dreketi chief by a Macuata *marama*, whose mark could often be had for a price on transfers of land from his father's people.[31]

As a result Dreketi was the haunt of land-jobbers whom Thurston urged to get at least the consent of Ritova as titular Tui Macuata[32]—and who then went on to his own whist-playing acquaintance and later partner in the Wainunu block, the conveyancer and legal factotum G. R. B. Towson, to get blank copies of deeds which they filled in on the decks of their cutters or at coastal villages. The boundaries were often laid down by very rough compass bearings. The land enclosed invariably purported to run into many square miles. And though the speculators sold off blocks to men intending to settle, they probably also had in mind the nest-egg that would accrue in the sunny days when Fiji should be the possession of a colonial power.

Meanwhile the land-jobbers deferred to those chiefs who had acquired a need or taste for guns, bolts of cloth and liquor; set up overlapping claims; and quarrelled gently with each other. 'I told him if he attempted to build a house I wd set it afloat down the river & himself astride the ridge-pole', Theodore Hoyt recalled after Captain Hedström's intrusion on Dreketi land which Hoyt had acquired on his way back from another buying spree up the

[29] *Fiji Times*, 4 September 1869.
[30] LCC R1155.
[31] LCC R829.
[32] LCC R801.

coast.[33] Some of the casualness of it all, on both purchasers' and vendors' side, is conveyed by a letter from G. M. Henry to Hoyt in November 1869:

> You had better go as quick as possible about that land of yours in Macuata as Mr. Oneill and Mr. Fraser are doing their best to buy it from Ratu Mudu and Mafileo who have also made an offer of it to me.
>
> And if you have any wish that I shall make it right for you; I can buy it over again from them, as it can not be done without, as Ritova has given his leave that they shall buy it, and that he will sign his name sanctioning it. Mafileo is now waiting untill he sees me before he sells it to them. I have sent for trade that is wanted by them which I shall pay for other land if you do not come quickly: the land you have bought is well worth buying over again so do not sacrifice it. You do not know what it is. I have bought next to you commencing at Qaqaravu Point and running up the river Qava, and the Labasa 9 miles.
>
> Please give my respects to Jane . . .[34]

Next year Henry bought land on the Labasa that his correspondent had just sold to Marshall Moore, having discovered that Ritova repudiated the sale to Hoyt. He had done no more than accept goods in return for the right to erect a store and to trade over a certain area, said Ritova, and anyway the land was under the *lewa* of Katonivere. 'Went down', recalled Henry, 'and purchased the land with my own trade.'[35]

Soon Henry had a neighbour on the disputed land, Moore's overseer who 'sent to Mr Henry to borrow a little Tea and Sugar' but found Henry 'could not, or would not spare it, for fear he might have to borrow himself'. The overseer's tribulations were recorded for Moore's information—and posterity's: his isolation, his labour problems, the stealing of a knife by a man from the neighbouring village, a prohibition placed by Ritova on the sale of pigs and large yams, another chief's edict that none of his men should work for a particular settler, the heavy-handedness of some other planter towards labourers ('I believe in *taskwork*—but not in the Egyptian style') and the irritation caused to the overseer by Fijians who wanted to trade whilst he was at lunch, insisted on turning out his boxes, had actually brought nothing to barter and yet could not be turned away without offence. 'I am thankful to

[33] Ibid.
[34] Henry to Hoyt, 11 November 1869, F1/Temp. 16.
[35] LCC R1171.

say everything is quiet here, but it is not so along the coast, I have heard of several petty robberies, and not long since Mr. Broomfield was turkey trampled in his own house. So I shall be glad if you will get me either a Revolver or a Dbl barrel Gun.'[36]

The insouciance of the speculators was imitated by men of more serious means who came to risk both their money and their persons by working the land themselves. Such a one was the former Ceylon planter, latterly manager for the Polynesia Company at Suva, Joseph Glenny, a man Thurston came to detest for his racism, whose boundaries might have been interpreted to give him 40,000 or even 400,000 acres, though modestly he only claimed 4,000. Glenny acquired his land for muskets, powder, cloth and pistols paid to Turaga Levu, who was still involved in the Nasara-waqa war which broke out in 1869 and as a result of which the bulk of the Dreketi sales were made. Glenny bought land from which Turaga Levu had lately driven his enemies, the *Kai* Seaqaqa; they attempted to burn out one of Glenny's subpurchasers.[37]

Thurston saw no insuperable objection at this time to the purchase of land with firearms, though less than twenty years later he prohibited their sale throughout the Western Pacific with the object of preventing land-purchase. He bought land himself with arms now, regarded a dozen or so trade-muskets as necessary parts of a planter's equipment; but he had no patience with men whose recklessness in their choice of plantation-sites threatened to disturb the islands' peace. If he had any doubts about the dangers inherent in land-dealings, they were removed finally next year when the Muir brothers at Nadi were burnt out on land which he had awarded to their predecessors in August 1868 as a fine, from the *Charybdis*.[38]

There was a proper way to go about acquiring an original title to land, a procedure to go through if the *itaukei* were to recognise the fact of alienation. It depended on communication through the proper channels. As a minor chief of Rewa later said about an island sold by Roko Tui Dreketi:

> The custom was formerly if the chief sold the land without asking us we would refuse to build a house for the white man, and if the chief asked us why, we should say because he had not consulted us . . .

[36] Portion of a diary belonging to N. Turner, NAF MS. 6; Turner to Moore, 19 June 1871, ibid.
[37] LCC R788, P166. [38] LCC R1107-9.

> Had the chief of Rewa sent and determined to build a house I should have remonstrated in a respectful manner, relying upon his paying regard to my remonstrance. If the chief had ordered us to build a house, we should have asked where sir, at Wai ni Kalai; if he said yes, we should have said who was the white man, and where was the payment, and on his saying there was none, where is the payment for the house, and if he then said there is none, and have not given us any property of his own, we should have said, where are we to plant your food, sir, if you give away the land we plant on. We should have refused to build the house.[39]

Almost all that Thurston now knew of what was going on in areas like Dreketi, and he knew most of it in outline, he learned around Levuka. In his last months as acting-consul he had no inclination to be busy about Fiji at large; probably he felt he had no mandate. His attention was centred on Levuka beach, thronged by planters, newly-arrived or come in for stores and lingering long after their half-decked cutters had been loaded. As one of them who knew Fiji's timeless pace and a plantation's solitude wrote, 'let his requirements be many or few, under a week no man can leave Levuka'. According to the same observer, the merchants who supplied them 'never appear to have a minute to spare; and yet, I believe, the whole business done on the beach in a day could not afford any two of them real business employment for four hours'.[40] Here Tui Levuka was still to be seen, rolling drunk, till just before his death: and here, too, as this planter said, 'some of the Ratus or petty chiefs, who, swelling with self-conceit, lounge about the verandahs of the hotel, and who excel in insolence among a proverbially insolent race'.[41] Politeness others might see in that race—as the politeness of Cakobau, walking along Beach Street with an attendant behind him and overcoming his repugnance to the alienation of Bauan land sufficiently to greet a planter from Koro jocularly by the name of his plantation as 'Ratu mai Nola'. Over the Nola block his restraint was the more remarkable in that this was land he had given to his negro attendant, Bill Berwick, for building him a schooner. The negro was supposed to live on it with his Bauan wife and not to sell, for he 'lived with us, and was

[39] LCC P107.
[40] W. C. Pechey, M.D., *Fijian Cotton Culture and Planters' Guide to the Islands* (London, n.d. [written 1870]), 10. Pechey had a plantation at Savusavu.
[41] Ibid., 13.

one of us'. Berwick, notwithstanding, had sold it off like any white man.[42]

Levuka was a quiet town bar the occasional round of fisticuffs, in the opinion of those habituated to life there. But it was rowdy enough at the end of September when Captain Jonathan Morgan gave vent to the temper which, it was said, had got him cashiered for attacking the adjutant of his regiment with a drawn sword. Come down either to direct military operations envisaged by the Polynesia Company or in answer to advertisements for military settlers to subject Colo put out in Cakobau's name and denounced by Thurston, he had gone about Fiji sufficiently to see that he had no occupation there—and to learn in conversation with planters that they did not regard Fijians 'at all in the light of human beings'. He fell to drinking and breaking up hotel furniture in Levuka, was put under restraint by a group of billiard-room loungers and then, breaking loose, he 'called out' one of them who, as Thurston wrote, was being restrained 'by several of the orderly and respectable residents of the port until his pistol exploding by accident brought a Mr. Hoyle to the ground with a bullet wound through his leg'.

At the request of an indignation-meeting Thurston, with Ratu Melikisateki, chief judge for Lomaiviti of the Bau Kingdom, tried Morgan before a jury and sent him for more formal proceedings to New South Wales—to the irritation of the authorities there, who had no power to hold him and were already embarrassed by Thurston's habit of looking to them for rapid advice and assistance which he could not get from the Foreign Office.[43] With Morgan went his fellow would-be duellist, T. S. Minton, one of the *Daphne* owners, who had come to Fiji to secure possession of her labourers to sell for their passage-money and who did not now accept the opinion of the Governor of New South Wales that they were free to choose their own masters.[44]

The broil was 'a reign of terror' such as Thurston had long feared in Levuka—and feared the more because in the past residents had not fully supported his attempts to keep order. He harangued a captive audience of Europeans in the Reading Room

[42] LCC P93A.

[43] Encls. Belmore to C.O., 27 October, 28 December 1869, FO58/118; *Fiji Times*, 2 October 1869.

[44] Belmore to Thurston, 26 October 1869, and to March, 6 November 1869, F4/8.

on Niukaugi hill with sardonic exuberance. 'Some people were prone to resist authority in any shape, treating it lightly as at best a doubtful blessing; but human experience had shown that authority, almost in any shape, was better than none, and the sooner his auditors admitted the proposition the better, instead of tiding over the present and mortgaging their future at a high rate of interest.' 'For some time past he, personally, had heard it said, "Oh, there's no law here, the jurisdiction of British Law Courts does not extend to Fiji". The glorious uncertainty of the law had passed into a proverb'; but there were in fact statutes of George IV's reign that would reach residents in the Pacific islands. And residents themselves could crush riot underfoot by joint action, 'without resorting to bowie knives, revolvers, or other deadly weapons'.[45]

He had one more moment in his career as acting-consul, a particularly agreeable moment for a man who lived in a place where all talk was in dollars and cents but who could never think of the American eagle without seeing the bat, bantam, peacock and ostrich too, like Mr Mark Tapley in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. In October 1869 he received an issue of *Blackwood's Magazine* in which Captain Hope recounted how the American debt came to be—how claims had been exaggerated by resident traders, then endorsed by visiting frigate-captains on information provided by the largest and perhaps most fraudulent claimant himself, J. B. Williams. A fortnight later, as Thurston told Hope, 'a sail hove in sight—with *something* of a "man of war" cut about her', though she 'came in like a merchantman, and anchored in the manner of short-handed colliers—one sail clewed up at a time and a hand at the yard arm "lighting up" the sheet'. She proved, 'despite all this', to be the U.S.S. *Jamestown*, Commander Truxton—whom 'I liked just a little'—sent down in haste from Panama to re-investigate the American claims.

'Prostrated both in mind & body to a great degree' from a week's vain nursing of Adolph Feez, Thurston was awakened one midnight by Tait and Nettleton. They were sent by Cakobau, with a letter addressed to him by Truxton requesting he attend a court of inquiry with his own counsel and witnesses. Cakobau wanted him as counsel, Thurston was told, and so did all the Wesleyan

[45] *Fiji Times*, 9 October 1869; for the statutes in question, see Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire*, (Canberra, 1967), Chapter 1.

brethren 'excepting Mr. Moore whom they said had, with Dr Brower endeavoured to force his son upon the chief—in order, as the chief feared to sell him'. In the event Truxton on Brower's motion refused to let Thurston act, even 'as J.B.T. an ordinary Fijian resident', and he watched proceedings from ashore.

He marvelled a little that one of the court's members should be old David Whippy, one of the fathers of the part-European community at Levuka. Though he shared the common, instinctive distaste for part-Europeans, he respected Whippy himself—'a man of firm yet mild temperament', Thurston thought him, 'sagacious to a high degree at Fijian Councils, and respected by natives and whites as a shrewd trustworthy man'. But he found it strange that Whippy, retired now to Wainunu, should be judge in a case in which he was himself a claimant for $6,000. And he was morbidly delighted by the decision handed down by the members of the court.

For while they found no evidence to justify the payment of more than $7,199.67 to Williams's estate—against the $19,365 he had been supported by earlier naval commanders in claiming—they could not resist a sally at Hope's expense which Thurston thought revealing of the national character. They found that the United States government should refund to Cakobau these $12,165.33 of Williams's inflated claim after the Polynesia Company fulfilled its obligation to pay off the full sum hitherto demanded; and they pledged themselves, in defence of 'this semi-barbarous and almost helpless King', never to be satisfied 'while our Government is made to appear vacillating and ungenerous . . .'. Then they added the hope 'that nothing in the result of the labours of the present Court may be made the subject of a stringent Magazine Article by a Captain of the British Navy who necessarily views all matters from an English stand-point'.[46]

Thurston found it irresistibly amusing that such a remark should appear in the record. The iron, he told Hope, had 'entered the professional soul of the "Eagle"'. Later he wrote more soberly:

> The decision of the Court is as you observe very characteristic of the Yankees. No doubt the struggle among the Courts collective wisdom to ignore any knowledge of an officer in the British Navy was extremely acute, but he had, very inconsequentially, and in a

[46] 'Memorandum upon the Ownership of Land . . .'; Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, Letter-Journals; encl. idem, 8 December 1869, ibid.

manner damnifying to themselves, to be dragged forward at last—in order the American Eagle in the persons of the honourable court aforesaid might tell 'a Captain &c. &c.' their 'labours' were squared upon the 'prunes, prism, and propriety' principle, and offered no matter upon which his critical falcion could flesh itself. To anyone but a Yankee however it would be apparent that their senses were pricked far more by the 'Magazine Article' than by the knowledge a 'helpless and semi-barbarous chief' had for twenty long years been bullied by the Great Republic—But they are all alike. The mob, the Press, and the Government. It is all hickory ham, wooden nutmeg and nauseous patent medicine. What will it all come to by and bye?[47]

A night or two before the *Jamestown* sailed, Thurston entertained her officers 'with one of the handsomest dinners ever given in Fiji', as the *Fiji Times* believed.[48] Nettleton and his wife were there, Tait, the uncommunicative but over-venturesome Fred Hennings, and Archie Boyd from Waidou, secure in the possession of his thirty *Daphne* labourers so long as Thurston could prevent their being sold to other planters for the benefit of men he thought should be in gaol. There too was Brower, probably already proposing to himself that the State Department should actually find evidence in its archives to support the payment to Williams's estate of the full $19,365—which the estate actually received on those grounds[49]—and subject to the suspicions of his current host, who wrote privately that it was 'rumoured he bought up Williams's claim, some time ago'.[50] The commercial agent was there in virtue of the nationality of the principal guest, who may himself have had doubts about his country's representative. It was almost certainly Truxton whom Thurston delighted to quote as saying: 'For American Consul read scoundrel, wherever found'.[51]

Then Thurston turned back to the preparations he was making against the time, fast-approaching, when he would indeed be a private resident. It was rumoured that he intended to become secretary to Cakobau[52] but he had different plans. 'If I do not

[47] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, ibid.
[48] *Fiji Times*, 6 November 1869.
[49] Brower to Goodenough and Layard, 4 March 1874, F4/12-16; Fish to Thornton, 21 July 1876, encl. F.O. to C.O., 9 August 1876, CO83/12.
[50] Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, Letter-Journals.
[51] Minute by Fiddes on Thurston to C.O., 3 September 1885, CO83/41.
[52] Morgan to Belmore's secretary, 25 November 1869, encl. Belmore to C.O., 28 December 1869, FO58/118.

remain at Ovalau', he told Hope in November 1869, 'I intend next year to go eastward to Taveuni where I have a fine tract of country in quiet possession. I shall import cattle & agricultural tools and make a large plantation of Sea Island cotton for which variety the light soil is well adapted.'[53]

His land was called Tabaune, four square miles on the north-east coast of Taveuni running from the swift-flowing Waibula river southward around Naveitalacagi point to Naqai creek in Vurevure bay. Inland it went up from wide coastal flats into rugged mountains. He had made his first purchase there in July 1867, buying land on Naqai creek for £10 down. Before buying, he had discussed the land with Tui Cakau, the original vendor, and early the following year he had bought an adjoining, deeper block from Naveitalacagi to Waibula from Tui Cakau himself, sending Lomberg up to conclude the deal. Ratu Golea had 'asked me for some guns and ammunition and money I had', Thurston remembered, 'and offered to give me the Wai Bula block for them'; the price named in the deed was £80, though Thurston recalled that £130 had actually changed hands.[54] He had been there to take formal possession when the *Rosario* arrived in April 1869, walking the seaward boundaries though he did not go far inland. Almost immediately, he had begun dividing it for sale. The block on the Waibula went to Lomberg for £1, with right of way to the river preserved to Thurston, together with enough land on the bank to erect a water-mill to drive a cotton-gin; another block went to his brother Henry, presumably again for a nominal sum; and the one between these two was sold for £120 in 1868 to Lieutenant E. A. Liardet, then in the *Brisk* but disillusioned with the navy.[55]

Liardet and his intended partner at Tabaune, the *Brisk*'s former surgeon Dr J. Cruickshank, were now aboard H.M.S. *Virago*, the ship bringing down Consul March. Some time towards the end of 1869 Thurston had been setting out his own Fiji experience for Liardet's indirect benefit in a 'Memorandum of Outfit for Fijian Planter'. Clothes, he wrote, might be reduced to a minimum. 'A Planters costume—on service—is simple and consists of Boots, trousers, shirt and hat—the latter with a broad leaf.' He advised

[53] Thurston to Hope, 22 November 1869, Letter-Journals.
[54] LCC R126; F4/Temp. 1 Vol. II, No. 515.
[55] LCC R18, R161-2, R126.

that '*any* and *all* Seeds possible' should be brought, likewise a full kit of tools. And he went into detail on the subject of a desirable boat:

> A Boat is in Fiji what a horse is in Australia—our only highway is the sea. I would recommend a boat 30 feet over all—good long and flat floor—*square* roomy stern, any assertion to the contrary not withstanding. If one, that could be *raised upon a plank* and *'quarter' decked* could be bought cheap in Sydney—buy it. I have seen such boats sold from Emigrant ships with oars &c for £25. If bought do not have sails made in Sydney—buy 2 bolts No 6 Canvas, and bring it down. Freight to Fiji would be £5 to £8.
>
> *If nothing like above is to be had before departure—come without one.*[56]

He himself was building an eight-ton decked cutter, deeper-draughted than his schooner-boat and better able to make the passage from Tabaune to Levuka for stores across the turbulent Koro sea. Whether she was put to that use regularly depended somewhat on the *Virago*'s passenger.

The *Virago* arrived on 28 November. Two days later Thurston, who had not expected to be actually superseded until 1 January 1870, had to introduce his successor to Levuka. A member of the consular service since 1863, Edward Bernard March was a life-saving hero with the Albert Medal for an exploit with a line in heavy seas off the north coast of Spain; but he did not meet Calvert's specification even in the particular of religion. Calvert had required a Protestant and March was a Catholic, like his Spanish mother. 'He is very fond of ease and good living—and one of the vainest men I ever met', wrote Thurston, after putting March up for a week while he looked for a house of his own.

> As a characteristic anecdote of his 'coolness' he asked me . . . to read a dispatch from the F.O. directing a report on the present state of the Islands be made at once . . . He asked me to write the reply. I did so and brought all my knowledge to bear . . . Under the impression he would forward it as my work—for he could not be supposed to know anything about Fiji . . . I gave it to him: when, he carefully copied it attached *his* name, and 'mirabile dictu'—asked *me* to hear him read it, *as he thought he had fairly exhausted the subject.* I felt mirth and anger struggling for the mastery, but as he . . . is my guest I sided against the latter.[57]

[56] Place Papers.
[57] Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, Letter-Journals.

He was not disposed to be readily impressed by the qualities of his supplanter; but this report is clearly his work, while there was general agreement with his assessment of March's character as regards vanity and love of ease during the twenty-five months March spent in Fiji. 'In addition to Mr. March's over concern for the dignity of his office', observed a senior naval officer towards the end, 'he appears to be otherwise a most difficult person to deal with'.[58]

Much of the difficulty was caused by March's keeping away from his actual office, for Thurston was justified in his prediction that March 'will never do the work—he does not seem to have had any experience in Consular matters beyond shipping and discharging seamen'. His incapacity and arrogance became proverbial; he added venality to them, collecting fees for inspecting labourers out of office hours to which he was not entitled;[59] a petition for his removal was being circulated by the end of 1870. Within six months of his arrival, March, for his own part, was indicating privately to the Foreign Office that Fiji was far from being the place to which he would have wished to be promoted in recognition of his father's long service and personal friendships: 'you would pity me were you to see the kind of men with whom I have to come into contact in my official character'.[60]

There was a gleam of hope for Thurston in this. He had the impression that the supplanter's interest at the Foreign Office was strong enough to get him posted rapidly away. 'Mr M. has asked me to remain connected with the Office', he wrote, 'and I have consented upon the understanding he supports my claim to the future permanent appointment, for I feel, and I fancy he knows, his stay in Fiji will not be long'.[61] There was value, therefore, in the address of thanks he had received from British subjects for the 'credit, alike to himself, to the British Government, and to Fiji' with which he had managed consular affairs.[62] He had another, less welcome notice of the respect he had inspired amongst his fellow whites early next year when the liverish R. B. Leefe, ex-lieutenant in the Indian Navy, former Cardwell Police-Magis-

[58] Stirling to Admiralty, 19 October 1872, encl. Admiralty to C.O., 13 February 1873, CO83/3.
[59] Buisson to Knatchbull-Hugesson, 10 April 1875, PRO 30/6/44.
[60] March to Alston, 17 May 1870 (private), FO58/127.
[61] Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, Letter-Journals.
[62] *Fiji Times*, 4 December 1869.

trate and now a Ra planter, omitted his name from the eight signatories to a letter of rebuke on a labour matter which was sent to Leefe and published by him in the *Fiji Times*; he had omitted it, Leefe explained to the public, because 'I did not wish to see his name mixed up with what I could only consider . . . a gratuitous impertinence'. Thurston, amusedly, had already announced that he was 'always ready to stand the consequences of putting my name to paper, and require no consideration, even though it entail an octavo share of public or private displeasure'.[63]

He was sending away copies of the *Fiji Times* in late 1869 and early 1870, 'for they give you some idea of the way things trend here'.[64] He was involved in the political trends during the four months' free service which, as he said, he gave to March. Questions of government were under discussion. So were the relations proper between the races.

The *Fiji Times* editorial comment was moderate on race relations at first. It deprecated the use of 'the language of slavery' in relation to labourers—'my niggers', 'going a-slaving'—and advised caution in dealings with Fijians. 'Treat the native as a man', urged the fourth issue, 'your inferior if you please, but be careful to vindicate your superiority by your conduct, remembering that he will eagerly imitate your vice, and return it back upon you with tenfold retribution'. 'If you have not "tact" sufficient to keep friends with the chiefs . . . you should seek another home.' Future generations in Fiji 'will bless or curse us, as we leave them an inheritance of peace or of cruel war . . . the happy union of races, or of fiendish extermination'.[65]

But the *Fiji Times* was the voice of the white settlers. It was dependent upon, shared the views of, a readership whose members had no doubt about the necessary, inevitable, probably Darwinian and certainly divine pre-eminence of their 'race' wherever it should settle. They were 'Anglo-Saxons', emigrants from a society in which 'Anglo-Saxonism was in vogue', it has been well said, 'like civilization and science, free trade and progress'.[66] Science itself was clear

[63] Ibid., 19 and 26 March, 23 April 1870.
[64] Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, Letter-Journals.
[65] *Fiji Times*, 25 September 1869.
[66] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London, 1971), 38. I am indebted to Dr Bolt's book in the course of the following paragraphs. For my prior application of the concept of racism to settler politics in Fiji, see 'John Bates Thurston, Commodore J. G. Goodenough, and rampant Anglo-Saxons in Fiji'—*Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, XI, xliii, 1964.

as to the respective places 'in Nature' of white and black. The leading members of the Anthropological Society of London were convinced of diversity in the origin and genetic nature of peoples, as against the older, Benthamite assumption of unity. They moved on to the parallel assumption of the superiority of their own race.

An anthropological critic of Bentham's disciple John Stuart Mill knew from inquiry that the Negro, type of the coloured man, was 'a being of inferior *organic* constitution, in whom corporeal function and animal impulse too readily dominate moral sentiment and intellectual aptitude . . .'.[67] And the society's first president found scientific truth in the views of an American medical man, a defender of slavery, who held that to argue '"equality" of the Negro to the white man in any sense whatever, is inexcusable on the ground of ignorance; and those thus warring against the laws of nature and progress of society, deserve to be treated as its enemies . . .'. Europeans and Negroes were distinct species, held Dr Hunt, the president. There was 'as good reason for classifying the Negro, as a distinct species from the European, as . . . for making the ass a distinct species from the zebra . . .'. From this followed the black man's inferiority to the white, far lower in intelligence as he was than gorilla from chimpanzee: a sub-being who 'becomes more humanised when in his natural subordination to the European than under any other circumstances . . .'.[68]

Arguing rather for the genetic unity of mankind (on less than scientific grounds, perhaps) and assuming the human equality which sprang from it, T. H. Huxley was answered with a string of authoritative statements to the contrary.[69] However the balance might seem to swing between Hunt and Huxley, the popular mind held tenaciously to propositions like those asserted by the critic of Mill: that the 'inferior character of the Negro is as distinctly stamped on his organisation as on his destiny': and that the product of miscegenation 'is a blot on creation, the product of a sin against nature, whom she hastens . . . to reduce to annihilation'.[70]

Against the humanitarians Carlyle inveighed, sneering at their

[67] 'Race in Legislation and Political Economy', *Anthropological Review*, IV, xiii, 1866, 134.

[68] James Hunt, 'On the Negro's Place in Nature', *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London*, I, 1863-4, 51-2.

[69] James Hunt, 'On the application of the principles of Natural Selection to Anthropology', *Anthropological Review*, IV, xiii, 1866.

[70] 'Race in Legislation . . .', 120, 125.

'most baseless, and in the end baleful and all-bewildering jargon' of brotherly love,[71] while Dickens, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, derisively added 'snub-nosed' to his description of Exeter Hall's frequenters. They were 'Nigger Worshippers' to many of their opponents, 'stupid negrophilists' to others; and they were themselves so deeply immersed in the 'poor deluded children' syndrome as often to excite a risibility in the racists that was not unreasonable.

Moreover the cultural roots of most *Fiji Times* readers were those of a society which, still reeling under the shock of the Indian Mutiny, had been sent sprawling by the Jamaica Revolt of 1865—sprawling from a pedestal of philanthropy which that society's members were now disposed to kick into matchwood. The imperial Anglo-Saxon had prided himself on his sense of fair play in dealings with his subject peoples. Since 1865 he had been conscious of nothing so much as their base ingratitude. The London *Times* had deplored the ingratitude of the revolting ex-slave of Jamaica, 'he, who has come in as the favoured heir of a civilization in which he had no previous share . . .'.[72] On matters of race, *The Times* followed a line not so far removed from that soon adopted by its Fiji namesake.

The latter was more intimately acquainted with the race question—more acutely, more painfully aware of black ingratitude towards, and black incapacity to deal on an equality with, that enterprising Anglo-Saxon who was 'the heir of all the ages' and whose aspirations from his childhood had 'been directed to the infinite . . .'.[73] The *Fiji Times*'s leader-writer had closer examples than Jamaica in the 'ingratitude' of the Maori, the 'gross inferiority' of the Australian Aboriginal. And he had a larger share in the general sense of insecurity amongst white men which had led so august a journal as the *Lancet*, following the Jamaica revolt, to adopt the theory of human history after which all was an inevitable series of race wars.[74]

By February 1871 Fiji Europeans were to have seen some of their number burnt out of their plantations by Fijians who declined to recognise the sacred rights of property as conveyed by crosses on

[71] Carlyle, quoted Hunt, 'Negro's Place', 36n.
[72] *The Times*, 4 November 1865: quoted Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, 87.
[73] *Fiji Times*, 22 March 1873.
[74] *Lancet*, 2 December 1865, reprinted *Popular Magazine of Anthropology*, I, January 1866.

a title-deed. The new editor of the *Fiji Times* was then to be calling for the formation of a Volunteer Corps against 'the semi-barbarous natives who surround us'—natives who would 'some day wake to the fact that they are homeless' and 'to a great extent dependent on the white man's charity' as a result of vast alienation of land. 'We were ourselves present . . .', wrote the editor, 'when the head chief of a district . . . stated his belief that the whiteman would ultimately acquire the whole of Fiji; that there would be no place for the natives, and therefore the only thing they could do was to die fighting for their lands'. There was no question who would go to the wall in such a fight. 'The dominant Anglo-Saxon race of course would sweep all before it . . .'. Still, the turmoil would be inconvenient and damaging to the country's credit.[75]

Even in the early issues of the *Fiji Times*, the correspondence columns showed that belief in the divine right of 'the dominant Anglo-Saxon race' to inherit the earth was fervent among subscribers. 'Dau Vosata' might argue that the whites' advantage lay in making the country an exception to 'the great law of the progress of the human race . . . that . . . admits of no rights in a savage race'. But 'Wanderer' was 'a most thorough opponent to all monopolies, and more especially to that species of monopoly that would fence off any one portion of God's earth from the material good that regularly follows in the footsteps of the Anglo-Saxon . . .'. He saw no future for 'our breech-clad brethren' except as plantation labour. 'The savage must serve or die':

> . . . the laws that ordain his disappearance before the civilised man are as certain as those that govern the heavens; too far inferior to us in mind to keep pace with our rapid advance, too far behind ever to hope to overtake us; so long as the two races keep apart all goes well, in a fashion with him, but as soon as civilization encroaches upon savagedom . . . the savage, if left to himself, inevitably perishes; bind him to our chariot wheels, and drag him along, in spite of his outcries, and he would live. There is but one city of refuge for these doomed races, 'forced labour under legal supervision . . .'[76]

For the Anglo-Saxon overseas was heir to an inscrutable yet beneficient Providence which had ordained that inferior races should, by a natural decadence, melt away before the superior. This was fundamental doctrine, implicit in the thinking of many writers.

[75] *Fiji Times*, 15 February 1871.
[76] Ibid., 23 October 1869, 8 January 1870.

Sir Charles Dilke, whose *Greater Britain* enjoyed immense success on its publication in 1869, condemned British arrogance and insensitivity in India. But he regarded the destruction of American Indians, Maori and Australian Aborigines 'by the English colonists' as 'inevitable'. And he took it for granted that the 'Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth'. This assumption was, in the final analysis, no less acceptable to him than to less sensitive Anglo-Saxons, for he was convinced also of the utility of his race's culture to mankind at large: 'the power of English laws and English principles of government is not merely an English question—its continuance is essential to the freedom of mankind'.[77]

In its cruder form, this belief had great appeal in Fiji where settlers responded to the prophecy of the visiting Melbourne journalist Henry Britton that, as the 'aborigines of North America, Australia, and New Zealand, obedient to a mysterious law' had 'perished on the first contact with that race to whom is confided the great colonising mission', so it would be in Fiji—its 'native population is doomed to the melancholy fate of the aboriginal inhabitants of those countries where the sons of Japheth have settled . . .'.[78] The prediction, founded as it was in scientific observation, gave great comfort to Japheth's sons in their prospective struggle with the black sons of outcast Ham.

For Thurston, ever since he had been in a position to know Fijians alongside white men, this had all been poppycock—but potentially deadly if acted upon. The superior race argument was 'fallacious', he had told a Ba planter who was given to peppering Fijian 'trespassers' with smallshot, 'and too dangerous to the common weal of Europeans generally to be allowed currency'.[79] It was to be years before he had a correspondent to whom he could write unreservedly about relations between white and black in the confidence that he would be favourably understood. This fellow-thinker found, he wrote with total disenchantment about white racism and hypocrisy. 'With all our "highfalutin" to the contrary, the wrongs we have committed in the names of Christianity, civilisation, progress are manifold. We are, as a race, a race of robbers and spoilers.'[80] Long before this, and for public consump-

[77] Charles Wentworth Dilke, *Greater Britain* (London, 1869), I, 308-9, II, 407.
[78] H. Britton, *Fiji in 1870* . . . , 75.
[79] Thurston to Groom, 5 December 1868, F4/1.
[80] Thurston to Gordon, 27 April 1879, *Fiji*, III, 561.

tion in Fiji, he was to remark with anger that the 'policy of British settlers everywhere has been to destroy the political and social position of the native, for the idea of a white man recognizing any rights or feelings in a "nigger" is as yet almost unknown'.[81] He recognised rights in Fijians—predominant sovereign rights. He showed this by his contribution to the discussion on constitutional issues which was conducted in the *Fiji Times* early in 1870, when the future international status of Fiji and the legal relationship between Europeans and Fijians were in dispute.

Thurston would have preferred the annexation or protection by Britain which the newcomers' nationality made logical to his Tory eyes. 'Is there any chance of the Conservatives reviving our traditions? or will the illiberal liberals keep in?' he had asked Hope in December 1869; 'the spirit of the present government certainly violates the inbred feeling of most Britons'.[82] After March's arrival he had kept in his own hands a petition to Britain that eventuated from a public meeting at Levuka in June; alarmed by a petition for American protection which was being sponsored by the Polynesia Company, residents had sent a deputation to him. He had drawn up a request for protection during ten, fifteen or twenty years, if annexation should be against British policy, to give time in which 'to cultivate a form of Government analagous to that of the Sandwich Islands'; and he was circulating it for signature now. He discussed it with Cakobau, who called a meeting of chiefs at Bau, and got his agreement in October 1869, while Ma'afu probably signed when he spent an afternoon with Thurston at Kalaba next month. He sent it off through the consulate in March 1870 and it vanished into oblivion in London.[83]

Already in February that year the Foreign Office had learned that the Colonial Office wanted nothing of Fiji and was not to be prodded by the risk of American intervention, which it thought chimerical.[84] And the petition, minuted upon in the Foreign Office to the frequent effect that some decided line must be adopted, elicited neither a line nor an answer.[85] The policy was to give the

[81] *Fiji Gazette*, 15 November 1873.
[82] Thurston to Hope, 8 December 1869, Letter-Journals.
[83] Emberson and J. C. Smith to Thurston, 13 November 1869, F4/10; *Fiji Times*, 8 January 1870; Thurston to March, 10 March 1870, F4/10; F4/Temp. 1 Vol. II, no. 608; encls. March to F.O., 31 March 1870, FO58/118.
[84] C.O. to F.O., 4 February 1870, FO58/119.
[85] Minutes in FO58/118, 120, 127.

consul magisterial powers, as soon as the lawyers could be convinced that a basis existed acceptable in international law.[86] Thurston himself bore some responsibility for the Foreign Office's persistence in the belief such powers would be sufficient. In the despatch he had written on the labour traffic in December 1869, sent on by March under his own name, Thurston had shown himself more hopeful that such powers would enable the consul to control the traffic than he had been when he had the *Mary Ann Christina* and *Daphne* on his hands.[87]

By October 1870 Thurston was already to be admitting that he had 'doubtful feelings of success' about the petition. 'My great object was to checkmate the efforts made by certain adventurers from Melbourne to bring the group under the American Flag, and for the time, and so far as they, a mere handful of desperate adventurers without personal honour or national attachment, are concerned I fancy I have succeeded.'[88] At the beginning of March 1870 he secured Cakobau's word that he had never signed the American petition put before him by those same 'adventurers'[89] (the current general manager of the Polynesia Company and Joseph Glenny). Then he wrote to the Melbourne *Argus*, poking fun at that 'something called a memorial, signed by 102 British subjects and 12 Americans'. 'If the Victorian colonists consider the establishment of a foreign protectorate at these islands will be dangerous to their commercial or territorial interests, let them impute the evil to the promoters of a company duly incorporated in their own chief city.' To confuse matters a little, by bringing a newer world into play against the new, he published words that would have embarrassed him years later, had they been brought up: 'The opinion of myself and the majority of settlers is, that Fiji is a necessity to, almost the birthright of, the Australian colonies; and having real interests in this country, we shall not desist from our attempts to effect with them a recognised and legitimate connexion'.[90]

But the Briton abroad demanded liberal, representative, go-ahead government as of right. And he demanded it immediately.

[86] F.O. to C.O., 4 April 1870, FO58/119.
[87] March to F.O., 17 December 1869, FO58/126.
[88] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, Lang Papers, ML A2229.
[89] Thurston to Cakobau, 23 February 1870, F4/12-8; Cakobau to Thurston, 2 March 1870, ibid.
[90] *Argus*, 3 May 1870.

That month a pamphlet began circulating over the signatures of thirty-seven settlers calling for an 'Independency' for Fiji.[91] Its originator was the Taveuni planter A. W. Hamilton, late lieutenant in the Royal Navy, who remarked from the chair at the ensuing public meeting that, though many things must be considered, 'the most important of all . . . was the manner in which the aboriginal was to be treated—was he to be our inferior, equal, or superior?' Though Hamilton himself 'thought we should be taking a step in the right direction in co-operating with the native', the meeting unanimously carried an exclusionist resolution: the object was 'to form a league or society for the mutual protection of the life and property of the whites against the outrages committed by the natives'.[92]

The mover of this was 'Colonel' Jennings, one of several betitled Southerners in Fiji among whom existed an infectious inclination to bring into the islands an ethic, as well as an article of culture, from the southern states of America. The 'Colonel's' plantation manager had lately shot a Fijian in a labour dispute. Thereupon Jennings himself had 'expressed his determination to fight and kill any Fijian who interfered with or annoyed him, though he strongly deprecated the exercise towards them of harshness, cruelty or injustice'.[93]

The 'Independency' was intended to be a white republic, formed with a view to punitive measures by mutual action and in order to equip its members with land-titles which would give investors some show of security—or as the pamphlet observed, adding the promotion of capital investment to the protection of colour, 'to take such steps as will enable us to offer a better security to all Commercial people in the Colonies, and to secure for ourselves permanently the advantages and profits which must accrue from cultivating under proper auspices these lands which we have rightfully acquired'.[94]

The constitutional basis for it was advanced in a letter to the *Fiji Times* late in March by 'Republican'—E. S. Smith, another of the *Daphne* owners come down to claim her labourers, a man of

[91] Pamphlet encl. March to F.O., 31 March 1870, FO58/118.

[92] Ibid., *Fiji Times*, 16 April 1870. For 'Taveuni' Hamilton see also, below, p. 267. He is not to be confused with 'Colonel' A. W. Hamilton of Nadroga.

[93] *Fiji Times*, 25 December 1869; March to F.O., 31 March 1870, FO58/118.

[94] Encl. March to F.O., 31 March 1870 (no. 7), ibid.

legal training.[95] 'Republican' was replying to a *Fiji Times* editorial which had argued against the white republic on the grounds that outside support would be needed if a race-war broke out. 'Better far to unite our destiny with some flourishing Australian Colony', argued the *Fiji Times*, 'or agitate persistently for the protection of Great Britain, than as a young and feeble Independency, be killed in the cradle by our black nurse'.[96] 'Republican', in answer, mocked the petition to Britain and required no outside help to deal with the nurse: 'all we require is to keep the natives in check, and it is quite possible to do so without an army . . . All experience proves the whites can defend themselves when allowed to do so'. He urged vigilance committees and self-help, the self-reliance of the emigrant who would wish to be unfettered by the institutions of the mother country other than those which he chose to reproduce.[97] His theory seemed illegitimate to Thurston.

'Republican's' letter, Thurston retorted as 'Britannicus', was 'an outrage upon international law' in its tacit assumption of an independent sovereignty in the whites.

> The legal idea of a State, besides the obedience of its members to those in whom superiority is vested, demands fixed abode and definite territory belonging to the people by whom it is occupied.
>
> By the purchase of land here, we have as it were incorporated ourselves into the territory. Legally, we are aliens domiciled in the country, and if we improperly interfered with the Chiefs or people . . . they will doubtless request the interference of the first naval officer . . . arriving . . .

Thurston quoted authorities in support of a connection with Britain as the world centre of commerce and culture. He traversed the fear that planters had for their land-titles. Others besides 'Republican' had 'conjured up grim visions of "Land Commissioners", and "military noodles", who will cut down their thousands of acres into hundreds'. 'Let those stand in dread whose titles are comparatively or superlatively bad—for be our future under American, British, or self-government, Land Title Commissioners will eventually appear.' There should be 'no playing at government by men without authority . . .'. And though mutual defence was a duty, 'when settlers in a foreign country are

[95] See his statement in *Fiji Times*, 26 July 1871.
[96] *Fiji Times*, 19 March 1870.
[97] Ibid., 26 March 1870.

prevailed upon to regard the natives of the soil as aliens, or enemies, their self-reliance may easily lead to results the civilized world will term amateur brigandage, if not something worse'. Whites were united, Thurston gathered, in regarding government of themselves by Fijians as impossible. But a protectorate was necessary if they were to have 'permission to govern ourselves, or at least to have a great voice in the administration of our affairs'.

> There are two ways of proceeding—one, recklessly, and with a hurried course to the object, violating all sense of propriety and entailing humiliation and failure; the other, leading to success, by a course so strictly guarded that no principle is violated, and no offence given either to the natives of the country, or to the Governments that have the power of calling us to account.[98]

This elicited an openly racist statement of the Independency's position from 'Republican'. The issue of the paper in which Thurston's letter was printed had carried a report of joint action by the Savusavu planters in support of H. B. Smith of Kuladrusi plantation, who had been overpowered by his Ra labourers and seen his house ransacked; the planters had rallied, shot dead three Ra men and wounded three more—to the satisfaction of the *Fiji Times*'s correspondent, who witnessed 'personal gallantry' by many of the seventeen whites and nine part-Europeans involved and believed that their action 'if imitated in other parts of the group, would give the natives a better idea of what white men can do if put to the test'.[99] Such action was equally to the satisfaction of 'Republican'. 'If "Britannicus" does not know how the natives are to be held in check', he replied, 'let him ask the Savu Savu men, they at any rate know the proper style of doing such important work'. International rights in Fiji

> . . . are precisely those of all civilized men settling among savages; they purchase land from the natives, and are perfectly independent of them as soon as they pay the stipulated price, we are entitled to protect our lives and properties at any cost and risk, and are not in any way under the rule of the natives, who lose all power over the land so sold to settlers.

He objected 'to the statement that in purchasing land we have incorporated ourselves into the territory'. On the contrary,

[98] Ibid., 2 April 1870.
[99] Ibid.

Europeans formed 'a community as distinct as black is from white'. Each planter had 'fixed abode,—every man's title deed defines his territory—and he has as good a right to defend it as France, Austria, America, or England'. By a reference to men 'who having made their homes in this semi-barbarous country have something to lose', Thurston had indicated by contrast that he recognised the essentially itinerant, billiard-room habitué *Daphne* Smith. Now 'Republican' introduced a personal cut at him: '"Britannicus" would perhaps like to be chief judge at, say, £1000 per annum...'.[1]

On 23 April Thurston replied briefly over his own name. He had no such ambition, though it was not unlikely he would fill such a post at least as zealously as would any President of the 'Utopian Independency'. On the main question, Fiji wanted 'a little friendly and legitimate help until we can stand alone'. Under protection there would be no expensive colonial establishment 'and "Britannicus" and his fellow-planters would have quite as much to say in the management of Fijian affairs as under the Self-Government of Republican, and in a far more certain, satisfactory, and legitimate manner'. For his part, he by no means believed in non-resistance—'and should natives think fit to burn him out, or openly rob his property, he has no doubt as to what will be his course of conduct'. But he was 'convinced . . . that in most (he does not say all—for he knows what a native can be) cases of difficulty there are two sides to the story'.[2] He may have known the other side to the Savusavu story. Smith was on land of which part had earlier been given over by Tui Nasavusavu to a colony of Ra people, who disputed Smith's occupation.[3]

So, for Thurston, the matter ended for the moment. He was much occupied with his private affairs. Discussion on the republic continued without him. Delegates to a central committee had been appointed while he was writing. It had been resolved to form a Corporation of Fiji Settlers, the chief membership qualification for which was 'to consist in the applicant being a white man'; its efforts were to be directed 'towards establishing Fiji as a home for the white race'.[4] But he was supported by Swanston who urged 'conjoint action with the native rulers to the very utmost limit of

[1] Ibid., 9 April 1870.
[2] Ibid., 23 April 1870.
[3] LCC R225.
[4] *Fiji Times*, 16 April 1870.

possible forebearance' as the indispensable basis for legitimate government. And Thurston's insistence on legitimacy thus derived was taken up by the *Fiji Times* when it became reconciled to the experiment: 'The object of the Corporation is to *derive* power through the ruling chiefs . . . it is not sought to *create* power . . .'.[5] Perhaps losing part of its attraction for some men as moderation crept in, the Independency foundered on inertia; moreover, the centre of action moved out of Levuka for a little over a year.

Thurston also had left Levuka by then. He had realised that March was not going to succeed in effecting a rapid transfer from Fiji. As Thurston put it to Hope, his final decision to move '130 miles from Mr March and all Levuka' was immediately prompted by his embarrassment at the way in which March depended on him and the residents continued to seek him out. March was calling on one of the Thurston brothers to protect him against an obtrusive settler on Christmas Eve, 1870,[6] and European settlers in all Fiji shortly looked to J. B. Thurston as, in their own words, their Messiah. But he was glad enough on other grounds to act on his earlier plan of moving to Taveuni.

Though he would have jeered at March's wails about drunken rowdiness at Levuka, and did assure Hope that the 'mob' was 'to be lead, or directed easy enough' by anyone with 'a grain of sense or tact',[7] he himself had found the rowdies difficult to deal with. And their attitudes were contagious. As attorney for a Sydney firm with claims on the estate of the late John Harman, Thurston discovered that 'Harman Junior acting under local advice that *no law courts exist* in Fiji, shows no disposition to consider the creditors of his father's estate in any degree . . .'. He had the disagreeable fact recorded in the consular archives as testimony to the commercial ethics of small traders.[8]

A direct personal embarrassment came from the continued efforts of Minton and others to get possession of and sell the *Daphne* labourers. Thurston was bombarded with letters from Minton in Sydney 'in a very violent spirit', as he told March. 'Possibly he is mad, I think from what I saw of him here, he is a dangerous man, not very vicious perhaps, but foolish.' He quoted

[5] Ibid., 28 May 1870.
[6] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals; Consul's daily proceedings, 24 December 1870, F4/12-7.
[7] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.
[8] F4/10, 18 March 1870.

extracts to prove it. 'You could employ force', Minton had assured him, 'you could shoot them down for there must be Justice. I got the best advice—and you can demand payment of the passage money or the men and on refusal you can shoot them down . . . I tell you as a friend and would not deceive you so you can act for me with decision and safety.' Thurston had received no instructions how to dispose of the labourers and so they were now subject to March's direction. Meanwhile, he had given instructions to the chief of those he was supposed to shoot down, his brother Harry. 'Should Minton . . . appear with arms, and assume a threatening attitude you know what to do—shoot him if you cannot effect his arrest *without a particle of personal risk to yourself*'. He put the matter officially before March on leaving, 'not that I expect any trouble from Mr Minton if he does appear—but when men who appear to delight in amateur duelling, brigandage, and war find themselves in a semi-barbarous country it is difficult to foresee the limits to which their idiosyncrasies may carry them—or the painful alternatives to which orderly and peaceable men may be compelled'.[9]

As March plaintively wrote on receipt of Thurston's letter: 'A pretty place to live in this Fiji!'[10] In November *Daphne* Smith himself brought roars of applause from a Levuka public meeting with the confession that he had challenged Henry Thurston and the promise that he would 'fight them all personally till I fall, but lose the men and receive no redress I will not'.[11] Smith lost the men, or the several dollars a head that they were worth to him in passage-money. And he died, not of a bullet, but a watery death in Levuka harbour one night six years later, trying to swim out to an anchored ship in pursuance of a drunken wager.[12] In the meantime, though Henry Thurston might say that the labourers were under protection of the Crown,[13] it was undeniable that thirty-five of them were still working on Bureta and went with it, some of them, when the plantation was sold in September 1870.[14]

Appealed to in November 1870 by his brother, Scott and Boyd

[9] Thurston to March, 10 May 1870, F4/10.
[10] March to Alston, 17 May 1870 (private), FO58/127.
[11] *Fiji Times*, 19 November 1870; and Smith's letter, ibid., 10 December 1870.
[12] Journal of Baron von Hügel, 11 May 1876, MAE.
[13] *Fiji Times*, 26 November 1870.
[14] F1/Temp. 3/2.

to come down from Taveuni to allay the tempers inflamed against them by the public meeting, Thurston (using a favourite adjective) described Smith's language as 'that of a tenth class Fenian orator' and declined. The matter was in March's hands; Thurston himself still hoped the *Daphne* case might be reopened; and he would 'certainly not permit myself to be the first to recognise the right of my fellow countrymen . . . in these Islands to assemble at the ringing of a bell, or the posting of a placard for the purpose of discussing and deciding questions of which they are utterly ignorant . . .'. The 'state of Society at Levuka' no longer possessed the 'honest and orderly tone' that he had seen in it when he addressed the crowded Reading Room in 1869.[15]

Meanwhile he had registered his new cutter.[16] In April 1870 he had loaded her deep, chartered another, and taken his household up to the virgin block between Naveitalacagi and Naqai that he had reserved for himself from Tabaune. Its Fijian name was Naveitalacagi. But he was faithful to old memories that year. He named his cutter the *Dove*, and on formal occasions he called the plantation 'St Helier'.

[15] Thurston to Scott, Boyd and Henry Thurston, 2 December 1870, NAF, MS17.
[16] F4/11, 23 March 1870.

7

'I occupy all I own and have it put to use'

'I have a most beautiful place here', Thurston wrote from Taveuni in November 1870, 'far superior to Bureta in every way'. He had almost fifty acres under cotton by November, four in 'lawn & garden', and another ten fenced off for horses. He was following the unusual course of ploughing before he planted, was investing in the manner of a man who had no fears for his possession of the land. He revelled in his lonely home-making 'on the borders of savagedom'. 'We seldom see white people', he wrote; and their Fijian neighbours were 'very civil and friendly'.[1]

His was the furthest point around the top of Taveuni reached by plantations, until Fitzsimmons and Ryan began work at Vurevure, the next bay, in 1871. To the south he saw the island's weather coast, high and wet, largely uninhabited by Fijians. His plantation was healthy and beautiful, exposed to the trades. Naveitalacagi was aptly named—'Divider of the Winds'. He looked across Tasman Straits to the island of Qamea, beyond curling reefs, over yellow sand. He had sheltered anchorage for the *Dove*. And he had the prospect of company. By September 1871 Cruickshank, with his wife, had 'built a nice house next to us' at Vunivasa, as Thurston told Hope; and Liardet was expected. 'They have nearly one hundred acres planted with cotton and are much pleased with Fiji.'[2]

Meantime he cut bridle-paths and, in the intervals of work with the few labourers whom he had brought from Bureta, he rode about the island. He noticed deserted village-sites which spoke of a Fijian population fallen over a few years to a thousand, from about four times that number.

[1] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.
[2] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, ibid.

> If one asks of an old man—What has become of the people? He will reply with subdued voice—'Sa mate Saka—Sa moku'. 'Dead, clubbed, Sir'—Clubbed and eaten he means—In fact, mission influence arrived just in time to prevent this Island—the dread of all cannibal Fiji—from being absolutely depopulated.[3]

The few Fijians still living on Tabaune had been moved off by Tui Cakau, who had come over with 'the people from nearly every town in Taveuni and from Vanua Levu', Thurston recalled,

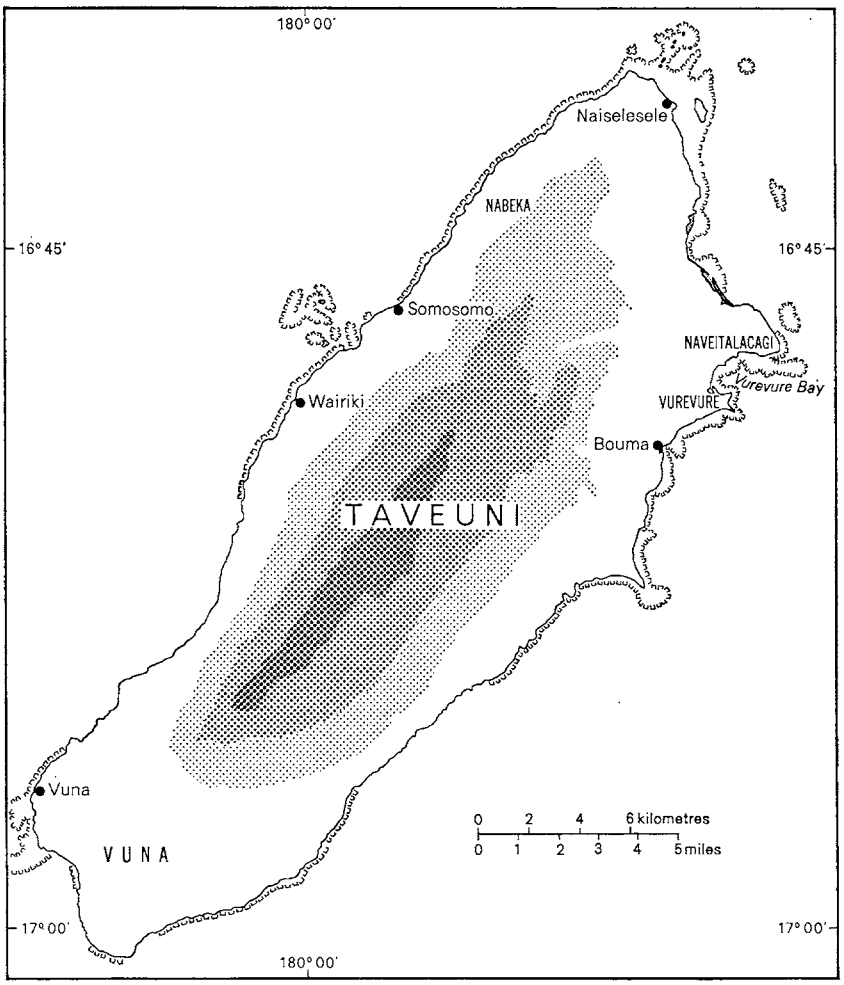
> —there were 5 to 700 people—they built my houses cleared 50 acres for me and every day before going to work their officers cried that they were doing this in order that they might know that Tui Cakau was giving me the land to be mine for ever.[4]

In October 1870, from the midst of this hacking down and burning off, singing and *yaqona* drinking, Tui Cakau wrote to Consul March guaranteeing Thurston's title against a claim manufactured by the American land-jobber, Theodore Hoyt.[5]

For Tui Cakau, Thurston was actually a counterpoise to other Europeans. Ratu Golea had decided to sell no more land.[6] He was determined on this, wrote Thurston with great approval in October 1870. Golea had actually refused as much as a pound an acre.[7] And so it was hardly coincidental that the 'secretary' chosen for him by the assembled planters in September should have been land-jobber Hoyt, nor that Tui Cakau should seek refuge with Thurston. He 'lived very much on my plantation', Thurston recalled,

> and consulted me upon nearly all that he did. He could not live at Somo Somo, because he was pestered with white men wanting to buy or lease land, or to obtain men or something. He asked me to let him come to my place as no one would then worry him; his request was backed by the coarse but forcible expression that if he was a bitch in heat, and white men were dogs, they could not hunt him about more than they did. He stayed with me on one occasion during this year for nearly three months, and had his own house and servants.[8]

[3] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, Lang Papers, ML A2229.
[4] LCC R126.
[5] Ibid.; LCC R150.
[6] *Fiji Times*, 23 July 1870.
[7] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, ML A2229.
[8] Minute by Thurston, n.d., CO881/6, COCP Australian, No. 78.



Map 3 Taveuni

It was probably about this time that Thurston took into his house Tui Cakau's senior son—the 9-year-old Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu, *vasu* to Bau, who was to be for many years the son that Thurston himself lacked. Thurston's object was to bring the boy up in the ways a Fijian chief must know, whose lot was cast in a new age. 'I beg of you not to hinder my request that I may do something in memory of him, as he has always cared for me from the time when I was an infant to the time of my present mature age', Ratu Lala was to write when his foster-father was dead.[9] Thurston sent him to school in Sydney and spoke of his education as an 'experiment', but there was nothing cold-blooded about it. He liked children, was loved in return when at last he had children of his own. And his eldest daughter, in her eighties, remembered Ratu Lala as a matter of course: 'my father's adopted son'.

There were some seventeen planters on Taveuni when Thurston arrived and their number increased during the next two years. They were 'the Taveuni Lords', accurately thought by their contemporaries to be more substantial settlers than were found together elsewhere in Fiji, with more capital, European wives and wooden houses among them than was common.[10] Thurston was like them in that sense, with Marie, his half share left from the proceeds from Bureta's sale after he had bought Zöllner out, and all his considerable investment at Naveitalacagi. He did not make one of the 'Taveuni Lords', however, nor go tippling much in the Post Office Hotel down at Vuna from which the proprietor wrote in June 1871 that he was doing a brisk trade with Fijians and Europeans alike: 'any cheap stuff will do for the nigs'.[11]

But Thurston was no recluse; he figured in the journal of E. J. Turpin, his old clerk, now resident on Laucala and bearing no grudge for his dismissal. Though Thurston kept aloof from politics he watched them closely. He corresponded about Fiji's future with the Reverend Dr J. D. Lang who, probably on the strength of Thurston's letter to the *Argus*, wrote in August 1870 to enlist Thurston's aid in his own current attempts to secure Fiji for Australia. Thurston had no great hope of either Australia or Britain. 'Little help is to be expected from without', he told Lang in October. 'Home, and Colonial, papers only tell us what we are painfully alive to—namely that we are in an extraordinary position,

[9] Ratu Josefa Lalabalavu to Governor, 31 March 1897, FCSO 97/1195.
[10] See, e.g., *Fiji Times*, 12 June 1872.
[11] Hazell to Lyons, 7 June 1871, F1/Temp. 31.

quite anomalous &c &c'; here were 'two thousand whites settled in Fiji, hundreds followings, thousands of pounds invested . . .—and no Government for protection of life and property'.[12]

Lang's evident assumption that Fiji was for the taking ran counter to all 'Britannicus's' principles. Fiji was already recognised as a state or series of states in treaties with several European powers, Thurston told him; for Thurston no longer believed it safe to hold that Fiji was 'a mere congeries of savage tribes incapable of entering into civilised relations', as he had argued against the Polynesia Company in 1868.[13] He was worried by the threat to residents like himself in Lang's assumption that land could be dealt with after the pre-emptive right principle, on the assumption that Fijians were 'barbarians' incapable of entering into contracts. In reply, he was careful to describe a consular supervision of land acquisition which actually obtained only in theory. Overtly, he brushed the threat aside. 'Personally, and speaking as one who has adopted Fiji as his future home in this world, I care not what individual or Court investigates the title to land I claim here. *I occupy all I own* and have it *put to use*.' But his basic principle was the one he had argued against 'Republican':

> The Chiefs have their written Constitutions and Laws. They can all read, and nearly all write. The heads of the two native governments have their banking accounts and can afford to buy such yachts as the Xariffa—or Vivid—for their pleasure, as well as vessels of larger tonnage for ordinary service. Tui Lau's bill for two or three thousand pounds would be eagerly taken by any Fijian mercantile man—and, in short it may be assumed that the day *has now gone by* for dealing with Fiji as any Colonizing Government would deal or did deal with countries like Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. During the last two years Fiji has made great progress, and if during the coming year no favourable action is taken by H.M.G. in Fijian affairs or by the Colonies—or any one of them—by consent of the Government, then the leading and influential Europeans must consider themselves naturalized Fijians and—as in the Sandwich Islands—co-operate with the native Chiefs in carrying into effect a more complete form of Government than at present is practicable.
>
> I am aware much can be said against this idea. I have said a great deal myself, but society here native and foreign is in a state of combustion—and requires some controlling power.[14]

[12] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, ML 2229.
[13] Thurston to Governors of New South Wales and Victoria, 23 July 1963, F4/1.
[14] Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, ML A2229.

In the interests of Fijian sovereignty, he exaggerated here the number of chiefs who could write (as only the younger ones could). And he did not say that Ma'afu was notoriously a difficult man to get payment from (though of course the authority conveyed by possession of his account made it worth having).[15]

To illustrate his point, Thurston used *Fiji Times* reports of the *Tovata* meetings held lately at Wairiki. Ma'afu had deplored the jealousies still dividing Fijian chiefs; he had spoken of the strength they would find in unity and had dwelt upon the troubles caused by contact with Europeans:

> Many whites are good men and true; many are evil disposed and opposed to law; these latter come among us and because we have dark skins they think we are wild beasts and that they can carry out any iniquity without being called to account.[16]

From his own conversations with Ma'afu Thurston knew that this was the Tongan's own voice. And four months later, as Thurston again learned from the *Fiji Times*, Ma'afu was given pointed proof of the truth of what he had said. The first case came on in Cakaudrove of a planter tried before the white magistrates lately appointed by Tui Cakau in accordance with 'Britannicus's' principles. A planter was fined three dollars for taking yams from a Fijian, meaning to pay for them in his own good time. He burst in on Ma'afu to threaten 'personal chastisement' if Ma'afu himself would not flog the Fijian for thus insolently prosecuting a white man. The European was rebuked by his fellow planters.[17] But next month the Vuna planters supported Ernest Logan, Marshall Moore's partner, who had assumed all the *persona* of a Fijian chief in accepting office as a magistrate. White supremacy demanded that he whip a Fijian caretaker who protested at his borrowing the Marist priest's boat without permission, Logan declared, while as a *turaga ni lewa* he had the power of life and death over Fijians. Moreover, he demanded of the planters' meeting: 'Is there no one here who has ever struck his labourers for insolence?'[18]

Thurston kept this incident in mind.[19] And he can have found no comfort next month in the Levuka people's refusal to admit Fijian vendors' right to any voice in disputes between Europeans

[15] See, e.g., Thurston to Ma'afu, 2 October 1868, F4/2a.
[16] *Fiji Times*, 23 July, 20 August 1870.
[17] Ibid., 12 November 1870, 14 January 1871.
[18] Ibid., 1 March 1871.
[19] See Thurston to Fred Hennings, 22 April 1872, F1/41.

over conflicting land deeds.[20] The *Fiji Times*'s editorial pronouncement that an indignation-meeting which had warned the 'niggers' against this interference in the superior race's affairs represented 'the voice of the people' was doubly distasteful, for it was the view of that 'Fenian' *Daphne* Smith. Here were all the elements of lynch-law, here rowdiness like that attending the early white settlement of New Zealand. And here were the makings of race-war. In the *Fiji Times* Thurston read of planters' expeditions to punish Fijians who contested their boundaries, filled their cotton houses or insulted their wives. He read of Cakobau's anger too. 'When a native does wrong there is no rest till he be punished', Cakobau was reported as saying in March 1871; 'but I have heard that, the day before yesterday, when a man charged with killing a native was brought to justice, you of Levuka assembled with arms, and refused to give him up . . .'[21]

From *Fiji Times* discussions Thurston found that whites were seeking protection by forming local associations in professed collaboration with the leading chief in their district—that is, he whose mark validated their land titles. In Nadroga and Lau, as in Taveuni itself, such associations were formed. The Europeans were paying all the deference to Fijian sovereignty that 'Britannicus' could have wished. He learned from Swanston's address to a meeting of Lau planters at Lomaloma that this deference was a sham. Swanston recommended this much concession as a means whereby whites could acquire control in Lau. 'By our labours we shall habituate the mind of these savages to pay deference to law in contra distinction to the will of the chief, and the eventual result will be the gradual, imperceptible and peaceful, transfer to us of the entire political power of the country.'[22]

Swanston was advancing this prospect as a sop to induce the Europeans to accept the principle of equality with Fijians and Tongans before the law; but there is little doubt that it accurately represented his personal feelings. He had told Lang that he conceived it 'impracticable for these savages ever of themselves, or for themselves, to establish any political structure that we should be able at any future day to dignify by the title of a Government'.[23]

[20] *Fiji Times*, 22 and 25 February, 1 March 1871.
[21] Ibid., 13 March 1871.
[22] Ibid., 7 January 1871.
[23] Statement by Swanston, 7 July 1869, ML A2229.

And the *Fiji Times* interpreted him to whites generally as advising their 'yielding as occasion requires, to gain the confidence of the natives'—which done, 'our course in the future will be free from many difficulties'.[24]

Thurston possessed other reading matter besides the *Fiji Times* and his Humboldt, Macaulay and Washington Irving for the heat of the day and the long dark evenings at Naveitalacagi. He received a copy of the *Anthropological Review* for April 1870 from Dr J. Barnard Davis, whose article 'Oceanic Races, their hair etc., and the value of skulls in the classification of man' was published in it —published with Thurston's help, perhaps, for Davis was an armchair ethnologist dependent on a correspondent in the islands, 'an experienced observer, who has spent many years in the Pacific', and whose style in the quoted descriptions was much like Thurston's. The article which Thurston lingered over was a posthumously-published one by Dr Hunt, 'On the acclimatisation of Europeans in the United States of America'.[25]

If Thurston knew Hunt's views on race this article would have been particularly compelling. Here he found Hunt on his other theme: the doubtful viability of British settlement overseas. Americans, in Hunt's view, were suffering degeneracy from the effects especially of climatic differences; without continued immigration they must die out. Thurston took malicious satisfaction in the prospect that the civilisation which was 'all hickory ham, wooden nutmeg and nauseous patent medicine' might vanish; but Hunt's argument might equally apply to the acclimatisation of Europeans in Fiji. There also 'that most vain portion of humanity who calls himself Anglo-Saxon', in Hunt's words, he 'who promulgates his so-called "civilisation" by fire and sword', might be expected to vanish, no less than from that New World where 'the almost exterminated savages will be revenged by a slow, gradual degeneracy, and perhaps final extinction, of their conquerors'.

Hunt's article apart, what stuck in Thurston's mind from this issue of the *Anthropological Review* may well have been T. H. Huxley's scientific doubts about the whole vulgar concept of race. 'Sir, first clear your mind of cant', he found Huxley quoting Dr Johnson in a printed lecture. That instruction was agreeable to him, for he found cant in any form detestable; and to him its forms

[24] *Fiji Times*, 11 January 1871.
[25] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.

were many. He thought it particularly enshrined in the shibboleths of the 'middle-class' which, Tory that he was, he felt was fairly depicted in Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (from which he was later to borrow in newspaper articles). In the London *Times*—'regularly read on the shores of Tasman Straits', as he assured Hope—he found the prospect of war with Prussia reported and wrote a high Tory outburst:

> The War policy will I think try the strength of Gladstones Ministry. Our national prestige is sure to be lowered in their hands and the country will open their eyes to the fact ere long. If the Conservative Govts have made mistakes they at least have made them with a dignity of manner inherent to the class to which Conservatives necessarily belong but Bright & Co are Manchester Factory men—and shuffle like other tradesmen I really believe Matt^w^ Arnold is right in saying the effect of the Middle Class (of which Bright is a representative) policy and their several newspapers has done more to make continentals 'think little' of us, than all of the Conservative mistakes. Manchester policy is a shuffling, veering, dog-vane policy, and always will be seeing it is actuated more by regard to the Bankers Balance—than the National honour.[26]

In his eyes it would have been to the national honour to annex or protect Fiji, for instance. He could not readily forgive a government which had left him virtually without direction as acting-consul and his observation of which gave him little hope of positive reactions to the 1870 petition. Nor could he forgive the rejection of himself in favour of March which made him now a simple planter.

He was a practical planter, as his success at Bureta had shown. Huge coffee bushes of his planting still stand in the hills up Naqai creek. He planted cacao too and later put in coconuts; but in 1871 the prime crop was still cotton. The owners of the large north Taveuni plantation Nabeka grossed £900 from fifteen bales of their mid-1871 crop, which sold at forty pence per pound.[27] Hurricanes were a threat but, like the other Taveuni plantations north of Wairiki, Naveitalacagi escaped the hurricane which wrecked many at Vuna in March 1871 and, at Levuka, put Thurston's old ship *Kestrel* on the rocks, her hold full of planters' equipment, before she could get away on her projected labour

[26] Ibid.
[27] *Fiji Times*, 14 February 1872.

voyage.[28] Two months later he had faith enough in a planter's future in Fiji to run down to the New Hebrides for labourers himself.

He sailed from Levuka on 4 May 1871 in the 40-ton topsail schooner *Strathnever*, out of Auckland, which he had chartered at £110 per month in partnership with the Shetland Islander J. H. Petersen, one of the owners of Nabeka and formerly a partner of J. C. Smith; the latter advanced Thurston any of the charter money he lacked. He was going to get men and to return a few whose time was up. And, as he told Hope, he wanted to see how recruits were obtained. It did not take undue scepticism to see the *Daphne* case repeated when Solomon Islanders from the old *Kestrel*, the first ever recruited for Fiji, were paraded before March and, to signify their willingness to serve five years, 'held up their outstretched fingers in the usual manner'.[29]

The unsupervised Fiji recruiting ships were credited with much outright kidnapping and indiscriminate shooting by others besides their Queensland rivals, who had carried government agents since December 1870. Inquiries after Bishop J. C. Patteson of the Melanesian Mission was killed in September 1871 at Nukapu were to elicit sensational stories of disguised ships seen canoe-smashing and man-stealing, their bulkheads pierced for rifle fire into the hold in case of resistance there. Amidst all the apocryphal sightings and identifications it became clear, for example, that the screw-steamer *Wainui* was kidnapping for Fiji; and the schooner observed smashing canoes off Gela by a member of the Melanesian Mission was probably the *Nukulau*, which sailed from Levuka in June 1871.[30] When Thurston cleared the Levuka reef in the *Strathnever* there had been sufficient attacks on small vessels in the New Hebrides to raise the question of provocation.

The cruise was a brief return to an old way of life, not one that he now hankered after but still promising to be agreeable as he walked the little schooner's deck at midnight, close-hauled on the port tack to a sou' sou' westerly with Beqa looming on the weather bow. He learned that the master, Richard Mackay, was an old gossip. From him he heard the story of the Wesleyan devotee

[28] Ibid., 22 March, 5 April 1871.
[29] Ibid., 3 December 1870.
[30] Encls. Admiralty to F.O., 28 December 1871, FO58/130; depositions encl. Douglas to Thurston, 14 September 1872, F1/11.

Alexander Eastgate's leaving New Zealand for Fiji with a bankrupt estate behind him. 'At the first meeting of his creditors, he startled them by commencing proceedings with, "Now my Brethren first let us pray". No wonder I have noticed said man to be highly thought of among the saints.'[31]

Had the winds been fresh and constant the passage to Tana should not have taken more than six days. On the third day out he took time off from casting bullets and doctoring a sick return to calculate that they might be in sight of Kadavu again on 30 June, 'if we are very fortunate'; but it was nine days before they raised Tana. Meanwhile he had recourse to his books.

> During the morning read a little in Vol. 2 of Humboldts 'Cosmos' upon the various descriptions of nature at various epochs and by various races. One or two quotations recalled to memory the splendid dreams of the 'Great Admiral' and made me wish I had brought Irving's 'Life' with me. His description of the night preceeding the day upon which the Spaniards first gazed upon the isles of the New World always makes my pulse quicken as if I was there awaiting dawn among them.[32]

He was keeping his fullest journal since his days in the *Arabia*, sketching schooner and islands, drawing charts with a practised hand; and his description of a brother of one of the returns met with on the beach at Tana on 13 May showed how much of the eighteen-year-old still lurked in the man of thirty-five. The islander

> was introduced as 'Nolan's brother' which sounded Milesian though the man looked Mel[an]esian probably the fellow is the descendant of some ancient Fenian who has lost his original tint and tradition retaining only the ancestral name and treachery.
>
> Art had done nothing for 'Nolan's brother', his mug was neither 'handsomely carved' nor fancifully painted. In one hand he held a bit of string, that is to say he was carrying his clothes, in the other he grasped a very small crab. We had evidently disturbed the arrangements he was making for breakfast—but 'Nolan's brother' seemed to

[31] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau Fiji to the New Hebrides in search of Voluntary Emigrants. Kept by John B. Thurston—Schooner "Strathnever"' (MS.), 4 May 1871. (He did not name Eastgate, whose identity is revealed in a manuscript note by another Fiji resident on a published version of the story: see J. M. R. Young, 'Frontier Society in Fiji 1858-1873', Ph.D. thesis, Adelaide, 1968.)

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from the surviving manuscript version of the *Strathnever* journal— a fair copy of the original made by Thurston himself, but slightly shorter than the typescript which his younger daughter made of the original before, apparently, destroying it.

[32] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau . . .', 7 and 10 May 1871.

care but little—his friends had unexpectedly turned up perhaps a breakfast might turn up also.

Thurston saw the New Hebrides again through a faint blur of memory, with eyes habituated to the scenery of Fiji. The sight of Futuna, some thirty-five miles south-east of Tana, reminded him of time's passage. It was ten years since he first glimpsed it. 'Then I was onboard the old "James" on my way from the Kingsmills to Sydney. What strange events have happened to me since.'[33] And the south coast of Tana reminded him of Taveuni in general contour:

> Between the several bluff points small bays of no depth presented themselves, and apparently there were many villages—for columns of pale blue smoke & groups of natives were frequently seen. Inland the hills sloped upward with a very gradual incline—as at Nai-sele-sele, and the lightly timbered land with frequent clear spaces intervening showed cultivation was largely carried on. The whole scene was charming—very Fijian—rock—and reef—mountain and dale—verdure everywhere—and only broken by the sunlight chasing the shadows among the hills.

He had two days on the north-west coast, putting returns ashore at Blackbeach and walking inland with an eye to the flora—in particular 'a beautiful palm growing forty or forty-five feet high with a crown of graceful densely spreading frond that put me into ec[s]tasies of admiration'—as well as to the Tanese who 'do not as in Fiji sell yams by fifties or hundreds but by ones and two's—so bartering is an interminable job, and while on charter . . . a very losing one'. He was taken to a hut between two great trees around which the ground was cleared and trampled, as for dancing. 'A lot of wild Tanna men, yelling and dancing under the huge branches . . . the scene lit up by huge fires must certainly be a most damnable sight.'[34] The Tanese had become accustomed to visiting Europeans' lust for land and at Blackbeach in particular they sold the same areas repeatedly to different visitors.[35] When Thurston was there some whites who had actually settled at Blackbeach had lately fled to the eastern coast in fear of the Tanese. 'From all we could learn, the Chief Yatu had been ordered out of a house and then fired at',

[33] Ibid., 11 May 1871.
[34] Ibid., 13 and 14 May 1871.
[35] See the case papers for Tana in External Affairs records, the judgments of the New Hebrides Joint Court, and, generally, Scarr, *Fragments of Empire*, 176-251, *passim*.

Thurston recorded, and told Yatu that the whites were curs for running away instead of shooting him. 'He said he was not angry and didn't fire first'; and his people offered Thurston, in his turn, miles of rolling country. 'I told them however they must get civil before I came there as I should certainly kill them if they worried me.'[36]

He left Tana with that pleasantry and, running up to Efate with a fresh breeze, learned how inferior the *Strathnever*'s gear was as the running-rigging parted around him. Many of the sheets and halyards were of cheap New Zealand flax and 'resemble haybands more than anything else', he wrote some six weeks later when he had learned all about the ship's ill-found condition and her master's determination to spin out the voyage for as many months as possible. 'Hungry goats would eat them of[f] the belaying pins.'[37]

He was off Efate on 16 May, the finest island he had yet seen in the Pacific, it seemed from the sea, 'and if healthy and the natives quiet would be a splendid place on which to settle'. With the anchor down in Vila harbour, he began work in earnest. He knew the Efate people in Fiji as tractable, willing labourers; but on their home ground he found those of Pango, in particular, well-up in dealing with European visitors. He did not much care for it. Trading for yams on the beach he

> for the first time realized the curse of English speaking natives . . . on all sides I was saluted with 'Well: what have you got'. 'Show us your cloth'. 'What do you wear a pistol for are you afraid of us' And one fellow, standing with crossed arms and lowering brow said in measured tones, 'look here, are you going to buy these yams according to your own rate, or according to ours, because if you dont buy as we are inclined to sell you had better take your things away'.
>
> I felt inclined to hit him between the eyes, but as I should have certainly got well mauled and robbed in return I merely closed the box & told him to keep his yams. For three hours, I stood buying among a set of rascals as sharp as Jews of Ratcliffe Highway. They offered 20 yams for two fths of cloth, and when I said 50 for the same amount they yelled in derision. Finally I got 20 for a fathom but they always tried to put in little ones about the size of a turkey egg and when I said 'Your yams are like our fowl's eggs' they retorted 'Yes! but they're bigger than your potatoes'. I bought 740 & returned to ship by one p.m. almost famished.[38]

[36] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau . . .', 14 May 1871.
[37] Ibid., 1 July 1871.
[38] Ibid., 17 May 1871.

Next morning he was away early to Fila in the inner harbour to beat a rival recruiter. He 'engaged Sam and Tom, two English speaking men the former highly recommended—and both of great experience among the islands', whom he hoped to use as intermediaries in recruiting and would return later. Fila he found more agreeable than Pango, the houses each with its own fence and scrupulously clean, the women 'ornamented with a profusion of red and white beads' and reminding him 'very much of Africans excepting in features for some of them had really handsome profiles'. At the dancing-place he found a fine array of slit-gongs, carved and painted, 'certainly the most wonderful things in that way I have ever seen', all about fifteen feet high and many very thick. 'Eight or nine . . . stood together and from the effect of a few blows I struck upon three of them, their united sound must be quite deafening.'

The sea outside the harbour was thick with ships, many of them recruiters; and a call he made at Mele islet to find no men left supported the impression he had formed at Tana that in three years' time Fiji would get no labourers from the New Hebrides.[39] He boarded one of his rivals, Queensland's *Spunkie,* and found her master's head swathed in bandages from an axe-blow at Malekula for which her people blamed kidnapping from canoes by the *Wainui.* 'I have no doubt this is fact', wrote Thurston, 'for I have heard the same reported by men who were onboard of her'. The master's injuries added point to the warning he gave

> that we were entering field where life is not certain a moment. Bullets and poisoned arrows being the first or last salutation of the people . . . He advised our taking two boats ashore—one to lay on oars outside the one trading or holding communication in order they might cover her with firearms, or in case of assault, assist to rescue the crew.
>
> It is evident all round that getting labour is more difficult and dangerous than we at first conceived . . .[40]

So it proved. And so he proceeded into July as the schooner worked north through the New Hebrides into the Banks Islands. He went away early each morning, balancing in stockinged feet at the steering-oar of his whaleboat, to lie stern-first off black sand or

[39] Ibid., 18 May 1871.
[40] Ibid., 17 May 1871.

rocks buyings yams and tempting away men to eat them with offers of trade-goods for their kinsmen, while Petersen lay further out in the covering-boat with rifles at the ready. The trade had been carried on in this way for some eight years now, when it had been conducted without force; and so it was to be carried on during another thirty, for all Thurston's conviction that the group was already drained of men.[41]

He had counted much on the influence of men from Bureta, whom he was returning, to help him get labourers. He had the reputation of being a good employer.[42] He fed his men well, paid them fully and doctored their ills as well as an acquired skill allowed. At Emae, which had a near-Polynesian chiefly structure, he returned men whose thirty-three articles of trade in pay stood well against the seven which others had each lately brought from Fiji and were six higher than some Queensland returns had just received. Planters were named who were holding men beyond their due time, however, and the word had gone out that no more must leave for Fiji.

He was recognised as the one-time consul—'& one or two chiefs who have not been onboard ship for years have ventured . . . to go onboard (very much against the wishes of some of their people) & I have not let them go away empty handed'.[43] He learned there could be danger in this recognition when, stepping ashore at Tongoa to inspire confidence in people who seemed ready to shower the boat with stones that would have stove her in, he found that his sitting on the shingle talking about their wrongs was to no purpose. He felt 'a Planter's scapegoat'. 'That the good men do is often buried with their bones while the evil lives after them, is well known to me, but the good I have at times done to these natives while in Fiji, must have been buried at once.'[44]

They redeemed themselves a little next day by bringing him plants, taking him into their town to see a dance, and warning him not to leave his boat at the island north of Tongoa, Epi, where indeed he 'heard tales of Fiji man-stealing' and found that, when

[41] Deryck Scarr, 'Recruits and Recruiters: a portrait of the labour trade', in *Pacific Islands Portraits*; and the introduction to Deryck Scarr (ed.), *A Cruize in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas*, by W. E. Giles (Canberra, 1968).

[42] Evidence before Cakobau government's Polynesian labour commissioners, 9 October 1871, CO881/4, COCP Australia No. 40.

[43] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau . . . ', 24 May 1871.

[44] Ibid., 26 May 1871.

young men were willing to come, their kinsmen often prevented them. He did get a few men here, however; he recorded his appreciation of the Epi men's fine stature, their high, narrow skulls, very black hair and painted faces, and noted their arrows carried in a quiver and their mission hatchets. A heavy swell along the north coast of Epi drove him over to Ambrym—where the people impressed him still more—and after recruiting six men in two days he went on to Raga. There bushmen tried to drag the boat ashore and could only be kept off by the display of a 15-inch knife. 'To Revolvers they paid no attention one might as well have presented a beer bottle.'

He returned aboard after this episode to find that the *Dancing Wave* had picked up twenty men at Ambrym the day after the *Strathnever* left. 'No doubt our negotiations and bearing had just paved the way for him.'[45] It was bitter to lose such a haul when he and Petersen were pulling and sailing up to twenty-five miles a day along rugged coasts to collect in handfuls the sixty men the schooner could carry and invariably faced a long trip back to her at night as she sagged away to leeward in the hands of her incompetent master.

The mishandling of the *Strathnever* was at its most dangerous in the Banks Islands. Thurston recruited three men at Meralava—'a wonderful spot', teeming with people and with its yam plantations 'to be seen in terraces right up to the summit or as near the summit as clouds will permit you to see'. Called by somebody ashore, a new recruit leaped overboard after the presents had been given and a second followed; but, 'as this trick has been done too often', Thurston hauled one back aboard. 'The other boy—given to me by his Father with many requests as to his welfare, and solemnised by rubbing noses, laughed heartily and seemed in no way frightened at this episode.' Along the rocks women ran to beckon in the boat, but their menfolk were watchful behind them; when Thurston did recruit women elsewhere for work as cotton-sorters, he was careful to make sure that they were free to come.[46] Throughout the history of the labour trade, the recruiter's boat offered escape to the discontented women of Melanesia; and often the taking of them brought a volley of musketry at the next boat to call.

[45] Ibid., 6 June 1871.
[46] Ibid., 23 June 1871.

For the next island north, Santa Maria, he had an intermediary, one of the *Daphne* recruits brought down to interpret, through whom he had more stories of kidnapping but, notwithstanding, got some men and was invited to spend a night ashore. He made it the night of 16 June, sleeping in an inland village in a house 'thatched most beautifully with Sago palm leaves', 'the neatest thing I ever saw', and next day inspected the masks of the performers in the rites of the *sukwe* club 'which rising to a peak four feet above the head covered the face, and the whole chest of the wearer', the upper part a mass of red berries and the rest 'formed of stiff white pith laid upon a frame work . . .'.[47]

Occasions like this were by way of a holiday for him, though for Petersen this one meant a night of anxiety on his behalf. But, with thirty-two recruits aboard, there were still another twenty to be got before the charter-money could be considered well-spent and the risks of recruiting regarded as passed. Two days later, on the weather side of the island, a nervous string-finger ashore saved the boats from an ambush laid by men whose wives were bent on running away to Fiji. The first arrow was loosed too soon and the boats pulled away under a pall of smoke from answering rifles, their occupants meditating on the properties of the Banks Islanders' arrowheads of human bone which, though not 'poisoned' in the fashion the intended victims supposed, were sufficiently imbued with the tetanus bacillus to ensure that a man hit might die in agony. Thurston had a still narrower escape on the same coast twelve days later: answering smoke-columns to go in for recruits, he was set upon for trade-goods and again it came to flights of arrows and shots.[48]

In all, the Banks Islands came near finishing his career, for at Ureparapara in the last week of June the *Strathnever*'s master surpassed his habitually bad seamanship. At Vanua Lava on 23 June Thurston had picked up a man, evidently an old hand, who, hailed casually, came off with an insouciance that surprised him, bringing another along, and who mentioned the crater on Ureparapara as a likely place. Leaving the schooner hove-to outside, Thurston sailed in baffling winds through the narrow inlet between high cliffs, not a quarter of a mile apart, to where the cutter *Lapwing* could be seen lying inside.

[47] Ibid., 16-17 June 1871.
[48] Ibid., 19 June, 1 July 1871.

Just then an exclamation from the boys made me look round, when to my anger and astonishment, I saw the 'Strathnever' careering into the gorge dead before the wind.

. . . here was her obstinate stupid old Master running headlong into the centre of a blown out volcano. Surrounded by abrupt mountains two thousand feet in height, subject to alternate calm, whirlwind and descending squall, utterly ignorant whether or not the interior basin was of unfathomable depth, or its waters broken by detatched reefs, and utterly devoid of any seamanship or ability to extricate his vessel from the improper place into which he was standing, this man actually imperilled his uninsured vessel, our interests, and the lives and safety of everyone on board.

Mackay explained that the sight of the *Lapwing* had encouraged him in, 'though from the distance at which he was the Cutter might have been high and dry for all he knew to the contrary', as Thurston pointed out. There was deep water, as it happened; but the problem was to get out again next day, under heavy rain, with alternate calms and baffling gusts that filled the mainsail one way, the jibs the other. With a boat out on a line ahead to help her head around in stays the schooner tacked back up the gorge, sluggish as a log in 'the heaving black-blue sea', whilst 'along the shores rolled the surf, licking the thirsty chaps of the rock bound cliffs . . .'. She won her way clear at last, but only after moments that put Thurston in mind of the *Star of Eve*'s fate, though they enabled him to show that he had not forgotten his Marryat. And he liked, of course, to dramatise:

. . . when the men were worn out with pulling in the boat, a flaw of wind . . . shot the ship so near to the mouth, that she felt the influence of the wind outside which blew diagonally across it.

After two tacks we headed a little to windward of the lee point, a bluff precipice against which the sea broke heavily, sending tons of seething foamy water far up its face.

The Master thought the vessel would weather it. I thought my swimming powers were going to be tested again. On we went, slowly, slowly, drawing out two feet and settling to leeward three. All hands stood silent not a sound could be heard from any of the seventy souls onboard. The stupid old master, silent, trembling chewing tobacco mechanically held the wheel.

Will she not stay said I, although I felt it was now too late.

'No, no', was the reply 'she *must* weather it. Oh my God, my God'. To leeward, not three ships length off lay the rocks, the heavy short seas tumbling off the point stopped her way—she ceased to go ahead and began drifting to speedy destruction.

How much I thought of in one minute. I did not fear for my life, intending to jump overboard before she struck, but I thought of my natives, my lost work, time & property on board—above all of the 'Lapwing' and that I had better charter her at a tempting sum, to carry myself and people home at once. 'In to the boat my crew', said I. 'Let us save that'. 'Down helm' said the mate at the same time 'she might come round and if not may as well go on stern first as any other way'.

Down went the helm, and she came slowly up to the sea—and stuck there. By this time I and my boys were in the boat, but on the lee side and the ship drifted so fast we could not clear her from the side owing to the great pressure. By our limited forces we pulled to the bow, when a great sea lifted us up, nearly smashed the boat against the anchor—struck the bow with great force—and—paid her head off the right way.

The ship was now within the foam and backwash from the rocks. It was impossible amid the roar of water to hear an order if it were given.

Slowly, it seemed an hour—though it could not have been two minutes—she paid off and gathered way . . . She drew gradually forward, a light puff of air help[ed] her and in five minutes time by the mercy of God she was out of a danger from which no seamanship could have saved her.[49]

His time in the Banks Islands enabled him to call on Bishop Patteson at Mota, with whom he discussed an episcopal visit to Fiji to bolster up the Reverend Mr Floyd of Levuka, and considered the possibility of Anglican mission work among the imported labourers. Patteson recorded their conversation about recruiting:

> He says, that about 3000 natives from Tanna to [Ureparapara] are in Fiji, & Queensland has perhaps as many . . . He admits that much kidnapping goes on. He, with all his advantages of personal acquaintance with the people, & with the native interpreters on board, could only get about 30. Another . . . a respectable man who would not kidnap cruised for some weeks and left for Fiji, without a single native on board. How then do others obtain 70 or 100 or more?[50]

But the men he nevertheless recruited there made it unnecessary to go on to the Solomon Islands, for which he was devoutly relieved, much as he would have liked to see the group.

[49] Ibid., 24-5 June 1871.
[50] Ibid., 22 June 1871; extract from letter by Patteson, 8 July 1871, Gladstone Papers, BM Add MSS. 44299.

When he ordered her head turned south on 3 July the schooner had on board most of the fifty-five to sixty labourers who would work their five years at Nabeka and Naveitalacagi, at which latter plantation three died. But Thurston had another month to suffer before he saw Fiji again, his back strapped up against a wrenching at Ureparapara, by his own account keeping his temper with the 'consummate robber' of a master until Mackay became 'impertinent', and going out in the boats for yams and the occasional recruit as the *Strathnever* faltered her way south. On 14 July she was anchored at the southern end of Pentecost in a gale while Thurston, cooped up by driving rain in her tiny cabin with four others,

> as a diversion tried to commit Grey's Churchyard Elegy to memory, but as the rain fell in one solid sheet as if the flood gates of Heaven were opened I turned from that to a poem upon the Deluge entitled 'The last Man' and sent myself into a doze in which I dreamed I was on board Noah's Ark beating up to Fiji under a strong trade wind with five hundred labourers in the hold & Japhet as Supercargo.

Two days later, drifting in calms off the Shepherd Islands, he had less uncomfortable leisure to speculate on Melanesian origins and ancient means of transport. He was given 'a hearty welcome' next day at Tongariki by his old labourers from the *Reliance* who told him that hardly three days passed without a ship calling to recruit or trade. It was at neighbouring Emae that he had recorded the prevalence of pidgin English, tools and guns, tobacco and matches, and had known that he was 'in Greater Great Britain'.[51] So he had felt throughout the islands wherever the pull of Queensland, New Caledonia and Fiji had become established.

Then on 19 July the part of dreamer and speculator was replaced by that of man of action, which of all roles was his favourite. At the Presbyterian mission island of Nguna he found that ten nights before, in the Reverend Peter Milne's absence, the small Fiji schooner *Fanny* had been cut out and two of her European crew killed. He assembled the story carefully from the Rarotonga mission teachers and a former labourer of one of his old neighbours at Bureta—'nothing so easy as making mistakes in native matters'—then set about refloating the schooner and

[51] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau . . .', 24 May 1871.

rescuing her master, the sole survivor. He had it well in train, with the *Strathnever*'s people, before a boatload of Havannah Harbour settlers came up to help. He recorded his admiration for the Rarotongan teachers and was more pacific with the Nguna people than he felt prompted to be. 'I felt very much inclined to make it lively for these gentlemen—but found myself in a fix', he told Hope.

> If I had shot a score of them & burned the town—the throats of the teachers would have been cut five minutes after I had lifted the anchor. Again if as at one time I intended I had embarked the Teachers & carried them away to Aneiteum. The whole Presbyterian Synod would have persecuted me to the death—as a pirate and robber of Mission Stations. Under these circumstances I did the best I could—prevented my own people—and also other crews . . . from taking reprisals—and accepted the assurances of the Nguna men that no teacher or Missionary should be molested.[52]

Later that year H.M.S. *Rosario*, under a new commander, fired shot and shell into Nguna with Milne's approval; and questions were raised in Parliament as a result.

Thurston had been out now for close on three weeks longer than he had hoped to be. Another fortnight elapsed before he saw Ovalau again, spent beating against a strong trade in the ill-found, ill-managed schooner while he doctored one of his boat's crew, wounded by an arrow at Santa Maria, whom he was determined to see prove that the 'poisoned' point need not be fatal. One of the Ambrym recruits was sick too, shot through both thighs when a rifle accidentally discharged. 'I was standing at my plant case and the charge passed about 11 inches from my back.'[53] The schooner was five days tacking along the Viti Levu coast to Ovalau; and by the fourth, with thoughts of a naval court into the master's conduct in mind, he was trying to give himself and Petersen the appearance of men deeply engrossed in their books, himself resorting to Humboldt and Macaulay alternately. But at noon on 7 August the anchor went down in Levuka harbour. He was conscious of nothing but relief to be within a final short sail of his home and, well supplied now with reliable labour, had no intention of leaving it in the foreseeable future except for a holiday visit, perhaps to Auckland or Sydney. Had he stood by this intention there might

[52] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals.
[53] 'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau . . . ', 19 July 1871.

have been Thurston graves at Naveitalacagi now, even a Thurston family still living on Taveuni.

But he left the plantation only nine months later, and to all practical ends permanently. Political affairs had come to a head during his absence. While he was pulling through wind and rain, a government had been sprung on Fiji. All the abortive constitution-mongering of the previous two years had been short-circuited. In June 1871 Cakobau had declared himself King of Fiji and had appointed a small group of white residents in and around Levuka as his Ministers. And Thurston, soon after his return, was forced into an involvement that he would have preferred to avoid.

8

'I am now a Fiji-man'

WHEN Thurston landed from the *Strathnever* in August 1871 Levuka was full of political rumour and constitutional theorising. Since June it had been the seat of the government which was to live for almost three years as that of the Kingdom of Fiji—as the '*de facto*', the 'so-called', as 'Cakobau's', and as 'Thurston's Government'. Thurston's part in it was to make him the man most hated by Europeans in Fiji, where once he was among the most admired. He was to be the Messiah turned Judas.

Such a metamorphosis would not have been particularly unlikely, nor an over-difficult one, in a tiny white community fighting for political dominance and economic survival. In reality it was no metamorphosis at all and therefore perhaps was the more unacceptable. Men were to feel cheated who, in their expectation of Thurston, had cheated themselves. They had assumed that their own assumptions were also his—the man of whom the proprietor of their newspaper was to complain to 'Mr Alderman' McArthur that he held office under a colonial government, to the detriment of white interests, as the nominee of Cakobau.[1]

Thurston's instinct was to keep clear of political involvement as he got his labourers ashore from the schooner. Here was a unified Kingdom, summoned into existence by proclamation issued in Cakobau's name, with Ma'afu already joined as Viceroy and offering the prospect of a unified Fiji; but here, too, were European 'Ministers' at £500 a year, new arrivals all, flotsam on 1870's flood-tide of immigration; and here were bank-notes, backed by a Treasury empty except for small loans negotiated with Rabone, Feez & Co. Here were theatricals to avoid which Thurston had

[1] Encl. McArthur to C.O., 17 August 1878, CO83/18.

helped launch the 1870 petition for British protection. Amused and apprehensive, he had renewed hopes of returning to the consulate, which March's mysteries and half-promises led him again to believe would soon be vacant. And when he was immediately offered the post of Chief Secretary, he may have thought the resignation of the then incumbent was the more agreeable part.[2]

Now the results of increased European settlement were becoming even more apparent in hostile Fijian reaction. And, however much whites might question the legitimacy of Ministers' positions,[3] they were willing to test their effectiveness by fastening upon them responsibilities like those arising on the Ba. Planters there, living on land which Tawaki of the *Kai* Tio had sold them to protect himself against the mountaineers,[4] had supposed themselves mere spectators of a Fijian fight until July 1871, when James Macintosh and John Spiers were killed—killed over land, according to one planter's later recollection, but possibly in revenge against 'those white men who went about with revolvers popping at the Fijians', as a Ba diarist recorded Fijian hearsay at the time.[5]

Landing into the tail-end of indignation-meetings on the murders, Thurston may have thought the Chief Secretary's post a poisoned chalice. And he could not think well of these 'Ministers' who wanted him as ballast: principally the then Chief Secretary, S. C. Burt, defaulting auctioneer from Sydney who had been Cakobau's commercial agent since his escape to Fiji in 1870: and the Premier, George Austin Woods, paunchy, loud-voiced, one-time lieutenant in the Victorian naval reserve who had been dismissed in 1867 after rumoured financial misdemeanours like those which were said to have occasioned his leaving the Royal Navy as a midshipman. Woods had come down in March 1871 to plan a survey of the Nanuku passage at the invitation of a committee of Levuka businessmen.[6] And it almost looked as though the commission to arrange this survey which a public meeting had confided to that committee had been construed as a mandate to govern Fiji; alongside Cakobau's half-brother Ratu Savenaca Naulivou and son

[2] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals.
[3] See, e.g., Diary of G. H. W. Markham, 13 June 1871, ML A1462.
[4] LCC R982; Thomson to Colonial Secretary, 4 November 1893, NLC Outwards Letters and Reports 1890-1900.
[5] LCC R982; Markham, Diary, 13 July 1871.
[6] For Burt, see Thurston to Lang, 23 October 1870, ML A2229; for Woods, see Victoria, *Government Gazette*, 1855-67, *passim*, and his statement of 17 August 1877, LCC R302.

Ratu Timoci Tavanavanua, the Ministry announced in June had contained, besides Burt, the name of another committee-member, J. C. Smith, with Gustave Hennings. The latter two disavowed the nomination; but Smith joined in August, as did the eldest Hennings brother, Fred. Men of business that they were, they needed the security of government and law courts. Yet most white men of any substance or desire to lead a settled life felt that need to varying degrees; they showed it by their eventual general acceptance of Cakobau's government despite the unpopularity of its sudden inauguration.

Thurston was not to be tempted. Having refused Burt's post, he found white politics pursuing their familiar course while he busied himself at Naveitalacagi with his cotton crop and cut new sails for the *Dove*, built a dinghy, put up another house.[7] The question of March-April 1870 was being canvassed again in the columns of the *Fiji Times*. As the paper said, the problem was how to unite extremes under a single constitution. On the one hand, there was 'a King and people lately emerged from barbarism' to whom 'despotism is a normal institution'. On the other, there was 'an intelligent white population, accustomed to freedom, yet desirous of law and order'.[8] While 'Britannicus' remained silent, 'Republican' was abroad again with many allies.

A vociferous body of white opinion still held that the exclusive white republic was preferable to mixed government under an indigenous King. As *Daphne* Smith said now, 'if a permanent colony was to be formed here, let it be one that our posterity would not be ashamed of not one who owned a Polynesian negro for its monarch'. There were men 'who would pamper the natives until no white could live here'. 'Would the electors support such a course, or should they not rather allow the wise natural law to work that law which ordains that the savage shall disappear before the white . . . Divide and govern were his watchword . . .'[9] Though Smith was unpopular personally, his views found much support on the Levuka beach among those 246 voters (almost a third of the group's total white voting strength) who took a lead from the keepers of the hotels where they, 'the people', regularly gathered now in public meeting to relieve the tedium of Levuka life. Smith's

[7] Diary of E. J. Turpin, NAF, 7 December 1871, 17 February 1872.
[8] *Fiji Times*, 17 June 1871.
[9] Ibid., 26 July 1871.

disciple, the planter and hotel-keeper John Manton, came top of the poll for both the constitutional convention of August 1871 and the resulting white Legislative Assembly of October; in the latter instance, Manton had twenty-two votes more than his own, and the community's, creditor, the popular Fred Hennings.[10]

And the racism of men come in since 1868 struck echoing chords in some older residents, who saw the need for compromise disappearing as the white man's day dawned with his rising numbers. Old settlers well knew that Fijians were 'totally destitute of any idea of honor or self-respect', so Thurston could read Robert Spowart, who had sold him Bureta. Fijians were 'treacherous and cunning to a degree, with very little respect for right or wrong, or for our complex moral ideas'. For whites to recognise Cakobau as King would be to encourage Fijians to regard them as *kaisi*, men of no account. Better far a white republic, continued Spowart, 'with the reins of the whole team of chiefs in our hands, and we should daily consolidate our power . . . while lessening that of the native chieftains and . . . gradually become the dominant rulers of the country'.[11] A similar view inspired the Nadroga planters (a self-confessed élite among the planter communities, second only to the Taveuni Lords) who sent 'Colonel' R. W. Hamilton as their delegate to tell stories of Arkansas, urge a white republic and, by his strictures on 'native character', indirectly throw light on the relations of his constituents with Ratu Kini.[12]

Yet there were practical considerations both of local necessity and absence of international alternative. In July 1871 news had reached Fiji that the longed-for Mother Country had cut off Fiji: Lord Kimberley, Colonial Secretary, had announced that the white community was large enough to provide for its own government.[13] Later that month the editor of the *Fiji Times* had come to terms with the reality of Fijians' presence in his own way:

> We do not require their talent, the white man will bring that; but we require their sanction, because in mere brute force . . . we are not more than a fiftieth of what they are, and we also require for purposes of Government their money contributions. In all other respects the Europeans will rule; the power of education and civilisa-

[10] Ibid., 19 and 22 July, 2 and 16 September, 21 October 1871; on Manton's indebtedness to F. & W. Hennings, see, e.g., LCC P148.
[11] *Fiji Times*, 19 July 1871.
[12] Ibid., 29 July 1871.
[13] Ibid., 12 July 1871.

tion must come to the front, and if the prominent figure be a native, whether in the form of a King or a president, it is only a puppet, the strings of which are pulled by the white man.[14]

This pragmatism operated in the constitutional convention. From the convention emerged a constitutional monarchy with twenty-eight white representatives in a Legislative Assembly, while the Fijian Governors and Lieutenant-Governors were to sit in the Privy Council. And the editorial's soothing assumption operated in the Legislative Assembly. There a spectre raised by careless drafting in the Constitution Act, whereby the franchise was granted to 'every male subject of the Kingdom', was exorcised by the Electoral Act: 'male subject' meant 'all residents . . . other than Native-born subjects and Natives of any Polynesian islands', the Electoral Act declared. The Assembly's assumptions were further revealed when Henry Eastgate of Rewa, successful proposer of this amendment, went on to demand separate birth-registers—for Eastgate 'was a white man and a European and the other was a black man and a Fijian'.[15]

As Thurston told Fred Hennings a few weeks later, it was 'so certain that contempt is the feeling generally held by civilized men towards a barbarous or semi-barbarous people' that, 'in the interests of humanity and justice', only very exceptional Europeans should be given authority over Fijians.[16] He himself had evidence that Cakobau thought him exceptional, for all their earlier troubles—the evidence of two letters which Cakobau sent him, asking for his help.[17] He knew better than to suppose Cakobau a puppet. His own experience at the consulate would have led Thurston to agree with Fison that the Vunivalu of Bau was 'obstinate as a pig', one who 'throughout his lifetime has never acknowledged any law as to political action but his own will . . .'.[18] And in fact the Ministers of Cakobau Rex were already learning how determined he was to rule in matters Fijian, and how Fijians scorned any orders not delivered as from him.[19]

[14] Ibid., 29 July 1871.
[15] Ibid., August 1871, *passim*, and 9 December 1871.
[16] Thurston to Fred Hennings, 22 April 1872, F1/41.
[17] Thurston to Carnarvon, 20 October 1874, and C.O. to Gordon, 3 March 1875, C.O. Despatches to Governor of Fiji.
[18] Fison to his brother, 26 December 1871, Press Copy Book of Rev. L. Fison, ML B591.
[19] Burnes to Woods, 14 September 1871, F1/31; Executive Council Minutes, October 1871.

Thurston's own feelings on the relations between Europeans and Pacific islanders were complicated now by his sense of the 'wonderful permeating force' of white civilisation, or its artefacts, which he had felt in the New Hebrides. He indulged in misty speculation over his pipe. 'Are we not a sort of modern Gades outside the pale of civilization instead of outside the Pillars of Hercules—a kind of hedge or boundary between Heathenism and Christianity between Barbarism and Civilization.'[20] Then on 9 September 1871, three days after he wrote this, he was given cause to wonder how firm that boundary was. His Fijian neighbours killed all of Fitzsimmons's and Ryan's imported labourers who did not escape into the bush or swim to Naveitalacagi. 'The natives have given me their reasons but they are simply absurd', wrote Thurston at the time, 'the strongest one being that the murdered men stole some of their nuts and also challenged them to fight'. 'If I ascertain the rights of the affair', he continued to March, 'I will write you again'.[21] Talking later with Tui Cakau, he found that there was a boundary dispute involved, as well as Fijian women. Thereafter he insisted that the labourers had fired first.[22] He led no punitive expedition in the meantime, even though his neighbour Cruickshank was full of anger and fear at the dangers which would threaten if the dead were not avenged by the combined whites.[23] Thurston was for legitimacy; in this case, that meant punishment by Tui Cakau.

He was appealed to by Ratu Golea in October. Fred Hennings and Ratu Timoci were anchored at Wairiki with a force from the visiting U.S.S. *St Mary's* below hatches; they proposed to force Tui Cakau's adherence to the government and to secure Brower's support by obtaining the chief's recognition of certain repudiated American land-claims. Thurston wrote them a letter on Tui Cakau's behalf. Later, when their Minute of intentions came into his hands, he covered it with derisive italics which convey his opinion of the Ministry's notions of justice and diplomacy.[24]

Yet he could see that the idea of central government was

[20] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1871, Letter-Journals.
[21] Thurston to March, 9 September 1871, F4/10.
[22] Thurston to Douglas, 12 September 1872, F1/23.
[23] Cruickshank to March, 11 December 1871, F4/10.
[24] *Fiji Times*, 30 August, 20 September, 18 October 1871; Thurston to Commissioner for Lands, 4 March 1876, with encls., and to Williamson, 5 July 1880, with encls., LCC R121.

attractive to Fijians. The adhesion of Ma'afu looked hopeful even to Frederick Langham,[25] though men might doubt whether the Tongan understood his oath of allegiance in any sense recognised by Europeans.[25] Ma'afu's example helped to bring in Tui Bua, while his intervention in a war on the Dreketi resulted in Ritova's nominal adherence.[26] When Tui Cakau finally joined under more pacific representations from Levuka and Bau, all windward Fiji had recognised Cakobau's government. And on Viti Levu too it achieved a degree of acceptance which would have seemed visionary before this. The Ra coast was secured by Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro, long resident there, who became its Governor, took in the Yasawas, and levied with no lighter hand upon turtles for his *magiti* and women for his bed. Deep inland, Viti Levu remained inaccessible to direct political influence, but on the Ba coast the *Kai* Tio's need for Bauan support helped to secure the government there, while in Serua and Namosi men may have seen it as a useful counterweight against both their mountaineer neighbours and the claims to authority over themselves of the Rewa chiefs. At Nadroga Bauan predominance was resisted by both Ratu Kini and the planters. The latter's opposition may have been significant, for the Ka Levu allowed Europeans to speak more authoritatively for him than most of his fellows in the Fijian hierarchy. In early 1872 he came in—whether influenced by the Ministers' intercessions through his creditor Gus Hennings or by the planters' decision to try this new central government.[27]

Meantime, Europeans had continued to outrage Thurston's sense of legitimacy. Concern for an Englishman's innate constitutional rights had gone hand in hand with fear for the honour of an Anglo-Saxon amongst 'niggers'. The *Fiji Times* had cried 'despotism' when the Ministers pressed on with government by Order-in-Council before elections to the Legislative Assembly were completed.[28] And it was 'an outrage to every white man here' for a European to be imprisoned with a Fijian, the Cicia planter George McEvoy had told a cheering meeting at Levuka chaired by

[25] Langham to Rabone, 26 August 1871, MOM 103; Fison to his brother, 26 December 1871, ML B591.

[26] LCC P456, R788; *Fiji Times*, 11 November 1871.

[27] For Ratu Kini, see, e.g., Rennie and Thomson to March, encl. March to F.O., 30 October 1871, FO 58/120; and, for the rest, Ministry of Native Affairs and Chief Secretary's correspondence.

[28] *Fiji Times*, 21 October 1871.



10 Enele Ma'afu, about 1876



11 Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro, about 1876

12 George Austin Woods, Premier and Minister for Lands and Works, August 1873





13 Robert Sherson Swanston, Minister for Native Affairs, August 1873



14 John Bates Thurston, Chief Secretary and Minister for Foreign Relations, August 1873



15 Cakobau Rex, August 1873

Swanston.[29] Direct democracy had prevailed on the beach; the gaol had been broken open, offenders put on trial before 'the people'.[30]

And the idea of the white republic was always to live alongside the desired alternative of British annexation, the more or less despised expedient of Fijian monarchy. The republic had a champion now in Thurston's supplanter March, who encouraged men to ignore the government. For March took it as a personal insult, threatened to pack Ministers off for trial in Sydney if they interfered with British subjects, declined to attend the commission it had set up to inquire into the labour traffic[31]—all this while his Foreign Office superiors were congratulating themselves that Cakobau Rex and his Ministers would now remove responsibility for the control of the British in Fiji from Downing Street's own nerveless hands.[32]

The obstructing consul had enjoyed a novel popularity with whites until, early in 1872 when the Legislative Assembly was enacting law, other planters besides those of Nadroga decided to see whether their own habitual resort to direct action against Fijians might not be rendered unnecessary by the action of the new courts. In March thirty-one Rewa settlers protested at the public meetings in Levuka which were 'frustrating the general wish for peace order & good government . . .':

> The feeling in the native mind, never hitherto in our favor, will if such a state of things be allowed to continue, become absolutely against us—already and with good ground they complain of having to pay taxes while the whites refuse to bear their share . . .[33]

The following month twelve planters from five other districts met at the Planters Club Hotel, with John Rennie from the large Maro plantation at Nadroga in the chair, to associate themselves with this Rewa protest.[34]

This left the consul as would-be secret patron of a set of Levuka irreconcilables to government and taxes in any shape. So they seemed to Thurston and their actions betrayed them. They were

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.; Roche and Cox to Burt, 19 October 1871, F1/10.
[31] March to Burt, 30 June 1871, F1/14; Senior's affidavit, 13 October 1871, and Lyttleton to Burt, 9 December 1871, F1/14.
[32] Wylde's Minute, 10 September 1871, and F.O. to Sagar, September 1871 (draft), FO58/129.
[33] Statement by Rewa settlers, 16 March 1872, F1/10.
[34] Rennie and Truscott to Burt, 15 April 1872, F1/10.

watermen and cabinet-makers, a photographer, hairdresser, shipwright and several publicans—all essentially transients.[35] Their strong point on the waterfront was Keyse's Hotel, fraudulently acquired[36] by one of their notables who was to bolt from law at last to a violent death in the Gilbert Islands. He was St John Curtis Keyse, elderly, respectable, later Thurston's would-be murderer.[37] Their leader was already well known to Thurston: Hume J. Beatson, President of their British Subjects' Mutual Protection Society. A deserter from the Royal Navy, as Thurston believed, Beatson had latterly been master of a recruiting brig by which, at March's instance, Thurston had returned his *Daphne* labourers—to his own loss and theirs, he feared, for he suspected they had received nothing of the £234 10s which he had paid Beatson on their behalf.[38]

In early 1872 Thurston read of charades enacted at Levuka which helped to harden his contempt for the attitudes of Europeans—contempt which may have been given sharper edge by the recollection that he himself had shared those attitudes once. It was clear that men were clinging to the sense of invulnerability they derived from their British nationality because they had little else to hold to. The rags of race were being drawn about a more than material nakedness. At three shots from a carronade the B.S.M.P.S. members were 'rolling up', armed, to protect any one of them threatened with government arrest and put him first on his trial before 'the people'. The group was aptly apostrophised by the government as 'the Ku Klux'. When word came that R. W. Keane (alias Smith) had shot Ratu Isikeli's brother in a revival of the Kuladrusi dispute, a man appointed to arrest him was intimidated by a member's abuse: 'You are worse than a bloody Nigger and would work for a Nigger'.[39]

A revealing weakness hung about some whites who came before the courts. There was Sinclair, back from a labour voyage (his track crossing the *Strathnever*'s, whereby a charge was to hang against Thurston)[40] which had ended with the murder of two Europeans by Malekulans aboard his ship in Levuka harbour. Tried for assault

[35] See their *Fiji Times* advertisements, 12 June 1872.

[36] See J. E. Mason to Burt, 15 September 1871, F1/10, and connected papers in F1/Temp. 6, Temp. 29, Temp. 31, Temp 33.

[37] LCC R196, Mason's evidence; RNAS XIII.

[38] Thurston's memorandum, 31 August 1878, Government House Miscellaneous Papers; Thurston to Boyd, 2 June 1870, Place Papers.

[39] Deposition of Duncan Murray, F1/Temp. 29.

[40] See, below, p. 248.

on other Malekulans, he denied the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over the 'sturdy Saxon', the 'indefatigable Englishman'. And he demanded 'to be released from the odium of this atrocious interference with the freedom of a Briton'. His jury pleaded 'custom of the country' in mitigation of his offence.[41]

Thurston blamed March for the turmoil at Levuka. He knew how he himself would have dealt with the Ku Klux as consul. He felt the more bitter because March's encouragement of obstruction and turmoil forced him to declare himself. 'If I am now a Fiji-man', he told Hope when he had finally thrown in his lot with independent government, it was because of this 'half bred Spanish bigot'.[42] His bitterness is likely to have been increased by Hope's eventual reply, for Hope wrote that Thurston's falling out with the consul might prejudice his own standing in Downing Street; and Hope suggested that, as Cakobau's Minister, Thurston would naturally 'think differently to what you wd. have done as Mr. Thurston of Taviuni' about the suitability of that white-dominated constitution in which Thurston himself had no faith.[43]

Thurston's involvement with Cakobau's government was forced on him. The general situation in early 1872 was much as he had described that of 1870 to Lang, with the added thrust of Kimberley's despatch along with the existence of a government. That government's credibility had never escaped from the pall of (on some grounds unreasonable) suspicion surrounding Burt and Woods; and Thurston both feared for its effectiveness and was worried by the damage it and its detractors might do to Fiji's credit overseas.

References were being made locally to 'carpet-bags' and cries raised of 'white niggers'; for it had once been rumoured that Woods had accepted a Fijian title; his drilling of Fijian soldiers 'white-man's fashion' had given great offence; and to some Europeans it seemed that the fate of the southern states under Reconstruction was threatening Fiji. Complaints were voiced that politicians who had promised that 'vigorous opposition' which most became a Briton had been bought off with office. Objections were raised to paying taxes, into the care of men who from their past

[41] *Fiji Times*, 15 November 1871, 2 March 1872; Rex *v.* Sinclair, F1/Temp. 29.

[42] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.

[43] Hope to Thurston, 22 January 1873 (copy), ibid.

might be thought capable of robbing the till, by men who had difficulty in finding hard cash.[44] The paper currency could not be redeemed for want of money in the Treasury. And Woods was off to float a loan which some settlers questioned their ability to repay, on the security of 'crown lands' which not a few were convinced did not exist—off to float it in Sydney where, as Thurston told Edwin Turpin on 12 January 1872, people were 'watching with keen eyes the doings of Messrs Burt & Woods the defaulters and wondering how men can be gulled by their representations'.[45]

Thurston had a four-day-old letter in his pocket then, signed by thirty-four planters of North Taveuni who formally invited him to replace J. C. Smith as their representative in the Legislative Assembly. His acceptance was probably already drafted—'my best endeavours shall be devoted to the interests of my constituents and the country generally'.[46] He campaigned, but need have been in little doubt about the result. He was the man 'in whom the whole of Fiji reposes confidence', the *Fiji Times* soon averred, 'owing to his career whilst representing Great Britain'.[47] He had private evidence of that confidence already. He was being pressed to join a reconstituted ministry by Smith and Hennings who, businessmen and creditors that they were, had so far escaped the odium falling on Burt and the absent Woods. He was doubtful whether he would agree with them on political matters; and he was under pressure also from William Scott, his predecessor as clerk to Consul Jones, who wanted him as a member of a new ministry along with Swanston.[48]

To another of Scott's persuasion, David Wilkinson, Swanston seemed essential, as adding the ballast of age—perhaps of conventional *sententia* also—to Thurston's sense of the dramatic: 'you and Thurston would command respect & confidence both at home & abrode, and soon set things to right', Wilkinson assured the erratic member for Lau. 'Thurston alone is too arrogant and ostentatious to be popular long I fear, and besides he is young and we want men of some experience as well.'[49]

[44] *Fiji Times*, November 1871 to May 1872, *passim*; Markham, Diary, 25 February 1872.
[45] Turpin, Diary.
[46] *Fiji Times*, 28 February 1872.
[47] Ibid., 8 May 1872.
[48] Correspondence in Swanston Letters, FM.
[49] Wilkinson to Swanston, 4 March 1872, ibid.

Arrogant away at Naveitalacagi, Thurston found vessels anchoring off his landing-place with embassies from Levuka where, as he said later, 'Men patrolled the town in armed parties—and it was in danger of being fired at any moment'.[50] In some quarters, including the *Fiji Times*, the Ku Klux regained favour as it defended the white man's constitutional rights and honour. Proliferating public meetings sent deputations to Cakobau. On 16 February such a meeting, called to discuss a cheaper form of government, carried unanimously the resolution of two small merchants that Hennings and Smith should administer until the Assembly met—and 'that these gentlemen be invited to ask Mr. J. B. Thurston to assist them'. After a private meeting the following night, Hennings went up to Naveitalacagi 'to try and induce him to join'. And on 23 April the rumour that 'Thurston, Hennings & J. C. Smith' were thus joined reached Ba where, so the diarist G. H. W. Markham recorded, it 'gives universal satisfaction'.[51] In fact Thurston had declined the public meeting's invitation. As he told Hope, rather grandly, it took a deputation next month to move him—'Mr. Speaker, the Clergyman of the Church of England and a Privy Councillor', at whose intercession 'need I say I gave in and allowed myself to be put in harness'.[52]

More efficacious than the representations of Messrs Hennings, Floyd, and J. S. Butters ('late Mayor of Melbourne, and Diamond Mine Swindler', as Thurston had described 'Mr Speaker' Butters when he was the newly-arrived representative of the Polynesia Company not long before)[53] was a third letter from Cakobau, written after he had been harried by whites at Bau. Thurston made a translation:

> I write to you because of the white men for I am now anxious (excited) because of their continual 'big talk'.
>
> I now beg of you to come very quickly to me, and assist me in the affairs of the Country so that Fiji may be successful (progress).
>
> I send Mr Butters and Mr Hennings to you that they may explain my views on many things.[54]

[50] Thurston to Carnarvon, 20 October 1874 (draft), Thurston Papers.
[51] *Fiji Times*, 21 February 1872; Otway to Swanston, 17 February 1872, Swanston Letters; Markham, Diary, 25 April 1872.
[52] Thurston to Carnarvon, 20 October 1874 (draft), Thurston Papers; Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.
[53] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, ibid.
[54] Cakobau to Thurston, 9 March 1872 (translation), encl. C.O. to Gordon, 3 March 1875, C.O. Despatches to Governor of Fiji.

Completing his election campaign, Thurston came top of the poll, with the Vuna planter James McConnell returned for South Taveuni.[55] In mid-April he was at Levuka, selling his Kalaba cottage for £200[56] and arranging that Smith and Hennings should resign. He perhaps doubted whether businessmen could clearly distinguish between their own and the country's interests; if so, he was to find his cynicism justified a few months later, when Hennings became a political opponent in his financial extremity. Another fortnight, and Thurston put St Helier in the hands of his brother-in-law Sidney Prince, then left finally to sit in a saddle which imperfectly straddled two horses.

To his fellow Europeans he was the man 'who would deliver the people' from their political bondage to the incompetent.[57] To himself he was one who had crossed a Rubicon, lost a 'struggle to keep clear of Fijian politics',[58] brought a name that he believed stood well in London's official circles into an association that smacked of political charlatanry. And 'the people' to whom he recognised the prior attachment were not 2,000-odd Europeans. His contempt for cant guided him in this, but so did his sense of reality. The commission as Chief Secretary that he received formally on 14 May bore the signature of Cakobau, whose 'native-born subjects' dwarfed the European community as the Pacific Ocean the island of Ovalau.

Arriving off Ovalau at the beginning of May, Thurston dropped anchor below the normal anchorage for Marie's sake—there was 'a "row" going on and bullets were being "slapped about" with an "abandon" anything but attractive to married people of quiet tastes and regular habits'.[59] Beatson and his colleagues were amusing themselves. H.M.S. *Cossack* was daily expected, bringing British official reaction to the attempt at government; and the B.S.M.P.S. could be expected to act on the avowal, contained in its recent 'Declaration of Freedom',[60] that it recognised no such government, by proving that in reality none effectively existed. In a crisis, Thurston was not much concerned about 'support' in an Assembly

[55] Thurston to Fred Hennings, 26 March 1872, F1/41.
[56] F1/Temp. 3/12.
[57] *Fiji Times*, 11 May 1872.
[58] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.
[59] Ibid.
[60] F1/Misc. 31.

whose basis he thought ill of and whose acceptance of his leadership he could take for granted. On 9 May he became Chief Secretary and set about dealing with political nihilists.

He made a compact with March which the consul broke as soon as the warship arrived. 'He was to introduce me to Douglas [of the *Cossack*], I was to pack off old Ministers, and everything was to go merry as a marriage bell.'[61] On 8 May Thurston's kindly feelings expressed in a note of the sixth were reciprocated by March; he was still being thanked in June for favours; and he may actually have been introduced to Captain Douglas by the consul.[62] On 14 May, however, finding a letter of January in which March had demanded to be allowed to act 'without being coerced' over mails, Thurston the administrator minuted: 'This is in fact the source of all difficulties encountered by Government. HBM Consul fails to see that he cannot even by the greatest stretch of courtesy be permitted to act "at discretion" which is the real meaning' of his demand.[63] And, as he complained, Marsh 'threw me over upon the first chance and resisted my measures as he had done those of my predecessors'.[64]

On 14 May Thurston was involved in dispersing the B.S.M.P.S. when it gathered under arms in response to the arrival of the *Cossack*, which anchored on the thirteenth—'her very presence suggestive of security and liberty' to the *Fiji Times*.[65] She had come with instructions to treat Cakobau's as a *de facto* government. Opinion in the Foreign Office was pragmatic enough: 'we need not inquire as to the Abstract right of British Subjects to occupy a Foreign Country & set up a Government in it'; it was 'sufficient for our purpose that such a Government does exist & although of course we cannot formally acknowledge it we may deal with it as a de facto Government & require it to observe the duties of good neighbourhood'.[66] But with the warship's arrival, as Thurston remarked, 'it was not difficult to see what would happen'. A judge was presented in court with a list of seventy men who, as B.S.M.P.S. members, did not recognise the government and, if

[61] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals, and to F.O., 17 September 1872, F1/23.
[62] F4/4.
[63] Minute, F1/14.
[64] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.
[65] *Fiji Times*, 15 May 1872.
[66] Holland's minute, 7 January 1872, F058/133.

molested, would 'proceed to defend themselves to the last extremity . . . to preserve their rights and liberties intact'. At the same time, as Thurston told Douglas, they were preparing to open the gaols again 'and bloodshed must ensue without the intervention of your authority and good office'. But he knew that Douglas must be guided by what he found ashore—'our "defacto" was to be tested'. He was ready:

> If we held the prisoners—we governed. If the mob broke gaol what would Captain Douglas think of the 'Government', but that it was a farce.
>
> . . . The police, White, and Native, with the Civil servants numbering in all nearly two hundred men took possession of the Parliament house and beach. Another force surrounded the Gaol, and in the presence of nearly two hundred neutrals I ordered the Captain of Constabulary to load with ball cartridge—to arrest any malcontent found under arms—or, on resistance to shoot them—and to shoot down any persons attempting to break gaol.
>
> The 'Society' fell back upon their stronghold 'Keyses Hotel' and there we 'circumvalated' them . . . That very day, Hamilton of Taviuni—just out from England—(son—or rather one son—of poor Murchisons predecessor, in Geog Socy) had sold me two short 12s with any quantity of shell-fuses, grape, canister &c so we were masters of this most ridiculous situation. Capt. Douglas sent me a verbal message to stay 'the carrying of Keyse's by assault' until he could see Field Marshall Beatson and his people. Taylor, his first (in plain clothes) came to my offices at 10 pm & saw at a glance the Gov was forbearing but not weak. The night passed—and, since then, no man has 'rolled up'—no horrid gun has frightened quiet women and children—no powder has been burnt in anger.

He realised that his words and actions might seem wild to a distant correspondent; but to him the simple fact was that the former Ministry 'was afraid to—I may as well write it plainly—to shoot March's vagabonds down and hang him if necessary—as a caution to gentlemen of his kidney in future'. He was not afraid. If a city was afire, 'Who would hesitate to batter down a few "blocks" . . .'.[67]

His hand was seen clearly enough locally. At the Ku Klux's meeting of inquest Beatson 'supposed it was the Chief Secretary who had ordered out the natives', the most heinous crime of all in

[67] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, loc. cit.; *Fiji Times*, 15 May 1872, Thurston to Douglas, 14 May 1872, F1/13; and see also Thurston to Granville, 17 September 1872, F1/23.

a Fiji European's calendar, while 'honest indignation' scarcely permitted the *Fiji Times* to speak of it, though 'the expression with which it should justly be stigmatized will be found in the breast of each right thinking man'. But he had gained his end. The Ku Klux was broken, rebuked by Douglas, with Beatson pledging his word that members would obey the laws and pay taxes, if given six months' grace to quit the country without prosecution for past errors. Though few actually went, they began making ostentatious preparations to leave for the tax-free, fabulous land of New Guinea. A planters' meeting had already held March 'responsible in a great measure' for the uproar.[68] And Thurston took over the business of the Chief Secretary.

He lived for the next ten years on the promontory between Nasova bay and Levuka in a house originally rented for Cakobau's use when the King came to Ovalau; it was half European cottage, half Fijian *vale*, the latter hung with *masi* and used by Thurston as his dining room, with small areas screened off as sleeping-places for guests. He kept a Fijian guard outside, in deference to the secrecy of the papers he brought home to work on at night in the handwriting that was never to be absent from government papers in Fiji for a generation. He was 'very much occupied' with 'most pressing business'[69] And he was delighted to be so again, for all (perhaps partly because of) his sense that he was a pocket Hercules faced with at least twelve tasks. He found departmental routines well-established—and men established in them who must, perforce, be kept there. He resisted the demands of judges for increased salary, found competing interests and pressures enough to turn any man's hair grey who had to resolve them.

After six months of office he looked older than his thirty-six years; and he bore the marks of continued living in the tropics on his skin. 'Mr. Thurston is . . . about 45 years of age: little, thin, sallow, and active, and very fond of playing the diplomatist', wrote a guest he had for three weeks in about November 1872. The guest was Richard Philp, English-trained lawyer who found it hard to make a living at any Bar, come down to be disappointed of the office of Attorney-General and affronted at the 'wretched

[68] Beatson to Cabinet, 11 June 1872, F1/10; *Fiji Times*, 12 and 19 June, 15 May 1872.
[69] Thurston to Boyd, 2 June 1872, Place Papers.

travesty of courts of Justice in Fiji'. It was a travesty which, Philp thought, Thurston recognised and regretted. 'He would not go so far as that—but he admitted that it required "amendment".' To this guest Thurston seemed 'a very self conceited man, and . . . fond of notoriety and playing the big fiddle: but he really is a man of good character and of good ability . . .'.[70]

He was seen by Philp with Cakobau at Bau, Chief Secretary seated beside King to discuss policy before withdrawing to a side-table to write despatches for its execution. Philp noted how, when Cakobau spoke to Thurston, his tone changed from the chaffing tones in which he addressed Ratu Savenaca Naulivou and others in the house to a note which, to Philp's ear, indicated that he 'seemed to stand rather in awe of Thurston'.[71] In the voice-change Thurston probably received no more than the politeness due to one who was not of the circle in which great rank directly applied; but *Na Kena Vai* could now be appropriately taken to mean 'Pilot-Fish'. Henceforth the grey, aging, pessimistic Fijian had beside him on formal occasions a bantam-like, heavy-eyed, loquacious figure full of Fiji's 'most perfect rights of sovereignty' in international law and of its government's claims to all diplomatic niceties.

'Diplomacy' was a word much in vogue with Thurston in his first months of office. He indicated to Philp what he was to tell the Colonial Office two years later: the government's 'very inception was a mistake'.[72] But he did not love a political vacuum. He held that the basis of the current *de facto* recognition must be maintained. The government must be seen to govern. And *de facto* must be consummated by full and unconditional recognition, 'a fervent aspiration of the King'.[73] To that end he—who had been cynical enough about His Majesty the King 'or as irreverent people call him Cock-a-boo Rex'[74]—henceforth insisted that Cakobau be recognised without reserve, the integrity of the Kingdom and all its institutions respected. Unity once established, he thought it an improvement on the old state of Fiji—whereas to other men of his

[70] Diary of Richard Philp, FM, *passim*: for Philp's financial difficulties, see Graham Bros & Co. Letterbooks.
[71] Philp, Diary.
[72] Thurston to Carnarvon, 20 October 1874, encl. C.O. to Gordon, 3 March 1875, C.O. Despatches to Governor of Fiji.
[73] Thurston to Douglas, 14 September 1872, F1/23.
[74] Thurston to Hope, 6 September 1872, Letter-Journals.

colour from March downward it was a potential threat to their own pre-eminence.[75]

And he was intensely concerned about the image Fiji projected to the world. He had long regretted the occurrence and magnification of such events—arrival of colonial defaulters, drunken riot about the beach—as had lately led the Governor of New South Wales to remark privately: 'Fiji often reminds one of a penal settlement freed from all supervision'.[76] Thurston thought Fiji's image could be improved by sympathetic reporting. At his first reported public appearance after he took office, a government dinner, and speaking as Minister for Foreign Relations (a portfolio he had added to that of Chief Secretary), he proposed a toast to the consuls. They were 'capable of adding largely to the prosperity of the countries in which they resided'. 'So little was known as to the real state of foreign nations that when . . . Charles Levy made some satirical remarks on Florence . . . they were accepted as serious.' His point was lost on 'Don Eduardo' March, who was absent.[77]

He found immediately that the courts' jurisdiction was being challenged. Lying under arrest in Levuka harbour was the 23-ton cutter *Volunteer*, her red ensign replaced through government action by the Fijian dove-and-olive-branch—or, as her owner's brother's wife affirmed, by 'the rag of an embryo semi-civilised state'.[78] The *Volunteer* had been making regular trips to Fiji with New Hebridean labourers whose passage-money went towards the plantation being established on Tana by her owner and his brother, Charles and George Blair. At the end of January she had been arrested, after getting under way, at the suit of Levuka merchants claiming £55 due on stores provided her through the master; he had been dismissed by George Blair and later laid claims for wages to which, under his agreement, he was apparently not entitled. As the case dragged on evidence emerged of possible later collusion between master and creditors. But George Blair, who was in charge of the cutter, got into the Ku Klux's hands and stood on

[75] See, e.g. March's memorandum of 7 May 1873, FO58/135: 'it may be emphatically said that the safety and the lives of the settlers depend upon a return to the former primitive condition of things in so far as the native race is concerned.'

[76] Belmore to Granville, 24 March 1871 (private), FO58/121.

[77] *Fiji Times*, 1 June 1872.

[78] Ibid., 30 March 1872.

his assumed rights as a British subject, denying the jurisdiction and refusing to plead. He remained lightly imprisoned, visited by March and Beatson; and he sauntered out on 14 May to join in the demonstration. Later, while his case was awaiting re-examination under agreement between Thurston, Douglas and March, he collected his chronometer secretly from the consul; and, at a moonlit June midnight, Thurston saw Blair make sail in the cutter—and put her upon the reef. Thurston's own concern was not with the heroics of Blair and his coadjutors but with the integrity of the jurisdiction. Next year, after further evidence had been made available, he advised Blair to sue again through the courts. Now he sought opinion in Sydney on the legality of their proceedings and, for the rest, was in the hands of the judges, whose decisions he was determined to see enforced. A later judge declared that they had decided fairly on the evidence.[79]

Thurston's letters to Douglas on this matter were long, full statements of the case—lest there be any 'possibility of my bona fides in this matter being somewhat less apparent than the interests of this Government and my own honour require'.[80] So were his letters on that labour traffic which, since Patteson's death, had been giving Fiji the widespread image of a nest of slavers. As Thurston strongly suspected,[81] it was an image propagated by March, who marked his despatches 'Slave Trade' and avowed the government was that emotive traffic's protector. The old Ministry had given him cause. A notorious kidnapper, the *Nukulau*, was part-owned by J. C. Smith; and Woods owned another recruiter, the *Peri*, off which the consul was ordered by a policeman while she was holding recaptured runaway kidnapped labourers who had killed five planters in a cutter between Levuka and Taveuni. But it moved Thurston to fury and distaste that the consul, having passed men from other ships after their drunken crews had made it notorious they were kidnapped, should be both gaining personal credit and damning the government with his despatches.[82]

He protested that the British Consul, to say nothing of the

[79] See, especially, papers in F1/18; *Fiji Times*, 1872-3, *passim*; F1/10, 11, 13; Gordon to C.O., 21 August 1875, CO83/6; Des Voeux to C.O., 30 August 1878, CO83/17; Gorrie to Gordon, 5 December 1877, FCSO Letters from Chief Justice to Governor 1877-81.

[80] Thurston to Douglas, 9 September 1872, F1/23.

[81] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.

[82] Thurston to Sahl, 12 October 1872, F1/23.

British press, was saddling Cakobau's government with responsibility for crimes committed miles from Fiji by ships originally out of British colonial ports. And he was irritated to find himself swimming in the backwash of a mistake of Fred Hennings which it looked as though the consul had engineered. In April the Melbourne brig *Carl* had arrived on a second visit with labourers consigned to Hennings, her local agent; before boarding her to examine them as a Minister, Hennings invited March to accompany him and, with thanks, was told:

> I have been on board the 'Carl' and done the needful so there is no occasion for my going again especially as the weather is bad and I am suffering from a bad foot.—
>
> With the result of my examination of the natives and the proceedings I intend adopting in consequence I had the pleasure of acquainting you this Morning.—

The erasures in the second paragraph of the original do nothing to remove the feeling that March was being evasive. Hennings insisted that March had merely asked him to have employers call on him with their labourers from the brig; but six days later when Hennings had passed them, as March represented, against his advice, March reported that the *Carl*'s mentally-disturbed owner, turning Queen's evidence, had implicated her in wholesale murder on both voyages.[83]

'I have no wish to defend Mr. Hennings. I think as Agent for the ship he should have been hyper critical in his examination', wrote Thurston to Hennings's creditor and the Kingdom's Consul-General in Sydney, Carl Sahl, of Rabone, Feez & Co., 'but I point out to you how, that which in the Consul is but an oversight, in the Minister is a rank villany.' Thurston himself had been engaged in a correspondence over the *Carl* which March so conducted 'that I almost believed the wrongs had been committed in this harbour and that I myself was not free from guilt'.[84] Indeed, he was being blamed by March for failing to prevent a girl from the *Carl*'s being smuggled away, as well as for the escape of a crew member whom, according to Thurston, March himself had declined to prosecute—

[83] March to Fred Hennings, 23 April 1872, F1/41; March to F.O., 29 April 1872, encl. F.O. to C.O., 4 September 1872, CO83/2; Thurston to Granville, 19 October 1872, F1/23.

[84] Thurston to Sahl, 12 October 1872, F1/23.

lest by so doing he be thought to acknowledge that government which, so he assured London, with characteristic obliquity, he was now acknowledging.[85] 'Any person reading the despatch in a blue book where it will eventually appear must think the "Carl" sailed under the auspices' of Cakobau's government.[86]

As Thurston dealt with the backwash he was conscious that he was a markedly different man from those who had created it. Until informed otherwise, he assured March, he would 'continue to believe that the fact of my being "in office" under King "Cakobau" will be some assurance at the Foreign Office and elsewhere in England, that an active [concern?] in favour of [natives?] is not confined to one gentleman in Fiji'.[87] He left Douglas in no doubt on the point. The naval officer had little doubt, either, as to the respective bona fides of Chief Secretary and British Consul; the former was master of his role and well-disposed, the latter obstructive, incompetent.[88] Thurston was busy proving to Douglas the power and goodwill of Cakobau's government—as by arresting the *Nukulau* kidnappers in the teeth of the Levuka mob, with whom her master was a popular man; rumour reported that it was he who had caused Patteson's death by impersonating a missionary to entice islanders aboard.[89] The outcome hardly increased Thurston's faith in the British system, since the trial failed for want of interpreters who might have been procurable in Fiji.

For Douglas the government's case was proved. He sailed finally in October, leaving Thurston with an official commendation to add to an earlier, personal message in which Thurston took much pleasure. He had achieved all he had hoped with the *Cossack*'s commander, despite their 'hard diplomatic interchanges'.[90] On Douglas's reports Commodore Stirling remarked that 'the Fijian Government exercises so much authority that it is impossible not to recognize its existence and . . . absurd to ignore the action of its ministers and law courts . . . especially as they appear to be acting

[86] Thurston to Granville, 19 October 1872, F1/23; March to F.O., 8 January 1873, encl. F.O. to C.O., 5 May 1873, CO83/4; March to F.O., 12 June 1872, encl. F.O. to C.O., 31 March 1873, CO83/3.

[86] Thurston to Sahl, 12 October 1872, F1/23.

[87] Thurston to March, 30 July 1872, typed transcript, NAF.

[88] See, e.g., Douglas to March, 2 June 1872 (private), F4/9.

[89] Douglas to Stirling, 21 September 1872, encl. Admiralty to C.O., 7 January 1873, CO83/3; Douglas to Thurston, 17 September 1872, F1/11.

[90] Douglas to Thurston, 14 September 1872, F1/11; Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.

in good faith for the establishment of law and order'. And when Douglas's despatches reached the Colonial Office early next year it was noted there that he 'speaks well of Mr. Thurston'.[91]

Thurston became favourably known in the Colonial Office. He was told by Sahl (who was on a business visit to Rabone, Feez & Co.'s Birmingham principals) that both Kimberley and the Foreign Secretary were much exercised by the kidnapping question; pressed as they were by public outcry over Patteson's death, they were full of that proposed Pacific Islanders Protection Act which, in the facile British official mind, was seen as a universal panacea for the Pacific's problems. 'The Government is favourably inclined towards Fiji', Thurston learned from Sahl,

> and Earl Granville listened with great interest to the information I could give him about the stability and success of the Government and their desire to put the Labour question on a satisfactory footing. The latter is a matter of great importance—a Bill is before the British House now to regulate the traffic and I had an interview with its promoter Sir Knatchbull-Hugesson about it.
>
> If your Government will meet the British Government in this matter a great point will be carried and the formal recognition of Fiji will follow as a matter of course.[92]

In response Thurston seconded a bill 'To regulate the Hiring and Service of Foreign and Native Labourers' and sent the resultant statute off to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Sir Edward Knatchbull-Hugesson, asking for suggestions to improve it. His covering letter was 'a very proper one', minuted an assistant under-secretary, while from R. G. W. Herbert—Permanent Under-Secretary and of great influence—came precisely the proposal he had hoped to elicit:

> The Legislation is just about as good as that of this Country or any Colony: and this despatch, with the favourable condition in which we understand the public affairs of Fiji now are, constitutes a complete answer to those who have urged that we neglect a high duty in hesitating to make Fiji a Colony. Could we pretend to say that a third class Governor, with the usual expensive staff of incompetent colonial officials, would have done as well as Mr. Thurston's administration?

[91] Stirling to Admiralty, 19 October 1872, encl. F.O. to C.O., 13 February 1873, CO83/3; Hugesson's Minute, ibid.
[92] Sahl to Chief Secretary, 22 March 1872, F1/10.

> The time for the formal recognition of the new State appears to be near at hand, and care should be taken to prevent the Consul . . . from unnecessarily snubbing Cakobau Rex & his Ministers. It may be worth considering whether this is not a good time to tell them that if the Act . . . is put into force with a vigour corresponding to the govt intentions which it's well considered provisions are taken to express . . . H.M. Govt. will not delay to accord recognition to that Government & State.[93]

But if Thurston ever learned of this reaction it was many years later, when he knew Herbert personally. Now he was to work in worse than silence so far as the British government was concerned, and under circumstances which were to make him see it as the height of pusillanimity.

He had been buoyant after his return to the centre of affairs. He had announced his 'sincere hope', his 'confident expectation' that 'in the future Fiji would realize all that was so sanguinely fostered . . .'. There was to be a bank, a steamship line, reclamation of the foreshore at Levuka—all financed by loans raised in Australia and New Zealand. And the willingness of overseas capitalists to invest in sugar plantations and crushing mills was to be encouraged, though even Rabone, Feez & Co., confidential financiers though they were of a hard-pressed government, were not to be supplied with Fijian labour as they desired but must make their own bargains under the new laws.[94]

Outwardly, Thurston was sanguine enough to make an approach to India for the introduction of labourers into Fiji, descanting upon the hospitable nature of Fijians:

> Although the aboriginals of this Country have so lately emerged from barbarism, their feeling towards all foreigners is remarkably cordial a large number of Polynesian Immigrants has for years past been scattered over the Group in the employ of the various white settlers. Although differing entirely from them in habits and language, these people have not only been tolerated by, but have for the most part, been on friendly terms with the natives amongst whom they have been living. From this fact and an intimate acquaintance with them extending over many years, I am of opinion that there is nothing in the character of the native Fijians which even were their Country still without a Government, would render probable a collision between the two races while the strong fear of

[93] Minutes on Thurston to Knatchbull-Hugesson, 24 June 1872, CO83/2.
[94] *Fiji Times*, 1 June 1872; Thurston to Rabone, Feez & Co., 21 January 1873, F1/23.

transgressing the laws which already is felt by all classes of Fijians would now be an additional protection.[95]

But he knew the dangers of collision between Fijians and the other race already established in Fiji. Though he was busily creating an image of Fiji overseas to bring it recognition as an independent state, he was doing so with the object of strengthening a government about whose suitability to the country he had few illusions. Under the constitution, his own position was fragile in the extreme.

He had come back to Levuka 'at the request of the opponents no less than the supporters of the Government movement',[96] as he did not fail to remark. Once there he had found his countrymen convinced that he was 'able and honest' and, having won 'the confidence and respect of his fellow settlers' as acting-consul 'by his gentlemanly demeanour, good sense, and thorough business habits', could now be expected to advance a policy such as 'the public' could support.[97] He went through the forms when the Legislative Assembly met in May. He explained that he had taken office 'under very pressing circumstances' without waiting to assure himself of his majority. He would not identify himself with the old Ministry but would stand or fall by his own measures. And, with a large majority, he passed a budget that changed the former direct taxation system to one of indirect customs duties, with a poll-tax left on Fijians. He did not reduce expenditure, as critics were soon to be claiming he had promised to do in his election speeches; but he carried the *Fiji Times* with him in the belief that a range of fairly high duties, yet lower than in Britain or Australia, was justified in the Kingdom's early stages.[98]

He carried the *Fiji Times*, too, in his acceptance of Woods as a colleague after the Premier came back from Sydney on 22 May (in company with Sir Charles St Julian, Knight of the Kingdom of Hawaii, come to put into the Kingdom of Fiji's service as Chief Justice the law he had learned as the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s court reporter over many years). As Woods told the story, he had over-reached Thurston on his return: he had got Thurston to

[95] Thurston to C. B. Chalmers, 14 September 1872, F1/23.
[96] Thurston to Granville, 19 October 1872, F1/23.
[97] *Fiji Times*, 11 May 1872.
[98] Ibid., May-June 1872, *passim*; and F1/6, for parliamentary proceedings generally.

discuss again the resignation of the old Ministry and Thurston had not been able to say that Woods had done such harm that he too should resign. Woods was perhaps careless with money, but probably not venal. He was a romantic; he was to seem 'not anti native' to Thurston, 'but rather the other way'.[99] Possibly, too, Thurston was overborne at first by the man who had been a lieutenant in the Victorian naval reserve when he himself was in a coasting schooner. Moreover Woods was deep in financial arrangements on the government's behalf. And perhaps Thurston was ready enough to have him lead in those manoeuvres across the rickety floor of the old Reading Room that he himself thought so remote from basic realities in Fiji.

Thurston spoke there of the need for firmness in government, for Levuka's dissident whites to be kept to heel, for the troubles still current on the Dreketi to be ended and all interior Viti Levu brought to order. But he did not sympathise with the instinct of members to introduce the modes of, say, Victorian colonial politics into Fiji along with the Victorian law code. He could not shake off irritation at such time-wasting, factious ploys as the motion of no confidence which a former Minister, J. T. Sagar, introduced in June. An idol in the bush was an ogre in government, to seek for the emoluments of office was more honourable than to accept them when thrust upon one, so Thurston learned. And he found that Swanston, now Minister for Native Affairs, had his liabilities as a colleague. It was partly Swanston's earlier knocking about with all sides which brought William Hennings out on Sagar's side. Swanston had associated with the 'opposition', complained Hennings whose main anxiety was to get back to his store. Swanston had learned their plans, then had joined the government.[1]

He himself 'was perfectly indifferent to office', Thurston announced in reply to the motion, 'and if expression were given to a reliable opinion that a gentleman better fitted . . . could be found, he would cheerfully resign'. He was answered with protestations of confidence. And away at Bau Langham acknowledged that his was 'the best Ministry to be formed from the present House'.[2]

[99] MS. journal of Commodore J. G. Goodenough, 28 December 1873, ML MS. 889/7. Thurston to Gordon, 8 December 1878, *Fiji*, III, 465.

[1] *Fiji Times*, 26 June 1872.

[2] Ibid.; Langham to ?, 18 June 1872, MOM 103.

Langham's acknowledgment was grudging. Though Thurston so well knew the Wesleyan Mission's ability to influence opinion outside Fiji that he wrote to its Chairman, whom he despised, amiably enough for Langham to believe they were 'on friendly terms',[3] he had little chance of conciliating the missionary. An inveterate publicist, a bigot too rigid even for Calvert later in his prohibition on tobacco and *yaqona*,[4] an adoptive father who thrashed his daughter when the girl playfully cut off the locks which in Fijian society indicated virginity[5] (and who thereby gave point to a jibe of Thurston's that 'the most prurient subjects are dear to the heart of the average Wesleyan missionary')[6] Langham had already discovered that Fijians found a rival attraction in the government to the claims of Wesleyan Methodism.

His spiritual son, Cakobau, had become so earnest in the cause of government as to foresake the commands of God by going to sea and transacting business on the Sabbath. Thereupon Langham had sent him 'a kind and Christian letter' (*'me mudu ga nai vala-vala tawa kilikili oqo'*: 'let this unbecoming conduct cease'): 'a *private*, and *strictly unofficial* communication', as Langham protested, which the old Ministry had made an issue of even though J. C. Smith was Superintendent of the Levuka Sunday School.[7] Langham's intervention was, to his colleague Nettleton, 'an excess of pastoral oversight in one' man;[8] but the man ruled the local mission. And his rapid, professional recognition that the government was a rival was accurate. Even at the Christian citadel of Lakeba, though the *vakamisioneri* remained profitable, it was patent henceforth that more pressing business than the *lotu*'s was on Ma'afu's mind when he called there, and on the mind too of his protégé Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba who became Lieutenant-Governor of Lau:

> Poor deceived simpletons! [wrote a missionary from Lakeba] some of them look down from the eminences to which recent political changes have raised them upon the cause which once engaged their

[3] Langham to Chapman, 9 July 1873, MOM 103.
[4] Calvert to editor, *Methodist Recorder*, November 1886, MMS.
[5] 'Biography of the Reverend Arthur J. Small by his daughter . . .', NAF MS7.
[6] Minute, 11 March 1887, FCSO 87/679.
[7] Langham to Woods, 18 December 1871, F1/31; Langham to Rabone, 23 December 1871, MOM 103.
[8] Nettleton to Woods, n.d. [*c.* December 1871], F1/31.

hearts, and deem it unworthy of their support now. Many a Fijian Chief has given up his attachment to the lotu for the sake of same naval Officer's cast off clothes, and a seat in Parliament.[9]

And so the missionaries' support for the government was always half-hearted; their comments on it are to be treated with reserve.

Thurston saw the secular side of the 'deceived simpletons'. He recognised the political awareness of Fijians. To him, as he announced for public consumption in December 1872, it was Fijians 'who feel even more strongly than whites, the protection which a Government gives them'. He believed 'that the Native Chiefs have most intelligent ideas about their position, and that they are anxious to assist in the consolidation into our central power of what has hitherto been a collection of chiefdoms whose interests and aims were antagonistic . . . .'[10]

Yet in June that year, when he left the arena of politics as they were conducted by the superior race and went to sit in the Privy Council (where Ma'afu presided over Ratu Isikeli, Tui Bua and Roko Tui Dreketi, Ro Matanitabua Kuraduadua's son from Namosi, Tui Viria, a knot of leading Bauans, and Tui Cakau), Thurston recognised more than ever that, as he told Hope, it was 'a most extraordinary attempt to establish a Government with such incongruous elements'.[11] He found that the chiefs in the Privy Council had their own sense of the incongruity; he was presented with a letter, signed on their behalf by Cakobau and Ma'afu, which had actually helped Langham to some genuinely-based doubts about the viability of independent government.

The Fijians said they wanted to know more about certain, unspecified, administrative matters. They wanted only four Europeans to lead the government: Thurston, Swanston, Hennings and Woods. But they were worried by Woods. 'We are frightened by the appointment of Mr. Woods that he Europeanised so hastily certain ways of Fijian works. He should start from alphabet and then to more hard reading writing, but he hastily started with hard reading things.' How were all the clerks government employed to be paid? Some Governors were being paid their £100 salary in the dubious Treasury notes, though they were sending in solid coin by way of taxes dragged out of their people. And this

[9] Rooke to Chapman, 18 June 1873, MOM 98.
[10] *Fiji Gazette*, 14 December 1872.
[11] *Fiji Times*, 22 June 1872; Thurston to Hope, 6 July 1872, Letter-Journals.

was the planting season, yet here they were all detained at Levuka. In a phrase, they concluded, Fiji was overloaded by all this new political superstructure, like a canoe with too big a sail.[12]

In fact Fiji under Cakobau's government often looked like a *waqa tabu* incongruously rigged as a schooner. And Thurston had cause to refer to the 'incongruous elements' frequently, in rueful recognition of inescapable reality. The government was top-heavy in structure, full of invidious compromises on the ground. In the chiefdoms, Thurston was partly working through European Provincial Secretaries like Nathaniel Chalmers in Lomaiviti. A Koro planter, Chalmers complained that a Fijian magistrate had prohibited his people from working for whites. Fijians 'appear to think & indeed say that the whites are only intruders, & their orders not to be regarded', Chalmers protested. On the other hand, another of Chalmers's Fijian colleagues was 'to some extent disliked by the natives as in their opinion, leaning always to the side of the whites—which I submit is a strong point in his favor . . .'. Chalmers's proposed solution was that he and another white official should nominate more worthy men who then 'when appointed would be more under our control . . .'.[13]

And neither Thurston personally nor independent government had more devoted supporter than the Warden of Ra, R. B. Leefe. A man of uncontrolled temper in his relations with his labourers, Leefe behaved as a *turaga* on his lands with villages clustering under him for protection against the undoubtedly predatory Governor, Ratu Isikeli.[14] 'If every influential Chief was dead or sent out of the Country a child could manage the rest they are the great cause of *every* trouble in Fiji not caused by the white aliens who are quite as bad in the abstract', Thurston found Leefe asserting next year. Thurston was not mollified to find his own habit of tongue, 'white aliens', being thus employed. He retorted:

> Mr Warden Leefe . . . shews his great want of Knowledge of the Fijian people. The great cause of late disturbances mainly arise from the waning powers of the Chiefs & the desire of every petty fellow to put himself forward. The 'Matanitu' *in time* will obtain the respect now centred in the Chiefs. The last however is the growth of past centuries the former is only germinating.[15]

[12] Cakobau and Ma'afu to Ministers, 20 June 1872, F1/10.
[13] Chalmers to Swanston, 1 and 12 April 1872, F1/41.
[14] Von Hügel, Journal, 26 September 1876; FCSO 75/11.
[15] Comment on Leefe to Clarkson, 24 August 1873, F1/10.

A flood of evidence showed Thurston the difficulties of his role of 'political missionary', as he described it to Hope.[16] The Suva settlers were complaining that Ratu Avarosa, Roko Tui Suva, was blacklisting their plantations in order to drive up labourers' pay, for instance.[17] On the other hand, Langham was providing examples of the farce to which the principle of racial equality before the law was reduced when justices of the peace were planters and store-keepers.[18] At the same time Thurston knew that the legality of the protective, mission-inspired Fijian law code, *Na Lawa Eso*, which the government had issued, was being challenged by some of the more sophisticated Fijians. Would-be liquor-drinkers, like Ratu Marika Toroca, son of the Roko Tui Namata, for years Cakobau's clerk and now second Associated Judge in the Supreme Court, and Ratu Jone Colata of Bau, lieutenant in the Armed Constabulary, were represented in the Courts by *Daphne* Smith in a bid to prove the code unconstitutional. Thurston disapproved of some of the Wesleyan-inspired enactments; but he found this alliance in court between white racist and go-ahead Fijian both ludicrous and painful, as well as instructive.[19]

Among less sophisticated Fijians there was trouble too. Young Ratu Luke Tabualovoni, annoyed at the detention in Suva of his father, Tui Wainunu, and by a labour matter, was building a war-fence.[20] And up the Rewa, as along the southern Viti Levu coast and in the hinterland, it was difficult to construct coherent chains of political authority centring upon Bau or Levuka from the fragmented, shifting options which existed. The Serua people sent an explanation through an old white resident from beach-combing days, 'Cannibal Jack':

> They wish me to state to you that they are quite agreeable, *themselves*, to pay their proportionate quantum of tribute, and to use all their influence in collecting all the poll-tax throughout their districts, but . . . the authority they have hitherto held over their people has always been rather low [?] compared with windward tribes, and

[16] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.
[17] Suva Planters' Association to Thurston, 1 November 1872, F1/10.
[18] Langham to Thurston, 28 October 1872, and Warden of Tailevu to Thurston, 4 November 1872, F1/10.
[19] Wilkinson to Swanston, 26 September 1872, encl. Swanston to Thurston, 30 September 1872, F1/10; Swanston to Thurston, 1 October 1872, F1/10; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 26 November 1873.
[20] Brooks to Swanston, 8 July 1872, F1/41.

that, in all political discussions . . . the sub-chiefs and their subordinates have always had a preponderating voice.[21]

Outside Fiji, it was difficult to maintain the Kingdom's credibility as a state in which capitalists could invest with confidence both that their interest would be forthcoming and their debentures duly redeemed when, for instance, J. S. Butters held two offices under King Cakobau and was launching a fraudulent plantation venture in Natewa bay.[22] 'It does not say much for Fiji Society that Mr. Butters smile or frown should have such weight, *that he is not to be made an enemy of*',[23] wrote the embittered Polynesia Company directors to Butters's successor as their representative, C. R. Forwood—who was himself an embarrassment to Thurston. The old Ministry had made Forwood a Judge, and want of professionally-qualified candidates forced Thurston to transfer him to the office of Attorney-General. Already Woods had written from Sydney that he was hearing 'some unpleasant rumours' about Forwood 'which makes me hope he has resigned before this'.[24] Thurston found himself pressed by Forwood, under his Polynesia Company hat, for help in putting the Suva settlers in sole possession of the land around the harbour 'as a personal favor'.[25] In 1876 Thurston still had in his possession 'blank deeds [to the company's Natewa bay block] forwarded to me' by Forwood, 'to which he naively asked Tui Cakau's signature might be obtained through my personal influence'.[26] For it was another anomaly of Cakobau's government that its coming into being aroused the expectations of Europeans hitherto disappointed of their 'rights' as against Fijians. The Polynesia Company's directors had no fear but that white ministers would help them. In November 1871 they had been confident of success, feeling 'no doubt that pressure could be brought to bear on the King from the American Consul' as well.[27] Their anguish was extreme when, within a year, they found their way blocked by Thurston's refusal to permit the

[21] Diaper to Ministers, 29 July 1872, F1/41.
[22] The Victoria and Fiji Cotton, Grazing and Mining Company: see LCC R1180-83. Burt later joined Butters, back in Victoria, in floating mining companies in the colonies.
[23] Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 12 March 1873, F1/Temp. 31.
[24] Woods's confidential memorandum, 14 September 1872, F1/1.
[25] Forwood to Thurston, 16 October 1872, F1/Temp. 20.
[26] Minute by Thurston, F1/Temp. 20.
[27] Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 14 November 1871, F1/Temp. 31.

Fijians' dispossession of land which he had never considered properly alienated.

Small businessmen, imperfectly informed, trying to realise a profit on a company whose exiguous capital was exhausted and whose board and managerial staff alike had undergone many changes amidst incessant vituperation, the directors inevitably supposed that Thurston had a private interest; and they found an old letter from Brower to support their interpretation. Thurston's attitude, they assured Forwood,

> is only part & parcel of his determined opposition to the Compy from the first—The following extract of a letter from Dr Brower shows his character, which taken in connexion with the alleged suppression of the Fijian Petition to the Queen in 1869 plainly shows that he has a little game of his own to play & quite destroys the weight of his comments.
>
> '*The opposition the delegates met with, is by no means at an end.* It seems to have taken *personal* hold upon the dignatory originating it, & I have no doubt but further embarrassments [?] will be brought to bear as opportunities offer. King Cakobau has been the object of an overbearing official interdiction for the last three years from that same quarter touching matters clearly within his own jurisdiction'.
>
> 'I can see that King Cakobau has a struggle before him to deliver over intact some portions of the scheduled lands—but *he is determined & will succeed unless embarrassed by outside influences*'.[28]

The case was very different. Cakobau had been ready enough to help the company to its land while the Americans were still a threat to him; but even then his ability had been dependent on the willingness to aid him of other chiefs, like Tui Cakau and Roko Tui Viwa. Ratu Isikeli had gathered some of the Ra chiefs in September 1868 to sign confirming land-deeds after hearing the Vunivalu of Bau assure them that 'as the ivi tree shelters them from the rays of the sun so they would be protected from their enemies by the Company'. In 1876 Thurston was to hear, without surprise, that many Ra chiefs who should have signed such transfers —and whose signatures sometimes did appear—had actually gone inland to escape the Bau party.[29] Even at Suva, whose young chief was *vasu* to Bau, the company could never get possession of all it claimed. Once the debt had been paid, moreover, Cakobau's

[28] Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 29 November 1872, ibid.

[29] *Fiji Times*, 25 September 1869; Thurston to Carew, 24 March 1877, FCSO Outwards Letters.

own willingness had subsided. As Thurston had written in November 1870: 'Thakobau, when asked "where is the land", rubs his brown paws, chuckles, and screams "Sa oti, Sa oti" i.e. Its all over, all over—'.[30]

Now Thurston told Forwood that the Cabinet would not eject Fijians from land signed away by a chief with no rights in it. He doubted they could be ejected, and anyway war would follow. But he was going to Bau in a week and would discuss with Cakobau how *bona fide* shareholders might best be compensated. 'Did go to Bau', he noted later, 'and the King . . . asked where his steamer & his £200 per annum was—He would'nt talk further on the subject'.[31] There was evidence to support Cakobau's contention that the promise of a gunboat or armed schooner had been unconditional; and his pension had never been paid.[32] The directors had hoped to get Lomaiviti made over to them, with Brower's help, to make up their acreage. They were enraged to find the islands offered as security for the government loan. 'The Directors can only hope that seeing the way the Compy has been dealt with, annexation to the British Empire may come about, *but prior to this it is most desirable that all our lands are made over to us.*'[33]

Thurston proved an insuperable obstacle. He and his colleagues 'were hampered in their treatment of this question by the undoubted promise of the individual whose Ministers they professed to be', he wrote later as an anonymous pamphleteer. 'They were also responsible to a Legislature, in which the Polynesia Company was largely represented, but to their honour be it said they never hesitated in their indignant repudiation of the Company's pretensions to expel' Fijians. To him the company remained 'a wild and very questionable speculation'; he would not be made its instrument.[34]

His only sympathy was for the 'Forty Thieves'—those individuals who had actually found the $43,000 to buy off Brower and, in return, had received titles to part of the supposed grant. He recognised an obligation to them. As he said later, he would probably

[30] Thurston to Hope, 23 November 1870, Letter-Journals.
[31] Note by Thurston on his 26 October 1872 to Forwood, F1/Temp. 20.
[32] Letters of Nettleton and Tait, September and October 1872, encl. Gordon to C.O., 5 July 1876, CO 83/10; see also Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 14 November 1871, F1/Temp. 31.
[33] Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 10 September 1872, F1/Temp. 31.
[34] *The Claims of the Polynesia Company, of Melbourne, examined and refuted* (Levuka, 1878).

have returned their money if the government had it. Lacking the cash, he proposed to help them to the 30,000 acres still needed to make up their grant of 100,000; but he would specify neither time when, nor place where, until he could see a way to deal with Fijian occupiers without deportation. 'To depopulate the land mentioned by you would be an injustice to the resident natives which Ministers do not think they ought to commit', he told their attorney, mildly enough.[35] They received, in the end, grants to land at Suva, Viti Levu bay, Natewa bay, and to all Beqa—but in circumstances which Thurston thought suspicious, and on whose authority, he could not later determine.[36] When they persisted in their application he answered them by inquiring, satirically, why they had not yet occupied Beqa, well knowing that they dared not.

This was all part of a wider-diffused problem: the question of the government's responsibility when a chief claimed to have sold land to a European and the Fijian occupiers denied either the fact or his right. Thurston decided it early in 1873 in the case of his old acquaintance T. W. White, whose claim to land on Ono, Kadavu, had failed before the Land Titles Commission. The vendor, Namusadroka, of Rewa, had divided the trade with the *itaukei,* the Rewa chief told a later commission. His right to sell was clear; there had long been another Rewa chief actually living there to protect Rewa's rights in Ono from the Tongans; and moreover, as Namusadroka said, 'the people feared the chiefs very much, they cheerfully accepted the trade, doubless fearing that if they did not act so, something evil might befall them'. He was present to remind them of this when the Cakobau government's inquiry was made.[37] Yet still the *itaukei* contested the boundaries. And 'caveat emptor', wrote Thurston:

> In cases of disputed Ownership *where the Natives have continued in occupation* the Government will not intervene unless it can be shown that the sale made by a ruling Chief—was as a *ruling Chief in effect* and not mere name, and that the sale was *clearly consented to* by the qasetaukei living and planting upon the Land. *In other case it will regard the title invalid.* The attempts constantly made to throw the onus of enforcing the possession of native lands

[35] Thurston's Minute on Polynesia Co.'s memorial to Carnarvon, F1/Temp. 20; Thurston to Morey, 30 October 1872, ibid.

[36] Thurston to Scott, n.d., and Scott to Thurston, 24 August 1875, encl. Gordon to C.O., 5 July 1876, CO83/10.

[37] LCC R1292; for the Cakobau government inquiry, see F1/47.

to Whites must not be accepted by the Gov. as against actual, bona-fide occupiers of the soil.

There are now upon the Coasts of Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, Nadi Nadroga &c &c perhaps 20,000 natives cultivating and holding lands, without any knowledge that some individual of their qalis have sold everything for an iron pot.[38]

White was a political opponent when he wrote this; but White does not appear to have been committed to enmity before November 1872 when this case was first decided against him.[39] The policy was a general one. 'I am glad we are in unison about the native lands', Thurston told Swanston privately, 'the idea of whole qali being landless is perfectly monstrous'.[40] And the case of Naviti in the Yasawas, which Thurston used in letters to Hope as illustration of the process he was fighting, involved the brother of a government employee as claimant, 'penniless I believe a short time ago', who 'desires to remove the natives'.[41]

'I know . . . the tools with which he has had to work', Fison wrote of Thurston when all was over, 'the difficulties he has had to encounter', and 'I am filled with admiration of his courage and ability'.[42] It was a fair judgment, for the 'incongruous elements' surrounded Thurston even in Cabinet. He had 'a set of hard working honest colleagues', he assured Hope;[43] but they had their limitations. The Treasurer, Dr C. H. Clarkson, was an honest man whose innate business acumen may be measured by his going privately into a plantation partnership with the financially-inept Wilkinson. And though Swanston was active and genuinely concerned for Fijian interests, which he saw in a more piecemeal light than Thurston, he was politically naive or, more likely, concerned above all to stand well with every man.[44] He talked incautiously

[38] Undated minute [c. April 1873], F1/31.

[39] In early November 1872 he had given evidence that 'from the very first there has been a most determined combination among all the natives of Ono & the Islands to prevent our ever obtaining our rights' (F1/47). And on 13 November he wrote that, as a result of the inquiry, 'we have to thank your honourable Government for being this day ruined men' (to Swanston, 13 November 1872, F1/41). For his opposition henceforth, see, below, pp. 209, 223.

[40] Thurston to Swanston, 'Wed. Night' [April 1873], Methodist Mission, Fiji: Cakobau Government Estrays, M9, NAF.

[41] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

[42] Fison to Gordon, 16 September 1875, *Fiji*, I, 511.

[43] Thurston to Hope, 6 July 1871, Letter-Journals.

[44] See Clarkson to Woods, 18 October 1872 (personal), F1/35; see also the letters of Woods to Swanston in M9.

and continued to let opponents of the government think he would willingly side with them. He complained that the cares of office forced him to neglect his private affairs; he had to be kept in Cabinet by bracing letters from Thurston, who wrote more kindly about Swanston's drinking with Keyse and Beatson than did Woods. And the latter himself had 'not a very happy manner with him' according to one of his financial contacts.[45]

Nor was the financial errand that took Woods back to Sydney late in 1872 a happy one, in Thurston's eyes. Woods was endeavouring to float an immediate £5,000 worth of debentures and to establish a bank in Fiji that would advance another £50,000 on the 'crown lands'. Thurston later admitted in his journal that he had always been worried by the land problem, especially the question of the existence of 'crown lands' and their employment as security for loans.[46] In 1881, when memory was dimming, he remarked that he 'had no connection with Treasury business under the old Govt'.[47] It was not strictly true. In July 1872 he gave personal security of £500 towards a loan of £1,500 made to the government by an Auckland merchants' representative.[48] And in October he was writing uneasily to Woods about the low returns from the Fijian poll-tax: on no account should Woods lead capitalists interested in the loans to suppose that all Treasury receipts were secure.[49]

Imputations of dishonesty hung about Cakobau's government all its short life, and lingered around its memory. Of some employees outside the Cabinet, they were well-founded. But when Thurston put out his midnight lamp ('I assure you Ministers!!! do not find time to eat or sleep)[50] he turned on his mats in the knowledge that no money stuck to his fingers or was made away with under his eye.

[45] Phillips to Clarkson, 7 October 1872, F1/27.
[46] See, below, p. 292.
[47] Minute, 29 April 1881, FCSO 772/81.
[48] Executive Council Minute, 13 July 1872, encl. Phillips to Acting Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1880, FCSO 702/80.
[49] F1/23.
[50] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

9

'The grasping proclivities and arrogance of our own dear race'

'THE Government is acquiring strength', Thurston told Captain Hope in July 1872. 'The policy of Government is altered.'[1] Under the Electoral Act of 1871, however, it was still a government with the major share of formal power in the hands of Europeans whose guiding ethic was founded on assumptions of white supremacy, shot through with racism. In their organ, the *Fiji Times*, racism was even now sometimes cloaked because the values were assumed; when those values were challenged the editorial columns could be relied upon to restate them with little disguise.

'In order to make way amongst a barbarous race, it is often necessary to treat them altogether as inferior';[2] thus the *Fiji Times* commended the acquittal of a man who had shot a Fijian labourer in one of those brawls which had their origin in truculence and insecurity on both sides, but in which Fijians sometimes showed greater restraint than Europeans. They had been angry but now it was all over, said Fijians on the Waimanu, for instance, after disarming and kicking planters who snapped a gun at them in a quarrel over land. They then took the planters home. The whites remained angry; gathered to the number of twenty-four for Sunday worship, they gave two Fijians fifty lashes apiece and would have banished five others to a Lau plantation had they not escaped.[3]

As early as February 1872 it had been evident to settlers that Fijians saw Cakobau's government as a source of strength. As a result of 'the new order of things', wrote a planter on the Dreketi, Turaga Levu had been officious in his dealings with Europeans over labour matters; and he was threatening to send whites to

[1] Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, Letter-Journals.
[2] Ibid., 27 April 1872.
[3] Ibid., 17 May 1871.

Levuka for punishment by the King if they would not pay idle men. 'I venture to say that the organiser[s] of the Government never for a moment intended, much less gave the blacks to understand that we are to be subject to them . . . But, perhaps . . . they overlooked the fact that they were creating in the black population a determination which . . . may pursue and torture us to the death.'[4] Under Thurston 'the people', his fellow Europeans, came rapidly to realise that this was, in their own terms, precisely what he intended. Their Messiah, they complained, 'soon showed his cloven hoof'.[5]

In June 1872 Thurston took up a member in the Assembly who, against the argument that to put a poll-tax on Fijians was to treat them unequally with Europeans, announced roundly that he 'was not going to stand there and hear that the natives were on an equality with him'. He was surprised, Thurston remarked, 'to hear an equality of races argued when the distinction between them was so marked' as in Fiji.[6] He clashed with Joseph Glenny when the member for Dreketi 'objected to any native having the power to arrest a white man', whether the Fijian were a Governor or no. Glenny was being hypercritical of existing procedure, Thurston replied; but as 'a matter of principle the Governor of a province had a perfect right to arrest any man'. 'According to the Constitution all men were held to be equal, but to his mind they were only equal in the worshipping of God.'

Glenny's answer was the strict racial division of the white republic: the 'less the races were brought into collision, so that the country might be governed quietly, the better'. And the member for Suva related how the drunken Roko Tui Dreketi had seized goods from him, effected ransom in gin, and had the member 'had a revolver with him he would have shot' the Fijian. Rabici had been suspended as Governor of Rewa; but Thurston deplored the cast of mind on display. Members who had to deal with their fellows' land claims 'knew as well as he did that purchasers of plantations were not ashamed to solicit the signatures of chiefs to their title deeds, but these once obtained then the natives were nobodies'.

[4] *Fiji Times*, 24 February 1872.
[5] Ibid., 22 October 1873.
[6] Ibid., 19 June 1872. The member was D'Arcy W. L. Murray, for whom see, below, p. 291.

When Glenny objected to the name 'Governor' being placed before that of 'Magistrate' in an enactment, holding it 'monstrous to place the magistrates beneath the native governors', Thurston replied with sarcasm: he 'thought the "white gentlemen of superior intelligence" (that he believed was the idea) had placed themselves in a position subordinate to the native chiefs by going to them for their blocks of land'. He thought it 'a political absurdity' for Glenny to claim, like 'Republican', that 'when a chief sold a piece of land he gave up all authority over it', for by treaties Britain and France had indicated otherwise: and, sardonically: the 'chiefs inherited rights, notwithstanding they might have been cannibals yesterday'.[7]

These exchanges entered deep into Thurston's consciousness. Glenny, originally a wealthy man, was influential in the European community, benefactor of the Anglican church, patron of Floyd.[8] He represented no lunatic fringe. He was the iceberg's tip. A newcomer 'cd. not form an idea of the schemes & machinations of the whites to defeat the just rights of the natives', Thurston said later.[9] He took notes of other statements made by Glenny now and later quoted them with effect. When Woods was using his favourite phrase 'native gentlemen', Glenny broke out with: 'the Premier had "natives on the brain"; but . . . he (Mr. Glenny) believed that the whites, by education and race, held a position from which they had a right to dictate to the natives . . .'. 'I . . . call a spade a spade', Thurston quoted Glenny, 'and those Christian gentlemen of his—what are they but niggers and hill men? Is it not an insult to this House, and to every white man in the country to have an old nigger like the King set up, as he is being set up? King, indeed! . . . he would be more in his place digging or weeding a white man's garden . . . .'[10]

Europeans were acting in accordance with their concept of themselves as an extirpating race. From Tavua in August 1872 the Baron A. B. d'Este (scion of French nobility and 'an officer of Algerian experience', as Thurston described him) wrote that, having found his late partner's grave desecrated, he held local

[7] *Fiji Times*, 24 July 1872.
[8] LCC P166.
[9] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 26 November 1873.
[10] 'Anti-Humbug', in *Fiji Argus*, 14 April 1876; and see also Gordon to Aborigines Protection Society, 12 April 1876, Rhodes House, Brit. Emp. MSS. S.18 C 135/84, quoting from the same notes.

Fijians responsible. He had 'told them that if they did not capture the criminals . . . I would make them suffer for it by destroying their towns and if necessary taking their lives'. As d'Este assured the government, rumour (erroneous) along the Ra coast was that it had decided to undertake no expedition against the mountaineers with whom planters lived in a constant state of warfare, 'but that any mountaineers seen on or near a plantation may be shot'. 'This is no more than what we have been doing here for the last twelve months . . .'.[11]

Planters' practice and attitude had been illustrated in a letter to the old Ministry from John Berry, d'Este's future brother-in-law. Berry recounted how, after a labourer had been killed on his plantation, the whites mustered, 'arrived at the native town at daybreak . . . and so surprised the natives that before the women or children could be removed we had fired on them (the men) and fired the houses killing all the natives and pigs we could see . . .'. Twenty-one Fijians were killed, recorded the *Fiji Times*, and many wounded.[12]

Of much of this Thurston was a part—in a different sense from the chance that saw him, too, a brother-in-law of Berry in 1882, just a year after Marie's death, when he married Berry's widowed sister Amelia. He could speak jocularly of shooting 'natives' in the New Hebrides. And he was conscious of colour. The distaste he felt for part-Europeans remained with him till the end. Its origins were deep, it may be, in the racial psychosis that led another of his guests and a fellow admirer of Fijians, the Baron von Hügel, to exclaim of a part-European: 'Good God . . . how near that poor fellow is to me'.[13] But he had nothing of the strain, so deep-rooted in the Anglo-Saxon's psychology, which allowed none of the rights of man to coloured men. He did not subscribe to 'the doctrine, that a superior race may rightfully oppress and utilize for its own benefit the existence of a subject one . . .'[14] as a man whom he came to respect was to describe the white man's philosophy.

His policy was hampered by that philosophy now. By sending *mata* into the hills, his government was trying to bring moun-

[11] D'Este to Douglas, 27 August 1872, encl. Douglas to Thurston, 20 September 1872, F1/11; D'Este to Woods, 25 August 1872, F1/31; Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.

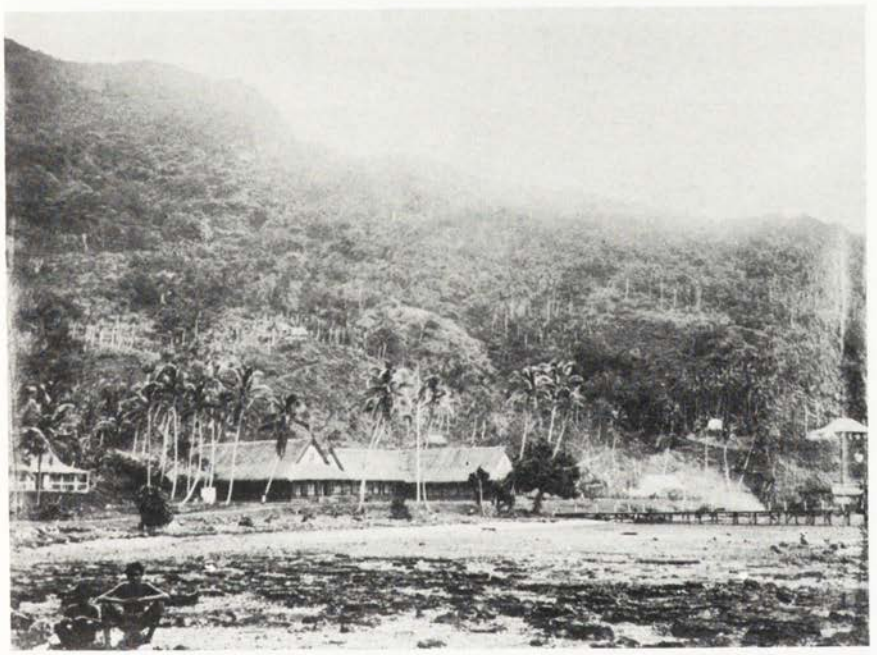
[12] Berry to Burt, 23 September 1871, F1/31; *Fiji Times*, 4 October 1871.

[13] Von Hügel, Journal, 30 October 1876.

[14] *Paper on the System of Taxation in force in Fiji . . . by . . . Sir Arthur Gordon* . . . (London, 1879), 8.



16 Vagadace, north of Levuka



17 Nasova: government offices, with Thurston's house on extreme right



18 Auditor-General, 1876

taineers behind both the Ra and Ba coasts into political relations with Bau and Levuka. Report in September was that the Ba men were willing to come in.[15] Cakobau himself was directly concerned with the Ba case, sending word by Swanston that they must be approached by *mata* alone, not by punitive expedition. He supposed that the feud between the mountaineers and the Ba whites marked by the Spiers-Macintosh murders would probably go on until agreement was reached, 'but that the Whites are to blame as originators of the difficulties & that altho the savages in the hills have been guilty of a heinous crime they are not altogether without excuse'. *Malua*, he said, 'by and bye'; and he instanced Baker's attempt to hasten the approach of Christianity inland.[16] But Ratu Isikeli, charged with opening up lines of communication, feared to bring mountaineers down where planters might fall foul of them, while at Tavua Berry hoped that leave granted for a *mata* to come through from inland would not 'be taken as permission for the Ki Colos to come when they like.' Berry required a time to be set, 'as all my men are armed and instructed to shoot any Mountaineers that they see down here'.[17]

And so, as Thurston remarked on d'Este's complaint,

> The state of affairs alluded to by Mr. D'Este is in the opinion of this Government attributable to the arrogant bearing and gross wrongs which natives of Ba and Tavua experience at the hands of settlers in those districts whose chief article of creed is the duty to shoot a Fijian hillman . . . whenever they see one.
>
> So great is the feud that the Government having last week named a time and place for the mountain Chiefs to visit the coast to tender

[15] Swanston's memorandum of 7 July 1872, F1/41; ? to Minister of Native Affairs, 17 September 1872 (copy), F1/32; Swanston to Magistrates of Ra and Yasawas, 18 September 1872, F1/42; Thurston to Woods, 26 September 1872, F1/23.

[16] Swanston's memorandum of 26 August 1872, F1/44.

[17] Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro to Minister of Native Affairs, 17 September 1872 (paraphrase), F1/42; Berry to Woods, 3 August 1872, F1/31. Planter irritation was voiced similarly from Navua next year, if more mildly:

> you are informed that a certain [inland] chief will join you in May, and pay his taxes: and after that letter has reached you, three of his people are caught stealing guns from a planter close to Duba, as they say, for payment, because Mr Sinclair would not let them come into his private dwelling, pull his things about, spit on the floor, and give themselves the airs of lords of creation, and the White inhabitants slaves, because from want of force we are bound to submit to their insolence. If sir you of the Governt. consider that ordering a thief out of your house is an act of an overt nature calculated to cause disaffection among the natives, then we are guilty of such acts. . . .

(Graham to Minister for Native Affairs, 15 April 1873, F1/41).

their submission are compelled to set apart a particular track through which they may journey.

Should Mr. D'Este and his friends act in the manner intimated, it will be the duty of this Government to prevent subsequent collisions by removing them from a district the disorders in which were begun and are continued by themselves in opposition to the measures and policy of the Cabinet.[18]

By the end of 1872 he was convinced that a race war had already begun in Viti Levu. As he told the Foreign Office in December, with the several Berry brothers in mind, in one part of Fiji—though fortunately only one—

> the planters have marks erected upon their neighbouring hills by which the rifle range is known and . . . any Fijian coming within these ranges is shot at and frequently shot dead . . . a feud has commenced by men mostly H.M. Subjects whose principal object is to kill off the Fijians and acquire by murder treachery,—and fraud their lands, . . . the war of the so-called superior against the so-called inferior race has commenced and is only held in check and can only be crushed by the Government established here in Fiji.[19]

Unless Britain intervened with protection, he meant.

He knew how Fijians were reacting: how Tui Cakau took away Fijian witnesses against Keane because they were locked up like prisoners,[20] how Ma'afu shunned Levuka after closing the Assembly in July with a powerful speech in which he pledged his oneness with Cakobau, their joint determination to uphold the government, and his weariness of the bickering Europeans:

> We are the natives. It is our land . . . if you will resist the Government, our duty is plain, and my mind is that we should request your Government to remove you . . .[21]

And if Thurston had to wait until next year to learn of Cakobau's 'accusing the whites of murder cruelty greed stating that they regarded the natives merely as pigs and dogs &c to be shot at beaten starved and ill used in every possible way',[22] the old man's outburst then was in the vein of his Totoga speech of 1871; and

[18] Thurston to Douglas, 21 September 1872, F1/23.
[19] Thurston to Granville, 16 December 1872, F1/23.
[20] Parsons to Chief Secretary, 7 August 1872, F1/10; *Fiji Times*, April-July 1872, *passim*.
[21] Ibid., 27 July 1872; F1/6.
[22] Carew to Minister for Native Affairs, 11 March 1873, F1/41; *Fiji Times*, 12 March 1873.

Thurston had probably heard much more from him privately at Bau and Nasova. Not for nothing had Cakobau been inquiring about the progress of the Maori wars since the late 1860s.

Until the latter months of 1872 Thurston ruled his 'incongruous elements' with confidence that he could rely on reasonable acquiescence in the government's existence from Europeans. They had no readily-acceptable alternative; they must remain resigned to losing some attributes of their British nationality. But no self-respecting Britisher could long refrain from criticising any government.

There had been complaints from Taveuni itself of broken election-promises on Thurston's part when his Ministry's budget went through at about £25,000 in estimated expenditure instead of being cut to some £15,000. His popularity among the Taveuni Lords had waned as against that of McConnell who 'thought the planters were already sufficiently taxed without having so high a duty imposed upon wines, of which they were the principal consumers'. Those planters—who would soon be reduced to drinking *yaqona*, many of them—'were the pioneers of civilization'. On their behalf, when the cost of labourers was under discussion and it seemed likely the Privy Council had taken an interest in wages, McConnell remarked that 'if Hon. Members were to be bound or dictated to by Native Chiefs, the sooner they knew it the better'. He was deservedly praised, wrote a North Taveuni correspondent, Thurston as deservedly censured.[23] And general financial objections, overcome at the time of the budget, had gained in gravity as the year 1872 drew on.

The expense of government was not to Thurston's taste—though its cost, as he wrote with dismissal, was actually 'just the value of spirits and wines &c that are consumed here'. In reality he was uneasy about it; later, as sole Minister, he cut expenditure to the bone; but for most of the government's life his hands were tied by departmental divisions and the needs of an administration that had inherited a deficit.[24] He economised on government appointments where he could; but there was a tightrope to walk between the pecuniary advantages of curtailing the existing establishment and the danger of augmenting the numbers of a factious opposition.

[23] Ibid., 15 and 22 June, 17 and 27 July, 14 August 1872.
[24] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals; Auditor's Report, 9 June 1873, NAF MS20.

And government of the kind that he envisaged for Fiji could not be had at nominal cost.

He was taxing a financially bankrupt community, however. The bottom was dropping out of the cotton market. Bushes across Fiji were laden with a bumper crop and the demand in London was for copra and rubber.[25] Now came the time of reckoning for many planters with little capital and slight knowledge of cotton-culture, and for merchants who had adventured large sums in credit. Thurston's own plantation losses told him that cotton was played out in Fiji, the quality of Fiji-grown fibre rarely high enough to compete on a world market which now was well supplied again from old-established sources. He was £1,150 in debt to J. C. Smith by September 1873.[26] Long before then men were claiming that the attraction of office for him was its salary.

Financial disaster lent an edge of desperation to white politics. With fifty or sixty of other men's plantations on F. & W. Hennings's books and the firm itself in danger of foreclosure by its own creditors Rabone, Feez & Co., Fred Hennings was faced with Treasury demands for 10 per cent of the value of cultivated land, 5 on uncultivated, 'and he should much like to know where it is to come from'.[27] In the first session of the Assembly planters had carried a statute protecting them for six months against prosecution for debts incurred before the Constitution Act was passed. In the 1872 session Colonel White, to cheers and hollow laughter, avowed that he would gladly take advantage of its proposed extension now that times had grown desperate. 'He had been four years in Fiji, had worked hard, had never been guilty of any extravagance, and at the present time found that he had been so successful that he had absolutely managed to get into debt to the amount of £400 . . . .'[28]

In Thurston's opinion the white community was morally bankrupt too. By October 1872, with the advantage of hindsight, he felt that when he had sent off the unanswered 1870 petition to Britain his object had been to 'save the natives from the grasping proclivities and arrogance of our own dear race, or the rascals of it'. He was now openly contemptuous of the constitution in his private letters. The 'idea of a Ministry in this country ruling by a majority or not at all is simply absurd . . .'. The constitutional rights that

[25] London market reports for May 1872, printed *Fiji Times*, 3 August 1872.
[26] F1/Temp. 6/54. [27] *Fiji Times*, 26 June 1872. [28] Ibid., 12 June 1872.

Hampden had fought for had no place in Fiji. 'Ministry after Ministry might go out and Fijian politics become merely the scuffling of kites and crows to the wonder of the natives & the ruin of the country.' In three months more, he told Hope, 'I shall have material to guide me as to the future, and if the country is not distracted by any internal disturbances and if I have no news of annexation from England, my best efforts will be exerted towards the amendment & abrogation of the present Constitution'.[29]

News of moves towards that British annexation impelled him to write so. In mid-1872 'Mr Alderman' McArthur had moved unsuccessfully in the Commons for Fiji's annexation in 'the interests of commerce, liberty, civilization, and Christianity'. By doing this, as R. G. W. Herbert acknowledged in a Minute of October which was written three days after Thurston wrote despairingly to Hope in similar terms, McArthur had raised an 'uncertainty on the subject' that would be 'inconvenient to all parties' until 'something further has been done to indicate the indisposition of this Government to annex Fiji . . .'.[30]

A decision from Britain one way or the other was what Thurston wanted. Some of the Commons speeches were disagreeable to him personally. They tarred him with the same brush as his predecessors and showed no understanding of realities in Fiji. 'The general absurdity, want of information and common charity shewn in the debate is painful in the extreme', he remarked to Sahl.[31] 'In the opinion of one gentleman, I find my unfortunate self and colleagues . . . pictured as an independent buccaneer government, raising an army to over-awe the Consul and coerce peaceable settlers!!!!',[32] he complained to Hope, with the object of influencing the Conservatives. To the Reverend Joseph Nettleton, now in Tasmania, he wrote roundly that 'Mr McArthur is being made a perfect tool of',[33] while in a private letter to Knatchbull-Hugesson, thanking him for the kinder words in the Parliamentary Under-Secretary's speech, he remarked that McArthur

> is certainly in possession of information as to Fijian affairs which is far greater than we possess who live in the country. I do hope how-

[29] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.
[30] Minute, 14 October 1872, on Thurston to Knatchbull-Hugesson, 24 June 1872, CO83/2.
[31] Thurston to Sahl, 30 September 1872, F1/23.
[32] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.
[33] Thurston to Nettleton, 20 October 1872, TL MS. 390.

> ever that if gentlemen will parade the wisdom derived from private letters & undoubtedly interested person's, H.M.'s Ministers . . . will give the 'independent buccaneer government' of which I have the doubtful honour to be a member an opportunity to make an explanation.[34]

He had a feeling that, even if the Fijian élite would consent to annexation, its members would suffer loss under British rule for which only substantial salaries could compensate them.

He was quite right about the private letters, though in asking Nettleton to forewarn Calvert against Consul March, whom he regarded as the hand on the tool McArthur, he was writing without knowledge of the 1869 affair against himself; it might have lent significance in his eyes to the fact that McArthur was seconded in the debate by Admiral Erskine. Correspondents of Calvert in Fiji amongst his former brethren, receiving reports of the debate in the *Watchman* by the same mail as Thurston had them in *The Times*, did not doubt Calvert's part in the moves to whip up popular support in Britain for annexation; and they thoroughly approved. 'It is now beyond all doubt that the Anglosaxon race will push itself all over these islands', Carey assured Calvert. 'Nothing can prevent it.' And, given a choice between British annexation and 'a govt. that will be sure to govern for the White man', he believed Fijians would prefer the former.[35]

For Thurston it was less simple. His own government would not rule for the white man, as the latter knew. And the view taken by Carey, Calvert and some of their colleagues was more determinist on the Anglo-Saxon race's future in Fiji than he could acquiesce in, while their belief in the possibility of forcing the British government to act in the way they wished was not supported by his own experience and observation. The government speeches themselves indicated almost incredible ignorance of what had hitherto passed between Fiji and Britain. Even Knatchbull-Hugesson did not know of the 1870 petition (the Foreign Office did not tell the Colonial Office of it until 1873). What were they about? Thurston wondered. Would they annex, as from the known policy of Gladstone's Ministry seemed unlikely, or help Cakobau's government by going further than *de facto* recognition? Or would they sit squarely in the middle and, by manifestation of their indecision

[34] Thurston to Knatchbull-Hugesson, 19 October 1872 (private), FO58/138.
[35] Carey to Calvert, 22 October 1872, Letterbook of Rev. J. Carey, ML B440..

and intermittent disapprobation, rob it of the power to govern?[36]

He appealed to Hope in October, asking him to contact Disraeli and, if annexation could be had, 'let me be so advised, and I will at once do what may be necessary as a preliminary step'. If the flag was not to go up, 'I shall devote my humble abilities to carry on the work into which I have been thrust'.

> I am Fijian now in interest, and wish well to the natives & the country. This being so I wish you would inform any state[s]man who will go into the matter (in the strictest confidence of course) that I believe the annexation of Fiji by Great Britain would be the greatest blessing that could fall upon these Islands, not because I fear to fail in what is now being done here but because I know England could do it better, quicker, and perhaps for the same or very little more money.[37]

He wrote officially to the Foreign Office in a similar vein eight days later as one of 'two or three disinterested men striving to raise the Polynesian from the slavery and degradation in which for ages he has been plunged', and asking for definite action. As he told Knatchbull-Hugesson: 'I pray H.M. Government *will* annex or let us alone in our own way'.[38]

This was the burthen of all his approaches to London. And in November his conviction deepened that it would do neither. That month there reached Fiji a circular despatch sent by Kimberley in August to the Australian Governors, embodying the Crown Law Officers' opinion 'that Her Majesty's Government may interfere with the acts . . . of British Subjects within Fiji, and may declare certain acts . . . to be legal or illegal . . .'. The opinion had been sought on March's highly-coloured description of his being ordered off the *Peri*. It was only a statement of law, the remark was made in the Foreign Office in face of Thurston's bitter protests.[39] But by the end of 1872 the favourable impression his legislation had created in London was being seriously damaged by the cumulative effects of March's attacks, even though the Foreign Office knew

[36] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Thurston to Granville, 19 October 1872, F1/23, and to Knatchbull-Hugesson, 19 October 1872 (private), FO58/138.
[39] Encl. 1 in Annexure No. 8 to 'Letter . . . to Commodore Goodenough . . . and E. L. Layard', GPPP, 1874, XLV; *Fiji Times*, 27 November 1872; Minutes on March to F.O., 13 February 1872, FO 58/131; Holland's Minute, 28 March 1873, on Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.

the consul had made Fiji too hot for himself and was now belatedly recalling him.[40]

Thurston saw this opinion as the final inconsistency. The 1870 petition had gone unanswered. In 1871 Kimberley himself had encouraged the idea of independent government. And now 'this precious document comes like a shell in our midst', meaning 'I suppose . . . either that Earl Kimberly originally wrote what he did not mean—that H.M.G. intend taking exception to the aid given to Thakobau by myself and other men, or that the dog in the manger policy is to be adopted, and Fiji neither let alone, nor taken possession of'. He could be in London within eighty days with Ratu Epeli and Ma'afu to arrange a cession, if Britain were willing. But, he appealed to Hope, 'in the name of all that is right and just I hope the Conservative party will see we are absorbed in the great empire—or left untrammeled to do the best we may'.[41]

The force of Kimberley's shell was that it destroyed the legitimacy of Cakobau's government in the eyes of local Europeans. As Thurston told the Foreign Office, the despatch 'cannot but lead to an attempt being made upon the part of those Europeans who would reduce the Fijians to serfdom to subvert the King's Government . . .'.[42] It was seen as cutting deep into the existing *de facto* recognition. It reinforced Europeans in the hopes of annexation which McArthur's motion with its popular support 'at Home' had already reawakened in them. Independent government, after all, had never been more than second-best to British rule for most white residents.

Nor had it been so for Thurston himself, as he indicated to his guest Philp while the movement for annexation and for disavowal of Cakobau's government swelled among Europeans during October and November 1872. 'I am sure that Mr. Thurston has no faith in an *independent* government; he believes in annexation to England as much as any of them; but it is his role to keep up the present government, until something like a definite arrangement is come to by the British Government. He said so himself to me.' Philp noted this, then added a gloss of his own. 'He is right: by doing so he makes better terms for the native Chiefs; and helps

[40] See, e.g., C.O. to F.O., 29 November 1872 (draft), and F.O. to C.O., 21 December 1872, CO83/2; and Granville's Minute, FO58/133.
[41] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.
[42] Thurston to Granville, 16 December 1872, F1/23.

himself considerably too.'[43] That latter interpretation was to have great attraction for Thurston's enemies. 'One thing was very palpable', claimed the *Fiji Times*, 'one thing very certain; and that was that whether Fiji were a kingdom, or whether it became a British Colony, the first consideration was to be—Thurston!'[44] It would not hold. He held out for terms for Fijians. But the line he pursued in doing so was not likely to attract a niche for himself.

For as 1872 drew to a close the *Fiji Times* and the general European talk around him made him fear what annexation might bring Fijians to. It would be the panacea for all Europeans' troubles, G. L. Griffiths promised.[45] And his readers agreed. A British colonial establishment could reasonably be expected to sympathise with their views both on economics and on race. White capital would be safe and the political dominance of the white man assured under the British flag. A *Fiji Times* staff correspondent reflected comfortably how the 'parental Government has followed her people into India, China, Burmah, Africa and elsewhere, redressing their wrongs and protecting their property'.[46] And, applauding McArthur, the editor, in the first of what was to be an unceasing series of attacks, found self-government a failure. 'The settlers are too few to govern the natives, and the natives are too low in civilisation and knowledge to be placed on a par with the white man, either to sit on the Magistrate's or the Judge's bench with him.'[47] Glenny agreed, deeply offended by a recent enactment of government relating to the provincial administration which 'seems to put a finish on their worship of the natives and insults to the white men' for it 'places three grades of ignorant demi-savages over the heads of the white magistrates, many of them gentlemen by birth, education, and position, and actually owning a larger share in the group than any native in it'.[48] He was for a return to the white republic, having suffered under colonial rule in Ceylon. Others saw annexation as the ideal. It would attract a flood of the outside capital that merchants and planters so greatly needed. Property values would rise, wrote J. G. Pfluger from his new plantation at Ba; banks would come in and struggling settlers

[43] Philp, Diary.
[44] *Fiji Times*, 14 November 1874.
[45] Ibid., 30 July 1873; and 30 August 1872.
[46] Ibid., 11 December 1872.
[47] Ibid., 16 October 1872.
[48] Ibid., 25 December 1872.

become independent of their shopkeeper creditors whose credit was advanced in goods marked up at their own rate. And without annexation settlers' colour pre-eminence as well as their capital would be at hazard, for the 'struggle for supremacy will come sooner or later, whether we have annexation or not, and then woe to the settlers who have to trust to a native ruler for protection'.[49]

'True to the instincts of our race', trumpeted the *Fiji Times*, 'we have utilised this land, and are surely wresting it from the hands of the Fijians, as we know the soil of Fiji is a most fertile one'.[50] Annexation would put the Fijians to their proper task (plantation labour) and in their proper position *vis-à-vis* the white man (far 'below' him). Whereas labourers now worked under statutory limitations, colonial rule would allow the law of supply and demand to operate. 'These children must grow naturally. They cannot be smacked into men. They may require years of labor ere they learn to govern themselves, long years ere they can be associated with the whites (as the present Government would try) in the government of others.'

There were automatic assurances that 'whilst the native would not be allowed to interfere with the rights of the white man, their own interests would be protected'.[51] But these assurances might, permissably, be seen sceptically by Thurston who, from his earlier reading of the *Fiji Times*, could not have been surprised when it broke out in fury on 4 January 1873 at the suggestion that Cakobau might oppose annexation:

> The white settlers of Fiji have been and are to-day the ruling power of the group, and the chiefs and the natives are merely their puppets. What the majority of the settlers demand, that Cakobau must accede to, his autocracy will not go down with white men who have been accustomed to a liberal form of government. He feels the power of the white race, and must bow to it. Already the Anglo-Saxon has firmly planted his foot here, and so certainly must he remain. The whites can do without the natives, but Fiji can never again be free of the white man. Her destiny is sealed, and as sure as the American Indians, the New Zealanders, the Australians have had to give way to the superior race, so surely must the Fijian . . . Fiji must now become the home of a white race, its original inhabitants are no doubt doomed.

[49] Ibid., 15 January 1873.
[50] Ibid., 26 October 1872.
[51] Ibid., 19 October, 27 November 1872, 22 March 1873; and see also 31 May 1873.

In his letter to the Foreign Office, written a little over a fortnight before this editorial appeared, Thurston remarked that he found it difficult to see how Fijians' right to defend themselves with the help of men like himself could be denied. They were the *itaukei*, the owners of the land, a sophisticated and for practical purposes settled people: 'they feel and know that Fiji is theirs, and that having offered it to Her Majesty upon two occasions without its being accepted Her Government will not support her wandering subjects in their attempts to acquire it by the help of fraud and murder'.[52]

In November 1872, for public consumption in Fiji, he had apostrophised his fellow whites:

> We came into these parts to be out of the way of the tax-gatherer, the constable, and law and order of every kind—and you would bring these upon us to our own doors. Before you became 'de facto' and meddled, we were happy in the belief that we had our Fijian friends in training—to serve us crouchingly—and feed our wants for land, for yams, for pigs, or mats—and think themselves well off with a rusty musket if they managed to dodge the contents of our well-kept rifles. Why can't we go on in this arcadian manner and thrash our own niggers without your 'maladministration?'[53]

He was writing in the leader columns of a newspaper that had been in pale rivalry with the *Fiji Times* since its inception, the *Fiji Gazette and Central Polynesian*, taken over by Cakobau's government in October 1872. Under its new name of *Fiji Gazette*, it was 'the first newspaper published by a Polynesian Government in the South Pacific', he told Sahl, and would enable Ministers to tell their own tale.[54] If a government-sponsored rival enraged Griffiths, Thurston had never thought highly of the *Fiji Times*'s occasional support. Its attitude to independent government veered with incoming news of reactions to Fijian events overseas; and on general grounds it was always 'that dirty rag' to him.

His name was never attached to the *Fiji Gazette*'s editorials; and though men were certain that he was the leader-writer, they found his tracks well covered when they tried to attack him in the Legislative Assembly for views expressed by the paper.[55] His authorship

[52] Thurston to Granville, 16 December 1872, F1/23.
[53] *Fiji Gazette*, 9 November 1872.
[54] Thurston to Sahl, 30 September 1872, F1/23.
[55] *Fiji Times*, 11 and 14 June 1873.

is as clear from comparison between the editorials and his letters as it was to those who knew the man alive: 'his writings may be easily distinguished from a thousand for their autocracy'.[56] For their biting sarcasm too, the complainant might have added.

'What is wanted by a certain class of men', Thurston jeered, 'is an Utopia of rampant Anglo-Saxons, with a subject population of Fijians (to them, in proportion as 70 to 1)—among whom to live, and among whom to find, or make, hewers of wood and drawers of water—to be regarded as the ancient Phoenician regarded the Iberian,—or the modern Spaniard the aborigines of Hayti; and, in due time, as those countries, and more modern and neighbouring ones have done—to furnish forth its perfect Iliad of woes'.[57] Rampant Anglo-Saxons expected to achieve this by annexation. Their desire was 'to reduce the Kingdom of Fiji to the position of a British Colony, and to subject its Sovereign, Chiefs, and people to some such status as that of the aboriginal races of other countries which have been thus "annexed" and subjected'.[58]

He feared that Europeans' most sanguine expectations might be justified. They might actually capture the colonial machine. Even in October 1872 when he was telling Hope of his confidence in colonial rule if only it would come quickly, his letter to Nettleton had another note. 'If Fijian interests will be benefited by Annexation', he wrote with some appearance of doubt, 'who more likely to know it than myself'.[59] The increase in his fears is reflected in his editorials. 'The days when poor aboriginals were poisoned with arsenic . . . or shot down like kangaroos . . . will never be suffered to take place again',[60] he assured sanguine settlers; nor would a second Governor Eyre be allowed to crush a revolt in Fiji as the prototype had in Jamaica. The assurance reflected, rather, his fear that in practice it might be so.

To him, Fiji was 'best governed by a system which, drawing its strength from the inborn feudal submission of the native character, shall gradually engraft on itself the independent energy and administrative knowledge of Europeans'; and this 'feudal spirit can be utilized only by a Government in which native Chiefs have a voice . . .'.[61] From the *Fiji Times*, however much its proprietor

[56] Ibid., 24 May 1873.
[57] *Fiji Gazette*, 5 November 1873.
[58] Ibid., 30 August 1873.
[59] Thurston to Nettleton, 20 October 1872, TL MS. 390.
[60] *Fiji Gazette*, 2 November 1872. [61] Ibid., 23 November 1872.

might argue in his own name for gradualism, he knew that Europeans expected, at worst, a crown colony government with 'liberal' white representation and minimal political rights for Fijians: 'Mr. Thurston must know perfectly well that we will have . . . a local government just as we have now', with the same right to make their own laws,[62] for all the picture he drew of incompetent and expensive rule by delay from Downing Street. He felt that European expectations might well be gratified, unless annexation was brought about on explicit conditions which would secure Fijian rights under colonial rule.

For British colonial officials could reasonably be regarded as fair-minded only in their own eyes. They were not always so in others. A Welshman, writing of New Zealand, remarked that 'John Bull with all his love of justice has too little regard for the feelings and customs of people differently constituted from himself'.[63] The American Consul in Melbourne, General Latham, had not thought that history went 'far to recommend the "tender mercies" of the British Government to the uncivilized aborigines of any portion of the world'.[64] And the French priest at Wairiki, who did not doubt that British annexation would mean a brilliant commercial future for Fiji, feared what it might mean for Fijians: 'A moins que l'Angleterre elle-même ne change, ce que l'on espère beaucoup hereusement, l'avenir ne nous promet rien de bon pour les indigènes'.[65]

Thurston himself was a sceptic, disposed already to doubt both the mental and the moral fibre of men like McArthur—whose philanthropy he was to see characterised as 'sadly deluded' by Gladstone in a Commons debate[66] and in whom lurked the businessman with trading interests in the Pacific[67] who found it both odd and unfortunate that the Maori should decline to sell land for a railroad.[68] Now Thurston saw McArthur and others in the Commons as abettors of men in Fiji whose aspirations for the

[62] *Fiji Times*, 20 and 29 November 1872.
[63] Lewis to McLean, 6 September 1862, TL, McLean MSS. 281 (I am indebted to Dr A. D. Ward for this reference).
[64] Latham to Pritchette, 7 February 1868 (extract), encl. Latham to State Department, 18 February 1868, Despatches from U.S. Consul Melbourne, NAW.
[65] Montmayeur to Poupinel, 12 February 1874, APM OF 208 *Epistolae*.
[66] Hansard, 3rd Series, CCXXI, 1287, 4 August 1874.
[67] See, below, p. 241.
[68] Alexander McArthur (quoting William) to Chesson, 31 July 1881, Rhodes House, Brit. Emp. MS. S18 C141/10.

group would make it a war-torn country—like that New Zealand which, to him, was the archetype of a colony where Europeans had allowed too little political influence too late to indigenous leaders. He knew Sir George Grey's early views from old New Zealand Blue Books and may have read Gorst's *Maori King*. He learned much from books; he had Blackstone on his shelves beside botanical works, kept Smythe's report as a text to guide him. His tastes were catholic. He knew Herodotus, later lent a Wesleyan missionary friend *Endymion*, *The Light of Asia* (newly-published verse life of Buddha) and Dawkins's *Early Man in Britain*.[69] And, by inference, he might have relaxed at night now with Voltaire. *Candide* could have been his bedside book to judge from the pessimism and satire of his writings. Anger consumed him. Henceforth his actions marked him indelibly in the eyes of his fellow whites as their implacable opponent—a renegade from his race, a traitor to the majesty of colour.

[69] Journal of the Rev. A. J. Webb, 1881, ML B577, *passim*.

10

'Treason — High Treason — against the Majesty of Colour'

ENRAGED Europeans confronted Thurston on 20 December 1872. White was at their head, Keyse and Beatson were among the rest. They came as a deputation from a meeting of some twenty residents (mostly planters) who had gathered at Keyse's on the sixth and carried a motion put by 'Taveuni' Hamilton: the Ministers should advise the chief of Bau to withdraw the Constitution Act and inform him that he was deceived in believing he had a right to grant one.[1]

Thurston had seen White and Hamilton on the seventh with Manton, *Daphne* Smith, and eleven others at their back; and he had insisted that they at least change 'chief of Bau' to 'your King'. To Thurston Cakobau was King of Fiji, recognised by all the great chiefs and many lesser ones, as also by members of the Legislative Assembly in their oaths and all European residents by tacit acceptance. The constitution had been established by a 'national act'; it could only be undone by another, he had said, and had argued the point with Hamilton. But he knew the feeling in the European community, where the most active men wanted a colonial régime brought in. He would consult his colleagues and determine what advice they should give the King.

He had been to Bau when he saw them again on the twentieth. And the King would not agree. Complaints came only from Europeans, Fijians held fast by the government. 'The natives had made a step in civilization, and were really interested in the present question . . . .' Moreover the Ministry must know the views of Europeans throughout Fiji, not just those who visited Levuka; and 'there were certain obligations which the Government must abide

[1] *Fiji Times*, 7, 11 and 21 December 1872; Thurston's memorandum of 7 December 1872, F1/10.

by, and which it would be unfair for them to shake off'. He was going up to windward to consult Ma'afu and Tui Cakau, however, 'and bear the remarks of the King, with the view of expediting any change which the country might demand', after which he would be better able to advise Cakobau.[2]

Before sailing, he sent a 'private and confidential' analysis of European behaviour to Sir Hercules Robinson who, as Governor of New South Wales, was the closest repository of British imperial authority. He believed that fear for their capital and the pre-eminence of their colour was moving the dwindling European community. On 6 December, the day when White revived the Ku Klux in a secret meeting at Keyse's, the statute protecting men from their creditors had finally expired:

> and as the present Ministry evince a determination to carry out the decrees of the Supreme Court, insolvent planters, (a very numerous body) are exerting themselves to the utmost with the hope of destroying the Government as the readiest way of resolving their difficulties.[3]

Potential insolvents were indeed numerous. Cases were now begun for the recovery of debt. The Supreme Court, always unpopular for its costliness, became doubly so for the danger it threatened. Planters contended that 'they derive not the slightest benefit further than the privilege of being sued and paying for the luxury', wrote 'One who has no cause to disown his nationality'[4] (and who looked for better credit facilities under British rule). By October 1873 F. & W. Hennings had entered seventeen suits for recovery of debts totalling $28,104.52 and some of the men brought up short, like John Manton, had left Fiji.[5]

In December 1872 fear of distraint was uppermost in many minds. White, Beatson, and the local member (an incipient bankrupt) had sympathetic audiences when they arrived at Rewa in January 1873 to urge an end to independent government before all were ruined and so large a national debt should have been incurred that Britain would recoil in horror.[6] It was the planters who

[2] *Fiji Times*, 21 December 1872.
[3] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), encl. Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.
[4] *Fiji Times*, 23 November 1872.
[5] Registrar of Supreme Court to Thurston, 2 October 1873, F1/11; *Fiji Times*, 14 August, 19 November 1873.
[6] *Fiji Times*, 29 January 1873; White, 'Memorandum for . . . Settlers at Rewa', 20 January 1873, F1/10.

'comprised the intelligence, stamina and very existence of the country', avowed John Rennie soon after mortgaging Maro plantation to J. C. Smith, and yet 'only storekeepers, lawyers, and salaried place holders had yet derived any benefit from the Government'.[7] And this Supreme Court that brought some men inescapably to face their creditors drove one of the latter to distraction. McConnell found his attempts to distrain on a bankrupt neighbour baulked by the Supreme Court's intervention on behalf of other creditors; and he did not accept the situation with equanimity.[8]

McConnell's other neighbour and White's coadjutor, 'Taveuni' Hamilton, was perhaps pressed into the arms of the revived B.S.P.M.S. by the action for debt of $1,355 on a dishonoured promissory note which was threatening him. Distress warrants were later issued. No longer did Thurston mention Hamilton in his letters to Hope as a worthwhile acquaintance as he had done in 1872, when Hamilton's English connections and his willingness to sell Thurston guns to overawe Keyse's Hotel still outweighed with Cakobau's Chief Secretary Hamilton's sponsorship of the 1869 Independency. Now Thurston classed Hamilton with White as given over to gin. He was the type of ruined planter whom Thurston spoke of to Robinson, though he still corresponded with Hamilton. Thurston had 'an almost touching note' from him, he told Swanston: 'he is ruined', and proposed going off to the New Hebrides. 'What madness!!'[9]

Yet in many cases, especially where larger sums had been invested, there was little incentive for merchant-creditors to distrain; there was scant hope that any worthwhile percentage could be recovered. Logan Brothers at Vuna and J. B. Macomber on Laucala were hopelessly insolvent, wrote J. C. Smith—so was Cruickshank too, he implied—and neither would pay ten shillings in the pound if sold off.[10] Unless there was reason to fear fraudulent default,[11] Smith was resigned to keeping such debtors afloat until better times came. So were F. & W. Hennings, desperate though their own relations with Rabone, Feez & Co. now were.

[7] LCC R1120; *Fiji Times*, 4 January 1873.

[8] McConnell to Nettleton, 16 December 1873, F4/12-15; for the court's action, see F1/Temp. 23 and 31; for McConnell generally, see LCC R16 and *Cyclopedia of Fiji* . . . (Sydney, 1907), 291.

[9] For Hamilton, see F1/Temp. 31; Thurston to Hope, 5 July 1872, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals; Thurston to Swanston, 14 April 1873, M9.

[10] Smith to Clarkson, 7 November 1873, F1/27.

[11] See, e.g., the case of 'Colonel' Jennings: F1/Temp. 31.

Only one of the planters whom Thurston knew as the main leaders of secession in 1873 had been ruined by creditors by 1875.[12] And although this one, Rennie, lost Maro in December 1873, the precipitating cause was probably his removal to Levuka gaol for shooting at Fijians.[13]

A fear 'of pressure from their creditors in Levuka' might well urge planters on to bring down the government, as the provincial secretary for Nadroga supposed.[14] What brought men out in arms against it was fear for the pre-eminence of their race. They found it 'inconvenient', Thurston told Robinson,

> to have a Government at hand that will suppress though only so far as its imperfected power permits the acts of tyranny (and sometimes murder) which in some districts particularly the north coast of Viti Levu are of frequent occurrence. I fear that the feelings and results which have taken place in other countries where intelligence and ignorance, or civilization and semi-barbarism have met will take place also in Fiji without a benign and powerful government can preserve the inferior from the effects of contact with a superior and more vigorous people. There is no doubt in my mind, and I confess it with deep regret, that to my own race in this group, no law will be acceptable that does not confine its action to the natives alone. The native is a 'nigger' of no appreciable value excepting to make his mark upon a title deed to land and scarcely that now since this Government has in some measure stopped sales in fee simple.[15]

As he wrote this, his brother's reports from Ba and Nadroga were before him. He had sent Henry down in November aboard the steam-launch *Pride of Viti* as Warden of Nadroga where, he instructed him,

> settlers . . . have suffered great annoyance at the hands of Fijians who to some extent resist or dispise the authority of the Governor Tui Nadroga and you will therefore . . . use all the tact, and forebearance at your command . . . With the Fijians you will endeavour by a judicious exercise of firmness and kindness to place yourself among them as their recognised arbiter and protector, impressing them by every possible means, with the paternal interest and supreme power of the Kings Government.[16]

[12] See applications for Crown Grants of J. H. James, Richard de Courcy Ireland, M. C. Johnstone, in the Lands Claims Commission records. Markham, another of the leaders, had no land of his own to lose.

[13] LCC R1126; and, below, pp. 214-15.

[14] Thompson to Swanston, 23 December 1872, F1/41.

[15] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), encl. Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.

[16] Thurston to H. C. Thurston, n.d. [November-December 1872], F1/3.

The Nadroga planters had been feeling neglected for months, with no court established and their former supporter, Ratu Kini, much away at Levuka. At a meeting convened by Rennie in September, they had 'pledged themselves to redress any grievances by force of arms'; the following month they burned a thieving village and flogged four of its people. They were willing enough to accept any government representative who would relieve them of this necessity for self-help; but Rennie had not supposed Henry Thurston was that man, with his uniform and sword.[17]

Rennie had been with Henry Thurston as they came down via Ba. There Rennie had heard Thurston's companion, Clarkson, echo Cakobau in blaming the Europeans. Clarkson assured the Tana labourers of William Burnes (most exposed of all Ba planters, upriver at Vunisamaloa) that they would be hanged if they shot Fijians. And Rennie had witnessed the government's attempt to arrest C. J. Lindberg on a deposition by Tui Ba that he had encouraged Fijians not to pay taxes; thereupon Lindberg 'had no choice' but to draw his revolver and threaten to shoot any man who laid hands on him—and Henry Thurston equally, as he thought, no choice but to level at Lindberg, as he swam ashore from the launch, a rifle that missed fire.[18]

Then J. G. Pfluger, arrested for helping his fellow planter to escape, had seen his own wife manhandled when she came out flourishing a rifle in his defence. Charged by Clarkson with causing the Rewa trouble of 1868, and still smarting from his losses then at Nailega, Pfluger was appealing for justice to 'the people' by way of the *Fiji Times*: 'let any native or member of this nigger government . . . state whether I ever have wronged or illtreated any of his black majesty's peaceable subjects'.[19]

'Nigger government' was likewise Rennie's cry at a planters' meeting when Henry Thurston landed at Cuvu. Cakobau's government was arbitrary in its dealings with whites. It truckled to 'cannibals'. Rennie's observation of these Ba tumults had left him in no doubt 'but that it was the full intention of the Government to pit the Fijians against the whites'. He 'called upon Ministers to be themselves Britons, and not accomplices of cannibals'—to go for annexation without reserve, putting aside the miasmic scruples that

[17] Graburn to Thurston, 10 October 1872, F1/10; Philp, Diary; *Fiji Times*, 4 January 1873.

[18] *Fiji Times*, 7 and 14 December 1872; H. C. to J. B. Thurston, 29 November 1872, F1/10; Markham, Diary, 8 February 1873.

[19] *Fiji Times*, 18 December 1872.

Clarkson had displayed when he said 'as four English gentlemen' he and his colleagues 'were all in favour of annexation . . . but that he, as a minister, having the interests of the natives to consult, would take many a long day to consider, before he would advise the King to cede . . .'. However they might decide, said Rennie, Ministers might rest assured that 'British subjects would not tolerate Government ideas being thrust down their throat with a bayonet at one end and a nigger at the other . . .'.[20]

In Henry Thurston the Nadroga planters were actually to find a man after their own heart. He made himself agreeable to them in a way that would have been impossible to his brother, whose views on the proper relations between the races he had never fully shared. Harry had abused his complaisance, Thurston thought in a few more years. In October 1873 the Nadroga men, hearing that the younger brother was to be recalled, petitioned for him to stay.[21] Early in 1876 their lament was recorded for the man whom they had, in fact, only recently lost:

> good old days, gone by never to return now that bloody niggers are by law treated as one's equals. In Major Thurston's time things were very different,—not many damned niggers cared to lodge their bloody complaints against white men then; they knew they'd get it hot if they did etc etc . . . His argument always was—We know what those damned niggers are,—the fellow is a nigger,—so there is nothing to be said—land taken possession of, food carried off, or his wife or daughter insulted, there was simply *no* use in trying to bring the case up, for a black is simply an animal & to be used as such.[22]

Acting on this same assumption, Rennie found that the elder brother's arm still reached into Nadroga. In April 1873 Rennie set about dealing with Fijians who lived on flats he had bought across the Cuvu river. They had been living as his tenants-at-will and had found the experience difficult enough. They were treated badly, they said, ordered about as though they were Rennie's own men, stood over in their work as though they were fools while they built a house for him as punishment for losing a canoe he had lent them. They were struck, caught by the scruff of the neck. Their work on the house was ill-done and Rennie proposed to dig up their yams and move them off. He went, armed, with his brother, overseer and a band of Tana labourers, to be disturbed at his digging

[20] Ibid., 4 January 1873.
[21] Nadroga planters to Woods, 8 October 1873, F1/31.
[22] Von Hügel, Journal, at Nadroga, 1876.

by his tenants who, fired on first, left him and others bleeding in a ditch. 'Rennie & Co. have been reaping as they have sown', wrote Thurston.[23]

An account from one of the Fijians involved reached the Ba diarist Markham, who likewise thought that 'the Rennies are probably much to blame' but 'did not feel very cordially disposed towards' his informant 'for having assisted at the outrage'. 'It is evident that the white man's "prestige" is fast disappearing if not already totally gone . . . .'[24] And Tom Berry away at Tavua, noting that Rennie was to stand trial for murder, did not know 'whether it is for killing a Nigger or a white man . . . .'[25]

That distinction was well known in Levuka. The three Europeans were twice given 'not guilty' by juries there, to tumultuous cheers from the spectators; and it was only by renewed prosecution that the government finally got John Rennie himself sentenced to two years for assault.[26] During the immediate aftermath of the skirmish, Thurston had a request from his brother for two or three white constables. In reply, he quoted the East and West Indies as places where 'black police are alone employed'. 'If Europeans dislike to be arrested by Fijians, they have but to keep within the law. Who should protect, or enforce the Kings authority but the Kings native born subjects?'[27]

With the ink still wet on his letter to Robinson, Thurston had sailed for Lomaloma to consult Tui Cakau and Ma'afu. On 31 January 1873 he wrote to Calvert from Levuka as 'Having only just landed from a tedious voyage to windward . . . *You* know what these months are'. The result of his trip and of a meeting of members of the Assembly on his return was that 'the king has officially authorized me, as foreign minister, to put the question of cession direct to H.B.M.'s government'. 'If it will entertain the question, the ministry, as his responsible advisers, are prepared to make a proposition.'[28] His formal question went off to the Foreign Office by the Sydney mail at daybreak:

[23] Rex *v.* Rennie, F1/Temp. 29; *Fiji Times*, April-July 1873, *passim*; Thurston to Swanston, 'Wed Night' [April 1873], M/9.
[24] Markham, Diary, 10 April 1873.
[25] Tom Berry to Place, 16 April 1873, Place Papers.
[26] *Fiji Times*, 31 May, 21 June 1873.
[27] Thurston to H. C. Thurston, 24 April 1873, F1/Temp. 23.
[28] *Fiji Times*, 22 January 1873; Minute on Missen to Thurston, 20 January 1873, F1/1; Thurston to Calvert, 31 January 1873, printed Thomas M'Cullagh, *Sir William M'Arthur* . . . (London, 1891), 157.

> Will Her Majesty's Government entertain a proposition from the Government of Fiji to cede the Kingdom . . . if its King and people once more, and now through the King's responsible advisers, express a desire to place themselves under Her Majesty's Rule.[29]

As he said in the letter itself and privately, his object was to spring an answer before the promised reintroduction of McArthur's motion, with no guarantee that clear decision would result, should still further dilute his power to govern. Would the British government annex?—or would it 'decide at once to recognise and assist us to establish an independent government'? So he put his object to Tait. 'In fewer words, will it undertake to rule here, or let us alone. Present policy being neither one thing nor the other.' He was immediately quoted by Tait to Alexander McArthur's father-in-law the Reverend W. B. Boyce in Sydney, much as Thurston had asked Calvert to quote him to Alexander's brother William himself in London. 'The present government has been wonderfully successful', Boyce was assured by Tait, who personally believed that annexation was probably the best solution, 'but unless recognized and *assisted* by Great Britain it must fail'.[30]

So Thurston resorted to the missionary and humanitarian-cum-commercial pressure groups. 'Pray let Mr. McArthur know [of the formal approach to the Foreign Office]', he asked Calvert, 'and any other of your parliamentary friends'.[31] And he attempted to use a private channel of communication open to his Chief Justice. An old Pacific islands visionary now tasting the reality at the end of his life, St Julian agreed with Thurston on many things. He had published articles on Fiji in the *Sydney Morning Herald* during 1870 which accorded closely with the views which Thurston had urged as 'Britannicus'. Early in 1872 he had published a pamphlet, *The International Status of Fiji*, arguing the Kingdom's legal existence as a sovereign state and its right to full recognition. 'The Fijians have always been a Nation, but have not, until within the last seven months, sought for international recognition as such.'[32] Thurston kept an annotated copy.

[29] Thurston to Granville, 1 February 1873, F1/23.
[30] Quoted Tait to Boyce, 24 February 1873, M'Cullagh, *Sir William M'Arthur*, 157-8.
[31] Thurston to Calvert, 31 January 1873, *Sir William M'Arthur* . . . , 157.
[32] Charles St Julian, *The International Status of Fiji and the Political Rights, Liabilities, Duties, and Privileges of British Subjects, and Other Foreigners, residing in the Fijian Archipelago* (Sydney, 1872 [Preface dated January]).

He agreed with the letter that St Julian now sent privately to Sir Alfred Stephen. The old law reporter urged the Chief Justice of New South Wales to use all his influence 'to procure a distinct, positive, and immediate statement from Her Majesty's (Imperial) Government of what it is they intend to do—or wish to do—or are willing to do—in reference to . . . the agitation which is going on in Great Britain, and, as an inevitable consequence, in Fiji itself, for the "annexation" of this Archipelago . . .'. There was 'vital necessity' for prompt indication whether or not London would move. An 'Official communication pressing for such an immediate statement' would soon be sent. And where Thurston indicated plainly now to Hope that his official approach was only an invitation to *discuss* annexation, St Julian made it clear that the basis of discussion must be annexation on conditions:

> although it would not be difficult at the present time to secure annexation upon terms . . . *unconditional annexation is an absolute impossibility* . . . Petitions and representations from the whites, and even petitions from natives—who may be induced to sign such things without regard to consequences, *are all worthless*. No doubt unconditional annexation might be forced on the Fijians, and submitted to for a time; but not for long. It would produce ultimately (and of this I am as certain as that the sun will rise to morrow) a war of races . . . By terms, carefully adjusted now, in which the interests and feelings of the present King, and the high Chiefs, and those of the Fijians in general are considered and guarded,—and such due precautions taken as the position, interests, and feelings of the white settlers render necessary,—all difficulties—or rather all serious difficulties—may be avoided, and Fiji may become a great and prosperous Country . . . .[83]

When Thurston wrote to Robinson he had seen three choices open to Britain: 'to concede the right of this governt. to deport refractory and seditious British subjects'; to assume a protectorate; 'or, to accept a cession of the Islands upon such terms as Commissioners appointed by Her Majesty's Government and King Thakobau might agree upon'. No outright 'annexation' was possible. And he shared the vision of Fiji's future that St Julian had, if Britain 'does not *and at once* declare clearly what is . . . intended by her'. It was a vision of government brought down by debt-ridden, racist planters until the Fijians—'bitterly in their heart of hearts resentful

[83] St Julian to Stephen, 31 January 1873 (copy), CO83/5; Thurston to Hope, 1 February 1873, Letter-Journals.

at the evident determination of the whites as a body to make [them] . . . strangers and serfs in their own land'—should rise and destroy them. 'The natives who have regarded white men almost in the light of Gods are now proceeding to the opposite extreme', Thurston had told Robinson, 'and attach to them attributes the reverse of divine . . . Should the Fijians once get their savage blood raised and an affray commenced—no power in Fiji could stop it'.

In February Thurston sent his official approach through Robinson, asking that its substance should be cabled to London and requesting a cabled reply. 'If a reply could come *by telegram* saying the proposition should be discussed or would be discussed it would be a very good thing', he told Hope.[34] He heard no more for almost seven months during which, in his earlier words to Hope, he continued to 'hold on to the tiller for the countrys sake and to keep the ship from taking the ground'.[35]

The tiller kicked even more vigorously than before. But Thurston's grasp on it grew harder in proportion. The mail had not been gone four days when William Burnes was killed by mountaineers, along with his wife, their two small children and some eighteen Tana labourers. And Leefe, arriving in the Ba river to represent the government on 14 February, found planters in arms, determined to reject any obligation to a government which they blamed for the killings by refusing passage to its troops.[36]

Ba had been fetid with rumour since November. Word amongst Fijians was that the whites of Ba, Nadi and Nadroga were to be hanged by the government and their lands given back; on the other hand, if Fiji were annexed the *itaukei* would be poisoned and shot.[37] Fijians had their own sense of the majesty of colour: 'Thats black', Tawaki's brother Nasau, pointing to his arm, told a planter just before the killings when the King's intervention was being promised to defend whites, 'Thakombau will never hurt that color'. And there was a well-founded fear on Europeans' part that the point had been reached when coast people and mountaineers might join hands against them. Nasau's prediction 'that the moun-

[34] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), loc. cit.; St Julian to Stephen, 31 January 1873, loc. cit.; Thurston to Hope, 1 February 1873, Letter-Journals.
[35] Thurston to Hope, 24 November 1872, ibid.
[36] *Fiji Times*, 8 February 1873; Leefe to Thurston, 12 February 1873, F1/10.
[37] *Fiji Times*, 18 December 1872, 18 January 1873.

taineers would be down within a fortnight in spite of the whites' seemed sinister when spoils from the Burnes plantation were found in his possession. As Thurston wrote later: 'The coast and mountain tribes had (though often at feud) something in common with each other. They had nothing in common with the settlers.'[38]

The planters saddled the government with the onus of an event which was, in reality, the product of their own choice of territory and their reactions to Fijians—an event which put at least one of them in mind of the Indian Mutiny. To Markham the scene at Vunisamaloa, Burnes's plantation, was like that at the Cawnpore Residency, and a crime against 'progress'.

> These are the first victims to the policy of the Fijian Government; Who will be the next? The Govt. party who came down in the steamer . . . openly sympathized with the mountaineers . . . This is the 19th century, here are a number of peaceful whites, brutally murdered in the open day before the gaze of their fellow countrymen who although belonging to the most highly civilized community in the whole world yet rival these most savage of savages in their utter indifference to acts of the most revolting barbarity.[39]

Yet the Ba men were not of one mind in their determination to have no truck with government; their intercepted correspondence enabled Thurston to single out ringleaders. 'Personally I am truly glad to hear the Steamer is up whether she brings Government troops or Volunteers is of little importance as we cannot afford to waste time discussing the merits of one Minister over another with the Mountaineers at our doors armed for mischief', wrote John McIntosh, brother of the man killed in 1871. 'We are just as much divided as ever . . . .'[40] But they had a leader in their former member, Dick de Courcy Ireland—'an unreflecting, passionate, quickly excited man' in Thurston's eyes[41]—who had made a splash in brash Melbourne before coming down to open a fairly heavily capitalised plantation (and, in a moment of abstraction at Levuka, to shoot himself through the hand with his revolver).[42]

While McIntosh and others wavered, Ireland told J. H. James, he had gone over 'determined to make the Ba men take some stand

[38] Markham, Diary, 8 February 1873; Thurston to Layard, 18 February 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[39] Markham, Diary, 8 February 1873.
[40] McIntosh to Berry, 25 February 1873, F1/31.
[41] Thurston to Stirling, 4 August 1873, F1/23.
[42] LCC R1041; *Fiji Times*, 18 May 1872.

against this damn'd Govt. bringing down their Fijian forces & taking the initiative in avenging the murder . . .'. He went to McIntosh's, 'collecting the planters on my way who all seemed quite careless about the matter and dreaded taking any violence', and there found John Berry, Warden of Tavua and brother to the murdered woman, who 'of course' approved the government's sending down troops and

> read a letter from Thurston to D'Este threatening that if any of us attempted to act without the consent & under the direction & command of the Govt. he would immediately have us removed & could command the Services of the first man of War &c. &c. &c., altogether the most threatening piece of impertinence I ever read D'Este replied to him in just the same strain telling him that no threats were like his promises &c.

Then Ireland made, as he said, 'a most inflammatory speech', telling Berry he 'had not a spark of the feeling of a man in him' if he let Ministers 'make political capital out of the murder of his own Sister which he knew they were doing by bringing Fiji men down instead of white men'.[43] Berry turned; and when Swanston arrived off the river early in March with a ketch full of Fijian troops and a proclamation of martial law, he found his way upriver barred by whites—'Is all the world mad?'[44]—and advised immediate appeal for British naval intervention in order 'to relieve us from a most grave responsibility'.[45]

The Vunisamaloa killings were no more than Thurston had long feared; they were provoked by the shooting of a woman, perhaps two, come down from the hills to fish in the river. He recognised that no one could say the mountaineers' strained relations with Tawaki, and hence with his 'fence' the Europeans, were not in great part responsible. 'No doubt the information you have forwarded is quite correct as to . . . the difficulty of tracing the feud to its origin', he told Swanston. 'Those Ba men however ought to be cautioned, or without some lesson they will return to their old tricks—I hope you will have little to do with them.'[46] For he felt that no one, equally, could doubt that the planters were in

[43] Ireland to James, 14 February 1873 (copy), F1/10.
[44] Swanston's note on McIntosh to Berry, 25 February 1873, F1/31.
[45] Swanston's memorandum of 5 March 1873, F1/10.
[46] Thurston to Brower, 14 February 1873, F1/23; Swanston's memorandum of 24 February 1873, F1/1; *Fiji Gazette*, 11 February 1874; Thurston to Swanston, 'Monday Night', M/9.

the grip of a pride of race, a near-absolute insensitivity to human attributes in men of any colour besides their own; it enabled them to see as ripe for a bullet any Fijian who did not live on their land and serve as a reservoir of seasonal labour and source of garden produce, or who did not pass as a potential ally from his residence on the coast.[47]

Insecurity had much to do with it, but the insensitivity had deeper roots. Long before the case came fully to light, it was common currency on the Ba that in about August 1872 Marawa, an inland youth come down to cut a digging-stick from the mangroves, had been killed by Lindberg with his Tanamen, in circumstances directly implicating John McIntosh and N. E. Soderberg. Marawa's head had been carried off by McIntosh as a trophy. It was said that the then provincial secretary had commended the labourers and 'presented the principal with *two shillings reward*!', Thurston's Commissioner for Ba reported in 1874.[48] Any Fijian not recognisably from the coast who, from curiosity or thievishness, hung about a plantation, risked an ounce of lead now. Sixteen days after the Burnes murders, Markham had a note from 'Colonel' James T. Proctor, the one-legged ex-Confederate lieutenant who had led the planters' punitive expedition of 1871. Proctor 'had found a "kai tholo" spying about his houses and shot him'. But for Thurston nothing quite approached the murder of the Karawa youth, which he had in detail. 'It is alleged and believed that Marawa was butchered like a sheep.'[49]

'Here I am with "Pride of Viti" Major F[itzgerald] and 50 rank and file', Thurston told Swanston from the mouth of the Ba in early March. He was expecting another two hundred 'rank and file'—'and Maafu (of his own motion) is sending down all his men, and offers to come himself to meet any whites in arms against the Matanitu'.[50] Meanwhile he had H.M.S. *Dido* behind him, as

[47] See the papers collected in F1/10.

[48] Harding to Whalley, 21 February 1874, F1/10.

[49] Markham, Diary, 20 February 1873; Thurston to Layard, 18 February 1874, im Thurn Papers. The 1871 expedition was 'a frightful satire upon our civilisation', in the *Australasian*'s opinion (reprinted *Fiji Times*, 17 January 1872): 'It seems to have been commenced in treachery, continued in a spirit of devilish carnage, and carried out with a cunning caution which closely resembles cowardice'. J. H. James, as a result, had felt secure at Teidamu with his partner Markham, in the belief that the mountaineers 'do not know about touching another white man as they say we give them such fits . . .' (James to his parents, 8 October-2 November 1871, J. H. James Letters).

[50] Thurston to Swanston, 'Saturday' and 'Sunday Morning', M9.

result of an application he had made to Robinson for a British warship to be sent down until Britain should have made up her mind.[51] He told her captain that the Ba planters were in simple revolt—'a few men moved . . . by a spirit of unrest and a disinclination to be controlled by legal enactment', who were using Vunisamaloa as 'a coign upon which . . . to hang imaginary wrongs . . .'. Their leaders were raising a cry against the use of Fijian troops on the specious grounds that they were to be used to dragoon Europeans, 'knowing that such an anti-native cry would be popular among a large section of the Foreign settlers'. And, as he continued to Captain Chapman, writing in the launch alongside the *Dido* off the Ba on 19 March:

> The reception of and residence of foreigners within this Kingdom is a question of hospitality and tolerance and not (as is most generally and erroneously supposed by resident foreigners) obligatory. So long as foreign settlers abstain from violating the hospitality extended to them, so long can the safety of the State tolerate their residence within its Domain, but if . . . foreigners seek to set themselves above all law and authority, to offer armed opposition to the Kings Ministers, to threaten peaceable villages with fire, to array foreign savages in arms against the King's native born subjects, to shoot down, murder, and permit their savage laborers to murder, the aborigines of this Country, then tolerance becomes a crime and forbearance folly.[52]

From the Ba, Nadi and Nadroga men that same day came a long statement of their case for secession. They had been at peace with the Fijians before the government existed, and were incredulous when the old Ministers replaced Tawaki as Tui Ba with Nabeka, whom they knew as the man whose degradation of an inland chief had caused the 1871 murders. (So they now said, though a few months earlier they had reported that Nabeka had actually instigated the murder, sending a *tabua* for the killing of all the whites in order to recover the lands Tawaki had sold.) The government had done still more to disturb Fijians by making Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro Governor of Ra—a man in known relations with the hills, a great drinker, with a high-ranking chief's lordly ways over a lesser chief's cash-box or a mission-teacher's wife, who had acquired the ketch in which the troops came down by engaging to supply

[51] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), encl. Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.
[52] Thurston to Chapman, 19 March 1873, F1/23.

250 labourers to a firm of recruiters (though only a hundred had eventually been forthcoming). Planters had killed only one mountaineer, they said, while one of the government's leading officers (Captain Harding, later Thurston's active and popular Commissioner in Ba) had lately shot a Gilbertese prisoner in Levuka gaol. And the recent killings by Fijian troops behind Tavua whilst 'pacifying' the hills had put the *Carl* massacre in the shade. The government was 'a monstrous sham and delusion'. Its Ministers, unconstitutional in their actions, arrogant, presumptuous, had run the country into a debt it could not pay, ignoring invitations to resign. The statement bore the stamp of de Courcy Ireland, though it was signed also by White (who had joined the Ba men), Markham, Montague Cholmondeley Johnstone of Nadroga and one other.

As Thurston read it, perhaps torn—as he often was in his life—between anger and mirth at its mingled half-truth, untruth and facts that were his own bane no less than the complainants', he is likely to have felt that they revealed themselves most palpably in one pregnant charge against Ministers:

> Their line of policy has been a systematic attempt to demonstrate the possibility of placing the superior race in a situation of utter subserviency to the inferior one; but we being men of Anglo Saxon descent are unwilling and determined not to be made a medium for the solution of such a problem.[53]

He was determined to solve it, in the way he had begun. Secession was to be put down, the unity and sovereignty of the Kingdom maintained. That his fellow countrymen would not congratulate him on his 'gentlemanly' conduct in not pushing matters to a conclusion, as Swanston had been congratulated, was of little consideration.[54] Finding Swanston disposed to urge planters' difficulties, Thurston later wrote to put him right: 'No doubt the Ba men have had as you say a good deal to irritate them, but they have no right to let one or two men lead the whole community by the nose'. If they were reasoned with, and their 'erroneous views' cleared up, 'I dare say they will be good boys in time to come, but they must not think as of yore that we are playing at Government or they will some day find it in grim earnest'.[55]

[53] Encl. Stirling to Admiralty, 18 April 1873, Adm. 1/6261.
[54] Markham, Diary, 7 March 1873.
[55] Thurston to Swanston, 'Monday Night', M9.

He had not expected that any naval commander would fail to see his point of view; and he was not immediately disappointed in Chapman. He went back to Levuka with the planters' written submission, Ireland and White aboard the *Dido* as detainees, and the satisfaction of receiving Chapman's assurance that he had 'had much pleasure in being associated with you in this disagreeable duty, and trust that the leniency shown to these misguided men will for ever prevent a recurrence of the like in any portion of the Kingdom . . .'.[56] Chapman soon found himself threatened with a law-suit by Ireland. He learned that the British Crown Law Officers feared his intervention in support of a *de facto* government might be a dangerous precedent.[57]

And leniency with the ringleaders had not been Thurston's real intention. 'I fear our lenient guaranty . . . was a mistake—and that they will only remain quiet until their opportunity occurs', he told Swanston. 'Their *talk* here is something astounding—and one or two Fenians in the Ward room of "Dido" fraternise with them.'[58] Irritated when Chapman freed the prisoners on parole, he prepared to prosecute White for treason. When Chapman intervened on White's behalf, arguing that the 'Colonel' intended to leave the country, he tried to use this as a lever to get Keyse and Beatson deported too.[59] He saw White go, but the other 'alien leaders of sedition' remained. And by May 1873 he was finding his principal object of forcing the western planters to recognise the government thwarted by the interpretation they put on their submission of 19 March. They had submitted to the British Crown, they claimed, not to the Fijian—though despite their objection to 'placing ourselves under the direction of any "Native"', many joined Ratu Isikeli and Swanston in carrying war into the hills.[60]

Thurston was indeed in grim earnest, and not with Europeans alone. The mountaineers of Viti Levu were to be finally reduced by war, now that diplomacy had foundered on the coastal hostilities. With the mountain towns invested, he sought to borrow rockets from the *Dido*, instructed Swanston in their use against

[56] Chapman to Thurston, 23 March 1873, F1/11.
[57] Law Officers to F.O., 27 June 1873, encl. F.O. to C.O., 10 July 1873, CO83/4; for Ireland's case against Chapman see Adm. 1/6303.
[58] Thurston to Swanston, 1 April 1873, M9.
[59] Thurston to Chapman, 8 April 1873, F1/23.
[60] Ireland and others to Swanston, 3 May 1873, and list of Volunteers, 17 May 1873, F1/4(a); Thurston to Sahl, 3 May 1873, F1/23.

the towns and laughed at the prosing of the major (an impostor) who commanded the forces. 'A live shell, or rocket, blended with a volley of musketry and a wild howl—further enlivened with the point of the bayonet will be more the thing' to settle with the *Kai* Colo.[61] At the end of March when war broke out up the Rewa, Thurston's reaction was the same: 'No permanent good can be developed in Fiji until every soul within its limits—white and black recognise the supreme Authority . . .'.[62] If his pursuit of the idea had become obsessive, as his correspondence indicates, it was because he saw the alternative so clearly: Fiji's collapse into the constituent chiefdoms with their disruptive patchworks of European plantations.

Collapse might be avoided if Britain would make up her mind; but, as 1873 approached the mid-year, Thurston's question to London still did not receive the reply he most required—a rapid one. Cabled by Robinson, it had found official opinion at a peak of indecision. Gladstone was unwilling to go forward upon the popular demand in Britain for annexation; and Kimberley was inclined to do so, in great part on the rather simple assumption that it would make 'kidnapping' more easily disposed of.[63] There was a very civilised and urbane disposition to take the line of least resistance—whatever out-dated information strained through the coarse mesh of personal, class-conditioned perception might indicate that to be.

March's 'Slave Trade' despatches were whittling away the government's credibility. So were the private letters that officials received in the consul's mail-bag from their acquaintances amongst the planters.[64] On Kimberley's part there was the uneasiness, result of March's despatches, that had led him to change his own mind

[61] Thurston to Swanston, 14 April 1873, M9.

[62] Cabinet Memorandum, F1/1.

[63] W. David McIntyre, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75 . . .* (London, 1967), Chapter 8, has a detailed account of reaction in London; unfortunately, this book is inaccurate in several minor statements and lacks understanding of what was going on in the tropics.

[64] See the Minutes of W. H. Wylde (30 April 1873, FO58/139, and 19 June 1873, FO58/140; Wylde's main correspondent was the callow but well-connected young Montague Cholmondeley Johnstone. Subpoenaed for the prosecution against John Rennie, Johnstone had been proposing to go into hiding until he heard of Rennie's threats against him, whereupon vindictiveness overcame the solidarity of colour. (Johnstone to Henry Thurston, 'Friday', F1/Temp. 29.)

and veto Herbert's proposal to grant full recognition. He coupled this with cynical distaste for what he called 'the dreams' of McArthur, Erskine and their fellow enthusiasts in the Aborigines Protection Society—'who fancy we have only to proclaim British Sovereignty in Fiji to produce an Elysium'.[65]

Positive action, reasonably enough, was not much discussed until Thurston's actual letter arrived in April; but even after that his two urgent cables for a reply went long unanswered.[66] 'What are that delightful lot of old ladies in Downing Street going to do about Fiji', he demanded of Hope on 28 July[67] when he was still more disenchanted with Downing Street ways of doing business. He had just received a minatory Foreign Office despatch, resulting from March's complaints, with the threat that the British Consul might properly invoke a warship's aid to get redress for British subjects.[68] The threat was ridiculous. March, leaving at last on plea of sickness in January, had left W. C. Michell to act for him —a man 'of unequivocal character for integrity' as his patron said, whom even the Foreign Office knew to be a weakling rogue.[69]

Thurston found Michell issuing recruiting licences to unsuitable craft with a freedom which invited the suspicion he was taking a rake-off.[70] As Thurston complained—'the operation of the Fijian Act is obstructed, and the British Act is burlesqued . . .'. Naval officers agreed with him, as would March's substantive successor.[71] But it was useless to try to get finer points across to public men. In the Commons during June 1873, in what the

[65] Minutes by Kimberley, 15 October 1872, 5 January 1873, CO83/2, and 14 May 1873, CO83/4.

[66] Minutes on Thurston to Granville, 31 January 1873 [so dated in original], encl. F.O. to C.O., 21 May 1873, CO83/4.

[67] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

[68] Chapman to Thurston, 3 July 1873, F1/11.

[69] March to F.O., 7 October 1872, FO58/131, with Minutes. Michell had come to the attention of the Foreign Office while in Hawaii.

[70] Stirling to Admiralty, 23 August 1873, Adm. 1/6261.

[71] Thurston to Stirling, 6 August 1873, F1/23. On the demerits of, in particular, Consul March, see Layard to F.O., 5 June 1874, FO 58/142: 'Great Britain is morally responsible to a certain extent for the shortcomings of Her Representative':

> Had Her Representative here done his duty and aided the Fijian Government, instead of thwarting it in its efforts to regulate the traffic, had he . . . devoted his attention to watching and guiding the traffic instead of labelling his despatches 'Slave Trade', he might have controlled the whole, and with forethought and cooperation none of the present difficulties [in returning labourers] would have arisen.

The judgment was coloured, but founded in fact.

Aborigines Protection Society published as a 'luminous and exhaustive speech', McArthur spoke unctuously of 'that weak and corrupt Government [in Fiji], under whose auspices the iniquitous traffic in Polynesians achieved its greatest development'. He went on to refer to the strong desire for British rule exhibited by the *Fiji Times*, 'which may be regarded as reflecting the sentiments of the population generally . . .'.[72]

Thurston found one of his own letters against 'Republican' quoted out of context by McArthur, which threw doubt on the pious member for Lambeth's good sense or indicated that his intellectual honesty was at one with his business ethics. As Thurston wrote in the *Fiji Gazette*—the 'remarkable character of the debate . . . so far as Mr. M'Arthur and his friends' share in it is concerned, is its remarkable nonsense, perhaps its remarkable dishonesty'. Thurston found himself attacked in defence of March by Sir Charles Wingfield (whom he believed to be a patron of March senior): 'if that gentleman [March] had truckled to the *de facto* Fijian Government as his predecessor did, he also might be the owner of extensive plantations', Wingfield supposed. Thurston confessed privately to being 'much chagrined' at this; but he was mainly concerned with the dishonesty of the whole motion.

> Why not say at once to the Ministry, my Lords, we are Manchester, Birmingham, or Lambethmen. We are representatives of that affluent, noble-minded middle-class whose gigability is beyond doubt, and whose bold and honourable policy is above praise—(particularly abroad). There are certain isles of the sea, the collective areas of which, equal the principality of Wales. They produce cotton, sugar, tobacco, and other valuable tropical productions. These Islands have been twice offered to you by their hereditary and lawful owners, and been by you declined. Left to themselves, these hereditary and lawful owners—as recommended by you many years ago—with the aid and counsel of certain American, German and British Subjects, so prospered as to make the country a valuable possession. To our class, whose soul no ordinary breeches pocket can hold, and to whom sugar, tobacco, and rum is of the breath of life, their acquisition would be most grateful. The islanders themselves would benefit largely by being 'acquired'—as have the people of New Zealand, Tahiti, New Caledonia, and other like countries benignly taken under the care and influence of powerful and civilizing nations. It

[72] *The Annexation of Fiji and the Pacific Slave Trade: Speech of Mr. Alderman McArthur, M.P. in the House of Commons on . . . June 13, 1873: printed for the Aborigines Protection Society*, introduction and p. 4.

is true, these islands cannot be seized and annexed by virtue of any known canon of international law; but . . . these people and their scoundrel Ministers know little of legal or any other canons; and in addition to the opportunity just now for saying you want to rule there, on account of the offences committed in the neighbourhood, by British Subjects—there are geographical, political, strategical, and Trans-Pacific-Mail-Postal necessities that may be advanced. Wherefore . . . annex Fiji—add to our already cumbersome dominion—crush the monstrous system of slavery—(which none of your men-of-war seem to detect)—by stamping out the freedom of the Fijians, and thus—to use the soul-stirring words of the petition now on its way [from Fiji] to your Lordships—'Be the means of felicitously placing the Labour Trade upon a righteous basis of beneficent security'.

This is about the plain English of Mr. M'Arthur's motion.[73]

Contempt for the 'middle-class' was something of a hobby with Thurston, keeping step in a few years with the hunting up of his Thornbury pedigree. By 1876 he was using writing-paper with the stork crest.

He doubted whether Britain would ever concern herself with Fiji. And it was neither in his nature nor within his power to stand still. 'The great question still remains open as to whether under favourable circumstances a successful government could be formed out of such mixed and incongruous elements as are found in the two races occupying the Fiji Islands', he had remarked to Robinson.[74] Indeed the circumstances were not favourable. But nor was it in his nature to submit tamely. He had known since at least October 1872 that government could not be successful under the 1871 constitution, with Ministers bound to command a majority in a white legislature.[75] He had been arguing the New Zealand example since he acquired control of the *Fiji Gazette*. Members of an indigenous élite had been used and discarded by settler-governments there, so he believed; representation had been given to the Maori too late.[76] The belief of white New Zealanders that they had shown the world how to deal justly with 'natives' was an endless source of half-incredulous, half-contemptuous amusement to him.

[73] Thurston to Hope, 25 September 1873, Letter-Journals; *Fiji Gazette*, 25 October 1873.

[74] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), Letter-Journals.

[75] Thurston to Hope, 11 October 1872 (copy), Letter-Journals.

[76] See, e.g., *Fiji Gazette*, 2 November 1872.

He endured one more sitting of the white Legislative Assembly. It met on 31 May, was dissolved on 11 June and never sat again. On 28 July he reviewed his experience of it for Hope's benefit:

> The two thousand Britishers here are laying a nice nest egg for future restless spirits to cackle over. When trouble first began in New Zealand—or at all events about the early part of Sir George Grey's administration there were about 20,000 settlers to 150,000 Maoris, here in Fiji there are 2000 or say 3000 men, women & children to 150—or perhaps 200,000 natives. The grasping, and rapacity of the Europeans is something quite marvellous. I am afraid that with the restrictions put upon us by Britain we (the Ministers) cannot stop it—and the Chiefs are getting highly irritable so that if Downing Street does not let us alone—or make up its mind for an annexation-treaty—upon which subject the Chiefs are fast cooling —you may expect to hear of some very remarkable and perhaps painful events from Fiji . . . .
>
> Parliamentary government here is a farce. Let any Ministers bring in any measure in the Native interest and the Opposition howl in derision. To get it through the House would be as hopeless a task as boiling tender a chilled shot. Thus we are at logger-heads, and at the present moment I do not think I have a white friend in the country or if any they are very few. The prime cause of all this is—land. The Whites look upon Fiji as their domain—and upon Fiji men as husbandmen to till it. We regard it from a very different point of view.[77]

The record of the Ministry in this last session had indicated willingness to make concessions. Thurston was still prepared to fight for a majority, even though members were either pledged to bring him down or deliberate absentees. 'What you say anent the Ministerial position I agree with', he told Swanston, 'but some of us must fight the problem through'. Read by St Julian, the King's Speech promised amendment of the Constitution Act to prevent Fijians from voting—a concession in return for which, probably, Thurston intended to make constitutional changes elsewhere and of which the details are obscure. The speech dilated on the advantages of sugar as a replacement for cotton and promised to meet planter demands by enabling them to employ as labourers prisoners taken in the hills.[78] It was to no avail. Burt, soon to be bought over by being made Attorney-General in place of Forwood who was acquiring political aspirations, led an opposition deter-

[77] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.
[78] Thurston to Swanston, 14 April 1873, M9; *Fiji Times*, 4 June 1873; F1/6.

mined 'to get at the real [financial] state of the country before going on with any business'. Enticed into defensive protestations, Thurston brought sneers from McConnell who 'expected to see before long a book issued from the "Gazette" office, "A Martyr to Circumstances", by the Chief Secretary, who no doubt was such'. On 2 June he was defeated by nine to five with three Ministers absent, in a house attended by only fourteen of its twenty-eight members.

Ministers resigned, Thurston told Cakobau, and it rested with him to select one of the opposition to form a new Cabinet. If Cakobau chose to refuse their resignation, as under the constitution he could do, they would only remain on condition the Assembly was dissolved and new elections held.[79] It did not need Cakobau's reply of 6 June to tell Thurston the resignation would be refused. And on 21 June he gave Sahl a hint of his intentions with the remark that perhaps the most important question to be settled 'is as to the position the Whites intend according to the Fijians', large taxpayers who were not commensurately represented (the difficulty of getting in their taxes, when Europeans had no coin to pay them for work, he did not mention).

> Intelligent Chiefs are already drawing attention to the fact that by the Constitution they have the right to vote, and my own impression is, that if the Whites do not concede this right with good grace, it will be exercised in spite of them at no distant day.
>
> Nothing can be more admirable than the earnest manner in which the natives are striving to acquire the principles and rules of civilized society, and nothing can be more painful than the present discord which characterises the proceedings of the white section of our community.[80]

The Assembly had declined to act on ministerial recommendations that the Electoral Act of 1871 was illegal, he later said in public; and it had introduced its own bills 'to set the provisions of the Constitution aside, and extend still more the dominancy of the white residents'.[81] Five days before he wrote to Sahl, he had received legal opinion that the opposition's proposed emendation of the Constitution Act to accord with the restrictive Electoral Act was unconstitutional.[82] Five days later again a Privy Council,

[79] *Fiji Times*, 4-14 June 1873, *passim*; Thurston to Cakobau, 2 June 1873, F1/1.

[80] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals, and to Sahl, 21 June 1873, F1/23.

[81] Answer to Stirling, encl. Stirling to Admiralty, 13 August 1873, Adm. 1/6261.

[82] Garrick to Thurston, 16 June 1873, F1/10.

meeting inland, determined to abide by the clause of the Constitution Act whereby the vote in elections to the Legislative Assembly was accorded to 'every male subject of the Kingdom'.[83]

This threat of the Fijian vote brought the racists out in full cry and won over to open support others who normally were content to give it tacitly. 'The clause under which natives are empowered to vote is against the spirit of the intention of the delegates', affirmed the *Fiji Times*. 'It was never intended to permit 100,000 of an inferior race to dominate over the 2000 of a superior race which had invested a quarter of a million of money in this country relying upon the good faith of its aboriginal inhabitants', wrote a correspondent.[84] And Thurston took advantage of the naivety in his fellow countrymen's protests to employ the weapon of ridicule that came as naturally to his hand as it hurt and enraged them. Clearly the chiefs

> received their Constitutional rights from the white delegates, who while *ex gratia* carefully guarding! the rights of the native . . . no more thought of carrying out the expressed intent of the Constitution than they did of flying or swimming back to their constituencies . . . The whites being the rightful and undoubted possessor of the soil, conceded a hollow something to the interloping Fijians just to save appearances.[85]

The latter sneer was inspired by a remark of Glenny's at a crowded hotel meeting. 'A simple compact', said Glenny, 'had been made with the natives, to keep people from saying that we enslaved them'. As Thurston told Hope—'this noble expression of the bold Briton contains the very pith or marrow of the White mans design in Fiji'.[86]

A White Residents' Political Association was formed to defend the old constitution. D'Este was a leading member and many hitherto uncommitted men joined—Rupert Ryder of Mago, even D'Arcy W. L. Murray (husband of Thurston's future wife Amelia), a supporter of the government until now. He was the former owner of the *Fiji Gazette and Central Polynesian*, a somewhat broken-down 'gentleman', a friend of Thurston, and a man who actually feared the coercion of British colonial rule. He was a

[83] Milne to Thurston, 26 June 1873, F1/1.
[84] *Fiji Times*, 19 and 26 July 1873.
[85] *Fiji Gazette*, 23 August 1873.
[86] *Fiji Times*, 26 July 1873; Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

humorist, but seems to have gone seriously for annexation now 'as the herald of a Government that would give confidence in our stability, and would afford to the white man the fair countenance of his fellow white man (Cheers)'.[87]

Fijians would not succeed in voting even if they dared attempt it, came word from Ba.[88] If returning officers accepted Fijian votes, moved the Dreketi planter and merchant Richard Cave, at a Levuka meeting, Europeans 'ought to take the matter into their own hands'. Rupert Ryder supported him, for 'we should never have capital here if the natives rule the whites'.[89] The white man was resorting to more than words. *Daphne* Smith, who assured Glenny's meeting that 'In no case was it likely we were going to put ourselves in the power of the natives', had earlier been obtaining promises of many votes at Nadi.[90] At Levuka the returning officer, Thomas Leggatt—a very honest man, as Thurston considered him in another context—refused to accept Fijian votes. And Otty Cudlip wrote around for support against the ministerial candidate for Ovalau, Scott: 'the crisis is at hand, the Govt. seem determined to use the native Franchise . . . .'[91]

As Thurston wrote on 28 July, the 'whole of the Whites are now trying to get men returned to the Assembly whose declared qualifications are a "contempt for niggers" and a determination to "clear them out"'. He himself invited Gus Hennings to stand, and invoked Cakobau and Ma'afu:

> The King says the Natives shall vote and send in men who will deal fairly with Fijians. Maafu remarked yesterday that he was sick of the papalagis everlasting talk and bluster, and if there was any of it in the next session and Ministers were abused again he should propose to the King to turn the members out of the House and lock it up. The notion was quite original in a Polynesian and remarkably Cromwellian.[92]

His right to invoke them thus, the reality of their support for Ministers, were testified to by the Reverend Mr Carey who did not think it likely Cakobau would abandon them but who feared the alternative he foresaw: continuance of independent government for Fijians by 'Whites who despise and hate them, and who

[87] *Fiji Times*, 26 and 30 July 1873.
[88] Ibid., 13 September 1873.
[89] Ibid., 26 July 1873.
[90] Ibid.; Markham, Diary, 4 July 1873.
[91] Cudlip to Bateman, 25 July 1873, Place Papers.
[92] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

will not take the trouble to understand them their manners & customs, their language or history'.[93] Thurston had, perhaps, shown no interest in the material Carey was collecting for *The Kings of the Reefs*.

To proceed with the new election was pointless, Thurston decided; the whole structure of government must finally be altered. On 28 July he wrote:

> Tomorrow at ten AM myself and colleagues meet the assembled Chiefs at Parliament House to discuss the situation—and I have settled what my advice will be—The present Constitution must be torn up and thrown to the winds, and a shorter, simpler one granted providing for a Legislature partly nominated and partly elected—and for more power in Native hands—or the King had better offer the Kingdom to Great Britain without delay.[94]

Carrying this advice, he began work on a proposal for a single-chamber legislature ('let the two races meet on an equal footing').[95] He defended the idea during September:

> . . . His majesty for Himself and people is thoroughly convinced and determined that the present Constitution is unsuited to the genius of the nation and the requirements of the Kingdom, that the results expected to be attained under such Constitution is unsuited to the genius of the nation and the requirements of the Kingdom, and that the interests of the Kingdom require an immediate change to a more modified form of Representative Government, always providing for the Electoral Franchise being exercised by the Foreign Residents in returning their members . . . to the National Assembly.[96]

His sense of the enormity he was committing made him prolix.

It led him also to introduce the new constitution stealthily, as a *coup d'état*. Agreed to at a meeting of the Privy Council held at Nasova on 27 September and attended by fifteen chiefs with two hundred Fijians under arms outside, it was sent out to the provinces for acceptance by Fijians and published in a *Government Gazette* of 6 October which had a very limited circulation.[97] Most local Europeans knew nothing of its provisions until after the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed them with St Julian's help on 4 November 1873: in particular, a National Assembly of thirty-six members,

[93] Carey to Nettleton, 15 September 1873, ML B440.
[94] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.
[95] Thurston's notes of 12 September 1873, on Leefe to Woods, n.d., F1/1.
[96] Thurston's Minute, 8 September 1873, F1/1.
[97] Printed *Fiji Times*, 26 December 1873.

twelve of them Fijians nominated by King and Governors, eight foreign residents elected by their community, the Cabinet, eight native-born or naturalised subjects of the Kingdom appointed by the King and sitting during good behaviour, and a President similarly appointed.

'Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat', the *Fiji Times* quoted at Thurston in August when he was exposing Europeans' defensive constitutional pretensions as fallacies before the newly-arrived Commodore Stirling.[98] He had seen his Taveuni neighbour Cruickshank lead a deputation to beg that Stirling would see Ministers dismissed and protect the 'constitutional rights which have been ceded to the domiciled Whites by the hereditary Chiefs of this country through the Constitution Act of Fiji'.[99] At the formal meeting that resulted in early August, Thurston called on Cakobau and Ma'afu to witness that they had both asked Ministers to remain; at a later meeting, he answered the deputation in a powerful statement which was published immediately as a broadsheet. There had been no such 'cession' of exclusive rights 'to any particular race . . ., however intelligent or influential', he said, with his heavy sarcasm. Europeans were 'placed upon a perfect equality with native-born subjects . . . —but no more'. Cakobau, or Thurston for him,

> hesitates to believe that those gentlemen of Foreign birth who assisted in the framing of the Constitution deliberately intended to confine the Legislative rights and privileges to their own class, and thus deprive the whole Fijian race . . . numbering to the whites as seventy to one, of all influence or participation in the legislation of their own affairs. Assuming, as appears to be the case, that the confidence reposed by . . . the hereditary chiefs in the honor, integrity, and knowledge of the white delegates has been misplaced, and that it was seriously the design of those gentlemen to grasp the power of dealing with the Fijians . . . as might be most suited to the interests of the whites, His Majesty . . . guards himself against such a dangerous and unjust device . . . .

The late candidates for seats had 'distinguish[ed] between white interests and black interests'. With many of them 'a most popular qualification is the public announcement, that—notwithstanding the solemn oath which members must take to support the constitution of Fiji—they pledge themselves . . . to bring about the annexa-

[98] Ibid., 20 August 1873.
[99] Ibid., 2 and 6 August 1873.

tion of his Kingdom by a Foreign Power'. Europeans represented themselves as being in fear of a collision between the races which, in reality, none was bringing on but they themselves by their political meetings and their language in the *Fiji Times*. Cakobau was 'unable to conceive how the tranquillity of the Kingdom can be seriously disturbed, unless British residents and others, by their high-handed and aggressive bearing towards his native subjects bring about those evils they professedly seek to avoid'.[1]

This was an example of what the *Fiji Times* later described as 'that fiery denunciation and sarcastic eloquence of which he is so completely a master';[2] and it touched his enemies on the raw. If indeed the Fijian was to be recognised as being seventy to the European's one and given power in relation to his number, what earthly chance was there for 'the capital, the education, the cultivated intellect' of the white?[3] A general cry of 'treason' was being raised against Thurston for his intention to overthrow the Electoral Act. He answered it, perceptively, in a *Fiji Gazette* headline: 'Treason—High Treason—against the Majesty of color'.[4]

He carried conviction. 'Mr Thurston is more than a match for his opponents', wrote Herbert when the broadsheet reached the Colonial Office at the end of the year, 'and is in a great degree successful in showing that they have no good constitutional ground for resisting the Government . . .'.[5] Stirling thought the same, though he was worried by the racial line-up; he left what he believed to be the 'very strong political party of respectable planters and others' to mourn that it were better it had never approached him.[6] Thurston reflected on his encounter with pleasure: 'Stirling complimented us very much and gave us more support than I expected'.[7] Soon afterwards he chose St Julian's pamphlet as a present for a departing lieutenant in the squadron, pasted with his own photographs of Cakobau and Ministers. He could not forbear to remark that 'it completely answers the question "What is a British subject?" British Crown Law Officers to the contrary not-

[1] Answer to Stirling, encl. Stirling to Admiralty, 13 August 1873, Adm. 1/6261.
[2] *Fiji Times*, 14 November 1874. [3] Ibid., 20 August 1873.
[4] *Fiji Gazette*, 2 August 1873.
[5] Minute on F.O. to C.O., 10 November 1873, CO83/4.
[6] Stirling to Admiralty, 13 August 1873, Adm. 1/6261; *Fiji Times*, 13 August 1873.
[7] Thurston to Hope, postscript dated 21 August on his 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

withstanding'. Yet he could still show interest in matters unconnected with Fiji's troubles: 'Let me know what S.E. New Guinea is like'.[8]

He was working at a peak of physical and emotional stress, however. He felt 'Worn out with fighting and worry', he told Hope. He feared that he was indeed trying to stem an irreversible tide. 'This sort of thing is going on as it has done from the Father of History's time to the present day all over the World', he wrote, specifically of the European pressure on Fijian land but with the wider phenomenon in mind, 'and will doubtless be attended with similar results. The weaker ever have to succumb whether it be mice or men. It is right however to protect them as long as possible and for daring to think so our countrymen hate and the "Kai Viti" loves us.'[9] Carey and others of his cloth, hearing the Fijians advance government taxes as the reason for their difficulty in responding to the *vakamisioneri*, would have doubted the latter supposition's truth, but from a viewpoint equally self-centred. There was probably no 'love', but a willingness to be assisted.

Among Thurston's worries were soon, not merely a Treasury strained by the cost of the expeditions inland, but also overseas capitalists uneasy about the prospects of a return on—even the safety of—their investment in the Fiji government loan. 'Our New Zealand Banking affairs are all right', he had remarked to his acquaintance in the squadron; but the £35,000 raised in Auckland, and the arrangements made with businessmen there to start a bank, had been achieved at the cost of alienating the Sydney financiers. Already worried by the Treasurer's drawing on Sydney before the proceeds of debentures were available,[10] Sahl wrote to Thurston himself in August to protest against the further issue of debentures when some overdue had not been honoured.[11] Existing debenture-holders had been foiled in their attempts to float them by the new issue. 'The only inference that can be drawn from the proceedings taking place in name of the Govt is that members thereof *have no honourable intention of establishing* the Government at all', wrote bitter Ebenezer Vickery, Marshall Moore's financier, by the same mail.[12]

[8] Thurston to Martin, 16 August 1873, Brewster Papers.
[9] Thurston to Hope, 28 July 1873, and postscript of 21 August, Letter-Journals.
[10] Sahl to Clarkson, 10 April 1873, LCC R929.
[11] Sahl to Thurston, 19 August 1873, F1/11.
[12] Vickery to Clarkson, 14 August 1873, F1/27.

Thurston regretted that a mistake had actually been made in the number of new debentures issued; he admitted that doubtless the Cabinet could have done better than it had done; but he denied that the government was precluded from putting the rest of the sanctioned loan on the market by any undertaking given before war in Viti Levu intervened—and before powerful chiefs were suborned from adherence to the idea of unified government by Europeans 'the most active and powerful of whom were the clients of our Commercial Representatives in Sydney . . .'.[13]

He meant the brothers Hennings; they were in fear of foreclosure by Sahl's firm[14] and were in a position to deflect some of the revenue that was supposed to help pay off the government's loans. He believed they had been tampering with both the taxes of Lau and its Governor for most of that year.

Thurston had always known how fragile was the adherence of the chiefs, how many-faced was that *valavala vakaviti* of whose treachery Ma'afu himself complained. Ever since government was formed there had been trouble between the Namosi people, led by the Governor Ro Matanitabua, and the *Kai* Batiwai at the head of the Navua river—the latter denying that Namosi had ever possessed authority over them, Matanitabua supported by the planters for his having turned Christian and, more particularly, for the protection he gave them against thieving Batiwai. Here the government had declined to be made the prisoner of Namosi and the planters. By August, at the cost of alienating some of the down-river settlers, it had achieved recognition of its authority by the *Kai* Batiwai—though there remained, further inland, towns that had to be designated 'rebellious' for their refusal to 'go to' Levuka through Namosi, and though *tabua* were out in the hills for the clubbing of the provincial secretary.[15]

There had been boundary disputes, too, like that between Ratu Isikeli and Ratu Kini over the latter's designs on the *lewa* of the southern Yasawa Islands.[16] On Kadavu, the chiefly families of

[13] Thurston to Sahl, 25 September 1873, F1/23.

[14] Foreclosure came in March 1874, on a transfer of assets signed 28 August 1873; the Fiji firm's outstanding debt was variously given as £60,000, £80,000, and £82,000. (See my 'Creditors and the House of Hennings: an elegy from the social and economic history of Fiji', *The Journal of Pacific History*, VII, 1972.)

[15] Correspondence in F1/1 and F1/41.

[16] Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro to Minister for Native Affairs, 23 October 1872, F1/41.

Tavuki and Galoa who held the highest offices in the provincial administration lived in dread that the government might support Namusadroka's claims to oust them, as the second highest-ranking chief in Rewa and *vasu* to much of Kaduva. The arrival of a new provincial secretary, without proper introduction, made them fear there was substance in Namusadroka's assurance that he was to be Governor.[17] Old Ritova, close to his dotage now, still had sufficient power in Macuata to interfere in the payment of taxes and possessed quite enough political sense to invoke Cakobau as the sole individual to whom he would pay a fine imposed on him for damage to plantations, not any white official.[18] And between June and September Bua province began to split. Tui Wainunu had died and some of the contenders in his family for the title were irked both by a remark of Tui Bua's at the funeral and by the requirement of paying taxes, through Bua, to Levuka. Other tensions were evidently operative, for two of Tui Bua's own sons fought on the Wainunu side.[19]

In much of this there was no more than the small-change of Fijian politics, essentially local and status-ridden. Commissioners went out—Wilkinson and chiefs from other provinces, as a rule—to inquire where the shoe pinched and to ease it when possible. Sometimes Cakobau's yacht *Vivid* or his schooner *Jeannie Duncan* sailed with a load of soldiers to let men know that central government existed to do more than merely collect taxes. And for the most part Thurston was not greatly worried.

The Bua trouble was different. It was fought on the marches of Cakaudrove. Rumour was that Tui Cakau himself encouraged Wainunu. 'It has been reported to us that when Tui Cakau went to Levuka he ordered 100 men to come over & join the enemy from Wailevu which they did', wrote Ratu Savenaca Naulivou and Cakobau's third son Ratu Josefa Celua from Wainunu in August; 'they say these were Tui Cakaus words to them, "go (to Wainunu) & wait there for me my signal to you will be the firing of a gun to Seaward, you then come out and attack the forces, and I will do

[17] Papers on White and Wright's Ono claim, F1/47; Forbes to Swanston, 24 February and 17 March 1873, and Ratu Seruvevele Qaranivalu to Swanston, n.d. [March 1873], and report of commission of inquiry, F1/41.

[18] Wilkinson to Thurston, 22 October 1873, F1/41.

[19] Tui Bua to Ministers, 10 June 1873, F1/31, and subsequent correspondence there and in F1/10; Fauvre to Poupinel, 12 October 1873, APM OF 208 *Epistolae*; LCC P456.

so from behind seaward" . . .'.[20] This, very likely, had been 'positively his intention', as they said; but his old adviser prevented him.

All that year Thurston had been worried about Tui Cakau, whom a commission in January had found irritated at the precedence asserted by the Bauan officials sent to rule his province under him.[21] The relations between him and Bau were potentially painful for a man whose father had been *vasu* there but whose own mother came from a lesser place. There were, too, conflicts arising along the borders of Cakaudrove in which a Tui Cakau might be expected to involve himself—to the distress of a central government whose watchword was peace, whose face was necessarily turned against the pursuit of those ends in added prestige that gave life savour to many ruling chiefs. What worried Thurston was the fishing that might be done in these waters by Ma'afu.

He had his own ideas about the influences that were being brought to bear upon Ma'afu, the commander-in-chief who after all had declined to become involved in the Viti Levu wars, the great man from whom even an inland chief like Matanitabua hoped to get advice.[22] And when the Lau taxes failed to come in, their collector William Hennings explaining that according to agreement he had first paid the provincial salaries, after which there was nothing left, Thurston had reason to be suspicious.[23] Hennings must surely be either venal or idle. Thurston suspected the former. His days as acting-consul had told him that much of the money which came into Fijian hands in Lau was already mortgaged to the Hennings brothers. And he may have guessed that the Lomaloma store was still about the only sound spot in their whole rotten pumpkin.[24]

Nor were indications later wanting that the infinitesimal amounts shown as taxes received in the Hennings' books did not accord with the sums actually paid them.[25] Early in 1874 Thurston

[20] Ratu Josefa Celua and Ratu Savenaca Naulivou to Cakobau, 16 August 1873 (translation), F1/10.

[21] Wilkinson to Minister for Native Affairs, 10 January 1873, F1/47.

[22] Humphrey to Minister for Native Affairs, 10 April 1873, F1/41.

[23] Clarkson to Drury, 28 February 1873, F1/10; W. Hennings to Thurston, 3 June 1873, F1/10, and to Clarkson, 27 July 1873, F1/27; Giblin to Clarkson, 12 June 1873, F1/31.

[24] Sahl to W. Hennings, 2 November 1871, Hennings Papers.

[25] Drury to Ryder, 30 June 1874, F1/10; but it should be noted that Woods denied any government knowledge of specific misappropriation.

found William Hennings defending himself and Ma'afu by pointing to the £1,235 14s received from Europeans since 1872—irrelevant, since it was Fijians' taxes that were at issue—and the £739 6s 11d received from Fijians over two years, paid into Ma'afu's account with the firm. No one who knew Fiji, Thurston observed, would believe this latter sum was all that wealthy Lau had yielded when Lomaiviti, for instance, had paid £3,738 for those same two years; and the 1872 taxes, due to be paid in without prior deduction for salaries, had never been accounted for. He stated the fact baldly in a memorandum, then made the marginal note that they were actually 'brought down by Hennings in the Tui Lau and shipped in a German barque to Hamburgh'.[26]

When annexation was being looked to as the panacea which would make the most hapless deceased estate prosper,[27] assure the Polynesia Company of its 'rights',[28] get planters possession of land that Fijians disputed[29] and secure Sydney capitalists interest on their advances, it was not unlikely that the most disastrously-hit firm in the group would seek to overthrow the major obstacle: that independent Kingdom which Thurston himself knew to be an idea imperfectly realised. Later Sahl said that when the Hennings brothers applied to him for advice he had advised them to go for annexation but, meantime, to stand by the government.[30] What actually they did, or indeed what influence they truly had on Ma'afu, remains uncertain, though the Ministers had no doubt that they were leaders against the government. Ma'afu himself expressed firm views against the passage of tax-money out of Lau.[31] And he was thought to fear that, under the government, he might find himself subordinate to the young Ratu Epeli when Cakobau should die.

For Ma'afu, and some Europeans, there might be attractions in a return to the *Tovata*. In July he announced that he and Tui Cakau had finally seceded.[32] He brought the news to Levuka himself in the *Xariffa*, perhaps relying on the *Dido*'s support. And Thurston went back to windward with him a few days later, bound for Savusavu to negotiate with Tui Cakau. They went together

[26] W. Hennings to Ministers and Consuls, 15 June 1874, and Thurston's memorandum, F1/Temp. 18.
[27] Minute on Black to Consul, 29 August 1873, im Thurn Papers.
[28] Polynesia Co. to Forwood, 20 February 1873, F1/Temp. 31.
[29] LCC R429.
[30] MS. Journal of Commodore J. G. Goodenough, 25 January 1874.
[31] Ibid., 27 January 1874.
[32] Parsons to Thurston, 3 July 1873, F1/10.

'for the purpose of staying a general war throughout Vanua Levu', Thurston wrote, 'a war solely instigated' by Ma'afu; and he had given the Tongan the alternative 'of going on this mission, or going to prison'.[33] Yet Thurston's reports to Woods in mid-July indicate that Ma'afu's intentions were actually a matter for speculation on Thurston's part, and for both constructive speculation and active manipulation on the part of Ma'afu's European hangers-on.

Thurston wrote from the *Xariffa* in Savusavu bay, with the small schooner *Isle of Beauty* lying a prize alongside. She belonged to one of the firms of Levuka recruiters which had seduced or been seduced by Ratu Isikeli. Finding her at sea with only a recruiting licence from Michell, whom the government now declined to recognise, Thurston had arrested her with zest. 'Nearly every difficulty that has arisen in connection with Fijian labourers originated with this firm and the sooner their business is suspended the better for natives and planters.'[34] Another year or two saw it suspended. One of the former owners, on a labour voyage in a schooner belonging to the Auckland concern whose senior partner was 'Mr Alderman' McArthur, was killed at Butaritari in a dispute with one of McArthur's traders whose last keg of beef he was instructed to remove, the trader's account being in debit. 'To do business in Righteousness', was the rubric Wm McArthur & Co. traded under: 'let all business in our name be on a true and upright basis, in nothing contrary to the word of God'. And so, they instructed the ill-fated Captain Moeller, they did not wish their name to appear in the labour business.[35]

Thurston's main business was 'patient diplomacy' with Ma'afu and Tui Cakau, the 'exercise of that patience which is absolutely required in dealing with these people—the only alternative being war which would upset the peace of three or four districts'.[36] Savusavu was full of Tui Cakau's troops, the coast in uproar against government's recent initial holding of courts in the bay. 'Tell your Minisita that the chiefs of Savu Savu are not at the beck and call of Cakobau's white magistrates', the word had come from Rokotovitovi, future Tui Wailevu, to the unpaid Minister for Trade

[33] Thurston's memorandum on W. Hennings to Ministers and Consuls, 15 June 1874, F1/Temp. 18; Langham to Chapman, 9 July 1873, MOM 103.
[34] Thurston to Woods, 15 July 1873, F1/10.
[35] *New Zealand Freeman's Journal*, Special Supplement, 8 December 1882; and see Scarr, *Fragments of Empire*, 78-9.
[36] Thurston to Woods, 18 July 1873, F1/10.

Captain Alexander Barrack, who as a planter and copra-trader in the bay was deeply interested in court proceedings: 'they acknowledge no master but Tui Cakau, no government but that at Wairiki'.[37] 'One principal cause of disturbance here', Thurston found, 'is the fact of a Mr Jackson having drilled . . . a number of Eroi and Nacikow natives—who have since been it is asserted insolent and overbearing to their Chiefs'. The upstarts in government pay had been dealt with savagely by Tui Cakau. Rumour seethed about his future violent intentions.[38] Ratu Selabuco, son of Tui Nasavusavu, was spreading word that help would come from Macuata against the government, the *Fiji Times* correspondent had reported on 8 July: 'and so without knowing it, the whites here have a volcano burning under them, all ready to vomit up death and destruction . . . at a wink from Tui Cakau, who the natives say is secretly in league with Maafu, to overturn Cakobau's Government'; some of his chiefs 'say that if Tui Cakau would only give them orders for a secret rising, there would not be a white man alive in the morning . . .'.[39]

While the *Fiji Gazette* was denying that secession threatened, Thurston found the danger of it very real and advised 'that every preparation be made to attack if the Government have to enforce its authority'. 'One half of Cakaudrovi will turn against the Chief. Taveuni might be taken possession of without difficulty.' But still, he believed, 'you may conclude that patient diplomacy will do it'. He spent all one day with Tui Cakau, who 'was most friendly and I see I have lost none of my personal influence over him'.[40] He gave Tui Cakau the ring which came back to him on Ratu Golea's death:

> he invoked his father—never to hide his real feelings from me, never to commit any hostile or overt act without letting me know. I gave him the ring, and it was agreed that if he ever felt 'yalo ca' (ill minded) to the extent of crossing the Rubicon—that the ring without a word should be sent to me beforehand. When he put it on he said 'Sa Vinaka (very good), when I am dead then shall the ring be sent to you'. He once lost the ring in Somosomo waterhole, and had hundreds of men searching until they actually found it . . . .[41]

[37] *Fiji Times*, 16 July 1873—report by Savusavu correspondent.
[38] Thurston to Woods, 18 July 1873, F1/10; see also *Fiji Times*, 9 August 1873.
[39] Ibid., 16 July 1873.
[40] *Fiji Gazette*, 19 July 1873; Thurston to Woods, 18 July and 'Sunday morning' [20 July] 1873, F1/10.
[41] Thurston to Gordon, 27 April 1879, *Fiji*, III, 560.

The great men were moved by resentment and mistrust, irritated by the spreading tentacles of Bau and disposed to keep the produce of their lands to themselves. Tui Cakau 'has grievances which demand consideration—but I believe the origin of movement is Maafu—acted upon by certain persons', wrote Thurston. 'If I succeed in my mission I feel sure some political alteration will be necessary to prevent an early recurrance of trouble.' And Ma'afu himself seemed to be intent on objects different from those which Europeans attributed to him. His name was being taken in vain by the *Fiji Times*. Thurston found him 'very indignant' at the paper's report that he had left Levuka determined to secede: 'this lie—as he calls it'.[42] Next day a letter went from the yacht to Chapman, written by George Bayley, the Hennings employee who acted as Ma'afu's secretary, to confirm the secession. Ma'afu and Tui Cakau would rule and protect whites as they had done before June 1871. Meanwhile they 'have been threatened by the Hon J B Thurston with the forcible intervention of an American man of war whom he says is pledged to assist Bau in maintaining the unity of the Kingdom'.[43] Whatever arguments Thurston may have backed up his 'diplomacy' with, Ma'afu—who later disavowed the letter in writing[44]—swore to him that Bayley had written without authority and 'wants to call him back . . . but I advise that they go on & that Bailley be brought up for it'.[45]

Thurston's object was to get effective public disavowal of such rumours; and Ma'afu was not always readily detached from preoccupation with his own affairs to see their wider effect. He denied the *Fiji Times* story privately, but Thurston could not get him to see that if he publicly tolerated it 'the consequences will be the same as if it were true'.[46] Actually it may have been true, for Ma'afu had ordered two hundred carbines from a Levuka firm just before sailing with Thurston. He could veer and tack with the best of politicians.[47]

Thurston wanted to get him to Levuka for a final reconciliation,

[42] Thurston to Woods, 18 and 20 July 1873, F1/10.
[43] Bayley to Chapman, 19 July 1873, F1/11.
[44] Ma'afu's correspondence with Chapman, 26 July, printed *Fiji Gazette*, 26 July 1873.
[45] Thurston to Woods, 20 July 1873, F1/10.
[46] Thurston to Woods, 18 July 1873, F1/10.
[47] F. C. Hedemann's statement, 2 August 1875, and associated papers in the suit against Ma'afu on his failure to take delivery of the £1,200 worth of Sniders, F1/Temp. 31. (The merchant estimated his loss at £700-800 in profit expected on the copra in which payment was to have been made.)

but 'Ma'afu does not like the idea of returning to Levuka—not that I think he is playing false but—he cannot—and still less so Tui Cakau—grasp the nature of the situation'. They cared for other things than the unity of Fiji. And there was tension between themselves; they hated to travel together. But on Sunday, 20 July, Thurston wrote: 'Maafu has just this moment sent a formal message to Tui Cakau requesting him to be on board tomorrow and proceed forthwith to visit the King'[48]—a meeting at which plans were probably laid for meeting the Commodore on his then expected arrival.

That, at least, was an occasion when Thurston could rely on the proud Polynesian to be 'Cromwellian' without coaching. Ma'afu had a speech to suit occasions when the whites were demanding preponderant rights. He delivered it to Stirling: the two epochs that Fiji had seen, first Christianity and second the present government; the dislike of 'the resident whites' for both; and the faith that 'we, the Chiefs of Fiji' had in the government, their united desire for the good of the land, as against the unchieflike clamour of the *Kai papalagi* who 'never cease slandering Ministers in talking to me and the other Chiefs' and from whose 'evil speaking' he had no rest.[49] He told Tui Cakau that they ought never to give up Fiji to Britain.[50]

Ma'afu was still at Nasova a fortnight later, and again Thurston found his presence valuable; but the actions then of the *Kai papalagi*, with the gloss put on them later by his old friend Swanston, shivered the Viceroy's belief in the government's power to survive their onslaught.[51]

At the end of August the supply voted in the last throes of the old Assembly ran out and whites prepared to resist after the manner of Hampden and Pym. The xenophobic F. C. Hedemann & Co.—which had sold Ma'afu his rifles—declined to pay a land tax levied, Thurston claimed, under an annual not a sessional statute.[52] On 1 September he heard that a part-European bailiff had been put into their Levuka store in distraint and ejected; he paused to ask

[48] Thurston to Woods, 18 and 20 July 1873, F1/10.
[49] Encl. Stirling to Admiralty, 13 August 1873, Adm. 1/6261.
[50] See, below, p. 307.
[51] See, below, pp. 307-8.
[52] Thurston to Sahl, 7 and 25 September 1873, F1/23.

'why a halfcaste was employed upon so grave a duty',[53] then applied himself to enforcing the law. He found the Germans breaking bond that day, standing siege afterwards with rifles and grenades on the balcony of their barricaded store. He protested to Bismarck at the countenance afforded them by his own friend Gus Hennings (acting German Consul in Fred's absence on a trip to Sydney about the fortunes of their failing firm).[54] And between 1 and 5 September he found all Levuka rising in righteous constitutional indignation.

On Thursday, 4 September, Thurston stood in the Council Room at Nasova while the new White Residents' Political Association told a contemptuously-silent Cakobau that he would 'not be King in one week from *this date*' unless the Assembly was recalled and Ministers were dismissed. Thurston remonstrated with their leader, Forwood (who had been dismissed as Attorney-General in July and was free to use the language of European supremacy more natural to him than that of Fijian interest which service under Thurston had forced upon him). Thurston saw his old Bureta neighbour Cudlip at the head of the crowd alongside Forwood, with Sinclair the labour recruiter and Wecker the bankrupt member for Rewa.[55] And he may have felt that they had all unaccountably forgotten the twelve-pounders which dissuaded Field Marshal Beatson sixteen months earlier.

He had a watchdog to muzzle now—H.M.S. *Blanche*, left by Stirling to keep an eye on developments between the government and the 'respectable body of planters and others' whom he had perforce left on collision courses. Thurston was aboard her with St Julian on the night of 4 September, inducing Captain Simpson to withdraw his recent proclamation which, by holding whichever side first resorted to force responsible to the *Blanche*, would have hamstrung Cakobau's government. He was responsible for the 'continuous stream of Natives, armed with Rifles, spears, clubs, and axes, and all in their warpaint' which Simpson saw from day-

[53] Thurston to the Sheriff, 1 September 1873, F1/Temp. 31.

[54] Thurston's memorandum for Warden of Central Province, 4 September 1873, and Thurston to Garrick, 5 September 1873, FM files 15 and 7; Thurston's letters in F1/23.

[55] Affidavits of Whalley and Ratu Epeli, 11 and 15 September 1873, F1/Temp. 31; *Fiji Gazette*, 13 September 1873. For the deputation's view, see affidavits of Coubrough, Richard Ryder, O'Donnell and McCulloch, October 1873, F1/Temp. 31; they purport to destroy the government's evidence and, in great part, succeed in supporting it.

break on Friday 'passing through the town and quietly and rapidly concentrating at Nasova . . .'.[56] And he was there to discipline them that day when the whites came back for their answer.

They pushed aside a picket which offered to let a deputation through. Then they ran into a force of Cakaudrove men and Tongans placed back along the road. Revolvers went off in the scrimmage. A Tongan took a bullet in the shoulder. And 'the chief part of the wealth and intelligence of Levuka' (to the *Fiji Times*) fled back along the beach, while Thurston helped to hold the Tongans off *Daphne* Smith whom they blamed for the shooting.[57] As Thurston assured Simpson: 'The King and Viceroy have sent to inform me that the Fijians and Tongans have carried out their instructions and allowed themselves to be *shot first*, but that the next time they come into collision with whites they will certainly be less considerate . . .'.[58]

This 'battle' or 'rout' of Nasova was a more shocking event than Europeans had contemplated outside their most lurid dreams. As their memorial volume observed, still shocked over twenty years later: 'then was witnessed the disgraceful spectacle of a crowd of respectable, well-meaning citizens—English, American and German—flying pell mell before a body of well-drilled savages'.[59] One of the fleers nursed against the man who directed the 'savages' a grudge which developed into pathological hatred during the misery he experienced over the next twenty years: Edwin Turpin, Secretary of the White Residents' Political Association, once Thurston's consular clerk, his hanger-on as a neighbour at Taveuni. For Turpin the admired, hoped-for patron became henceforth 'a blight and a curse to the country he had made his home'.[60]

Others managed to recall the Nasova affair with amusement at their own expense—as Thurston himself indicated when Swanston was looking for a berth in Tonga under Shirley Baker's premiership. Thurston thought it likely that Baker would 'reply to his application as one of the fugitives at the Battle of Nasova did to George Morgan "I am sorry for you my dear fellow but this hole

[56] Simpson to Stirling, 29 September 1873 (extract), encl. Goodenough to Admiralty, 23 October 1873, Adm. 1/6261.

[57] Affidavits of Whalley, Ratu Epeli, Coubrough, Ryder, O'Donnell and McCulloch, F1/Temp. 31; Milne to Woods, 6 September 1873, F1/1; *Fiji Times*, 17 September 1873.

[58] Thurston to Simpson, 5 September 1873, F1/23.

[59] *Cyclopedia of Fiji* . . . , 127.

[60] Turpin, Diary.

wont hold two"'.[61] He himself found the affair funny enough even in immediate retrospect; he retold it immediately for the horrified Swanston's information:

> *Friday* Riots in town—(Nasova forced last night) at 2.30 mob to seize—yours ever—and bully the King—Some 130 people sent back into town at the rate of 8 Knots—chased by Maafu & a party of Tongans—King & Chiefs raving mad—Many whites bruised, three prisoners, One Tongaman shot in shoulder, (nasty wound).
> Satdy. Strong guards—Deputations, big meetings Stocks of gin decreasing—
> Sunday—Quiet.
> Monday—Preparing to march 600 . . . men into town and sweep out the riff-raff—Germans preparing to cave in—Capt Simpson agrees to what is really a temporary convention—New Constitution announced
> Tuesday, Germans surrender—Deputation, Meetings to King & to say its all a mistake—and that he and his Ministers are the finest fellows on earth—Demagogues rampant in Public, but privately enquiring what berth they can have under new regime.
> *Hennings* at the root of all trouble—
> *Maafu very staunch*—he and Abel have ordered two hundred men each to be placed under drill—and the permanent force is to be increased to twelve hundred men—
>
> The Whites have done more harm last week than ever they did before for themselves—In addition to my belief that nothing will induce H.B.M.G. to bother with Fiji—the Chiefs now say—If we are treated like this by a handful of men what would be our lot if the country was full of them.[62]

Again he represented chiefly feeling accurately. On Ma'afu's motion, Cakobau was at last formally installed as Tui Viti in a gesture of defiance.[63]

Thurston's own will to rule was only strengthened by the rout from Nasova. His hand and the tiller were henceforth welded into an indissoluble unit—welded still more inseparably by the physical danger in which he stood. It looked as though the plots made and oaths taken in the previous nine months would reach fruition in knife or bullet. 'I should really not be surprised if Woods or I got a quick pot shot put into us', he told Swanston, who drank with some of the plotters and believed that by doing so he twice saved Thurs-

[61] Thurston to Gordon, 17 May 1881, Stanmore Papers, BM Add. MS. 49204.
[62] Thurston to Swanston, n.d. [early September 1873], M9.
[63] F1/5.

ton's life. 'We are however quite prepared for any such attempts.'[64] He had a guard of twenty-four Fijians over his own house. One night he sat on his verandah with lamps behind him and a row of riflemen lying in front, to tempt the rampants to expose themselves by a shot—and to lay the basis of a story that he liked to bring out with the cigars in later years.[65] No shot ever came. The plotters contented themselves with inventing the Rotuma murder story (which Riamkau disposed of) and with raking up an allegation that he had recruited his New Hebrides labourers by wearing consular uniform (which Petersen answered).[66]

But this confrontation at Nasova had coincided with the arrival of an answer to the approach to Britain. At long last, Thurston heard by cable brought from Sydney that March's substantive successor, E. L. Layard, and the relieving Commodore, Captain J. G. Goodenough, were to come in the additional guise of commissioners inquiring into his question. 'No word of annexation', as he told Swanston; 'only want to make enquiries'.[67] And 'telegraphic correspondence with a vengeance', he commented later to Hope, in irritation at cavalier treatment.[68] The delay apart, he drew no comfort from the cable, 'which throws no light on our subject'. He found the reverse of encouragement in press reports of Gladstone's comments about the commission: 'one would think the Commission had been sent out to make an enquiry without any reference to this Government'. On the contrary, surely, it must 'enquire of the Government and not come stirring up more difficulty by humouring the inclination of discontented whites'.[69]

He used the *Fiji Gazette* to mock the expectations aroused in the sanguine white community by reports of the commissioners' appointment. Was it supposed the commissioners were coming to call Ministers to account for maintaining law and order, and to 'proceed to trial and judgment' against the Ministers 'on a brief

[64] Thurston to Swanston, n.d., M9; Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers MAE.

[65] *Australasian Methodist Missionary Review*, V, 4 March—from information provided, evidently, by Thurston's friend, the editor, the Rev. George Brown. On this report, the *Fiji Times* denied the existence of the plot, in affected ignorance of the history of the community it served.

[66] Sinclair's declaration, 2 August 1872, F1/11; Petersen's, 21 February 1874, F4/12(17); Thurston to Simpson, 4 August 1873, F1/23; Simpson to Thurston, 13 October 1873, F1/11.

[67] Thurston to Swanston, n.d., M9.

[68] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

[69] Thurston to Hope, 25 September 1873, ibid.

from the *Fiji Times*'?[70] It was part of his personal curse, no less than of his political strength, to be far-sighted, sensitive to atmosphere; and he was writing with a sense of foreboding. He had no inclination, therefore, to delay promulgating the new constitution until the commissioners should arrive. He felt the more strongly placed personally in that, at Simpson's request, he had placed his resignation in Simpson's hands and had had it returned. He had made its acceptance conditional on the whites putting their objections to him in writing. And 'not a man dared commit himself to such a course', he told Hope, while the letter he received from Simpson in reply was, he felt, 'a sufficient answer to any assertion that I keep office—for the sake of the office'.[71]

He intended to negotiate with the commissioners from a position of strength. And the new constitution was an integral part of it. The case for such a constitution was clear on its own merits, he was still pointing out when one of the commissioners had been more than five weeks in the country:

> it is pretty clear, that while the Government should protect settlers from European countries, in their enterprises, and secure to them full liberty to pursue the avocations they may choose to enter upon, the main object . . . should be to improve and assist the aboriginal inhabitants in their progress towards civilization. This indeed is the only mode in which the Foreign residents can be safely protected, and permanently and peacefully established in the country.
>
> In order to accomplish this, and at the same time to improve the manners, and enlarge the ideas of the native race, it is obvious that a form of government must be adopted which these people can readily comprehend, and in which they can take a part . . . it would be utterly futile to attempt to introduce among such a people systems of government adapted only to civilized life; and utterly incomprehensible to a community in a state of transition. Wherever this experiment has been tried it has failed, and has been the cause of much bloodshed, and destruction amongst aboriginal people . . . .
>
> The attempt to form a government, upon the plan of what is called the English constitution, was neither more nor less than a gross absurdity . . . .[72]

In negotiations with Simpson during September he was contemptuous of the argument that the commissioners had a right to

[70] *Fiji Gazette*, 13 September 1873.
[71] Thurston to Hope, 25 September 1873, Letter-Journals.
[72] *Fiji Gazette*, 31 December 1873.

inspect the new constitution before promulgation; and he was unmoved by the reflection that to permit this would be the best way for the Fijians to show that confidence in British justice which Britain's record so clearly demanded. He openly deplored the British government's past pusillanimity. Coupled with McArthur's motions, Whitehall's failure to take up any firm public posture had caused great difficulty in Fiji. He was unrepentant when Simpson protested that in the final version of the constitution the nominated members were not necessarily white, as Thurston had indicated they would be when he gave a verbal outline. They could be Fijians or naturalised whites, and Simpson's objection that as matters now stood between Fiji and Britain no British subject could be naturalised was nothing to Thurston. Might not relations change? and could not Cakobau nominate naturalised Frenchmen, Americans, or Germans? As to the argument that Fijians (who were due to become extinct, so Simpson assumed) were under obligations to the beneficent whites which were scarcely recognised by the constitution's distribution of power, Thurston rejected it:

> in many cases the benefit derived from the settlement of civilized men has been bought at a high cost, and . . . it is open to doubt whether the Fijians have received anything but a spurious article.[73]

But he gave in, suddenly, when Simpson agreed to accept responsibility for anything that might occur if promulgation was suspended until the commissioners arrived.[74]

Privately, he feared the effect on Fijians of the white man's simplistic assumption that their knuckling under to annexation was a foregone conclusion. He was building up his position for negotiation from strength when, in September, he related to Hope the government's success on all fronts; but when he remarked in August that the 'Chiefs & King are not inclined for annexation now' he had received no news of the commissioners' appointment.[75] His enemies would have said confidently, as Hope too may have thought, that he spoke for himself, for office and ambition. The events of March 1874 were to show that he spoke truly.

[73] Thurston to Simpson, 25 October 1873, F1/23; for Simpson's view of Fijians' likely extinction, see his 27 October 1873, F1/11.

[74] Stirling to Simpson, 26 October 1873, F1/11; Thurston to Simpson, 31 October 1873, F1/23.

[75] Thurston to Hope, 25 September P873, and postscript of 21 August to his 28 July 1873, Letter-Journals.

Now as forever, he held that Fiji could not be simply 'annexed' by any European power that felt the need for Fijian harbours or products, or thought to protect her 'wandering subjects'. He was certain that to attempt this, to declare Fiji a British colony without full Fijian consultation, discussion and consent, would be to bring about another New Zealand. He had hoped and expected that commissioners would come when he sent off his question of 31 January 1873.[76] In the previous December, he had made it plain to the governor of New South Wales that he looked for a cession on terms agreed between commissioners and the Fijians.[77] He was still arguing this line in the *Fiji Gazette* at the end of 1873. And he was to base on it his whole conduct over the ensuing three months. 'It is necessary to protect the social, political and territorial feelings of the Fijians . . .', he wrote. 'It is necessary to respect the Fijians' attachment to the soil; but the Fijian is ever required to "move on" as the settler . . . comes on picking out the eyes of the land.'[78] And 'one thing is certain', he concluded on 31 December: 'the question of annexation will be decided . . . by the Fijians . . . irrespective of those clamorous settlers whose interest in the country cannot be made to accord with those of the people among whom they have nevertheless settled themselves'.[79] The 'inducement for any intelligent Fijian Chief to vote for annexation can only be a satisfactory assurance that, as a British subject, he and his people will be treated upon the same footing as other British subjects'.[80]

Doubt clouded the question as he wrote. He was confronting Commodore Goodenough who saw no problem in Fiji that British rule would not cure, who was willing, even eager, to override the limits imposed on him by his instructions in order to bring annexation about, and who supposed that the consent of Fijians was a matter of course. As Thurston summed up five months of anguish in his anonymous *Sydney Morning Herald* article 'The True Story of the Annexation of Fiji':

> Whether there were secret instructions from the British authorities to *secure* annexation, under any circumstances and by any means; or whether, there being no such instructions, it was felt that if this

[76] Thurston to Hope, 1 February 1873.
[77] Thurston to Robinson, 20 December 1872 (private and confidential), encl. Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.
[78] *Fiji Gazette*, 15 November 1873.
[79] Ibid., 31 December 1873. [80] Ibid.

could be done popular feeling and national pride would render the success very welcome, I know not. One, or the other, must have been the case. Commodore Goodenough came with the *prestige* of having succeeded in some pieces of official work elsewhere. An accomplished officer, a man of most pleasing manners, and, most probably, in private life, a gentleman of scrupulous honor. *Officially* a man determined to succeed somehow or other in the work committed to him. To obtain annexation—fairly and peaceably, if possible—*but to obtain annexation.*[81]

[81] Cutting in Goodenough's MS. Journal. The authorship of the two articles which appeared anonymously in the *Sydney Morning Herald* under this title is very evident from their general style, as well as from detailed comparison with Thurston's letters to Hope and leading articles in the *Fiji Gazette.*

II

'The King Rules'

J. B. THURSTON was three months short of his thirty-eighth birthday in November 1873 and was not certain that he would live to see it. He was an administrator whose ability was admitted to be unrivalled in Fiji,[1] a politician whose sense of reality differed from that of most others of his colour. He found himself at odds with his own society in its churches as well as in the secret conclaves of the rampants where he kept spies.[2] He saw communicants amongst the racists; and he could not forebear to sneer. 'My dear fellow, the principles of Xtianity are as opposed to the habits of some of its Professors—as pleasant manners are to the Skunk.' Was not the racist editor of the *Fiji Times* himself 'a member of the Wesleyan body, a local preacher, teacher, reader &c. &c.' who 'lives in the odour of sanctity, and in every respect is in a position to say "Thank God I am not as other men are . . ."'?[3]

Thurston's own 'God denying animosity to religion' could be spoken of to the Reverend Mr Langham in the certainty of its being recognised.[4] Thurston failed to conceal his inability to find God immanent in the persons of His self-confessed Elect. He did not deny God, merely the good sense, humanity and humility of those who sought to impose on Fijians Judaic principles which he thought neither apposite to the Fijian psychological make-up nor charitable in themselves.[5] His 'God denying' meant anti-sabbatarianism, the possibility of divorce on grounds other than adultery,

[1] Layard to F.O., 19 November 1874, encl. F.O. to C.O., 2 March 1875, CO83/8.
[2] Thurston to Gordon, 29 March 1879, *Fiji*, III, 543.
[3] Thurston to Swanston, 4 April 1873, M9.
[4] Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers.
[5] For Wesleyan attitudes see, e.g., Langham to Chapman, 24 January 1878, MOM 103.

and an end to the *vakamisioneri*. As Langham complained in November 1873 after raising £83 at Bau, Thurston had been advising Cakobau that all missionary collections should be commuted for a fixed payment from the government.[6]

Thurston was known for his vehemence in speech and on paper. Everything about which he felt strongly seemed to other men to have 'taken personal hold' upon him, as Brower said about his early attitude to the Polynesia Company. Sometimes he seemed to be compensating for an eye-level not much over five feet above ground. If he loved action, and talk of action, it was perhaps partly because he felt an inner need to dominate in a place where his small stature had put him at an immediate disadvantage with the Fijians themselves and brought sneering comments from the whites. When he had finally broken with Swanston, after the latter deserted independent government,[7] it was his size for which Swanston laughed at him: 'about 4ft nothing—that's his height is it not?'[8] He had the personal vanity popularly associated with small men; he 'stalked' rather than walked,[9] cultivated a grand but amusedly-relaxed manner. He found agreeable refuge at times in the administrator's ink-pot and paper. In his concern to make a calculated impact he kept a copy of Roget's *Thesaurus* close to his writing hand.[10]

He spoke with confidence because he spoke for, and after consultation with, men of rank in Fijian society, men who found him responsive to what they felt as well as to what they said. He believed that a European living in Fiji could only command Fijians' 'respect' by maintaining the values and way of life of his own society,[11] by preserving a certain gulf; but he did not feel it incumbent upon him as a white man to ride roughshod over Fijian modes and aspirations. He was an élitist; and where Swanston, in one of his phases, believed that the 'leaven for good must come from the masses', not the chiefs,[12] Thurston was less confident that 'good' meant 'change' or 'progress', less convinced of the European's right to inculcate it—though, indeed, he thought some attributes of

[6] Langham to Chapman, 17 November 1873, ibid.
[7] See, below, p. 313.
[8] Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers.
[9] See, e.g., von Hügel's journal, 31 July 1876.
[10] Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers.
[11] 'Remarks by Mr. Thurston upon the Memo of Mr. Chalmers as to Native Land Titles, and Government of Fijians', mid-1875, F1/Temp. 18.
[12] Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers.

Fijian society 'archaic', as the rights of the *vasu* for instance, and sought to remove them. Above all, he was certain that little could be done in a hierarchical society except through the apex of the pyramid—the obverse of which might be that he saw hierarchy and pyramid where more fluid structures existed.

His attention was now devoted to avoiding the repetition in Fiji of the situation he saw in New Zealand:

> . . . £10,000,000 of a military expenditure, half the native race destroyed, hundreds of settlers slaughtered, losses in other ways incalculable, at the present moment, even, no hope of permanent peace, excepting in the extermination of the Maori, or by admitting him to the Executive, and to the Upper and Lower House; and this latter alternative, at the eleventh hour, is now being tried.[13]

He was not certain that, if this latest show of interest by Britain proved empty, whites would not even yet come to accept the terms which Cakobau's government offered them. Otherwise, let them leave the country. If the continuing Kingdom should require more outside capital, a firm like Rabone, Feez & Co. was too deeply involved to withdraw, while an individual merchant like J. C. Smith retained confidence in Fiji generally as well as in Thurston himself. Sahl's membership of a deputation to the Governor of New South Wales urging pressure on London towards annexation was irritating, but not a declaration of withdrawal.[14] More investment might be hoped for from New Zealand, where Thurston had personal correspondents in political and commercial circles.

He believed he could still mediate successfully between Fijian and European as he waited for the British commissioners to arrive. He felt that he might yet keep open a viable alternative to British annexation, in case Britain again should not be in earnest or the Fijians should resolve not to cede. But the mediator's cloak lay on him heavily, because virtually unshared and because men of his own colour did not admit the case for the mediator's role. With the prospect of annexation so enticingly close, it was illegitimate if applied to any other end. It was an offence against all that was either rational or holy that he should see any alternative as open. No mediator was required, after all, where no conflict existed.

[13] *Fiji Gazette*, 5 November 1873.

[14] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 October 1873. Thurston's brother-in-law, Simon Zöllner, was one of the deputation.

And conflict could not exist where nature had prescribed that one race should lead, another follow, imitate and even learn through an apprenticeship of plantation-labour—if slowly, and if not overtaken by the natural law of decadence leading to extinction.

The charge of political charlatanry against Cakobau's government itself was one that Thurston had feared ever since he joined it. He referred to its history wryly, defensively, in later years. And he was always watchful for attacks that might come from either Anglo-Saxonry or humanitarianism. Facile humanitarianism,[15] he thought most of it was—the essentially shallow, half-informed, readily-satisfied concern of conventionally conscience-stricken men who had not the stomach to deal hardly with individuals from amongst a people in order to assist the whole to protect itself, for instance. He mistrusted the efficacy of humanitarian influence on the making of British colonial policy when Australia, New Zealand, or Natal was the example. He did not doubt that political dependence on Britain entered upon without conditions was, anyway, no desirable fate for Fijians. Yet he knew that he could be judged in terms other than he wished.

Years later he was to find a judgment made on himself in 1875, after three months' acquaintance, by a man whom he had come to feel was of like kidney to himself, Sir Arthur Gordon. Thurston was found to be 'detested by almost every white man in the group', but this was not to his discredit; for

> the hatred felt for Mr. Thurston by a large majority of the Settlers (which is quite remarkable for its intensity) is due chiefly to two causes—first, the inability of the bulk of the community to understand a man far abler and more clear sighted than themselves, and the suspicion and impatience which usually accompany such a misunderstanding.
>
> Secondly, his refusal to convert the Native population into one of Serfs for the benefit of the planters.
>
> He went far in that direction, but not far enough to satisfy the wishes of the community, and his refusal,—although probably due to the fact that he was clear sighted enough to perceive that such a policy could not be carried further without provoking dangerous resistance rather than to any higher motive,—is certainly not to his discredit.[16]

[15] Some limitations of the humanitarian viewpoint are well delineated in Legge, *Britain in Fiji* . . . .

[16] Gordon to C.O., 22 September 1875 (confidential), CO83/6 and NAF: Governor's Confidential Letterbook.

He may have felt that much of this was just. In the final qualification he probably saw the old friend, current correspondent and supporter, who had felt that no man could quite attain the high plateau he moved on himself. The reservations which, with a sense of shock,[17] he was then to find that old friend go on to make about his lack of scruple, his probable low sense of 'honour' and 'truth', derived, Thurston knew, from an unsound naval source.

Thurston believed that Cakobau's government under his direction could be judged most fairly by appraisal of motives and objects. He was willing to concede—privately, when concession could be made without prejudice—that his achievement had been largely negative. Fiji was no especial paradise for any race when Thurston was Chief Secretary and Cakobau was King. It was no white republic either, with chiefdoms played off one against another.

Thurston saw the Kingdom of Fiji as an ill-found vessel of indeterminate rig beating, perforce, into a hurricane—with reefs under her lee, her pumps going against holes, some knocked by coral-heads and others driven by a section of her crew which was in a chronic state of mutiny. Not all men, he knew, would concede him so much. The legislation put through in the last Assembly enabling prisoners in the Viti Levu war, if convicted of rebellion, to be leased out as plantation labour was a stumbling block; the *Fiji Times* itself had denounced the measure from the start. And the older provision that Fijian tax-defaulters should be put to work for the government might be used to make humbugs of Cakobau's Ministers. But he did not expect to find his picture denied in its entirety, that part of the crew still manning the pumps ordered away, every attempt made to drive more holes, cut the remaining sheets and halyards—and all this by a man with no mandate from any government. He expected it still less of Commodore Goodenough, when hitherto he had never failed to carry conviction with naval men.

It might have comforted him a little to know that Goodenough condemned virtually all of his own naval predecessors with whom Thurston had dealt. But it comforted him not at all to note that 'Goodenough is recognised here as "a British subject man", which is sufficiently expressive'.[18] As a planter whom Goodenough

[17] Ibid.—inset, pasted in by Thurston's secretary, of Gordon's later prediction for his future.

[18] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

shielded from prosecution saw him, Goodenough was 'an officer, a gentleman & a Christian', who 'gave the deathblow to the Thurston Government'.[19]

Son of a Dean of Wells, grandson of a bishop, J. G. Goodenough had been put into the Navy from the 'accident of his godfather . . . having been First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the child's christening', as his widow said in her *Memoir*.[20] As Thurston knew from Hope, Goodenough had acquired a reputation in the service as a 'diplomat' from his mission to Washington to inquire into American ship and gunnery usages, and from his term as a naval attaché on the Continent. After six weeks' acquaintance, Thurston had no doubt that he would go far in his profession, if not by qualities which others saw in him. 'In politics, diplomacy, or official matters', Thurston suspected, 'he is a clever, bold, unscrupulous, and even cruel man: above all this is a polite and affable manner in private which makes him one of the most agreeable men it is possible to meet'.[21]

Himself regarded as an uncommonly shrewd observer,[22] Thurston never saw the paragon of the widely-read *Memoir* who found it 'hard . . . to understand that men should act from interested motives', though that image of Goodenough, attractive despite the recognised imperfections of a widow's portraiture, by reflection helped to tarnish Thurston's image. He did see the man who suffered 'almost physical pain when he was brought face to face with dishonest or self-seeking intentions in anyone with whom he was dealing'. He knew that in the widow's mind 'anyone' had been substituted for 'Mr Thurston'; but he thought the dishonesty or self-seeking Goodenough had seen in himself was the measure of Goodenough's lack of insight, the pain a reflex of his determination to dominate. Had not 'even his elder brothers and sisters' in the nursery been 'accustomed to abide by his decision in a disputed matter, always recognizing his desire for justice . . .'?[23]

[19] Journal of J. L. Young, 17 September 1875, PMB; for Young's case (alleged illegal recruiting on the Ra coast) see Goodenough to Thurston, 3 January 1874, Goodenough Letterbooks, DL, and *Fiji Gazette*, 7 January 1874. For Young's failure to pay labourers on Taveuni, see statement of Rakiraki chief encl. Martin to Thurston, 22 July 1875, F1/41.

[20] *Journal of Commodore Goodenough . . . as Senior Officer on the Australian Station 1873-1875. Edited, with a Memoir, by his Widow* (London, 1876), 2.

[21] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

[22] Gordon to Selborne, 6 February 1882 (copy), Stanmore Papers, BM Add. MSS. 49245.

[23] *Journal of Commodore Goodenough*, 144, 2.

Thurston saw the determination the *Memoir* was to speak of, and believed it ill-directed. He saw the sense of duty, and thought it tending always to self-aggrandisement. 'Personally I like him very much', he wrote in December, 'Officially I do not like him so well.'[24] He described Goodenough as 'polite to a fault, yet dictatorial and domineering' in his letters to Hope.[25] In his journal he sometimes set him down as 'very offensive', sometimes 'awfully friendly', 'even feline'.[26] Each man would have been equally perturbed, probably, had either lived to see Thurston's step-daughter (child of D'Arcy Murray) engaged to Goodenough's eldest son.

Goodenough's character had soon to be assessed through the deflecting rays of a martyr's halo; but his manuscript journal and correspondence reveal him. He was eminently well adapted to achieve popularity in his society and time—conventional, upright, rather callow, never at a loss for a moral attitude, inclined to be petulant in his self-righteousness, little given to self-doubt. He was not wanting in either the arrogance or the obtuseness required to complete the picture of the very perfect English schoolboy hero. He was an impatient listener. His mind was made up rapidly, by the processes of feeling rather than of thought. He was then unreceptive even to the expert correction of Law Officers.[27] And he had the degree of self-admiration which is so complete that, never needing to obtrude, it is often taken for modesty. He looked for 'frankness' in others, as he found it in himself. His assurance in his own possession of the quality enabled him to be devious without realising it—unless it was simple obtuseness that led him officially to deny having given people to understand what his private letters reveal him as encouraging them to believe.[28]

He was a high-minded, water-drinking, evangelical Anglican who lived among his officers in an atmosphere of idolatry,[29] 'Holy Joe' to some of his men[30]—a very capable naval officer who cherished exaggerated ideas of the services rendered by past naval officers to the King and people of Fiji. And he was found charming by white Levuka. His uniform, with its reassuring remembrance

[24] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[25] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, ibid.
[26] 'The Cession of Fiji to Great Britain', *passim*, Thurston Papers.
[27] Goodenough to Layard, 7 March 1874, Goodenough Letterbooks.
[28] Compare, for example, his angry denial to the Colonial Office that he ever encouraged Cakobau to ask for terms, with his letter to Swanston of 24 January 1874 (Swanston Letters).
[29] Hosken to Olive, 29 August 1875, *Fiji*, I, 259.
[30] *Journal of Commodore Goodenough*, 28.

of 'Old England', sat handsomely upon him as, showing gratifying condescension, he took tea in the hot little weather-board and tin cottages which he secretly thought so badly of: 'how can these chaps be content to live in such hovels', he wondered, after visits to Brower, Thurston, Woods and Butters. 'Want of servants is I suppose the chief thing wh. prevents them having larger grounds & houses.' Condescension was one of the bases of his relationship with the whites. 'These people afflict me by their extreme humility, & honoured attention at my visit', he complained after tea with J. C. Smith's brother. 'It is I suppose partly from their training & social position.'[31]

Yet white Fiji generally, thus gratified, took him to its heart. And of any other Fiji he saw much less than he supposed. Much of what he did see of Fijians came to him through the eyes of European guides, amongst whom were stalwarts of the *Fiji Times*. His death from a tetanus-laden arrow that hit him at Graciosa Bay in 1875 was to bring the paper out in black-bordered mourning for 'one whose sympathies were always with his own countrymen'.[32] He deserved well of Hall and Griffiths in life. Much as he disliked their tone at times, he could not but believe that their political position was correct. And he allowed them to provide the eyes, ears and tongue through which he approached Fijians. Four days after his arrival, when he needed an interpreter, he accepted Hall's recommendation—the 'supremely cute little dodger' Marshall Moore, to whom Goodenough later confessed, with more than mere civility, 'I feel that I can do nothing without your help'.[33] Goodenough liked simple, clear-cut translations. He could rely on receiving them from Moore, who was afterwards to be found tailoring his translations to foster interests parallel with his own. Moore's personal interests now were in his Vuna plantation which, for sale or capital inflow, needed annexation.[34]

Goodenough himself was not an obvious candidate for membership of the rampants' Utopia, but he was ill-equipped to disen-

[31] MS. Journal, 23 November, 21 December 1873.
[32] *Fiji Times*, 18 September 1875.
[33] MS. Journal, 20 November 1873; Goodenough to Moore, 7 April 1874 (copy), encl. Moore to Commissioner for Lands, June 1878, FCSO 588/80. The description of Moore is Dr F. J. Pound's to MacGregor, 12 October 1885, Dept. of Lands Records; on it Thurston commented that Moore's 'simple proposals generally cover some petty trick'.
[34] MS. Journal, 22 December 1873; Mitchell to Gordon, 25 July 1876, *Fiji*, II, 102; Blyth to Gordon, 10 February 1877, ibid., 320.

tangle the counter-assertions of some fifteen hundred Europeans and three or four white 'Ministers'. He was bound by his caste, blindfolded by his nationality. His social condescension extended to politics. Colonial politicians had not impressed him by their probity in Australasia. How much more dubious must their counterparts' aspirations be in Fiji, and how far less controlled their opportunities? 'It would be difficult for you to imagine the smallness of the Colonial mind and this as regards it's English population is a Colony of a Colony, with the narrowest & most Philistine ideas', he told the First Lord privately. 'Two clever men who keep their temper have just twisted them about as they pleased for two years.'[35]

Thurston might have agreed with this characterisation of the European community. For him the trouble was that, even so, Goodenough arrived at the truth in a controversy by counting the number of white faces on either side. The obvious anomalies of the government were too gross, the views of planters who made acceptable luncheon-guests too proper, for a stereotyped mind to evaluate accurately. It was antecedently probable to Goodenough that a European claiming to be the agent of 'natives', daring to believe that British rule was not almost of necessity in their 'best interests', must be a charlatan. His mind was so far made up on this and other points when he arrived that nothing Thurston could do to undeceive him was acceptable.

Thurston tried, perhaps, too hard to impress on the newcomer that 'powerful personality' which previous naval visitors had found compelling. 'Nothing', he was determined, 'can be done excepting through this Government'[36]—a resolution which in itself was an obstacle to easy relations with a man unaccustomed to dealing on equal terms with anyone outside his own service but a colonial governor. And on 2 December, after being bothered with a stream of questions about the recent history of Fiji to which his lengthy answers were found tedious, he was accordingly set up as villain and stumbling-block by Goodenough—as

> rather a puzzle to me. His protestations of frankness and love of justice were so strong that I was prepossessed in his favor when I came up, but from the very first day of my official dealings with

[35] Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274; idem, 28 March 1874, Carnarvon Papers, PRO 30/6/44.
[36] Thurston to Hope, 25 September 1873, Letter-Journals.

him I have found him trying to overreach & full of the most extravagant ideas of his own position & the claims of his little Govt. Added to this he is one of the greatest bores I ever met, & in every conversation or despatch, thinks it necessary to begin at least with the tower of Babel if not to prove the creation of the world & the flood.[37]

Similar views of Thurston as stumbling-block have been attractive ever since to puzzled historians, who have universally, and crudely, supposed that if Goodenough so blatantly wrecked independent government in Fiji Thurston's was the fault, from his 'self-seeking' opposition to Fiji's 'inevitable' progression to dependence.[38] But Goodenough's comment was not merely revealing of himself in its shallowness; it was also disingenuous in claiming an original predisposition in Thurston's favour. A despatch Goodenough had sent from Auckland in October indicates that he already sympathised with white constitutionalism: white opposition to the new constitution 'might have been expected'. What respectable white man could accept it?—he demanded later.[39] He felt from the start that Thurston had kept in power by manipulating British naval officers,[40] and did not love him the more for the 'cleverness' he recognised in this achievement. It was an unrealistic judgment. If Douglas, Chapman, Stirling and Simpson had not supported Thurston they must tacitly have countenanced his opponents. They had supported him because they were convinced of his good faith, as Simpson had told him he would assure Goodenough.[41] Simpson's testimony was unacceptable to his superior, who was already prepared to disavow Simpson himself when he arrived.[42]

For though the impression has always prevailed that Goodenough was an absolute outsider unconnected with Fiji, he was in reality connected by marriage to a bankrupt, rampant Anglo-Saxon planter. His wife was sister to 'Taveuni' Hamilton. He had been introduced to society in New South Wales by a letter from Hamilton's cousin.[43] And he had been assured of the need for British annexation by that cousin before he left England, at a

[37] Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274.
[38] See Sources, p. 346.
[39] Goodenough to Admiralty, 23 October 1873, Adm. 1/6261; MS. Journal, 26 November 1873.
[40] See, e.g., Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274; the theme recurs in his recorded conversation and his official reports.
[41] Simpson to Thurston, 1 November 1873, F1/11.
[42] MS. Journal, 17 November 1873.
[43] E. Hamilton to Sir C. Cowper, 8 May 1873, Parkes Papers, ML A876.

dinner party at the cousin's country house during which Bishop G. A. Selwyn, predecessor of Patteson, had in vain held up the independent Kingdom of Hawaii as a better model for Fiji.[44] If Goodenough's initial hostility to Thurston's 'unconstitutional' predilections was not conditioned by 'Archie's' letters, it was still in accordance with the latter's views and those of the whites in general.

It was not merely the beach nor even, in Thurston's own bitter words, 'the anti-govt. men, broken down planters, ex-officials, &c. &c.'[45] with whose views Goodenough automatically fell in, but the views of almost the whole white population. The Europeans who flocked aboard the *Pearl* were not all obviously ruffian; they were often eminently respectable. Beatson was aboard on 20 November, Glenny with his partner in planting, little Mr Floyd, under his wing, and McEvoy from Cicia, 'a nice young fellow' according to the Commodore's journal. James came from Ba and, Goodenough noted, two 'very nice young fellows' from Nadi who 'said that they lived on good terms with the natives and wanted no Govt. interference'—and whose address of welcome and expectation he altered 'in one para & one word only' before accepting it.[46] Griffiths called, was not immediately connected with the *Fiji Times* and was set down as 'most objectionable'—a judgment which did not prevent Goodenough from writing to him later with an open cut at Thurston, made by a supposed neutral to an avowed protagonist as a crisis approached.[47] A deputation of the White Residents' Political Association, led by Forwood, was obliged to make more emendations in its address than the Nadi men—lest the recipient's mind should be prejudiced—but found all the comfort its members wanted in his assurance

> that although all Officers of Her Majesty's government have a solemn duty imposed upon them of protecting the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands, and others, from the wrong doing of those who may use the British Flag as a cover to unlawful proceedings; yet, that the welfare of such a community of British

[44] MS. Journal, 8 May 1873.
[45] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[46] MS. Journal, 20, 25, 26 November 1873.
[47] Ibid., 21 November 1873; Goodenough to Griffiths, 25 February 1874, ML Ag 13/2. The *Memoir* printed, rather, the homily given by Goodenough to Griffiths next year on how to run a passionless paper (ML Ag 13/3 and *Journal of Commodore Goodenough*, 144n.).

settlers as have extended their enterprise to this distant region, and the protection of Englishmen in the rightful employment of their capital and labor, must always be the first object of the care of the Home Governt.[48]

Goodenough knew no other role than that of 'a British subject man'; he needed no instruction. He could laugh at one planter's hankering after Pall Mall, be revolted by D'Arcy Murray; but he no more doubted the essential goodness of an Englishman or the propriety of his basic values than that the sun rose. When at last it was put to him by Clarkson that he surely did not go by British voices on the question of Fiji's future, his answer came pat:

> Indeed I do I sd. the ultimate decision does not rest with them, but of course their wish and opinion is asked. You do not suppose for an instant that I have come up here with any intention except that of seeking the interests of English. The English Govt cares no more for 140,000 natives & three White ministers, than for Samoa or the New Hebrides. The only reason of my being here is a regard for the 1500 whites here of whom the greater no. are British Subjects.[49]

His behaviour indicated that, if he did not quite see the ultimate decision as resting with Europeans, he assumed that Fijians fell in with their views. And when Fijians were slow to undeceive him with words, he did not know enough of them to ascribe their seeming acquiescence in his own views to the politeness, the sense of superiority over white men in the art of concealing their real wishes, feelings and opinions, that Thurston knew to be the cause.[50]

When Thurston first boarded the *Pearl* on 18 November he made it plain that his letter of 31 January 'was not a *request* to be annexed, but a demand: "Do you require or intend to annex us or not, because your interference is a hindrance to us & if your inten-

[48] Goodenough to Forwood, 20 November 1873, and to White Residents' Political Association, 22 November 1873, Goodenough Letterbooks. He had actually not seen Thurston's letters to the Foreign Office, as his remark might seem to imply. Copies had been prepared as a part of the commissioners' briefing; but pressure on the Colonial Office's copyists ensured that one set only was made, which Layard received. Goodenough did, however, acquire copies some time in December—when his main object seems to have become to demonstrate that their statements were untrue.

[49] MS. Journal, 17 February 1874.

[50] 'True Story of the Annexation of Fiji'.

tions were decided we could get on".'[51] Expecting an official call at his office in reply, he felt a card left with Marie was insufficient; his protest was set down as 'absurd'. Aboard again on 26 November, he deferred in this to the officer who, if he did not propose to abide by the polite conventions of the Pacific, had after all been a flag-captain in the Mediterranean. 'No doubt they were morbidly sensitive', Thurston admitted for the Ministers—and found they had reason to be.[52]

Already Goodenough hoped to force them to resign. Englishmen professing to speak for and asserting an allegiance to another sovereign were brands to be saved from burning and, if not saved, extinguished: the more so when, as Goodenough was to find, that sovereign was 'a dignified respectable looking old man *now*' but 'one can't help looking at his white teeth & remembering how he used to use them 35 years ago or less'.[53] He had talked with the planter delegations, with Forwood, and with Sahl, who was worried about the real value of F. & W. Hennings' mortgaged assets which he had come down to assess; with Fred Hennings himself, who was destroyed financially but hoping to save something and prepared to discuss the demerits of the new constitution; with Wesleyan missionaries, who were concerned how best to protect their mission sites at law; and with Brower. He had bathed much under Levuka's waterfalls, dined Thurston and Woods without pleasure, spoken with no Fijian but schoolchildren. And even by 22 November he had

> made up my mind to tell Mr. T. that before I can consent to the publication of their new Constn. I must have it sent to me publicly so that I may communicate it to Consuls of other countries and so that we may point the parts of it wh. are to be binding on British Subjects who cannot be regarded as Aliens to the commonwealth of a country to wh. they have supplied a Govt., and taxes.
>
> He will appeal to international law and my position will be that there is no precedent for such a case as this & that we may possibly now be creating a precedent . . . .
>
> If he offers to throw up the whole thing, then I say, that is old Cakobau's affair.
>
> If he does throw it up why then the British Residents must take care of themselves & make their own bargain.

[51] Goodenough to Goschen, 19 November 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274.
[52] Thurston to Goodenough, 24 November 1873, F1/23; MS. Journal, 25 and 26 November 1873.
[53] Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274.

If it shd. turn out that he says he will publish the constitution, then I say I will not allow armed Fijian troops to carry it out or enter the town under arms at all.

I must get from him a complete statement of all that has been done here from 1867.

He had made up his mind about the new constitution before he discussed it with Hennings and Brower on 25 November. They had only to agree with him 'that it was impossible and that the old should have been modified by and in the regular way'. Even so, Brower had remained 'the cautious old fellow' that semi-retirement in modest plenty enabled him to be. Brower's awareness that the 1871 Constitution Act could never have been 'modified' by 'constitutional' means was less dimmed by personal troubles than was that of Hennings; he perhaps recognised the foolishness of the Westminster model; and he 'would only say that it was a very illiberal allowance of [white] representation'.[54]

On 26 November, as on the eighteenth, Thurston attempted to establish a basis for negotiation. He asked whether Cakobau's was still recognised as a *de facto* government; and he tried to elicit the commission's terms of reference from this single member, here six weeks ahead of his colleague. Government was still recognised, Thurston learned. As for the other, the vital point—'I am not . . . able to communicate to you definitely the scope of our enquiry', he had been told, casually, in a letter advancing a claim for damages against Tui Cakau by a British subject (whom Thurston had never heard of) and demanding documents. Now he fared no better: 'without saying anything definitely to you as to what we may do or ask you to do', said Goodenough by his own account, 'we shall certainly not deal with you as a Commission.'[55] That was unsatisfactory enough, particularly when the new constitution was the issue under discussion, but worse followed as they talked.

Thurston made his own position clear. 'Unless the Country was left free to act, it had better be annexed . . . .' As for the new constitution, denounced as a *coup d'état*, it was meant to be one. 'It was meant to take away from the whites the power wh. they were constantly seeking to use to put down the native population & to ignore their rights.' But he knew his man as Goodenough

[54] MS. Journal, 22 and 25 November 1873.

[55] Ibid., 26 November 1873; Goodenough to Thurston, 25 November 1873, Goodenough Letterbooks.

pointed to the eight elected white members against twenty-eight nominees: 'It wd be impossible that the offer of such representation could be looked on as serious'. Thurston 'had nothing to say to this', recorded Goodenough,

> but that it was intended that the Govt. should be strictly a national one, that the former Leg. Concl. had continually striven to have a Fiji for the whites instead of a Fiji for the Fijians, and that it was the object of their const. to effect that, that I cd. not form an idea of the schemes & machinations of the whites to defeat the just rights of the natives.[56]

Here, irrevocably, they parted company. Thurston's view of his fellow whites was false to Goodenough, while Thurston found Goodenough's standpoint startlingly familiar. 'I had by the way said at some time that Govt. of course had a paramount duty to perform to English residents', recorded Goodenough; 'that was the raison d'être of being here at all tho' as he knew they felt it a duty to aid the natives in self government'.[57] Thurston was given the lie when he spoke of whites' designs. Months later, when Goodenough had been at Ba talking to settlers, his view was denied in the report Goodenough made on Thurston's allegations of random shooting at Fijians by the 'respectable body of Englishmen' whom Chapman had treated so unjustly.[58]

In part Goodenough was reacting against the vehemence of Thurston's insistence on a picture which he could not believe true. If he might have been helped to a more accurate appraisal of European attitudes and actions by John Berry's admission that he had frequently fired at mountaineers, Berry's wardenship obscured all else.[59] Psychology was not Goodenough's strong point, nor had he any understanding that in so small a community a man might have to use individuals whose views did not accord with his own even on the question he thought fundamental, but whose general predilection for government disposed them to carry through some of the administrative work.

Englishness and frankness were the commodities the Commodore dealt in. And Thurston's brand of frankness he did not

[56] MS. Journal, 26 November 1873.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Goodenough to Admiralty, 23 April 1874, Adm. 1/6303; for the grounds of his (inaccurate) opinion, see, below, pp. 288-9.
[59] MS. Journal, 23 December 1873.

admire. 'They are all alike working agst the Govt. & the native interest', said Thurston. 'Missionaries merchants planters and all; I do not say that there are not 10 or 12 respectable & right-minded people but the rest are all alike.' His interlocutor was not to be won over by the assurance that he too would see it before he left Fiji. 'I sd. I come here believing that everyone is an honest man', Goodenough replied, 'and I most certainly will not accept a statement from you alone against 1500 men who are as worthy of credit as you are.'[60]

Thurston's words and actions could seem paranoid if their context and foundation were not understood. He stood virtually alone. Swanston was aboard impressing Goodenough with his 'Englishness' soon after returning from the hills early in December, his own temper frayed with Thurston during arguments with Major Henry Thurston over the conduct of the war. Of the other Ministers, Clarkson was absorbed in financial matters, while Woods was no source of strength. If there were still a few planters prepared to swallow Thurston's views in payment for his influence with chiefs whose power they both recognised and feared, then his one-time colleague Barrack might be taken as their type; and Barrack, ruined by the hurricane of late December, looked to annexation for financial salvation after that.[61] From J. C. Smith Thurston could expect only watchful fence-sitting until political issues were resolved. His supporters were his immediate government employees. If he could have relied on more independent salary-holders like Wilkinson or Carew to accept the validity of his own views, Carew was away up the Rewa and Wilkinson was keeping very quiet, with no stomach for a crisis. As for missionaries, their withdrawal was now complete, though he still felt he should have had a claim on their understanding if their philo-Fijian image had been more than professional furniture.

'I am surprised that Mr. Langham a missionary should be in favour of Annexation! I am not',[62] he was later quoted as having said to Cakobau's Fijian chaplain. Though the final disavowal is to be treated as relative, the initial surprise—rather, scorn—was accurately represented. Its force was felt by Langham himself, who

[60] Ibid., 8 December 1873.
[61] MS. Journal; Goodenough's letters in Swanston Letters; 'Thirty Years in the Pacific', by Captain Alexander Barrack, NAF (microfilm).
[62] MS. Journal, 29 September 1874.

knew what settlers expected of annexation, professed an inclination towards 'Fiji for the Fijians' but fell back upon failures he alleged in the government's tracking down of 'kidnappers'.[63] These were, Thurston thought, no more than was likely to occur in any country whose judicial system was susceptible to judges' hair-splitting and jurors' prejudice.[64] He felt that Langham was making political capital out of kidnapping that had occurred before the government started. He thought the missionary was disguising an objection that derived from personal distrust of himself on matters relating to the welfare of the Mission, and from the pique of one 'who like missionaries nearly everywhere—desires to act as the King's adviser'.[65]

Langham complaisantly suspected that 'the Commodore will put the Govt into difficulties before he has finished with it'.[66] As Goodenough's ally, despite disclaimers of involvement, he was to prove a misleading link with Cakobau. His residence at Bau, his long years in Fiji, gave him the appearance of an intimate of Fijians; but his information was often second, even third-hand; and he was listened to but not followed by Fijians of rank, who disliked him. He did not believe in the practicability of an independent Fiji, emphasised the disunion of the chiefs and failed to see that men of his colour could be expected to make concessions which the new constitution demanded.[67] He ruled his church members with a hand that derived its iron not solely from a consciousness of the degree to which Fijian feet might falter on scriptural paths. He bitterly resented any derogation of his own dignity by his Native Assistant Ministers[68] and deplored some of his colleagues for their desire to give the islanders a seat in District Meetings.[69]

For there were racist strands in Wesleyan thinking; there were assumptions of white superiority, acceptance of the 'natural law', along with very general agreement that they must look forward to 'mixed mission work' in a community of which Fijians were a

[63] Langham to Chapman, 24 March 1874, 22 September 1875, MOM 103; to McArthur, 13 February 1874, encl. Chesson to C.O., 8 May 1874, CO83/5; to Millard, 11 May 1874, RH Brit. Emp. MSS. S18 C44/63.
[64] E.g., Thurston to Simpson, 4 November 1873, F1/23.
[65] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[66] Langham to Chapman, 25 December 1873, MOM 103.
[67] Langham to McArthur, 13 February 1874, CO83/5.
[68] Langham to Worrall, 26 May 1894, MOM 295.
[69] Langham to Chapman, 2 November 1875, MOM 103.

disintegrating, dying part. That acceptance had its counterpart amongst Thurston's more congenial missionaries, the Marists.[70] But he was not resigned in this way. The terms in which a man who knew him thought best to approach him are revealed in a letter he received from Carl Sahl, who 'candidly and sincerely' believed

> that if your Ministry as guardians or representatives of the interest of the King of Fiji and his people can arrange now with the Commissioners of H.B. Majesty for a protectorate or annexation on a basis that secures to the Natives . . . their rights and privileges your Ministry has done a deed of which they can justly be proud . . . and that would give you the satisfaction of feeling that the natives had a good security for their rights not only whilst your present Ministry, with their personal influence with the natives is in power, but also at a future period.[71]

It was shrewdly said, for Thurston had only two objects in view: to secure a conditional cession, with Fijian consent; and, in the meantime, and in case that consent should not be forthcoming or Britain should not accept the offer, to keep an alternative in being. Annexation was not to be forced on Fijians in the ruin of their national government as a solution, imposed in engineered chaos, to which they had no alternative; but he, like Langham, was left in no doubt that this would result from Goodenough's actions, whether the Commodore realised it or not.

He found Goodenough holding out the long-condemned threat of trial in New South Wales for British subjects who brought Fijian troops against Europeans. 'I am perfectly willing to accept the responsibility I shd not be worth anything if I were not', he replied, and wrote to Hope: 'In fact it is the old story—"muddle"'.[72] The 'secret instructions' which he wrote of later in the *Sydney Morning Herald* he never seriously believed in. He quickly guessed the Gladstone government's motive in sending out 'commissioners'. They came 'to report', he told Hope on 6 December.

> This means, We wont have you without public opinion is so strong that we *must* annex. We shall play for a year or eighteen months

[70] Brooks to Chapman, 4 December 1873, MOM 165: Montmayeur to Joly, 18 July 1873, APM OF 208 *Epistolae*.
[71] Sahl to Thurston, 20 November 1873, F1/10.
[72] MS. Journal, 26 November 1873; Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

with the question, during which time something more exciting may turn up. Fiji all this time is to be kept boxed up like a ship 'in irons'.[73]

It was a disenchanted, shrewd, accurate appraisal. A glance at Goodenough's brief would have shown him that as commissioner he had no mandate for the dictating role he had assumed—while as Commodore he was bound by convention to respect, not destroy, the *de facto* government. If Kimberley had indicated at a personal interview that he inclined to regard annexation as probably unavoidable,[74] there was no hint of it in the instructions he signed; they ended with a *caveat*:

> If the Fiji Islands are capable of being ruled in a tolerable manner by a Government which is in any real or even qualified sense their own and indigenous, it can scarcely be doubted that the establishment of such a Government would be more conducive to the interests of the British Empire as well as of the Islands themselves . . . .[75]

In a private note to Gladstone, Kimberley had stood on the shifty ground that Thurston so bitterly divined: 'I should propose that we should declare that we do not pledge ourselves in any way to annexation or any other particular course by sending out a Commissioner . . .'.[76] Kimberley's object was probably to move a reluctant Prime Minister by degrees towards annexation; but who should say that the Prime Minister's deep-rooted antipathy to it would be overborne by the Colonial Secretary's reluctant bowing to what he feared was the logic of events? Early next year, when Goodenough and Layard had pressed on in the teeth of Thurston's policy, they were publicly rebuked and secretly deplored even by a new Conservative government: 'The Commissioners have . . . exceeded their duty & disobeyed their instructions'.[77]

Goodenough was already prepared to do so by 2 December when he could 'see no way out of the muddle but annexation'—

[73] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, ibid. They were not formally 'commissioners' at all, Layard constantly insisted.

[74] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 10 June 1873.

[75] 'Copy of a Letter Addressed to Commodore Goodenough, R.N., and E. L. Layard . . . ', 15 August 1873, GBPP, 1874, XLV.

[76] Kimberley to Gladstone, 30 April 1873, Gladstone Papers, BM Add. MSS. 44225.

[77] Minute by Lowther, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, 16 April 1874, on Admiralty to C.O., 8 April 1874, CO537/115.

that annexation of which he had many of the sanguine expectations of his fellow whites, as to capital inflow and revival of white immigration. If Thurston had actually resigned to Simpson, as he had formally offered to do, Goodenough would have hoisted a protectorate flag and used the consuls in governments. 'The peace of the community would thus be secured and no steps would have been made wh. could not have been withdrawn from.'[78] Downing Street was horrified at this threat of unauthorised assumption of even qualified responsibility. Thurston would have been equally so at the qualification, irresponsible as he would have thought it. Unauthorised action such as this, to be followed perhaps by disavowal and anarchy, was what he most feared.

Until an offer of cession was accepted, he wrote later, 'the King rules'.[79] How much more so when it was not clear whether Fijians would wish to make an offer, nor whether a single commissioner was empowered to accept—or, indeed, to do anything. Meantime, he did not intend to yield direction of the country to Goodenough, Hennings and Brower. Vanity moved him in this, the former supposed. His own letters to Hope lend some colour to the assumption: 'why should I or my colleagues be ignored, but particularly myself', he wrote, since he had made the approach that brought the commission out.[80] But there were overriding, objective reasons.

'I can hold my own at the head of affairs here if I do not get ill—or get knifed', he told Hope; 'but it is generally understood and spoken of that as a "dernier resort" I must go. Threatened dogs &c. &c.'[81] He found Goodenough confusing and inconsistent in negotiation—found him indicating one thing, retracting it, denying that he had ceased to recognise the government *de facto* but interfering captiously, threatening to hold Cakobau responsible for taxes collected from British subjects since 1 September and pressing their personal grievances before the courts had heard them, setting protests aside with sneers and the remark that he saw no advantage in discussing the abstract rights of a *de facto* government—'especially when that Government contemplates a complete change in its Constitution'.[82] He was misrepresented by Good-

[78] Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274.
[79] Thurston to Layard, 9 June 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[80] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[81] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, ibid.
[82] Letters in F1/11.

enough, Thurston found; he was alleged to have said that if the races did come to blows 'the weakest', meaning the whites, 'would go to the wall'—whereas from the first he had considered Fijians the weakest and was 'somewhat disinclined to admit a change in my disposition'.[83] In his correspondent's eyes he was ridiculous to the last; he was arguing 'on the overstrained theory of the independence of a Fijian Sovereignty' called into existence, so far as it did exist, by the very whites whom he now sought to set aside as aliens.[84]

Yet he had said at the beginning where he stood. He had emphasised that there were 'only two ways of governing Fiji either by a strong native govt. or by annexation . . .'.[85] He repeated the statement at length when he found this private, personal observation, as he considered it, being used against him in official exchanges.

> I expressed no opinion as to the equality of the security of welfare between the two things.
>
> What I intended to convey was my conviction that a Parliamentary Government in Fiji was an impossibility. That the King and people would never return to such a form, which as might have been expected, has been found in practice utterly unworkable. That the only Government suitable for this country is one for the most part of a nominee character. Either this or Annexation and Government by Great Britain. No intermediate form no compromise, can end in anything but dissatisfaction and inconvenience. I am still of this opinion and do not hesitate to put my impressions into an official shape.
>
> . . . For some time past and at the present date Great Britain declines to govern Fiji and yet unhappily Fiji is not left free to govern itself, a state of things not likely to conclude satisfactorily.
>
> If you can inform His Majesty's Government, or upon the arrival of Mr. Consul Layard, can do so, that Her Britannic Majesty's Government entertain the question of January last in a favorable sense I have no doubt but that the King in Council might issue instructions to His Advisers, but I think you will perceive that the welfare of the country requires that an early and definite answer should be given.[86]

[83] Thurston to Goodenough, 10 December 1873, F1/23; for the hair-splitting reply, see Goodenough to Thurston, 10 December 1873, Goodenough Letterbooks.

[84] Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 19 March 1874, CO83/5, 13 February 1874 (confidential), ibid.

[85] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 26 November 1873.

[86] Thurston to Goodenough, 10 December 1873, F1/23.

He wanted to know for certain what Goodenough was empowered or inclined to do—suspecting that, as one inclined to do more than he was empowered, the Commodore would remain evasive. He can have expected no better answer than the bland assurance he actually received that the commission's coming was sufficient answer to the January question;[87] he had just been sent a letter, backed up on the day he wrote by a proclamation in the *Fiji Times*, which he recognised as open declaration of war. He was being published by Goodenough to the world as a slaver. For Viria and Waikalou people were on trial for 'rebellion' leading to the Rewa war; and, if found guilty, they would be put to service with planters.

Though many of these people actually pleaded guilty to rebellion,[88] the concept was strained; their precise relationship with Bau and the Kingdom was open to several interpretations. Thurston himself had marched towards Naqaqadelavatu with a Waikalou contingent in the Bauan army, however; he had sat with Tui Viria in the Privy Council; and from Carew had come a characterisation of the Viria people as 'rebels murderers & cannibals . . .'.[89] There was hard basis here for treating them all as in rebellion. Finances would benefit. And policy demanded it: the indivisible sovereignty of Cakobau throughout Fiji, if a fiction, must be made a fact by acting as though it were so already.

Neither this consideration, nor the conventions of Fijian conquest which could also have been argued to support the prisoners' removal and being set to work, weighed with Goodenough. He issued a protest against the conviction of the Nabutautau people who were due to be tried at an approaching court sitting. He announced that a British subject employing the Nabutautau would be liable to prosecution under the anti-slave-trade acts. He had acquired his information on the trials first, indirectly, from Mr Attorney-General Burt, then from Swanston—who had genuinely regretted the Cabinet's decision to hire the prisoners out and whom Goodenough now flattered in the terms of 'openness', 'frankness' most acceptable to them both.[90] Trying then

[87] Goodenough to Thurston, 15 December 1873, F1/11.
[88] F1/Temp. 28; *Fiji Times*, 19 November 1873.
[89] Carew to Minister for Native Affairs, 11 April 1873, F1/51.
[90] Goodenough to Thurston, 9 December 1873, F1/11, to Swanston, 9 and 10 December 1873, Swanston Letters, and to Thurston, 18 December 1873, Goodenough Letterbooks; see also his MS. Journal, 5, 6 and 10 December 1873.

to detach another government supporter by approaching St Julian with the assurance that he intended no reflection on the judgments of his court, to which he paid tribute, Goodenough was rebuffed.[91]

The Nabutautau should be treated as prisoners of war, Goodenough proclaimed. They were rebels in fact, Thurston retorted in an immediate memorandum for the Cabinet. They had formally submitted, their leading men going to Bau; and they had once been supplied with arms by government. Moreover Goodenough was assuming their conviction before the trial took place and 'can have no other object than to interfere with and dictate to this Government . . .'.[92] In Thurston's vehemence there was, besides constitutional legality, perhaps uneasy recognition too that his actions were open to disagreeable interpretation. Pander to slave-owners was never a part in which he would willingly have been cast. This may have helped spark his reaction again in January when he was assured by Goodenough that the Waikalou people, never having been subject to Bau, should not have been regarded as rebels.[93] At Bau on 10 January 1874 Thurston recorded the determination of Cakobau, himself and the supple Swanston to deny Goodenough's information, on the strength of Cakobau's knowledge of his relations with Waikalou, and then to discontinue correspondence on the subject. If there was personal uneasiness, the principle outweighed it:

> It is ordered by the King, that any actual or tacit interference in the domestic affairs of this Kingdom by Commodore Goodenough be met by a strong Protest from His Government.
>
> It is ordered that copies of the direct correspondence between Commodore Goodenough and the King be sent to the Commissioners of H.B. Majesty with a protest against the tone and mode of communication.
>
> It is ordered that the Constitution be published notice being first given to Commodore Goodenough & Consul Layard [who had landed at Levuka nine days before].
>
> It is ordered that if Commodore Goodenough interferes, or throws any impediment in the way of governing the Kingdom under the Constitution, to an extent which his Government cannot

[91] Goodenough to St Julian, 14 December 1873, and St Julian's reply, 15 December, F1/Temp. 31.

[92] Thurston's confidential memorandum, 9 December 1873, on Goodenough to Thurston, 9 December 1873, F1/11; Thurston to Goodenough, 10 and 11 December 1873, F1/23.

[93] Goodenough to Thurston, 6 January 1874, F1/11; F1/Temp. 28.

successfully surmount—that such interference be protested against. That if it be necessary to relinquish authority over British subjects—all further obligations in respect to them be repudiated—Maintaining at the same time all rights and authority over the Domain of Fiji its native born and naturalised people. The King yields only to the presence of superior force until he can refer to Her Britannic Majesty's Government—or obtain the intervention of some friendly and powerful State.

That to the latter end the Govt. prepare to send a Commission from HM the King to London—for the purpose of laying his Protest before the British Government and obtaining a satisfactory solution of the difficulty.[94]

Then Thurston wrote a *Fiji Gazette* leader to catch the mail and, overseas, controvert the *Fiji Times* in its glee at the Commodore's notice. 'When all the supreme chiefs of this country have given their allegiance to the King, and brought their Nation under . . . one head', he wrote, 'it seems something like straining a point to contend for the independence, upon very doubtful tactical grounds —of a petty tribe of cannibals'. And Goodenough was out of step with the imperial tradition of the country he represented. These hill people *had* actually submitted; but even had they not, 'we think we could cite instances from the history of British India where people have been made subjects of the Crown by Proclamation'.[95]

When Thurston spoke of 'the King', he meant his puppet. So general white opinion had it, in a 'benighted-child' syndrome that always prevailed with Goodenough. Faced early on with Cakobau's remark that personally he would prefer to keep Fiji but would consult his peers, Goodenough commented: 'It was the exclamation of a semisavage not liking to part with any power or dignity, now that he has ministers to help him'.[96]

It was, rather, the considered reply of a man for some twenty years subjected to Europeans' pressure—a man who did not admire every European, grew pensive later at the commissioners' confident intimation that more would come in than he could control, and always feared that under British rule all *lewa* would pass from him, his caste and his people. Against forces which he well understood but which of himself he could not control, Cakobau genuinely

[94] Minute, 10 January 1874, F1/11.
[95] *Fiji Gazette*, 7 February 1874.
[96] Goodenough to Goschen, 2 December 1873 (private), Adm. 1/6274.

looked to Thurston for help. 'I am afraid that the Commodore wants to come between me and my Ministers', Wilkinson quoted him, '& what can I do then, I shall be all adrift?'[97] He did not seek direction.

Thurston's part with him was that of intermediary, interpreter, general adviser—but scarcely cajoler, and still less dictator. Other sources of advice were more constantly available at Bau. Swanston was living there, while Cakobau sometimes exposed his own weariness and sense of futility to Langham.[98] It was no European but his half-brother and son who dissuaded him from giving up in despair. 'Great good', Thurston told Goodenough in vain, 'would result from your seeing the king is not as you suppose a mere puppet or tool in the hands of his Ministers but has opinions of his own'.[99]

'They are a difficult race to deal with', Thurston remarked in his journal. 'Little wonder perhaps when they are surrounded by tinkers and traders, missionaries, and adventurers—all boiling over with ideas based upon their special interests.'[1] He himself had only a plantation which he did not stand to lose and few of the speculative interests in land that might bring much money to Swanston, for instance, if annexation eventuated.[2]

The closeness of his own relationship with Cakobau is indicated by the way in which one seems to have absorbed the imagery of the other—a process in which the chronology of the utterances does not necessarily indicate the direction of the flow. 'If it was a matter of pigs and yams I could answer at once', Cakobau told Goodenough on 3 March 1874, under pressure to make the transfer of power that Goodenough then thought a formality. Thurston, in the previous December, had remarked on Cakobau's irritation at being 'lectured and hector'd, and asked to give up his country—as he might be asked to give away a yam'.[3]

He described an encounter between Cakobau and Goodenough on 22 December:

[97] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 24 December 1873.
[98] Langham to Chapman, 25 December 1873, MOM 103.
[99] Ibid.; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 20 December 1873.
[1] 'Cession of Fiji to Great Britain', 26 February 1874.
[2] Swanston's lands brought him £1,000 in 1877 (Swanston, Journal, 25 August 1877); Thurston sold his remaining Wainunu block on 12 October 1875 for an unknown sum; it could not have fetched above £200.
[3] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 3 March 1874; Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

> when Comd. G. in the presence of some 15 people . . . said (rather loftily), Tell the King that when Mr Layard arrives, We shall ask him if he wishes to cede Fiji to Gt. Britain. I do not require his answer now, he may think over it, but he must tell [me] himself, tell me directly, and he must understand that I will have no persons between him and me. But, you tell him he can answer now if he likes. Mr. Langham translated, when the old King instantly said—Though 'Tui Viti' I am only one man, so for myself I speak now nor wait the Consuls arrival. When the Chief of Cakaudrovi sends to me the message comes in the proper path (Kena sala). So from Rewa and elsewhere. My answer is I shall keep Fiji. The Comd looked annoyed & said I did not ask him anything about Cakaudrovi or Rewa. My question shall come as I like and I shall expect it is answd.[4]

He gives Goodenough's manner very accurately, as it appears also in verbatim reports of conversations with Cakobau.[5] Before him as he wrote was the peremptory summons Goodenough had lately sent for Cakobau to come to Levuka—a summons which could well have reminded the old man of American naval commanders. It was full of insinuations against Thurston himself, only a little more veiled in the version sent than in the draft. Its writer was obsessed with all those past services of British naval officers to Fiji—mostly imaginary—which, he supposed, entitled him to Cakobau's child-like gratitude, implicit confidence, and instant obedience.[6]

Thurston feared the results of this approach. 'The thing is a failure', he wrote of annexation on Christmas Eve, 'and I look forward to difficulty, and hosts of worries—all because a gentleman who may be very clever and admirably suited to European affairs is sent out to deal with semi-civilized people, and he determines to ignore and oppose the people in whom the semi-civilized people confide'. He, personally, was aggrieved. 'I don't fear his superior tact and I learnt to keep my temper', he assured Captain Hope. He had not learned to grow an extra skin. His resentment showed in his private correspondence, in what enemies would have thought was a threat: 'Since the King and Chiefs acted formerly on my advice, they will act again *only* on, and with, my advice, as Comr. G. will yet discover'.[7] He was wrong, however—for, despite all, he expected them to cede.

[4] Ibid.; Langham to Chapman, 25 December 1873, MOM 103.
[5] See, below, pp. 319-20.
[6] Goodenough to Cakobau, 14 December 1873, Goodenough Letterbooks; Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[7] Ibid.

He continued lecturing Goodenough on political realities in Fiji. Race war was certain if Fijians were not treated on a perfect equality with Europeans, he wrote. The new constitution would permit twenty-two Europeans to sit alongside only fourteen Fijians, if the whites would co-operate; and there was no reason why they should not do so, except that the backing and filling of Britain prevented the Fijian government from acting to maintain itself, on the one hand, while, on the other, it encouraged British residents in the hope that Britain would even yet change its policy and annex—'one effect of which, they very erroneously believe, will be to establish the Fijians as a separate and subordinate class'. Whites would be found to make no difficulty about taking the oath to maintain the Kingdom demanded in the new constitution provided 'this young and struggling nation' were left alone, held responsible only for its actual wrongdoing. Promulgation of the constitution was required, not as the bar to annexation that his impatient reader supposed it, but in order that Fiji should not have to negotiate a cession from a weak position.

> If the Sovereignty of Fiji be, on mature consideration, ceded to Her Britannic Majesty such cession must be effected by a National act, it must be by the free consent of an independent King and with the free concurrence of an independent people. The acquisition of this Kingdom by a Foreign power in any other way, may be effected by actual conquest, by fraud and betrayal by persons in power, of the high trust and confidence reposed in them, or by conspiracy and revolt of resident aliens—assisted from without—against the inherent rights of the natives of the soil.[8]

Privately he could state his government's dilemma succinctly: 'There are only two issues—and Britain will not take one—nor permit us to follow the other.'[9]

He achieved nothing. Goodenough was torn between Sahl's well-founded belief that Thurston personally would have been for annexation if the power to finalise it had been in Goodenough's hands and his own suspicion of Thurston's motives—suspicion fortified by *Fiji Gazette* articles which still cast doubt on the desirability of British rule.[10] Thurston found his accurate version of British double-headed official attitude to Fiji denied again.[11] He

[8] Thurston to Goodenough, 15 December 1873, F1/23.
[9] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals.
[10] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 14 December 1873.
[11] Goodenough to Thurston, 28 and 22 December 1873, F1/11.

waited to see whether Consul Layard would have additional instructions enabling him to commit Britain or be able to moderate the naval diplomatist.

After Layard had arrived on 1 January, Thurston lectured him too on the essential political differences between white colonies under responsible government and the constitutional requirements of Fiji.[12] 'Are you not already aware', he demanded on 16 January,

> that the whites desire Annexation to Great Britain—that their desire is more a furor, a madness, than anything else, that they 'will have' annexation irrespective of Native wishes, Native interests or even (they say) the British Government itself? Have you never heard that Assassination, violence, and forcible deportation would be used by whites towards Ministers—in order to break up the Government and so favour the chances of annexation?[13]

This was in reply to a note from the consul who, arguing that to promulgate the constitution would be an insult to 'the Queen my Mistress', held out again the threat of trial in New South Wales if blood flowed as a result.[14] To represent the new constitution as the cause instead of the result of threatened bloodshed was to ignore reality, Thurston continued: 'an armed rising of the whites has been almost the chronic condition of the country since the establishment of Government . . .'.[15]

Argument, though useful to have on record if a commission of protest should actually be sent to Britain, was to no immediate avail. His indulging in it was the outlet of an isolated man passionately wanting to be understood. He knew already that to appeal against Commodore to Consul was going to surf against sea; he never had cause to doubt that Layard mostly danced to Goodenough's tune—only more fantastically.

Rebuked by Hope for his 'word-painting' of March—as Thurston himself described it, apologetically[16]—Thurston kept a check on himself that extended in a few years to his features. He 'is a wonderful character', wrote a visitor to his house in 1876, '& possesses more self control than any one I know. Just a faint twitch

[12] Thurston to Layard, 11 February 1874, F1/23.
[13] Thurston to Layard, 16 January 1874, im Thurn Papers. Layard's marginal comments on this reveal his limited viewpoint and understanding.
[14] Layard to Thurston, 16 January 1874, F1/11.
[15] Thurston to Layard, 16 January 1874, F1/23.
[16] Thurston to Hope, 6 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

of the face, when talking of Mr. Layard . . .'.[17] In respect of Layard self-control wholly deserted him on paper only once, when he found the then ex-consul championing the *Volunteer*'s owners and minuted:

> His reference to 'the end of the tragedy' is only in accord with the florid and impulsive style in which he both wrote and spoke—and accords with the cast of mind which recognised, in the sudden death of a man in the prime of life, the hand of God punishing the deceased (and several others who died with him) for his opposition to annexation, and a warning to others as to what might be the consequences of their political opinions.[18]

He was to write this with feeling. George Whalley, his Under-Secretary, had been his friend. And Whalley's death at sea late in 1874 brought into the *Fiji Times*'s possession papers of Thurston's own which, to many, proved he had incurred divine displeasure in the same way.[19] Another besides Layard had probably identified Providence with the squall that upset Whalley's whaleboat; the self-confessed clergyman's son had assured Fijians in Langham's pastoral care that there was no Hell.[20]

As for Layard, he had come to Fiji uneasily. He was able to claim more honestly than Goodenough that he was predisposed in the government's favour on arrival. Even so, he had been talking before he left England of the anomalous position of Ministers claiming to be 'the subjects of a puppet "King", who was but yesterday a savage and a cannibal'.[21] The youngest brother of Sir Henry ('Nineveh') Layard, now British Minister to Madrid, he had, at fifty, all his overshadowing sibling's strong-headedness and none of his brilliance; he was soon to be fairly described as 'a most loyal, right feeling, impulsive, & somewhat foolish old gentleman'.[22]

He arrived under instructions identical with Goodenough's and with the added intimation, in response to his plaintive request for further guidance, that he must use his discretion.[23] 'Discretion' in

[17] Von Hügel's Journal, 31 July 1876.

[18] Minute, 23 April 1877, Government House Miscellaneous Papers. In a pencil note he added: 'Do not insert this in any copy of my minute. The reference is solely for the Governor as indicating the singular bias of Mr. Layard's mind'.

[19] *Fiji Times*, 14 November 1874; and, below, pp. 318-19.

[20] Langham to Chapman, 13 August 1874, MOM 103. Whalley was not named, but other evidence makes the identification a strong probability.

[21] Layard to F.O., 23 June 1873, FO58/134.

[22] Gordon to Carnarvon, 27 June 1875, PRO 30/6/39.

[23] Wylde to Layard, 23 August 1873 (draft), FO58/135.

most senses he lacked. If his having taken the Bar examination, his time as an official in Ceylon, his few months as secretary to Grey in New Zealand, his several years as arbitrator, then judge, of the British and Portuguese anti-slave-trade commission at the Cape, had all led the Foreign Office to think him particularly well-equipped for the Fiji inquiry, it did not long persist in that opinion. His reports from the Cape had actually been notable for their credulity. Now he was to make shipwreck such as he feared: long years marooned in the consulate at Noumea,[24] burdened with his inane son Leo—'decidedly a cub', to the other commissioner[25]—who was soon regaling Levuka with the father's expectations of being made Governor of Fiji. A 'fat man & talker', Layard seemed immediately to Goodenough, pompous, full of good intentions and lethargy, whom his fellow commissioner would have to tell 'what to do in everything.'[26]

Layard was also told what to do by Forwood, Cudlip, Glenny and *Daphne* Smith. His 'right-feeling' was of the conventional variety that made him see Thurston as a vain puller of strings on black dolls: the 'right-feeling' of the White Residents' Political Association. He was met at Keyse's Wharf by Mayor Cudlip and conducted to Keyse's Hotel, which he made his consulate, to hear an address by Forwood.[27] Where he had expected simple rowdiness and dissipation he found respectable Englishmen, imposed on by a handful of their countrymen who led by the nose an uncomprehending semi-savage and—hideous to contemplate—did not scruple to overawe a constitutionally-moved white opposition by coloured troops. He learned of the Nasova rout from those whose dignity had most suffered in it; their versions were immanent in the description he sent an embarrassed, satirical Downing Street to explain why he had disobeyed instructions to treat with Cakobau's as a *de facto* government.[28] He was not, moreover, received by the government he had been instructed to recognise, for it was seeking to change its character along with its constitution. The new

[24] For Layard after he left Fiji, see Scarr, *Fragments of Empire*, Chapters 4, 5 and 7, *passim*.

[25] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 29 December 1873, 3 January 1874.

[26] Ibid., 29 December 1873, 4 January 1874.

[27] *Fiji Times*, 3 January 1874; Layard to Thurston, 19 February 1874, F4/4.

[28] Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142 (see *Fiji Times*, 11 April 1874, for the similarity between this account and Cudlip's). Satirical comments appear on the Colonial Office's copy of this despatch.

constitution was 'utterly opposed to the interests and wishes of the White population, who established King Cakobau, and by their vote placed ministers in their position'; and, he continued, making the usual transition from 'white population' to 'the people', it 'has roused the indignation of the whole country'.[29]

Living ashore as he did Layard, unlike Goodenough, could not remain oblivious of the murderous plots slopping out of gin glasses.[30] He had an inkling that matters were more complicated than the naval mind comprehended. After a fortnight in Fiji, he wrote privately that nothing could prevent a fight if the proposals for annexation that he already expected the commissioners would make were rejected: '*both* parties are wrong & neither will give in'. Thurston, told 'in *five* hours talk' how Layard deplored his anomalous position, had 'admitted how awkward it was, but that he was driven to it'. So he was, Layard conceded: 'on one side by the turbulent whites, on the other by his evil genius Mr. Woods', whom 'men here dont hesitate to tell me they will shoot . . ., if they get the chance'.[31] Layard could not conceive that the 'evil genius' was composite, and coloured—the chiefs then gathering at Bau, on Cakobau's summons, to discuss the future.

It was unthinkable to Layard that any Englishman should so genuinely doubt the benefits of British rule as to risk reputation, even knife or bullet, in the attempt to keep open an alternative. Nor, of themselves, could Fijians form any opinion on the point. He himself could tell them of Ceylon, speak of Britain's notorious fostering care of 'native people'.[32] If Fijians doubted it, their disbelief must assuredly have been induced.

[29] Layard to F.O., 12 February 1874, FO58/142.
[30] See Goodenough to Thurston, 8 December 1873, F1/11, as compared with Layard's marginal comments on Thurston to Layard, 16 January 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[31] Layard to Wylde, 14-15 January (private), FO58/139.
[32] Ibid., 13 January 1874.

12

'Poor wretches, there is to be no peace for them'

CHIEFS of Fiji were gathering slowly in January and February 1874 to consider the commissioner's first formal approach. This was made on 2 January, in a letter that gave great offence in the Colonial Office whither Thurston sent a copy. It was 'no new thing for England to govern islands like Fiji', the Fijians were assured. If 'their true minds' should be 'to give Fiji to England' the sole object of the colonial government would be their good and that of all inhabitants. If they chose to keep Fiji, that would be well; but 'they must know that the numbers of Foreigners . . . will greatly increase . . . and . . . cause . . . great intricacies . . .'.[1]

There was consternation in Downing Street at the 'strong leaning in favour of annexation' which the commissioners showed 'even in this document', the issue of which was 'not in accordance with their instructions . . .'. 'They were desired to ascertain, as one among very many things, the feeling of the people as to annexation', minuted R. G. W. Herbert, 'but by no means to invite an expression of opinion in favour of it'.[2]

So, in all probability, Thurston had expected the Colonial Office to react when, having read the covering letter to himself (with its list of conditions to be met by any Fijian government, if in existence, that might seek British recognition) he sent the enclosure to Bau by George Whalley. 'Copy the one in Fijian, read it, and leave with the King—taking his instructions—I desire leave to print and publish it in Fijian for the information of the people.' He directed a copy of the covering despatch to be left at Bau. 'I desire

[1] Goodenough and Layard to Cakobau, 2 January 1874, encl. Goodenough and Layard to Thurston, 2 January 1874, F1/11.

[2] Minutes on print encl. Thurston to C.O., 12 January 1874, CO83/5. (Thurston's covering letter—if there ever was one—is not here.)

formal orders in reply.'[3] Then he waited until the ruling chiefs should arrive and it would be put to the test whether, as the formidable Ratu Kininavuai Nacagilevu, Governor of Kadavu, told Goodenough there, the decision would indeed be taken 'as Cakobau liked'.[4]

Thurston was stopping leaks where he could and keeping the pumps at work. In December he had even been prepared to consider trying to float another $75,000 worth of debentures.[5] His argument with the commissioners went on into February. *De facto* recognition was formally accorded by Commodore and Consul, retracted by their every action; and *de facto* authority 'limited and prescribed by extra-territorial influences . . . becomes a mere hollow sound . . .'.[6] His analysis was concurred in by Brower, who told his own government that the commissioners—

> though persistently asserting that it is solely and only their province to 'enquire' into and 'report' upon this question . . . in my opinion are taking such official action in regard to the internal Administration of, and thereby so disorganizing, the King's Government, as to commit their own Government, beyond the possibility of an honourable recall, to the certainty of an acceptance of Sovereignty in Fiji.[7]

And Thurston, fearing that its sense of honour would not prevent the British government from disavowing any such commitment, could not afford the complaisance that induced the American Commercial Agent to refrain from protesting. By 11 February he thought the Fijians would cede; but he saw no guarantee that their offer would be accepted; and he would go on fighting to keep open a viable alternative. If an offer of cession were refused by Britain, then

> I am confident that the Chiefs and people of Fiji will not submit to be ruled under a nominally Fijian constitution which is chiefly remarkable in that it absolutely excludes every native of the soil (saving the King) from legislative power, and rests it absolutely in every resident alien (white or black) except alien Polynesians.[8]

[3] Memorandum of 3 January 1874, F1/18.
[4] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 29 December 1873.
[5] Cabinet Resolution, 3 December 1873, F1/2.
[6] Thurston to Layard, 11 February 1874, F1/23.
[7] Brower to State Department, 20 February 1874, U.S. Consular Agency Laucala, V.
[8] Thurston to Layard, 11 February 1874, F1/23.

He opened a new journal on 30 January.[9] That day, and again the next, he met in full Cabinet to discuss commissioners' telling Cakobau he must dismiss Woods.[10] He went down the coast to meet Cakobau, who was smarting from this his first formal (though 'unofficial') interview with Goodenough and Layard; and he explained

> that their must be no personal feelings with reference to Cabinet. If one member was to blame all were to blame. That the conduct of Comrs was not honourable or straightforward—that while on the one hand they assured the King he should not be subjected to any pressure, they endeavoured to disturb his mind, and suggested his dismissal of Ministers. The object being it is supposed to make easier terms of session without, than with them. The King said he had full confidence in Minters. Let the evil manner of this proceeding be debited to ye Comrs not to him. Why did they come to him? he did not want them. The King further related how they had told him Ministers must give up all papers and that two gentlemen besides themselves viz Mr Sahl and Mr Horton would audit the accounts. In brief the King is given to understand annexn will take place before his reply is made. Recd orders to join the King at Bau in 4 days. Explaid the loan business & securities, read mortg[ages].

Thurston learned that Cakobau had 'made no reply but walked away' when Marshall Moore, once his secretary under the old Ministry, assured him he had left the government 'because its dishonesty stank'.[11] He did not need to be told how the old man had put the essence of the Fijian chiefs' problem to the commissioners: 'We do not want to be like Tanna men strangers in our own land, but to govern our own people'.[12]

Soon Thurston read a letter in which the commissioners repeated to Cakobau the substance of this conversation. They had 'pointed out to you the way in which you should manage your Government, until such time as it is decided whether this Country is to be Governed from England or not'. Cakobau must withdraw the new constitution, take no steps affecting white residents without consulting the consuls, ascertain precisely the position of the mortgaged islands of Lomaiviti.[13] As Thurston learned now from Cakobau himself:

[9] 'Cession of Fiji to Great Britain'.
[10] Cabinet Minute, 31 January 1874 (confidential), F1/Temp. 18.
[11] 'Cession of Fiji', 2 February 1874.
[12] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 26 January 1874.
[13] Goodenough and Layard to Cakobau, 13 February 1874, F1/11.

> The Comrs further told the King he had foresworn himself in granting a New Constitution ('bobolui vaka lasu' a lying oath) and that it was shameful that three men should be allowed to do, or carry such a measure—they do not seem to see—or rather they wont—that the Whites broke the Constitutional compact first—and that the action so harshly commented upon was a measure of 'self preservation'.[14]

Private business and the social round of Levuka offered him little relief. He talked with J. C. Smith about the 'future of the country' and his own indebtedness. Smith was 'inclined to make good terms as to Na Veitalacagi which I desire to make a cocoa nut plantation'.[15] His mortgage was renewed on 20 February: £1,260, at 10 per cent as before, to be repaid by 3 December 1880.[16] He was not ostracised by all of white Levuka. He had been able to give a dance at his house some months earlier, and had been saddened afterwards by the death of a guest from a violent attack of dysentery. 'The poor girl was among the merriest, but was buried four day's after.'[17] He had been president of the hospital subscribers until January that year and even now he drank tea and played whist in other people's houses. 'PM called upon Mr. Justice Garrick who with his wife has newly arrived from Colonies', he noted on 7 February, 'found her just gone out of her mind . . .'. He walked on to see Mrs Liardet, then up the hills to the building site he had lately bought for investment, to look out over the ramshackle settlement, tin roofs and white-washed weatherboard walls, where some European ladies pined, drank and went mad while his own wife gardened and defended him and Fiji. Marie too had the drinking habit; it contributed to the foreboding with which outsiders approached her. He was up there again two days later 'tired and worried' in a break from article-writing for the *Fiji Gazette* and discussions in Cabinet about cutting expenses. 'Comes Mrs Unwin asking for deeds of Albion Hotel ground and complaining of Lawyers fees being excessive—Which we well know is the case. I advised her not to dabble in land.' He sold his own new acquisition at the end of the month for £60.[18]

Reality was writing for the paper, orders to be given, arguments

[14] 'Cession of Fiji', 3 February 1874.
[15] Ibid., 13 February 1874.
[16] F1/Temp. 6/55.
[17] Thurston to Swanston, 15 April 1873, M9.
[18] 'Cession of Fiji', 7 and 9 February 1874; LCC R99.

in Cabinet where Woods resisted Clarkson's demands for retrenchment.[19] 'At 4 to Cabinet', Thurston noted on 9 February,

> where until 6 we argued our financial position. The Treasurer and Premier at high words, so that RS.S and I had much difficulty to keep them within moderate personal tones—The harmony of the Cabinet is however destroyed. The Treasurer will not yield until assured of a reduction in the expenditure & I think he is quite right.[20]

That night the *Pearl* returned from a cruise around Viti Levu; undertaken to enable the commissioners to test feeling, their expedition had encouraged Langham to believe that 'unquestionably' they were 'the gentlemen for the work to which they have been designated . . .'.[21] The work, Langham meant, not of inquiring but of forcing an offer of cession which he, any more than they, had no reason to expect would be accepted—and to which they had known before they sailed that they proposed to commit their government.[22]

To Thurston came 'the most conflicting stories of their cruize, and meetings with people white and black'. 'I hear they consider the state of the country horrible—the natives suffering from tyranny of Chiefs and oppression of Governt. That the natives "want to die", that the[y] pour forth their sorrows and wrongs when alone, but hush up when the Chiefs are about.'[23] He heard these stories accurately. The asserted legitimacy of his government from Fijian consent was a fraud, in the commissioners' opinion; 'among the lesser Chiefs' of Viti Levu they had found ' strong dislike to the present Government on account of the poll-tax' and the country's debt, which Fijians feared they would have to pay, while the government was no more careful of Fijians' welfare than planters were their wanton oppressors.[24]

'Of course there *were* plenty of such complaints' from Fijians, wrote Thurston in another of his unsigned *Sydney Morning Herald*

[19] 'Cession of Fiji', February 1874, *passim*.
[20] Ibid., 9 February 1874.
[21] Langham to McArthur, 13 February 1874, encl. Chesson to C.O., 8 May 1874, CO83/5. This letter has been much quoted in the commissioners' support—misquoted, given the writer and the sense of his testimony.
[22] See, e.g., Layard to Wylde, 14-15 January 1874 (private), FO58/139.
[23] 'Cession of Fiji', 10 February 1874.
[24] Goodenough and Layard to C.O. (confidential), 13 February 1874, CO83/5.

articles. 'What awful tales of British oppression, landlords' cruelties, and police tyranny, would be told on the coasts of Ireland, or even, perhaps, in some English districts, to any public functionaries supposed to possess power to redress all such complaints who might go about and collect them.'[25] He was borne out by the recorded grounds for the commissioners' opinion which, interspersed with contemptuous references to Layard, are given in Goodenough's journal. Ratu Kini's son and others at Nadroga 'said that they were wearied with being governed, that they wished to be quiet & at rest, and to be let alone'—observations which were thought more telling than the fact of Ratu Kini's own absence at Bau. And Tawaki, whose territory was divided with Nabeka on Cakobau's instructions, whose land was still a base for military operations, 'boldly said that his people were undone & miserable & cd not pay their taxes, that he hated the Govt. & could not get on with it & that the Soldiers were eating him out of house & home . . .'.[26]

European reactions were recorded with equal perception. Conversations had taken place with Ireland, whom Goodenough sympathised with on his removal by Chapman; with Pfluger, whom Goodenough could not but feel for in his sense of domestic outrage when, to defend Pfluger against Henry Thurston, 'My wife comes out alarmed with a gun & Fijian soldiers under the orders of Englishmen insult her'. And Goodenough believed d'Este ('a gentleman', to him) when the officer of Algerian experience said that rifle-ranges had indeed been marked out and planters 'subsequently did fire at Mountaineers who killed one of their labourers' but no mountaineer had ever been killed.[27] Complaints were recorded against Ratu Isikeli Tabakaucoro, who became for Goodenough a symbol of government-tolerated oppression[28]—a man whose power in Ra long antedated the government's existence and whom it could never have superseded.

Thurston found the commissioners 'awfully friendly' on their return, but thought it deceit. A letter he immediately received from Layard against promulgation of the new constitution was 'couched in fair terms, the meaning, insulting and aggressive'. His was not the government Layard had been instructed to recognise, he was

[25] 'True Story of the Annexation of Fiji'.
[26] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 February 1874.
[27] Ibid., 6, 7, 8 February 1874.
[28] Ibid., 18 February 1874.

told; if Ministers could not carry on 'constitutionally', they should resign.[29] He saw that constitutionalism was still the mode; and he knew that Anglo-Saxonism came hard on its heels.

He heard that the commissioners intended to send the *Renard* man-o'-war schooner after any official 'interfering' with Ritova. The Tui Macuata was no firm adherent to any authority which sought equality with his own and might have to be removed if his chiefdom was to be kept within the Kingdom. The commissioners' notion was that they were justified in interfering by what they conceived was their duty to maintain the *status quo*. After their interpretation, this meant freezing a situation whose essence was fluidity. In attempting it, they were likely to destroy government. 'They evidently intend forcing us if possible into a corner and then dictating their own terms', Thurston believed and was not convinced otherwise by a long talk with Sahl. 'He tries to reassure me. But I have no faith in the positive bona-fides of our British friends.'[30] An official report which they wrote two days later showed them planning ('although with great reluctance') to hoist a protectorate flag—an intimation which, too late, was to bring them orders not to commit Britain.[31]

They called a public meeting of Europeans up at Butters's house. 'At Night, petition out against the idea', recorded Thurston. 'Public will go a long way for annexation—but they wont go 300 feet high.'[32] It came off, accordingly, at the Criterion Hotel, where Goodenough told the gathering that their subject was 'annexation'. 'So far as the feelings of the Commission were concerned', he announced, 'as Englishmen, they thought the people here could not fare so well as under the British flag'. He invited Levuka's views, as he had already asked those of other districts and had found they 'accorded very well with his own'.[33] Capital would flow in to offset the higher taxation they must expect under British rule, he had assured the Rewa planters.[34] Cheers greeted his announcement now that the commissioners had told the King no action

[29] 'Cession of Fiji', 10 February 1874; Layard to Thurston, 10 February 1874, F1/11.
[30] 'Cession of Fiji', 10-11 February 1874.
[31] Goodenough and Layard to C.O. (confidential), 13 February 1874, CO83/5; C.O. to Goodenough and Layard, 18 April 1874 (confidential, draft), ibid.
[32] Ibid., 12 February 1874.
[33] *Fiji Times*, 18 February 1874.
[34] Fraser to Woods, 26 January 1874, F1/10.

should be taken without reference to the consuls—of whom Fred Hennings had conspicuously ignored their invitation to attend the meeting and Brower was anxious to remain silent. And cheers met Layard when he rose to confess that he 'had come out here very much prejudiced, but his opinions had very much changed'.

In Thurston's eyes, Layard probably came closest to the nub of things when he remarked that the commissioners' 'opinions were very well known, but were only as "dust in the balance" with the Home authorities'. Addressing himself to the question what form a colonial government should take, Layard remembered that two races must be considered, the 'dark far exceeding in number, and the white in intelligence'. And so, against the feeling of 'the people', he was for crown colony rule with both races represented. 'That would be only fair, because this was the country of the coloured race.'

Whites would take anything, rejoined Forwood from the floor, giving up an earlier meeting's demand for full white representation. The 'present government could not be satisfactory to the white residents, and must ultimately end in ruin to the black race' when 'Fijians were being led to suppose they could gain an ascendancy over the white race, and govern it, although they lacked the intelligence and knowledge of government and finance, and of the value of property'.[35]

'The real fact', as Thurston read Forwood's credo in the *Fiji Times*, 'was that two or three advisers would have absolute control over the black race'.[36] He heard that Goodenough thought so too, when the latter went to the Treasury next day to establish the extent of the debt. 'Learnt Comd. was not too courteous—took exception to Treasurers remarks and said he had "not come out to four British subjects".' There was only gloomy consolation in discovering that Brower 'thinks with me that the Comdr has demoralised both Blacks and Whites and destroyed the Government'. And there was no consolation at all to find Woods offering him the Levuka Agency of a trans-Pacific mail line whilst he took the Kaduva office. This was clear indication how the future looked to Woods, the greatest embarrassment he had amongst his colleagues. 'Note from Commodore . . . telling me he shall recommend the King to *dismiss* Mr. Woods', he wrote on 17 February

[35] *Fiji Times*, 18 February 1874.
[36] Ibid.

for example, 'Showed W the note & wrote off to Comdr. telling him so.'

Cabinet met that day 'till 10.30 pm' preparing, probably, for the continuance of the debt discussions next day. The whole business of the loans and the mortgaging of crown lands worried him. 'Debts, Mode of paying off', ran a memorandum of early January in his journal. 'Crown Lands, what can be definitely settled as such. This *must* be clearly understood.' It was the point at which he felt most vulnerable, that at which his hands had most been tied. For the debenture holders he spent little sympathy; but the areas of land mortgaged were uncomfortably reminiscent of the Polynesia Company's charter. As he wrote on 18 February:

> The Comrs. did not seem well pleased with Mortgages—as they scarcely could be—Unfortunately I was referred to—as to Public lands—and I cannot say—nor never did say—I could settle the land question to my satisfaction. The bond holders knew it was a speculation of the most speculative nature. They went in, and took others with them, to retire, if possible prior investment.

He had differing reports of the debt—£75,000 according to Clarkson, £82,000 after Sahl and Horton. 'I know not what to think.'[37]

This was a waiting time, to end when word should come from Bau that the chiefs were ready to discuss their political future. If a transition to dependence was ever made it would be at the will of Fijians, after deliberate discussion, and on conditions—so he had assured *ad nauseam* the readers of the *Fiji Times*, by way of the *Fiji Gazette*.[38] Nothing had altered that determination, simple recognition of reality, as he thought it. Yet he expected the Bau meetings to end in an offer of cession; and he helped lead the commissioners to the same expectation.

He had been discussing a 'treaty of cession' with St Julian since at least mid-February. A 'Draft Proposition' was jotted in his journal. 'During the discussion upon annexation . . .', he wrote next year, 'I found that the two leading thoughts of the Chiefs (the people as yet do not think at all) were confined, or nearly so, to the position of themselves and children under British rule'.[39] Their concern was reflected in his 'proposition'. Cakobau was to be handsomely pensioned at £2,000 a year, with reversion to his heirs, was to be given a yacht and to retain the title 'Tui Viti'; Ratu Epeli was

[37] 'Cession of Fiji.'
[38] *Fiji Gazette*, 31 December 1873.
[39] Undated memorandum, mid-1875, F1/Temp. 18.

to be recognised as his successor and made 'the Superintendent of Viti Levu and . . . Kadavu and Yasawa' at a salary of £800 a year; and Tui Cakau, with £600, was to be likewise 'Superintendent' of Cakaudrove. Other districts were to follow, as geography and old political ties dictated, each with its salaried chief. Thurston proposed a Lakeba restored to independence of Vanua Balavu, and a much augmented Cakaudrove with Bua and Macuata within its boundaries. Later he added Lomaiviti under Ratu Savenaca.

The notion seemed 'absurd' to the commissioners when he put it to them later. His concern was not in the money for its own sake (though he thought it fair exchange for rights of levy which he supposed would pass away under British rule), but in the principle. This was to be 'cession', not 'annexation'. If Britain 'undertakes the sovereignty of Fiji', it 'preserves to the ceding Chiefs a voice in the Councils of State . . .'. At least four chiefs should sit in the Executive Council. 'Children, heirs of Chiefs, to succeed to political rank & duty—that under any form of Government they enjoy a full recognition of equal political rights with British born subjects.' 'That native executive officers be employed, if competent, in subordinate offices.' Fijians were still to be governed by Fijians. 'The authority claimed and desired by the Native Chiefs is specially over Natives.' 'Under the Governor, they will be the Chief Executive Officers over Fijians', while European 'commissioners' would deal with whites and would act with the Governors when both races were involved.

Like *lewa*, land was to remain with Fijians. When crown lands had been delimited,

> The chief of every 'qali' to be acknowledged . . . as owner, absolute, of the land of his qali, and the guardian of the interests and rights of his people to such lands. The chiefs and people in changing their allegiance retain all their private rights. The people of qalis to be viewed as tenants on the qali land, with hereditary rights of tenure subject to the obligations as such tenants, towards the Chief as the recognised owner to whom rent shall continue to be paid, in money, labour, or in kind as may be agreed upon between them.

The crown might acquire land by purchase, but

> No transfer of land by sale or lease to be valid if made by the chief of a qali without the consent and approval of the heads of families of the qali & with the knowledge of the Government.[40]

[40] 'Cession of Fiji'; for the commissioners' reaction, see Goodenough, MS. Journal, 27 February 1874, and, below, p. 298.

Thurston was widely set down, now and in future, as the mouthpiece of chiefs, abettor of the commoners' oppression. He regarded the chiefs as guarantors of the integrity of Fijian society, bound through reciprocal rights and duties to the commoners whose kinsmen he supposed them to be, actual or by the fiction of adoption, and dependent with them upon the land in an essential synthesis. An Englishman from, he believed, the landed class, he considered Fijian chiefs an aristocracy indeed, actual land-owners and entitled to remain so. And he held that practical politics required the taking of a society as it was. Fijian, to him, was chiefly.[41] The revealed truth of nascent anthropological theory might later tell his acquaintance Fison that chiefly rights in land—rights undeniably exercised—represented divergence, through application of the strong arm, from the original, perfect order of things when all rights adhered in the commoner. But for Thurston the ruling chiefs of the great *matanitu* had 'divided and sub-divided (in remote and prehistoric periods) the land among their principal chiefs who may be said to hold their land in trust from the supreme chief subject to obligations and rights which could not be arbitrarily destroyed or evaded without violating the first principles of Justice'.[42]

If Thurston ever knew how Goodenough, in a confidential character-sketch, remarked that he 'appears to have the full confidence of Chiefs and perhaps of people',[43] he might have felt there was, for practical purposes, no such entity as 'the people' whose 'confidence' one man could possess. And he had reason to doubt the motives of Europeans who professed concern for 'people' combined with hatred of 'chiefs': 'as teachable as children', Nathaniel Chalmers described the 'people', in a moderate exposition of the settler viewpoint, 'and equally obedient if treated with firmness'.[44] Treated firmly by Europeans who would themselves assume the place of chiefs in Fijian society, ran the expectation of the white community. For Europeans expected to be masters of the leaderless and disinherited, who would be fit for salvation through toil on plantations.[45]

Thurston 'is clever and ambitious', ran on Goodenough's character sketch, 'bold and self reliant . . . cannot be trusted where

[41] Remarks on memorandum by Chalmers, mid-1875, F1/Temp. 18.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Goodenough to C.O., 17 April 1874 (confidential), CO83/5.
[44] F1/Temp. 18.
[45] On these expectations, see *Fiji Times*, 1875-80, *passim*.

Natives are concerned, would probably be constantly intriguing to carry his own way with them, professes great frankness and uses as much as necessary to conceal what he is about'.[46] Some of this, he might have thought, was true. And the latter part supported his own view of Goodenough's supposition that Fijians had neither opinions as to their own future nor power to judge the good faith of a European's representations.

On 19 February Thurston began work 'by 6 AM getting over arrears of official correspondence, ready for a start to Bau'. His arrears included a letter to John Hill, belligerent owner of Rabe, clearing Hill of Fijian charges that he had murdered a canoe-load of Cakaudrove men drifted there.[47] Then he wrote Hill a private note, with the 1870 petition in mind and no inclination to minimise his present involvement:

> The King and Chiefs have again placed themselves in my hands for advice, and the result is I am even now preparing the terms of a treaty of cession. It is not improbable that the King will intrust me to carry on a Provisional Government, until the cession is ratified—but this has *yet* to be settled. If it should turn out that I am, after two prior attempts, a principal actor in making Rabi a British dependency I shall expect when I visit it—to drink one of those 'bumpers' for which the 'Fiji Times' tells the world the island is so famous—[48]

This 'provisional government' had been on his mind for some days. It was an obvious necessity to cover the period of waiting, but had drawbacks from the possible diffusion of power into the Keyse's Hotel clique. He had been discussing its basis with the commissioners and had arrived at an agreement with Layard that the *status quo* should be observed while the offer was pending; by this he meant to guard his right to govern, though Layard's colleague immediately baulked at any fetter on his own freedom of destruction.[49] The subject came up again on 20 February, when Thurston had an unexpectedly cheering talk with Layard:

> He tells me some person who maligned me the other day, &, whom through him I challenged to meet me, so prevaricated when pressed that Comd. & he set the fellow down as a liar. Mr. Layard tells me the Comd. is much disheartened at the amount of debt, & that public

[46] Goodenough to C.O., 17 April 1874 (confidential), CO83/5.
[47] Thurston to Hill, 19 February 1874, FM MS. File 7.
[48] Thurston to Hill, n.d., ibid. (written to accompany above).
[49] Goodenough to Layard, 16 February 1874, F4/12-16.

> opinion is by no means against me. Finally, and touching our approaching resignation, He asked if I would take office again & seemed much releived when I said yes—If asked by the King.[50]

This sense of relief was recalled later by Layard himself from that conversation.[51] And that night J. C. Smith, dining aboard the *Pearl* more comfortably than Thurston had been wont to do over the past eight weeks, made it plain that he 'wishes Thurston to remain' and wanted too a pure crown colony, without European elected representation.[52]

Then, on 21 February, Thurston left for Bau with Whalley; he was there in six hours, 'after grounding twice', to call 'upon Ratu Abel & then in to the King'. 'Very hot and tired, went to bed early', he recorded. If he knew of the caballing for a continuance of independence that Whalley was later believed to have engaged in, he omitted reference to it in his journal. And over the next two crucial weeks he wrote entries which were consistent, not only with his public professions, but also with the journal accounts of Goodenough and Swanston—only more revealing of Fijian thinking.[53]

He saw Tui Cakau (who 'seems drinking hard, and is surrounded by Tongans') and borrowed his schooner to fetch Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba from Lakeba in haste, as a counterpoise to Ma'afu in whose company Thurston found his old friend again the day after. Ratu Golea 'promised amendment in private conduct', while Ma'afu 'seemed very uneasy and shifty'. 'Asked me if it was true he was to be reduced in rank & placed below David [Uluilakeba].'[54]

It was generally true. The Bauans wanted to use this moment of decision to chase Ma'afu out of Fiji and Thurston feared his separatist designs.[55] 'He is evidently playing a double part all round', wrote Thurston. His opinion was to find support in the recollection of Ma'afu's own *matāpule*, Sione Mafi, who spoke later of his surprise at Ma'afu's shifting attitude. Ma'afu was

[50] 'Cession of Fiji'.
[51] Layard to Thurston, 14 March 1874, encl. Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142.
[52] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 20 February 1874.
[53] 'Cession of Fiji', 20 and 21 February 1874; Langham to McArthur, 18 March 1874, encl. McArthur to C.O., 22 May 1874, CO83/5.
[54] 'Cession of Fiji', 22-3 February 1874.
[55] See the warning to be conveyed by Swanston, 18 February 1874, F1/1.

against annexation as the *Xariffa* brought them down from Lomaloma in January, in favour of it a few weeks later.[56] He had been frightened by the Bauans' hostility and had become convinced that the Nasova episode proved Europeans must eventually take over. Probably he feared Thurston's anger over the Lau tax defalcation, which the Cabinet was threatening to make good from Vanua Balavu. Even so, Tui Cakau's schooner carried a message on his behalf that the taxes were to be collected but held on to at Lomaloma.[57] He was keeping options open; but, much courted by Goodenough since his arrival from Lau, he was hoping to shelter under British rule.

Thurston was working again at a side-table in Cakobau's house; he was partly concerned with the current administration of the Kingdom but was most deeply occupied with the terms of cession. 'Talked with Ratu Savanaca and other Governors', he noted on the twenty-fourth. 'They seem well content with our propositions.'[58] He hoped to proceed deliberately, *vakaviti*; but at Levuka Goodenough was 'Getting tremendously bored with this waiting' and when Layard brought off a letter from Thurston saying that the chiefs were met he 'determined to be off to Bau at once'.[59] On 25 February, therefore, Thurston faced a complication in the *Pearl*'s arrival with both commissioners aboard and Moore to carry tales from Bau. 'Met Native Chiefs from time to time during the day & discussed affairs—find them filled with mingled feelings of confidence and suspicion, hope and fear and doubt', Thurston recorded that day, then dined aboard the *Pearl* with Ma'afu and Swanston.

Ma'afu was left out of the cession terms and Swanston allowed Goodenough to assume that the exclusion was Thurston's doing. It was actually Cakobau's. Swanston himself had recorded that Cakobau 'holds to his views in re Maafu and asserts that in order to ensure unanimity in the future that Chieftain must retire from Fiji'. Thurston found Ma'afu 'cold and sulky' at dinner and feared

[56] Cession of Fiji', 23 February 1874; statement of Mafi, recorded at Lomaloma by C. R. Swayne, 23 July 1890, printed A. B. Brewster, *King of the Cannibal Isles* . . . (London, 1937), 272-4. Mafi's recollection, which can be checked at many points against contemporary record, is valuable evidence of a participant's perception and is to be regarded seriously: not as fact at every point, necessarily, but as a genuine view of events.

[57] Friend to Clarkson, 2 April 1874, F1/10.

[58] 'Cession of Fiji'.

[59] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 24-5 February 1874.

the commissioners would not accept the Tongan's eclipse. They accepted it then but revoked within forty-eight hours without seeming to be aware of their inconsistency.[60]

Thurston's cession proposals were denounced aboard the *Pearl* on 26 February but he evidently did not think it final; for he left Whalley still 'working out with Ratu Savanaca the tribal and landed rights of the superior Fijian Chiefs' when, after 'discussing matters with the King until 10 am' on the twenty-eighth, he went back aboard to reinforce the previous understanding under which interim government could safely continue:

> Understood from the Comrs. that H.Ms. Govert. shall be carried on without any question as to Constitution under the Kings Authority, that no interference shall be attempted with that authority, but that no act which shall affect British interests for the first time, or in a new way, shall be made without prior reference to the Consul, That Fiji Govt. shall in meantime be supported, that no Parliament shall be again assembled.[61]

Now, if Britain should reject the offer which—despite the Fijians' fears—he still believed would be made, Fiji would not be left rudderless. He relaxed all 1 March, a Sunday, making no journal entry. And his comparative relief seemed to Goodenough to be the self-satisfaction of a successful conspirator. 'His manner has changed and there is an independence about it wh. I don't understand, unless he intends to play false.'[62] Under this illusion Goodenough saw Swanston and, retracting what he had agreed with Thurston about Ma'afu, dictated a lecture about Ma'afu's necessary inviolability which Swanston was to give Cakobau on Goodenough's behalf 'before the Council takes place'[63] on Monday, 2 March.

On the Sunday, again, Langham said he 'shd. not be surprised if Ministers were not scheming for a rejection of the offer of annexation'. Ratu Savenaca and other Governors, creatures of the Ministers, had been bribed with higher salaries, Langham warned Goodenough and Forwood later retailed to Layard. Theirs was

[60] 'Cession of Fiji'; Swanston, Journal; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 25 February, 1 March 1874.
[61] 'Cession of Fiji', 27-8 February 1874.
[62] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 1 March 1874.
[63] Ibid.; and see his entry for 25 February, and 'Cession of Fiji', 27 February 1874.

misinformation drawn from rumour about the proposed terms of cession. Their interpretation was based on the assumption that men had to be bribed not to give away what they regarded as their own.[64] If there was any bribery in Thurston's actual proposals, it ran the other way. Cakobau himself had an answer ready later when Goodenough told him that someone must have taught him foolish things. 'I will speak only a few words', he replied. 'No one has taught us anything. This Country does not belong to foreigners—'Tis true foreigners have taught us writing but no one has taught us Fijian Chiefs whether to give up our country or not.'[65]

On 2 March, predisposed to suspicion, Goodenough heard that annexation had not been discussed at that first day's meeting. Thereupon he sent a message ashore by a lieutenant and Moore 'to the King to say that I shd. come tomorrow morning early and should ask him at what hr. on Wednesday [4 March] he would give his decision'. 'He sd. he wd. be glad to see us', according to Moore, and directed the messenger to Thurston who 'at first did not wish to go to the King, but when Moore sd. that he had already seen Cakobau, he went'.[66] In fact, Thurston was horrified at the peremptory tone and time-limit:

> I told the L. that the Commodore seemed laying down a measure of time to which the Council were to confine themselves for discussion —& that I could not see how the King could give such an answer. If the matter was to receive fair deliberation he could not see where or when it would end to an hour or a day. By my advice the King named 8 AM for the visit.[67]

Thurston had actually begun the opening meeting by reading the commissioners' letter and 'explaining the whole position' to a Council whose component chiefs he noted: Cakobau, Savenaca and Epeli, Nacagilevu, Ratu Kini, Ratu Isikeli, Ma'afu, Katonivere, Tui Cakau, and chiefs of Serua, Namosi and Rewa. With chiefs of Nadi and Vuda who were at Bau too, this membership was drawn from a fairly wide area of Fiji. Tevita Uluilakeba was

[64] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 1-2 March 1874; Langham to McArthur, 18 March 1874, encl. McArthur to C.O., 22 May 1874, CO83/5; Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 19 March 1874 (confidential), CO83/5; Forwood to Layard, 16 March 1874, FO58/142.

[65] Meeting of 17 March, im Thurn Papers.

[66] Goodenough, MS. Journal.

[67] 'Cession of Fiji', memorandum, 2 March 1874.

sent for, and the Ba men would fall in with whatever Cakobau decided. So, too, it turned out, would all who counted among the rest. In this moment of final crisis, Pritchard's analysis of the Vunivalu of Bau's standing with his Fijian peers was seen to be just: 'the only Chieftain whose words and acts are circulated with any appearance of authority, and heard with any degree of authority and respect'.[68]

With Thurston, Cakobau's standing became an obsession, as the basis of his own status, so his fellow whites held. They believed he was straining fact to enhance a protégé and himself. To him Cakobau's installation as Tui Viti at Nasova in November 1873 was fact enough:

> . . . Thakombau is not only styled Tui Viti, but he is Tui Viti in fact . . . Every ruling, or high Chief in Fiji, including the Tongan Chief Ma'afu in out-door, full council assembled, and according to all the ancient Fijian forms and customs elected him Tui Viti and did him service and homage. They still regard him Tui Viti, not in mere name or style but in fact: and, in this lies the proof—If Tui Viti, 'ex mere motu', cedes this country to Her Britannic Majesty, every chief of Fiji will accept his act as binding upon them, but I venture to say that none of them would sign an instrument of cession, independently of, or contrary to the Tui Viti's wish.[69]

When he wrote that, in September 1874, he was thinking particularly of what he saw now in March. It was the more telling in that he knew Cakobau had then accepted a corporate decision with which he, personally, did not agree. Cakobau was tired, intermittently ill, willing at last to shrug and accept a 'white man's age'; but others still had their vigour.

Thurston recorded in detail the talk under the sinnet-seized roof. At the 2 March meeting there was discussion on the commissioners' letter and then, to clear the ground, on a proposal to assume formal responsibility for all that Ministers had lately done in the Fijians' name.[70] This brought up Ma'afu's case:

> . . . Maafu said 'I have only come here to listen, not to speak. I hear I am superseded'. The subject being a vote of confidence in Ministers since the date of the new Constn, Maafu declined and said let no one do anything he does not understand—adding—Why were we

[68] See, above, p. 24.
[69] Thurston to Robinson, 29 September 1874, Fiji Correspondence of Sir Hercules Robinson, NSW 4/1633.
[70] F1/3.

told last year that the great Powers believed in us and now we are talking about giving the land away. The King, Savanaca and others said they did understand—and M was left in a minority of one. His demeanour was very unpleasant, and he requested to [be] told what were the charges against him. The charges were, appropriating the whole revenues of Lau for two years and a half, carrying on the Tovata laws, and getting $7,500 out of the Treasury on the strength of his good faith and honour. He said he would reply in the afternoon. After lunch he replied that Louis Biganzole [one-time Secretary under the *Tovata*] told him he was, by his agreement, to collect all the revenues pay his own salary & pay the balance to treasury. That the revenues had never been equal to his salary & so he had nothing to pay. He said he had never believed in the Govt—nor Ministers, they carried too much sail and had too many clerks &c. &c. When shown orders in Council signed by himself, he said he had forgotten. The King ordered Swanston to state his views to the Council which he did reviewing all Maafus antecedents, and finishing by telling him he was no longer the Governor of Lau—& that he must leave Fiji and go back to Tonga in three months—Maafu left the house but it is expected he will make some reply tomorrow.[71]

All this was ground to be cleared before cession could be fully discussed. Nor would Cakobau be hurried. He made his 'pigs and yams' speech when the commissioners landed at 8.30 next morning:

> Com. said Tell the King I shall *expect* to be told tonight what hour tomorrow he will give his reply King If the Com. asks me for some yams or a pig I will tell him the hour he can send for them. If he is asking me to give him the country I must take my own time to consider and reply. He should remember that if our country is given to England it is parted with (cavuka'd) for ever.[72]

'We got no more out of him than this', noted the Commodore, having also been obliged to listen to Thurston's accurate description of what had actually occurred the day before, '& we left at last saying that we should expect to hear this evening'.[73]

Goodenough had been led by his own imperception and commitment, his impatience and reliance on imperfect sources into making '*a most wretched mistake*', as Thurston had foretold.[74] A succession of them, rather—for his formal assurances about the

[71] 'Cession of Fiji', 2 March 1874; Swanston, Journal, 2 March 1874.
[72] 'Cession of Fiji', 3 March 1874.
[73] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 3 March 1874.
[74] Thurston to Hope, 24 December 1873, Letter-Journals.

future of Fijians in a colonial Fiji were outweighed, in the minds of the uneasy, suspicious, power-loving people Thurston knew, by his dilation on present difficulties and Fijian inability to deal with the European, as well as by his notion of giving advice, which was to demand that it be 'invited' and then to offer it for virtually automatic acceptance.

If a colonial governor should behave like this, what hope then for Fijian self-respect? 'The Natives say they had heard very little of the great question of Annexation', Thurston announced a few days later, 'but they had heard a great deal of other matters—the National Debt, the venality of Ministers, the certainty of future complications, &c., and it seemed, viewing it from their standpoint, that an attempt was being made to frighten them into ceding their country'.[75] On 4 March, they formally decided to keep Fiji.[76]

This was a decision of some eighteen chiefs, led by Tui Cakau and Ratu Savenaca, who overrode Cakobau. At the meeting of 3 March held after the commissioners' visit he showed the humiliation he felt at the necessity—conveyed to him by Woods—of taking Ma'afu back into the discussions. He was inclined to curse all Europeans' works and promises. His half-brother reflected on the answers given by the commissioners when Cakobau raised the fundamental question of *lewa* on 26 January: a colonial governor would reside at Levuka, for instance, not at Bau, and would enjoy authority over all Cakaudrove, Bau, Macuata and the rest. 'If we give our land to England what do we benefit', Thurston recorded Ratu Savenaca. 'If we receive pay who will pay us—What will be the position of the King—The replies seemed very unsatisfactory—particularly that the King would have no Lewa but that the people would be ruled by a Governor from England.' Then Thurston watched Cakobau himself break out in his anger and despair:

> The King seemed to feel it also—and said—we may as well submit. I knew when you buli'd me at Nasova that it would not last long . . . let us give it up—and varaki—be slaves. Woods read extract of a letter saying England would not kovea [take by force] & that he could cede or not as he chose. Gradually the King worked himself into a passion—stood up and addressing Woods vehemently said

[75] *Fiji Gazette*, 21 March 1874.
[76] Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 19 March 1874 (confidential), CO83/5.

'See Mr. Woods, when a [mission] teacher falls from his place—and preaches again—we say that he is a false preacher. You tried to make me a Government & you have failed. I don't believe you any more. You and I have done with one another. It is over let us be slaves to England & have no more humbugging. The days of the King are ended, 'tis over today tomorrow morning I give the land to England —Leave the house every body—withdraw—the land is gone I have said it.'

Everyone then hurried out and the King left.[77]

To Goodenough in his man-o'-war schooner (the *Pearl* was gone to aid a stranded mail-steamer at Kadavu) and to Langham isolated on his hilltop came garbled versions of this outburst. Both probably derived from Ma'afu, one directly and the other through Joeli Buli.[78] Ma'afu had earlier told Goodenough that the new constitution had been signed from promulgation on 2 March, leaving him wavering between this and the true account given him by Ratu Kini that the only document signed had been an indemnity for Ministers.[79]

Ma'afu was playing for himself. His carbines were awaiting collection in Samoa; he had promises of support from Hedemann's if he chose to take Lau out of the Kingdom, so Swanston was later given to understand by a member of the firm; and, according to Swanston's own recollection, he could have relied on Tui Bua, supposedly Tui Cakau and Ritova or Katonivere too, as also the probability of support from Rewa, if he had chosen to awaken a new *Tovata* against Bau.[80] That range of support is doubtful, however. And probably Ma'afu too was tired. On 4 March, Swanston recorded at the time, Ma'afu sent for him while the Fijians were conferring; he thanked Swanston for his formal attack on Monday, as exposing 'the true mind of the Bauan chiefs'; and he added: 'these men are going to reject annexation'.[81] Their formal letter doing so was signed by Sione Mafi.[82]

Thurston had the blame for the decision from Europeans. He had put up the foredoomed Whalley to oppose annexation covertly,

[77] 'Cession of Fiji', 3 March 1874; Swanston, Journal, 3 March 1874.
[78] Langham to McArthur, 18 March 1874, encl. McArthur to C.O., 22 May 1874, CO83/5.
[79] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 3 March 1874.
[80] Swanston, Journal, II, letter to Editor, *Fiji Times*, 20 September 1889 (not for publication).
[81] Swanston, Journal, 4 March 1874.
[82] Encl. Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 19 March 1874, CL83/5; Mafi's statement, 23 July 1890, *King of the Cannibal Isles . . .*, 272-4.

Langham supposed[83] and years later was supported by Swanston, who affected to believe that the then Governor had urged Fijians against British annexation and foresworn himself by denying it. Swanston, then, regretted the loss of a volume of his journal from 7 March 1874 since it 'contains matter in detail connected with Thurstons scheming to prevent annexation & its final triumph through the adhesion of Maafu';[84] and he called on Bill Berwick to remember how Thurston had got Berwick out of Bau 'to quell some imaginary trouble between the Natives' at Ba while he advised the Fijians to carry on their own government with 'Cakobau as head and he—Thurston—as Premier but if they annexed that they would lose their land and would be made slaves of—'.[85] Berwick was aged, his fifteen-year-old recollection coloured by other resentments.[86] And Swanston's surviving journal in no way supports this reconstruction of Thurston's attitude towards a transaction that was completed by 6 March, when this journal ends.[87]

The crucial time was the evening of 3 March and the following morning before the Council met again. Thurston himself, after Cakobau's outburst of temper and resolution to cede, recorded only 'Hasty meeting of chiefs in anger—who swore he should do nothing of the sort'.[88] Thurston was reported by Moore soon afterwards as 'standing by the water-side and not knowing what to do'. He was quoted by Langham, months later, as having announced on 2 March: 'openly I have said that I am in favour of annexation but you know that I am not and that I can keep the Govt. going'.[89] And in public his credit was damaged by Ma'afu who asserted that Thurston had said the people would be shot, driven into the hills,

[83] Langham to McArthur, 18 March 1874, CO83/5.
[84] Swanston, Journal, II, undated note.
[85] Berwick, by Bruce, to Swanston, n.d., ibid.
[86] Minute of 16 November 1892, FCSO 92/3679. W. H. Bruce, who wrote the letter for Berwick, had grudges too (FCSO 88/271).
[87] Already in September 1874 Swanston gave Goodenough 'an interesting paper . . . about doings at Bau &c' (MS. Journal, 24 September 1874). It was almost certainly about annexation and, equally probably, was tailored to fit the outsider's view of Thurston's 'intrigues' taken by Goodenough himself. A note on these 'events' in Vol. II of Swanston's journal—clearly written after 1881—contains statements which the journal that ends on 6 March will not support. Possibly, after the event, Swanston truly believed Thurston had worked the Fijians against annexation. Equally, it seems clear that the missing volume did not support its writer's belief. And it is not impossible that it was mislaid for that reason.
[88] 'Cession of Fiji', 3 March 1874.
[89] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 3 March, 29 September 1874.

under British rule. This was a general fear long widespread amongst Fijians.[90] Ma'afu had earlier ascribed the same remarks at the same meeting to Woods. When he boarded the schooner to tell an outraged Goodenough that cession would not be offered, Ma'afu said nothing of this but showed himself isolated. 'All the chiefs were against annexation, was he to sign the paper refusing to be annexed.'[91] His *matāpule*, Mafi, had followed his own instinct in signing; but Mafi had been encouraged to it by Tui Cakau.

For Ratu Golea took the lead henceforth, determined to hold fast to what he had, breaking away from Ma'afu's leadership.[92] Not only the Bauans had *lewa* to lose. He was watched by Thurston with approval at a friend's renewed vigour not unmixed, perhaps, with surprise. When Thurston wrote Tui Cakau's epitaph,[93] the pride, boldness and straight-speaking he had in mind were those displayed in council at Bau between 4 and 6 March 1874. If he had wanted to sway any chief, here was the obvious candidate—the man for whose son Thurston had lately bought a new pair of trousers. But he was connected with Ratu Savenaca by rumour, never with Tui Cakau. All the truth in the rumours—rumours so discredited by examining their trains of transmission—was probably that, if Thurston was asked whether there might be disadvantages under British rule for men accustomed to exercising power, he could not deny it: and that, when the Fijians showed themselves opposed to taking the risk, he could not in conscience press it upon them.

His own account of the council that met on 4 March is corroborated again by Swanston's journal. The Cabinet was called into the meeting, wrote Thurston, and it advised Cakobau

> under the circumstances to offer the Kingdom again to Great Britain. He said His Chiefs should decide. The Chiefs all present including Tui Bua—and Buli Tavua who arrived yesterday—discussed the matter all the morning and came to the unanimous decision that they would try and govern themselves. This was conveyed in writing to the King, who appointed tomorrow morning for the final meeting.

Thurston went on to describe the sequel, as he alone of the diarists knew it:

[90] See, above, p. 218.
[91] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 4 March 1874.
[92] Mafi's statement, 23 July 1890; and all three contemporary journals.
[93] See, above, p. 37.

10 P.M. Chiefs assembled privately and sent for me. Their appeal not to desert them was most touching. Told them all their faults—and all my doubts. They promised to work, & go without pay if I would keep to them.

I promised I would do my best for them.[94]

This conversation by fire- and lamp-light was probably the one which got back belatedly to Langham, becoming misdated and distorted in the process.[95]

That same night, if Swanston's recollection was correct, Tui Bua and Ma'afu came in turn to hear Swanston's own belief that Ma'afu's interests would best be served by annexation. Independent government was impossible with white interests so entrenched said Swanston; and Britain, if not allowed in now on terms which Fijians could make, 'would occupy by *force majeure*', 'in answer to the prayer of the whites'.[96]

Thurston heard him in this strain next day, with a contempt that he voiced when he found the commissioners trying openly to use Swanston against himself. He had his own fears now. His main worry was that fissiparous forces among the élite would prevail and the Kingdom even yet collapse. But for his promise, he always believed, unity would have ended. Each chief would 'have retired *chez lui*, and, as of yore, paddled his own canoe in his own fashion . . .'. Fiji 'would have relapsed into its old barbaric state, tempered only by the intervention of British, German, and American consular officers, and the teachings of antagonistic mission societies'.[97] Time, when he wrote this, had only deepened the force of the truth he felt that night by the whispering houses and silent sea.

He was strengthened by the Fijians' resolution early next morning when Goodenough (having engineered an invitation in Cakobau's name through Ma'afu, Joeli Bulu and Langham, who wrote it)[98] landed 'to everyone's surprise' and fell into argument with Cakobau. 'The King asked if he had sent Maafu to [fetch] him', Thurston recorded with approval for the sarcasm, 'to wh. Comd replied—Tell him I shall not answer an impertinent question —& presently began to damn him under his breath'. Goodenough

[94] 'Cession of Fiji', 4 March 1874.
[95] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 29 September 1874.
[96] Swanston to Editor, *Fiji Times*, 20 September 1889, Journal, II; and see Langham to Swanston, 30 September 1889 (extract), ibid.
[97] Thurston to Gordon, January 1877, *Fiji*, II, 281.
[98] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 4-5 March 1874.

was in the damning vein that day, on the evidence of his own journal.[99] 'Both Consul and Commodore were very offensive', Thurston thought. They made it plain they felt sure Cakobau could not succeed with continued independence. As Thurston saw it:

> the Chiefs & all the people were summoned. The Commodore & Consul said they would like to explain anything—& presently commenced a general attack upon Ministers. They said England did not want the land—and then endeavoured by all sorts of specious promises to cajole the people. Then they tried to frighten them about the debt—The Comdr. illustrated by saying that if a man laid dollars along the coast from Bau to Nadi, the sum total would then be insufficient. Then Moore illustrated it with a box of matches upon the mats. The Chiefs however were neither persuaded nor frightened—simply saying well if the lands have to go—let them go—

Thurston challenged Goodenough when the Commodore spoke of the shooting remarks attributed to a Minister; he had him name Ma'afu as one informant; and, when 'to my horror the wretched liar' Ma'afu said Thurston was that Minister, he denounced Ma'afu with other chiefs' support.

> By & bye after the King went—he declared for annexation. Tui Cakau reminded him of his prayer to the King 'dont give up the land to England' . . . He cleared out. Chiefs firm—& silently angry.[1]

Their firmness and Ratu Golea's leading part was recorded by the other diarists. 'Tui Cakau said defiantly When the debt is due let them come and take our land if they like', noted Goodenough,[2] while Thurston's entry is once more complemented by Swanston's:

> King retired & Savanaca took the chair
> Savanaca asked Maafu what his opinion was on annexation.
> Maafu said if I answer you will not believe me
> Savanaca said answer at all events and then we will ask all the chiefs.
> Maafu said I am for annexation
> Tui Cakau said what has caused you to change your mind Just before Nasova you told me we must not give up our land . . . .
> Maafu said yes and it was the affair at Nasova that caused me to change my mind without annexation we shall [have] more Nasovas.

[99] 'Cession of Fiji', 5 March 1874; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 5 March 1874.
[1] 'Cession of Fiji', 5 March 1874.
[2] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 5 March 1874.

Then Swanston recorded his own opinion—counsel of despair, in Thurston's view:

> Mr Swanston rose and said what Maafu says is true reject annexation and we shall have more Nasovas & had it not been for the British Man of War then in harbour Nasova would not have ended as it did.
>
> Without a strong Govt matters will become more complicated. The Whites do not respect the Fijian Govt you Chiefs do not respect it you are not united on the question you do not work together and troubles will arise which will result in our fighting, we the Whites & you the Fijians, & this will surely result if we have not a Govt that all can respect.[3]

Now that the decision was taken Thurston could be cheered by the continued tenacity of Tui Cakau. 'The land belongs to us', Ratu Golea was heard by Goodenough; 'if the King says tomorrow, give them we will give them. If he says keep them we will keep them.'[4] The formal meeting and refusal came next day, 6 March. 'The King declined ceding in a very pretty speech', Thurston wrote while, by his own account, Goodenough remarked that it was a pity the chiefs had not known their own minds in January 1873.[5] 'Consul said to Comr tell them of the debt again before they decide', wrote Thurston.

> It was done at length but to no purpose. The King said the debt is a thing [of] ours, we are responsible, ours is the risk I don't ask you two to pay it. I did not know that I was to hear of this matter from you two. You told me you came upon two questions, two only. One was will you give up the land, the other was will you keep it? We will keep it. I thank you for your kindness and good advice, our meeting is concluded.[6]

Then Thurston set about re-establishing a government in place of his former Ministry, which had resigned.

He was sent for by Cakobau that afternoon; in the evening 'I met the Chiefs, Bua, Isikeli, Tui Cakau, Abel, Savanaca'. 'They promised faithfully to support me in all things, whatever it may

[3] Swanston, Journal, 5 March 1874.
[4] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 5 March 1874.
[5] Ibid., 6 March 1874.
[6] 'Cession of Fiji', 6 March 1874.

be.' He was moving in an atmosphere of emotion. Ratu Golea had acquired another ring. 'After Council today a very pretty thing occurred', Thurston warmly recalled:

> Tui Cakau had spoken so well, and supported me against Maafu who so frightfully lied—Woods after announcing his retirement and my accession to office—went over to Tui Cakau, and giving him his ring—known as the King's ring, said I give you this as my loloma to you, and that it is the gage of your faith in and support of Mr Thurston. Tui Cakau said I accept it, and the trust will only be broken by death.[7]

In pursuit of the Fijians' object, Thurston's scruples were sometimes different from those of his countrymen. Swanston recalled—probably accurately, in this—that, having obtained from Thurston the Commissionership of Kadavu, he asked him how the £82,000 of debt were to be paid. 'Oh, we can squeeze that out of the natives through the chiefs said he.'[8] Thurston felt that the continuance of Fijians' political future in their own hands was worth a little oppression.

He sketched resolutions (misdated, in another's hand, 'February 1874') enabling him to reduce expenditure, send a commission of chiefs to remove Ritova 'on account of . . . [his] age and imbecility', and directing every Governor and Lieutenant-Governor at once to levy his taxes 'to the full'.[9] And he jotted a private note for himself on the difficulties to be faced by the continued kingdom: internally from 'the whites—their trade, their ships, their increasing numbers —taxes' and, externally, from 'interference constant—all nations, probably seizure'. Outside the house, as he wrote, the sea linked Fiji with those other Pacific island groups whose recent history he thought taught lessons. 'Fighting in New Zealand, [New] Caledonia, Tahiti', he noted, 'because no chiefs ruled in the land'.[10]

He drafted a hasty notice on 6 March to be printed at Levuka next day: the commissioners had accepted the refusal, given good advice for the future, suggested modification of the new constitution by Ministers and consuls, promised British support. He had accepted office again. The Assembly would be called under the 1871 Constitution, 'with special reference to its necessary amend-

[7] Ibid.
[8] Note in Swanston's Journal, Vol. II.
[9] F1/3.
[10] 'Cession of Fiji', memorandum of 7 March 1874.

ment by the people, and the countenance and support of Foreign Representatives'. Expenditure was to be reduced, re-establishment of credit sought, and 'full Recognition of Fijian Independency by Foreign Powers' obtained.[11]

He implied that this policy had the commissioners' support. He thought this a fair representation of their advice to Cakobau.[12] He had been unable to talk with Goodenough after the meeting, for the latter had sailed immediately to rejoin the *Pearl*. He had tried to consult Layard on 7 March and had been told they might discuss affairs 'at some other time, if it is worth our while to go over them privately'. A 'polite note declining at present', Thurston thought it on receipt and replied that he intended to act on 'the general advice' conveyed in the commissioners' letter of 13 February; 'if agreeable', he would see Layard in Levuka to 'avail myself of the frequent offers you have so kindly made to aid the Govt. with your valuable advice and experience . . .'.[13] This second letter reached Layard at Levuka that night, brought initially to his son 'at the house of a friend' who Thurston later heard was Cudlip. It was opened and interpreted under the influence of the White Residents' Political Association, which clearly helped the excitable consul to his conclusion that Thurston had 'studiously attempted to avoid asking advice, and to take me by surprise'. As Thurston later reported it, on the authority of talk in Levuka, Layard was seen pacing his verandah with Forwood in agreement that it was 'too much to be borne . . . that they should be "beaten by a parcel of niggers"'.[14]

In ignorance of all this, when Goodenough arrived back at Bau *en route* for Levuka two days later, Thurston walked back to his boat with him,

> & acquainted him with my acceptance of office, & that I proposed going back to the old Constitution as the best way of meeting the people. He said it was the most Constitutional way, and that now Mr Woods had retired from the Cabinet, he did not think I should meet with half the opposition. Told him I should consult with him & Mr Consul Layard directly I arrived in Levuka.

[11] Reprinted *Fiji Times*, 11 March 1874.

[12] See Swanston, Journal, 6 March 1874; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 6 March 1874.

[13] Thurston to Layard, 7 March 1874 (two letters) and Layard to Thurston, 7 March 1874, encl. Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142; 'Cession of Fiji', 7 March 1874.

[14] Layard to Thurston, 14 March 1874, encl. Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142; 'Cession of Fiji', 2 April 1874; 'True Story of the Annexation of Fiji'.

He was speaking in Swanston's presence too; he had no public intention then in respect of his journal; and this is undoubtedly the conversation as he heard it. Goodenough had a different version:

> . . . Tn. told me that by same boat as took the news of the chiefs declining to cede, went up the intelligence that he had consented to try & carry on Govt., had reverted to the const. of 1871 and had issued writs. I sd. nothing but that it was unnecessary, that the people had perfect confidence that we wd. see them thro' their troubles, and that there wd. be no row whatever.
>
> I said nothing to him abt. his project as I did not know what Consul had said.
>
> He said that a return to the Const. of 1871, was, in his opinion, a better way of *managing* affairs than consulting the foreign Consuls.
>
> I thought this odd & an evident intention of plunging the community into still greater difficulties & disputes than they are now in, & of thus triumphing over the divisions wh. wd. ensue and ruling the whole.[15]

But Goodenough later admitted having said the substance of what Thurston recalled his saying about Woods.[16] His entry was dishonest, coloured by what he found that night in Levuka where Layard had issued another broadsheet to controvert Thurston's. The commissioners had said the 1871 constitution 'would have to be altered', Layard announced and Goodenough now agreed; and they felt the chiefs 'could not govern the whites, but by the advice of the Foreign Consuls, and that the King's advisers would have to be approved by the Foreign Consuls'.[17]

The 'lies' in Thurston's announcement 'are evident to anyone', remarked Goodenough; the commissioners had 'distinctly stated that attention to our advice would enlist our support; and that advice, which was very frankly offered, has not been sought'.[18] There were no lies. They had actually given endless 'advice'. Attempting to formulate a policy within the stipulations laid down by Goodenough, Thurston was in very fair accord with Goodenough's own private version of what they were. And the action the Commodore now gladly undertook to bring down Cakobau's reconstructed government had, as pretext, an untenable version of

[15] 'Cession of Fiji', 9 March 1874; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 9 March 1874.
[16] Goodenough to Layard, 12 March 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[17] Reprinted *Fiji Times*, 11 March 1874.
[18] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 9 March 1874; Goodenough to Layard, 12 March 1874, encl. Layard to C.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142.

events, a picture of Thurston's deceit, which originated in the consul's irrationality.

They were traducing him, Thurston had no doubt. They paraded their incomprehension before his astonished eyes. Never adept at sifting fact from fiction in past events, they proved now that they found difficulty in grasping the truth about events in which they were themselves principal actors. 'Possibly it was because I did not write officially' that they would not recognise him as Cakobau's Minister, Thurston wondered.[19] Rather, it was because Layard had been far out of his depth, amazed at the chiefs' decision, not willing or able to see that government must be kept going. He admitted later that, given the Fijians' refusal, he could see no point in discussion. And it was because Goodenough, deeply committed to annexation, victim still of his unsound sources, hating Thurston for having as he thought got the better of him at Bau, was willing to follow in this the despised colleague whom he usually led.

The commissioners mistook their position, having wavered at first towards an accurate appraisal of it in their initial acceptance of the Fijians' refusal and the idea of continued independence. All actors must sit on their hands, they supposed now, while they made up their minds what to do.[20] As Thurston gathered, he should have *forced* Layard to let him consult him, if it had meant dragging Layard out of bed or boat to do so. His 'intention . . . was to decline the advice which was very frankly offered by us', the commissioners jointly assured the Colonial Office—though Goodenough, privately, still did not think they had actually offered any —'and to attempt to act on the overstrained theory of a Fijian Sovereignty'. His proposed policy 'was virtually to recommence all the political strife of the past year from the beginning, and could have but one effect, namely, to exasperate the whites by whom he was placed in power and to accelerate a collision between them and the Native Chiefs with whom they had hitherto been on good terms'.[21]

Thurston spent the early hours of 10 March with a midnight

[19] Thurston to Layard, 13 March 1874, encl. ibid.

[20] Layard to Thurston, 14 March 1874, encl. Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142.

[21] Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 19 March 1874 (confidential), CO83/5; Goodenough to Layard, 12 March 1874, encl. Layard to F.O., 17 March 1874, FO58/142.

mail from Levuka, incredulous over reports of their actions. Other things apart, Layard, with Glenny, had sat on the Bench when McIntosh and Lindberg were brought up as accessories to Marawa's murder. After their discharge, he had caused excitement by remarking 'that if any one should be tried as an accessory the Ministers should as they had been cognisant of the matter for a long period'. Marawa had been shot 'escaping capture', Layard himself believed; and he had halted the prosecution with 'my suggestion that as yet the murder had not been proved!!'[22] Then Thurston

> called Council of Chiefs at 6 AM. and acquainted them that the Queens representatives had taken umbrage at my appointment and policy—and sought their instructions. Asked them to authorize me to confer & decide with Consuls as to future course. After discussion they named Maafu, Ratu Abel, Tui Bua, Ratu Savanaca, Tui Levuka, Na Cagi Levu and Tui Cakau to accompany me to Levuka as a special Council of advice.
>
> Left for Ovalau at noon, with Mr Swanston, and arrived at home about 5 pm.[23]

The boat-party and the special council were tense groups. Ma'afu was at open enmity with the Fijians and was actually threatened with death at Levuka,[24] while Thurston soon had added reason to resent Swanston whom the commissioners were recommending to Cakobau (along with his secretary, Henry Milne, set down earlier by Goodenough as 'stupid'[25]) as men through whom Cakobau should correspond and 'whose advice and wisdom you would do well to seek'.[26] Thurston commented on this next day:

> Swanston said—before Commissioners & every one else 'If you dont give your land to Britain then we (Keitou) white men will fight with you (Keimudou) Fijians. And this is the 'Wisdom' they are to search for.[27]

From that day's *Fiji Times* he learned that 'the Comrs have turned right round and intend forcing the Natives into all kinds of

[22] 'Cession of Fiji', 10 March 1874; Scott to Burt, 9 March 1874, F1/10; *Fiji Times*, 14 March 1874; Layard's marginalia on Thurston to Layard, 18 February 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[23] 'Cession of Fiji', 10 March 1874.
[24] Mafi's statement, 23 July 1890.
[25] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 22 December 1873.
[26] Goodenough and Layard to Cakobau, 10 March 1874, F1/11.
[27] 'Cession of Fiji', 11 March 1874.

embarrassments'.[28] A deputation of whites had called on Goodenough, vehement in their belief that Thurston had been pulling puppet-strings, to find the Commodore equally warm. By his own account he said 'that annexation was still not impossible if they chose to try to reopen it, that we thought it useless to go to new elections and that neither Con. cd. at present be worked'. Then 'Glenny said something about a free port, and this put it into my head to think of taking over Ovalau altogether into our hands as a concession & so cut the eye out of Fiji . . .'.[29] The treaty Goodenough drew up with this object contained a proviso that the Europeans should pay the debt, which he was genuinely concerned should not burden Fijians.[30]

Thurston felt they had better keep the eye, even if the burden went with it. Separate government of the races he thought impossible. 'Their interests are too much intermingled; to say nothing of the impossibility of that prevention of further settlement which would . . . be the principal aim of the Fijian rulers.'[31] And as he read the *Fiji Times*'s version of Goodenough's reply to the deputation, he may have felt it was actually the heart that was going to be cut out of Fiji. He described European reaction as he saw it around him:

> But what excitement there was in Levuka! Those who had looked upon everything as settled, and had breeches-pocket interests involved, were furious. Mr. Thurston was a triple-dyed villain and traitor. He could have forced the King and chiefs to accept annexation, and he had not done so. He could have refused to assist or advise them in any way, unless they accepted annexation, which they must then perforce have done, but—wretch and traitor against the divinity of white-skins—he had even the audacity to try and sustain a native monarchy. The Commissioners . . . had *not* miserably failed by reason of their own dictatorial action and mismanagement. Oh, dear, no! *They* had quite succeeded, but that villain Thurston, after having pretended to urge a cession of sovereignty had secretly advised the chiefs against it. This *must* be so . . . Had not all the missionaries and teachers advocated and preached for annexation . . .? And was not *their* influence all powerful? Had not the *Fiji Times*, their organ, . . shown the Fijians what a miserable

[28] Ibid.
[29] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 10 March 1874; *Fiji Times*, 11 March 1874.
[30] Encl. Goodenough to Admiralty, 19 April 1874, Adm. 1/6203.
[31] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 1874, letter from Levuka resident. Goodenough's opinion was that this was written to Sir Alfred Stephen by Thurston, which seems certain; the style is his and he claimed Stephen as a correspondent.

set of niggers they were; and how absurd it was to suppose that white men could ever look upon them as on any political equality with such white men as themselves?[32]

'Poor wretches, there is to be no peace for them', he wrote of the Fijians now.[33] He had further proof later that same day, 11 March, when Milne arrived from Bau bringing the commissioners' threatening letter with its demand that Cakobau come quickly to be told that, now he had said he 'did not wish to give Fiji over to be governed from Great Britain', he was 'in a far more difficult position'.[34]

Thurston was 'deceiving' him, Cakobau had been told. And he had received the mingled threats and promises with a shot calculated to hit the Commodore between wind and water: 'What good have the Ships of War done to Fiji—King Geo. of Toga brought the lotu. What have the Ships of War brought.' The question was settled, said Cakobau. He had been for annexation but the rest were opposed. 'All the chiefs were against it', confirmed Ratu Josefa Celua, 'we will manage our own Govt.'[35]

All this was reported to Goodenough by his own messenger; but he found the Bauans less compelling than the white Wesleyans. The mission conveyed to him its belief that the decision was not the Fijians' own, 'but one which they have been induced to adopt under the influence and persuasions of those who are personally and pecuniarly interested therein and who have not at heart the best interests of the Natives, and the Whites residing here'. It was 'universally among the Foreign population' believed to be against the wishes of Cakobau, Ma'afu, and 'some other Chiefs'; and 'disorder, anarchy, and *bloodshed*' would surely follow, if the commissioners did not act.[36] God, through His Elect, still held the decisions of His black people in less esteem than those of His white.

Thurston heard from Cakobau 'that he should come straight to me on Friday [13 March]'; and meantime, calling the council together on Thursday, he read out the commissioners' letter.

[32] 'True Story of the Annexation of Fiji.'
[33] 'Cession of Fiji.'
[34] Goodenough and Layard to Cakobau, 10 March 1874, F1/11.
[35] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 14 March 1874.
[36] Langham and others to Layard, 12 March 1874 (confidential), and Langham to Chapman, 16 March 1874, MOM 103.

> They all refused to have anything to do with Mr Swanston & were most vehement Maafu alone remained silent. He finally said he voted with Tui Cakau. Meeting very satisfactory to me. P.M. saw 'Sahl' who wants to heal the breach, says it is a misunderstanding. Late in the evening came letters from Sahl, saying Layard was corresponding with me. How this will end I dont know. Comdr sent for Swanston & told him he would never have anything to do with me again!!! If I write to him as a British subject, he would answer me!! Beautiful idea, certainly.[37]

When next he saw Sahl, it was to realise he 'evidently thinks I should eat dirt'.[38] And the exclamatory, if defensive, lecture he received from Layard on the duty of a potential prime minister to consult his 'friends' was no help. The interview Goodenough had with Swanston showed, rather, how it would end. Goodenough desired to speak with Swanston frankly, 'as one Englishman should treat another': and, also as an Englishman should, to have him teach Cakobau the impossibility of independence.

Before Goodenough was—or soon would be—Thurston's disclaimer of ill-intent, its justice corroborated by Goodenough's own journal and correspondence. Yet still he could not 'believe in Thurston's straightforwardness'.[39] While Layard was comforting Taveuni planters with the assurance that, though the government's taxes were legal, yet 'if the gentlemen in Taviuni will unite with the rest of the White residents all will yet be well',[40] Goodenough 'Speaking to various people . . . said the position is this':

> Mr. Thurston is one Englishman claiming to advise King Cakobau on the sole responsibility of himself towards the chief & in opposition to every white man here.
>
> I & Consul are two Englishmen acting under a sense of responsibility to their own Government, & most friendly to Cakobau's Govt., but willing to see all possible conciliatory measures adopted towards either side, & we forbid Mr. Thurston's accepting office. Should he persist we then remove him for a while, to his plantation or elsewhere till all is quiet & Govt. reorganised.
>
> It is the only way.[41]

[37] 'Cession of Fiji,' 11-12 March 1874.
[38] Ibid., 13 March 1874.
[39] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 11 March 1874; Thurston to Goodenough, 11 March 1874, F1/23.
[40] Layard to Taveuni planters, 16 March 1874, F4/5.
[41] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 12 March 1874.

On some considerations Thurston might have gone back willingly enough to the young coconuts of Naveitalacagi. But he was emotionally involved. And he knew the forces that would rule if he went. The Keyse's Hotel clique, the leading rampant Anglo-Saxons with whom in time of crisis the whites solidly fell in, were high in favour with Commodore and Consul. Layard's main political adviser was Forwood, whom he had 'appointed Attorney to the Commission', Thurston learned with incredulity, with 'Chambers at the Consulate!!!'[42] (As Layard naively told the Foreign Office, 'the knowledge that I was consulting him I know contributed greatly to induce . . . the confidence reposed in me by the British Residents . . .'.[43]) 'All sorts of intrigue at work', Thurston heard, D'Arcy Murray 'tells me Forwood has a treaty ready drawn up with Consular sanction appointing Forwood, Mason, Cudlip, and Ryder, a "Quadrilateral" Government'. 'Glenny furious.'[44]

Now Thurston had supporters in the European community. Neither Brower nor even Fred Hennings was prepared to follow Goodenough uncritically. Thurston's authority for assuring Brower that 'a feeling is arising among the Chiefs that they are being coerced' was not likely to have been questioned.[45] While Goodenough was issuing a final proclamation warning British officers in Cakobau's forces that they should abandon their posts or face prosecution,[46] Layard's official colleagues were won over to Thurston's support. Unwelcome visitors at the consulate on 16 March and diverted then by a ploy,[47] they persisted next day in urging that Thurston be recognised. He 'has gammoned them over to say all sorts of things to us', wrote a discomfited Goodenough, 'but out of the middle of it all comes his intense desire to write history & to get our letter to the King withdrawn from the approaching Blue book as he says'.[48] That letter, published, would have harmed the government they represented, Thurston may

[42] 'Cession of Fiji', 12 March 1874.
[43] Layard to F.O., 21 October 1874, FO58/142.
[44] 'Cession of Fiji', 13 March 1874.
[45] Thurston to Brower, 14 March 1874, F1/23.
[46] Encl. Layard to F.O., 18 March 1874, FO58/142. Thurston heard that it was aimed particularly against his brother and Harding, '"who are hot-headed" men' ('Cession of Fiji', 13 March 1874).
[47] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 16 March 1874: 'At the nick of time Layard shewed Brower the passage in a letter of Thurston's in wh. he says that he is not inclined to ask the advice of B & H because they are trading consuls'.
[48] Ibid., 17 March 1874.

actually have thought; there was nothing in it to harm him. And the *Fiji Times* of 14 March carried an address to the Fijian people which indicated that he was believed to have written history already. 'You believe in Mr. Thurston perhaps', said William Scott, devotee now of annexation, in the English version, 'well, that is good, but he is only one chief, suppose he was to die tomorrow whom would you put in his place'.[49]

As Cakobau himself was to say, there was no-one. And for his part Thurston recalled this as a time when he was 'frequently ill and worn out with work as Thakombau's sole Minister and Agent'.[50] He did not die on 15 March, however, but instead at 10 p.m. wrote a note for Whalley suggesting tactics Cakobau might adopt (falling into hostile hands it harmed the writer).

> Consul evidently intends to fight and make *me* the bone of contention. *They* must not be allowed to take first move. It must come from *our* side. The issue *must* be settled at once. Delay is dangerous. My opinion is that something should be written down from the King's own lips, something as annexed, or just it. That Abel, and Savanaca, with Milne should go on board at 8,—firm and determined—say the King will have me & no one else, *and then come away*. No waiting, no talk. The King must give up no jurisdiction. If he is forced, he must retire with his own people and let the whites veitalia [do as they please]. Then Savanaca and I must go to England and complain (but keep this strictly close). There is no other course open. If the King & Chiefs want me they must keep me. It is in their hands.
>
> I will send Milne down in the morning and will write to German & American Consuls asking them to meet me at nine. Leave the newspaper at my office. Leave no papers about.

The draft he enclosed was presented to Goodenough by Savenaca and Epeli next day on Cakobau's behalf:

> I have had read to me your letter of the 10th. March, about Mr. Thurston, saying you did not wish to correspond with him—and advising me to write through Mr. Swanston, or Mr. Milne.
>
> I now write to say that Mr. Thurston is my Minister. I have appointed him and I desire he may be recognised.
>
> Mr. Milne has other duties, and Mr. Swanston I no longer want. Ratu Savanaca and Ratu Abel I send with this to tell you my mind that it may be clear to you. Mr. Thurston will confer with the

[49] *Fiji Times*, 14 and 18 March 1874.
[50] Minute, 23 March 1876, FCSO 76/486.

Foreign Consuls for the good of the land. I know he desires this. Also, I desire that all things be done through him.

This is all

Koi au[51]

Seen crudely as string-pulling, his suggestions were actually towards the tactical implementation of the decision already taken by Fijians to retain their independence.

'Rather pert', Goodenough thought the letter, as coming from 'natives'; and he gave its bearers no chance to leave without argument:

> I explain that this had nothing to do with annexation that I was not angry with King or Chiefs, only with Mr. Thurston because he has deceived me. The Chiefs dont understand these things; they are white men's affairs and as they don't understand them; they must either trust me or Mr. Thurston. If they trust Mr. T. then I shall leave them to their fate, but if a single white man is hurt I shall punish natives who hurt them.[52]

Cakobau wanted Thurston. He told Goodenough so when he came to Nasova with the chiefs' committee on 17 March, resentful and sarcastic still, forced there when he had wished to see the naval negotiator privately at Draiba.[53] He was told he had appointed a Minister without consulting the consuls as he had been 'advised' to do. 'Is it in accordance with the law, for Foreigners to have any voice in the selection of the Ministers', he demanded, and was informed: 'There is no question of law, whoever has told you so is foolish. Weak people must go about with a support which the strong can do without'. He was asked if he wanted Goodenough's advice now, said he was waiting to hear it, and was assured he would not get it until he asked—and, by implication, undertook to act on it. He would govern Fiji, he said, and learned he could not, 'unless with the advice and assistance of the Foreign Consuls and

[51] *Fiji Times*, 14 November 1874, 'Mr. Thurston and his Scapegoat'. The editorial is a well-written and, if its assumptions were well-founded, telling denunciation of 'the *Honourable* John Bates Thurston!' See also Goodenough to Griffith, 10 July 1875, ML Ag 3/3. For a reply on Thurston's behalf, from a brief he provided, see *Fiji Argus*, 20 November 1874. The correspondence proved, rather, ran the reply, 'That Mr. Thurston was fighting loyally for what he all along contended . . . —the native interests, and *annexation upon conditions*', not that he was moved by simple ambition.

[52] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 16 March 1874.

[53] Perry to Milne, 16 March 1874 (copy), Goodenough Letterbooks.

myself'; for 'it is no new thing for the whites to interfere in Fijian affairs', he was told again, in Goodenough's constant refrain to which his usual answer was that those times were gone, since he now had Ministers to help him. 'Some kinds of assistance are good others evil', he remarked, and asked in vain for an indication of which kind Goodenough's was. 'The law is a foreign institution we desire to carry it out but the whites are strengthened by you in opposing it.'[54] Cakobau was known for his 'choice language', his 'fine command of Fijian words', his mastery of irony, and he translated well.[55]

Watching, Thurston may have recalled occasions in the past when, as acting-consul, he had played Goodenough's part of terrier against bear. He had found another part more satisfying, if more dangerous. He heard now Cakobau's curt dismissal of the suggestion that Fijians were in leading-strings, Cakobau's answer to complaints of his being kept in his current part: *'Au na sega ni taura edua tale na Minita eke'*—'I shall not find another Minister here'.[56]

Yet the ship was in irons. Though Thurston still had a tiller in his hand, still went to his office, there was no telling how even the rudder would respond. He was aboard the *Pearl* next day, trying to unravel the misunderstanding. He was told that either he was not so clever a man as Goodenough had supposed or there was a 'different morality this side of the globe'. His hand was shaken. Privately, in the language of the midshipman's mess which Goodenough had far less outgrown than Thurston his merchantman's cabin, he was set down a 'Cur & blackguard'.[57] He could hold on no longer.

He was thinking even now of the long-term future, and the strong probability he still foresaw that Britain would disavow her commissioners. On 19 March he 'met the Chiefs in Council at Draiba'—Cakobau himself, all the committee except Tui Levuka and Ma'afu, and nine others including Ratu Kini, Gagabokola, Katonivere, Matanitabua, Roko Tui Dreketi. And he issued an Order in Council dismissing Ma'afu from the Governorship of

[54] Nasova meeting, 17 March 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[55] Obitual note by Calvert, quoting Langham, MMS; Commonplace Book of Rev. I. Rooney, ML.
[56] Nasova meeting, 17 March 1874, im Thurn Papers.
[57] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 18 March 1874.

Lau.[58] Misappropriation and the fact that he was a Tongan, only recognised as a chief in Fiji by the 1871 agreement under which he joined the government and 'which he has wilfully and wholly broken', were the grounds advanced;[59] and also, as Thurston added, the 'constant treachery and official malversation of the man, his incessant intrigue, and spoilation'.[60]

Many constructions were put on Ma'afu's dismissal then and later, most of them to Thurston's disadvantage. 'Maafu squashed Thurston's (not yet Sir John) attempt to keep Cakobau on the throne & so incurred his constant enmity', wrote C. R. Swayne, a Dreketi planter in 1874, who was later friend of and plant collector for Thurston, and European Stipendiary Magistrate at Lomaloma where he recorded Mafi's more likely version of that undoubted hostility's origin. About the lie at Bau, Mafi recalled, 'Mr. Thurston always bore a grudge against Maafu and me'.[61]

It was true. Thurston had bitter memories of this time generally. Disloyalty to Cakobau's Kingdom at the end was always at the top of his list of sins, a mark of moral cowardice and naked pursuit of self-interest.[62] He felt particularly bitter about Ma'afu's caving in to white domination because it was a reversal of the Tongan's earlier behaviour, which Thurston had admired. But his resentment was not the cause of Ma'afu's dismissal. By William Hennings it was seen as resulting from a 'quarrel between Cakobau & Maafu' which Thurston recklessly encouraged.[63] He must have authority to back him if he was to become Warden of Lau again, he told Thurston from Lomaloma; 'this authority you have removed, but you do not tell me that it is to be replaced'.[64] 'A very proper letter', Hennings's seemed to Goodenough, who read it on the day of its date and only hours before dining with the man he wished had overrun Fiji in Pritchard's time: 'A rascal perhaps, but a man & an open bold man without lying devices.' 'Fearless and inviting confidence.'[65]

[58] 'Cession of Fiji', 19 March 1874.
[59] Order in Council, 19 March 1874, transferred to F1 series after finding by present writer in FCSO bundle 'Colonial Secretary 1883'.
[60] Undated draft, F4/12-1 (6).
[61] Swayne to im Thurn, 12 September 1913, im Thurn Papers; Mafi's statement, 23 July 1890, *King of the Cannibal Isles* . . . , 272-4.
[62] See, e.g., Minute, 2 October 1880, FCSO 80/1875.
[63] William Hennings to Swanston, 2 April 1874, Swanston Papers.
[64] William Hennings to Thurston, 1 April 1874, F1/10.
[65] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 1 April 1874.

Thurston had his own dismissal ready for Hennings: 'The Ministers of the King are public officers, and it is not remarkable that their ideas as to the interests of the Fijian race differ from those of persons who exist by trading with, and sometimes upon that race'.[66] And judgments like Goodenough's he found shallow. 'Maafu is a vigorous, stern, and (when it suits his purpose) cruel ruler', he wrote, 'whose ideas on the score of personal freedom and rights are as opposed to those of the anti-slavery and aborigines' protection societies of England as can well be imagined'.[67] He deplored the rigid moral code that gaoled a large percentage of Lau's youthful population for sexual misdemeanours. And he feared what Ma'afu would do if Britain should decline the offer of cession that he now saw must inevitably be made.

Ma'afu had 180 of his countrymen under arms at Lomaloma; the general assumption amongst Europeans in Lau was that he would fight. A curious passage at Bau on 6 March, taken with Mafi's recollection of it, suggests that Ma'afu may have believed he would actually fight under British naval auspices. What would the Commodore do, now that annexation was rejected, the record shows Mafi asking of Goodenough. Though it also shows Goodenough's replying that he would neither interfere nor permit any other European to involve himself, Mafi's memory of this, or a parallel incident, perhaps indicates what impression was current at the time. They talked in Joeli Bulu's house, Mafi recalled, and the Commodore asked Ma'afu 'if he thought he could prevail against Bau'. 'Maafu said "with ease if you do not interfere". The Commodore said, "I am induced to assist you".'[68] They had long been 'on winking terms', Goodenough had recorded, unconscious of the hidden depths in the 'man of the world' across his cabin table. And Ma'afu, who induced Goodenough to insist on his reinstatement on 3 March, may have sensed a flicker of support in the Commodore on 27 February when, told by Goodenough admiringly that he saw him ready for a fight in defence of his status, he replied: 'I don't mind these Fijians but the whites are too many for me. What can I do?'[69]

[66] Memorandum on William Hennings to Ministers and Consuls, 15 June 1874, F1/Temp. 18.
[67] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 1874.
[68] *Fiji Times*, 11 March 1874; Mafi's statement, 23 July 1890.
[69] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 27 January, 27 February 1874.

It was Mafi's question that induced the Wesleyans to fear *'bloodshed'*.[70] And Thurston himself saw the likelihood of it if Britain again rejected Fiji. He could not be sure how Ma'afu's old *Tovata* allies would react. He may have heard rumours of the German merchants' proposition. Certainly he knew of the idea Ma'afu once had of sending to Tonga for help, for he wrote warningly to Tupou.

To leave Ma'afu the undoubted Governor of Lau was foolhardy, then. Much better to attempt to confine his power to Vanua Balavu and build up against him as Governor the present head of what Thurston later described as 'the crushed and subordinated Tui Nayau family'.[71] The building-up was difficult enough, when Ratu Tevita Uluilakeba oppressed his own people, had very little ability and, though married to a *marama* of Bau, looked to Ma'afu as a father—old friend as Ma'afu was of his actual, dead, father. Thurston lectured Ratu Tevita on the necessity for him to assume the duties of his rank, gave orders that Fijian officers should replace Tongans wherever possible and, having remarked to the men he sent to help administer Lau on the tyranny of mission-inspired Tongan laws, read with approval, if perhaps with a cynical twitch, the eager agreement that 'they are conceived in sin and bring fourth misery'.[72] Other men thought that to convert the strong possibility of trouble into a virtual certainty was reckless enough, but Thurston liked to strike first.

The deposition once agreed to at Draiba on 19 March, he 'explained to the chiefs that I could not form a Cabinet nor carry on with the opposition offered by British Commissioners'. And the Fijians 'passed a resolution asking me to hold office till things were settled'. In the face of the commissioners' determination that no government should exist, things could be settled only by surrender.

That morning Goodenough heard that 'Thurston wd. try to persuade the Chiefs to ask to take back their decision agst annexation'. He did not believe it, but would wait and see—'That liar is a good deal cleverer than I am, having the Native chiefs at his back' —while Thurston noted: 'Dr Brower and Mr Hennings endeavouring to bring about a fair understanding 'twixt self and Commodore'. Their success involved the latter in capitulation the

[70] Langham and others to Layard, 12 March 1874 (confidential), MOM 103.
[71] Minute, 1 October 1879, FCSO 79/1075.
[72] See correspondence in F1/10, especially Drury to Thurston, 30 June 1874.

same day: 'he sent word by Dr B that he will be glad to meet me tomorrow as the Kings trusted and special Adviser'.[73]

That style was balm to Thurston; when he had an entry in the *Colonial Office List*, it went in, with capitals. And balm too was his part in the scene enacted aboard the *Pearl* on 21 March when he conducted the cession negotiations into which the Fijians were forced. 'The offer of annexation would never have been obtained excepting by myself', he told Hope, meaning that without him the chiefs would have broken up. 'We have had a hard struggle and I have been very badly used . . . .' 'My first reward was when on the deck of the "Pearl" the King desired me to give the letter of offered Cession to the Commodore with English formality. With all my hopes I never thought I should be the actual official medium through which the offer wd be conveyed.'[74] He was to be called 'egotistical', 'grasping', 'overbearing';[75] and here he was showing something of the quality which provided superficial grounds for these epithets—his concern for eventual recognition, frankly exhibited in the consciousness that he had earned it by the course of conduct least calculated to win him the plaudits of men likely to be heard and understood.

For Fijians it was surrender now: but still conditional surrender for, as he continued, 'I have won the battle for the Fijians'. Before Cakobau signed the offer, Thurston explained that 'men were not given, nor the land, nor even the grass upon the land'. 'We offer to Her Majesty . . . the Government of the Islands, but not the soil or the Fijian people, and we trust to her generosity in dealing with us and our children'—so ran the offer which Downing Street recognised as 'apparently little more than the high privilege of governing at the cost of this country![76] Nor did Thurston wholly trust to the unfettered generosity of Layard's Mistress's advisers. Next month he drew up Terms of Cession embodying the conditions he had prepared at Bau, along with the 'Memorandum . . .

[73] 'Cession of Fiji', 19 March 1874; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 19 March 1874.

[74] Thurston to Hope, 16 April 1874, Letter-Journals.

[75] Wilkinson to Gordon, 29 March 1879, *Fiji*, III, 556. Wilkinson was actually defending Thurston against Dr (later Sir) William MacGregor, a jealous rival.

[76] Thurston to Hope, 16 April 1874, Letter-Journals; *Fiji Gazette*, 1 April 1874; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 21 March 1874; quoted Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 21 March 1874 (confidential), with Herbert's Minute, CO83/5.

upon the Tenure of Land in Fiji' in which he set out some of his views on Fijian societies.[77]

And Goodenough, accepting the offer, went away to note in his journal: 'Now I must work heart & soul to get the Govt. to take the islands or all will be worse than before, a great deal worse'.[78] The excellent foundation for this admission confirmed unfavourable conclusions about the man, as Thurston might have thought. His efforts to keep government in being were further justified in April, when Goodenough received a cable indicating that he was likely to be disavowed even for the steps seeking annexation that he had taken by February. Goodenough sailed for Sydney on 20 April in a petulant frame of mind, writing '*Sa Oti* to all Fijian bothers and troubles, confound them'—and apparently supposing that he had written 'Farewell', '*Sa Moce*'.[79]

Thurston had no such escape, though 25 May found him and Marie 'At sea—beating between Goro & Batiki in the Rosamond' ketch on his way to Naveitalacagi. He anchored there early on the twenty-seventh and at once 'Went over the place' with Prince. 'Cocoa nut trees planted everywhere. The avenue grown up very fine—Just 3 years and ten mos old.' 'Memo', he noted, '4200 nuts makes one ton of copra' and '4000 husks = three tons of fibre'—which, together, were worth £67 at the expected high price of fibre, the machines for processing which he inspected on other men's plantations. He 'suggested improvements to Sydney as to copra making more particularly as to vatas, & cutting up of nuts'. Flesh sun-dried on trays made cleaner copra than that smoke-dried; but these *vata* must slide readily under cover against rain-storms. It was showery now, as he tested samples of sugar cane.[80] In sugar, he too believed, lay Fiji's future—but in its cultivation by large companies, he hoped, not by the small family planter whose impecuniosity and political expectations were so troublesome.[81]

Government business pursued him. The prison labourers hired by J. B. Macomber on Laucala were proving hard to handle. 'Yesterday visited Laucala, in consequence of compl against the

[77] Encls. to 'Report of Commodore Goodenough and Mr. Consul Layard . . .', GBPP, 1874, XLV.

[78] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 21 March 1874.

[79] Draft on Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 13 February 1874, CO83/5; Goodenough, MS. Journal, 20 April 1874. *Sa oti* means 'it is finished'.

[80] 'Cession of Fiji'.

[81] *Fiji Times*, 22 April 1874, where a correspondent makes this view an accusation against him.

convict labourers from Viria—found them an independent lot. Took nearly 200 clubs away from them.'[82]

And so government business had followed Thurston from the moment the capitulation was made. He had received a deputation on 20 March to put his view of late events. 'He would conclude', the *Fiji Gazette* had reported him, 'by saying what he has said all along . . . that the best thing that could happen to Fiji would be Annexation to the British Government on such fair and honourable terms as would satisfy the natives, both now and hereafter'. He had still been worried. 'Annexation a Fact!!', a notice from the *Fiji Times* office had blared that day, while 'Islands ceded to Great Britain' echoed one from the consulate. He had written an editorial to warn that this was not yet so. The offer was made, but its conditions must be accepted before the Fijian flag could come down. 'Our last word to British officers in their dealings with the Native race is "*Festina lente*".'[83]

A government must be kept in being under the King's authority. The commissioners had asked Cakobau to name two Ministers to sit with the consuls in an Ad-Interim Executive Council and he replied that he 'wished for Mr. Thurston and could not trust any one else'.[84] Thurston's reappointment hit the Keyse's Hotel clique like a club,[85] while he faced a personal problem of his own over the composition of the Council. Rupert Ryder had been proposed by the commissioners—a proponent of white supremacy, if not a rabid one—and he wished first to see Thurston 'as to old political differences'. 'I told him I could throw the "memories" overboard if he could—and that provided I met Mr. Ryder *only* in Cabinet, i.e. not Forwood & his crowd I should be satisfied. We shook hands & he took his seat.'

Then Thurston collapsed. 'Very ill—result of reaction—hardly able to go down to the office. Met at 10—nearly fainted several times.'[86] He lived at an intense pitch; the muscular collapse that was to kill him had been presaged by bouts of exhaustion, after periods of strain, which left him retching and twitching. Palm Sunday found him 'Better Today' and the following day—

[82] 'Cession of Fiji', 1 June 1874; Macomber's memorial, 3 February 1876, FCSO 76/298.
[83] *Fiji Gazette*, 21 March 1874; *Fiji Times*, 21 March 1874.
[84] Goodenough and Layard to C.O., 13 April 1874 (copy), Adm. 1/6303.
[85] *Fiji Times*, 11 and 15 April 1874.
[86] 'Cession of Fiji', 27-8 March 1874.

before another collapse set him dizzy and unable to read ('Might be worry—very likely is, or it may be my tonic mixture')—he was lost again in the minutiae of administration and personal, as well as foster-son's affairs. Men were demanding jobs again. He spent Good Friday at home, 'rested myself body and mind', but: 'In the afternoon Dr Brower called, pressing a "claim" for Mr. Drury [U.S. Vice-Consular Agent] to be admitted as Sheriff, Chief of Police &c. &c. How wonderful it is', he added. 'Drury cannot write the words correctly',[87] and sent Drury back to watch Ma'afu at Lomaloma.

Already on 28 March he had re-established the provincial administration, reappointing European Commissioners in association with the Governors. Commissioners had been appointed in the previous November to assist the Governors in, especially, extracting revenue from Fijians, with orders 'to remember that the native race can only be effectually governed through their Chiefs . . . and no attempt to over-ride their authority will be tolerated'.[88] Now they were to report to the Chief Secretary instead of to the Ministry of Native Affairs, which was abolished.

Its eclipse was seen as self-aggrandisement by Thurston, resulting in oppression of the *itaukei* to fill the Treasury. Tax-defaulters were sent to plantations. Stories circulated of fishermen's very nets taken by tax-collectors. To Wilkinson, devotee of the idea of a Native Department to shield the people, Fijians seemed to regard this time as a reign of terror.[89] And undoubtedly Leefe had his own way in the courts of Ra for the next few months, while Harding, Commissioner for Ba, was a hard man, and Henry Thurston continued to cement his relations with the Nadroga planters in his own way. Philo-Fijianism might seem humbug now to men other than those who themselves believed in a 'natural law'.

Thurston held that desperate times necessitated remedies more or less drastic. A distinct possibility remained that Fiji would have to try to remain a nation. And so necessity drove him to a heavy-handed extraction of taxes; he had cut expenditure to about £16,000 a year but there must be no deficit on this to pile upon the existing debt. In the abolition of the Native Department, on the

[87] Ibid., 29-30 March, 3 April 1874.
[88] Thurston to H. C. Thurston, 28 March 1874, F1/Temp. 23; Woods to H. C. Thurston, 17 November 1873, ibid.
[89] Wilkinson to Robinson, 16 February 1875 (private), F1/Temp. 18.

other hand, he acted on principle. '"Native Isolation"', he believed, 'is radically wrong'.[90] A 'Native Department' bred the esoteric, eventually the incompetent. In a land where the vast majority were 'natives' it was grotesque that their affairs should not be the direct concern of the executive's head. Views he wrote down in 1881 had been put around by him in conversation during the preceding seven years:

> the Wars and troubles of the Cape Colony—and of New Zealand were owing more than anything else to the Department of Native Affairs—the name generally given to the mysterious sphere of action in which the native Mumbo Jumbo works his own sweet will unknown to Governor or anyone else. Shepstone was the Mumbo Jumbo in South Africa—Donald McLean in New Zealand.[91]

It was a truth that still had to be fought for eighty years later.

He did not doubt that the situation was potentially desperate until Britain should decide to accept the offer. With the spectre of London's past procrastination haunting him, he had set a time limit. The offer was to remain alive for twelve months only. In the meantime, his guiding principle remained: 'Until the offer of cession is accepted the King rules'.[92]

The need for its continued acceptance was impressed upon him by incoming local mails. Reports from all over the group convinced not him alone but even Layard too that the government must be allowed to govern, if Fiji were not to fall back into the anarchy of the 1860s. He had constantly to defend the principle against Goodenough who, on no more authority than his broad pennant, had been giving assurances of support to Kadavu chiefs against the Governor. Over Macuata, again, Goodenough was finding it possible to reconcile disclaimers of more intervention than was necessary to reconcile existing difficulties with an order to his naval subordinate to arrest any government official who interfered with Ritova.[93]

At Taveuni Thurston had heard from Tui Cakau that Ritova, arming his province against the Kingdom, was asserting Good-

[90] Memorandum of 5 January 1875 on Swanston to Thurston, 4 January 1875, F1/Temp. 18.

[91] Minute, 5 May 1881, FCSO 81/648; and see Wilkinson to Robinson, 16 February 1875 (private), F1/Temp. 18.

[92] Thurston to Layard, 9 June 1874, im Thurn Papers.

[93] Goodenough to Layard, 29 July 1874, im Thurn Papers; and to Chapman, 2 July 1874, ibid.

enough's promise of protection as an independent chief. He did not believe such a promise had been given but found on his return to Levuka that he was wrong. His Fijian commissioners had been rebuffed and he received a naval complaint over the dismissal of Ritova (who had actually resigned as Governor months before in favour of his half-brother, Rataqa) after Goodenough had 'distinctly promised him that he should not be injured'. What respect would the natives now show for the flag of an English man-of-war? protested the injured naval complainant.[94]

To Goodenough, Ritova's removal was 'one of the pieces of meddling injudicious native policy . . . which has tended to create' some of the government's difficulties; and it might 'very likely result in injury to the British subjects who are planters in that district'.[95] To Thurston, it was the replacement in an executive post of a senile man much liked by the whites because 'he did not hesitate to spoil the people to satisfy the rapacity of certain Europeans' with a long-time rival (Ratu Kinijaoti Katonivere) who 'has never sold land, has resisted occupation when sold by smaller chiefs, has, unquestionably, been a troublesome fellow, but is an active and intelligent man'.[96] He was to revise that final judgment over later years; for the moment, a foil to Ritova must be found if the Kingdom was to be kept together.

And the Commodore must be brought to see that his broad pennant meant nothing in what was still a foreign, independent state. Thurston tried to tell him so in a letter addressed to Layard the morning after his return from Taveuni. '. . . I incline to the belief—one which I never withheld from the Commodore—that he formed his opinions upon Fijian politics and native matters—from sources outside the Governmt and acted upon them without regard to the effect . . . upon it', Thurston wrote. Yet it was both to the object Goodenough had in view, and in accordance with his own undertaking, to maintain government now. Naval knight errantry, on information dredged up from planters and the occasional chief with political irons in the fire, was out of place: so much he did not quite say: but the feeling shows in a letter that Goodenough thought 'thoroughly uncandid' and 'impertinent'.[97]

[94] Dupuis to Layard, 26 May 1874, im Thurn Papers; Layard to Thurston, 4 June 1874, F1/11.
[95] Goodenough to Admiralty, 3 July 1874, Adm. 1/6303.
[96] Minute on Macuata residents' petition, 31 June 1875, F1/Temp. 18.
[97] Goodenough to Layard, 29 July 1874, im Thurn Papers.

It was perfectly candid, with a malicious parody of the outraged naval officer's fear for the respect lost to the British flag:

> If the British Commodore upon this station unknown to this Government corresponds with native Chiefs and makes promises which are only calculated to cause them to obstruct and rebel against the King's authority . . . what respect can such chiefs and their people be expected to show to the Flag and officers of their native Sovereign whose authority and position the Commodore almost in the same breath declares is to be observed and maintained.[98]

As in many previous cases, retorted Goodenough, he was 'creating a difficulty in order . . . to prove that he is the one person necessary to guide Fijian Politics' and was indulging himself in 'correspondence which he wishes to form the political history of his Government . . .'.[99] This was the judgment of a disappointed, soon to be very bitter man. If Thurston did have such a vision of himself it derived from the evidence, was not constructed. If he was arrogant, outwardly self-assured, well content with the consistency of his own political conduct, then he had cause.

Consistency was his hall-mark. He never wrote a private letter, nor can be shown to have said a word, that did not run in parallel grooves with what he wrote and said as Cakobau's Minister. His letter to Goodenough about Macuata was a measured protest that he would willingly have seen published, though even this he wrote in haste; but a rapid, personal pencil note which he sent Layard on the same subject two months later was absolutely consistent with it.[1] And he took no steps to preserve his image in history. Unlike Goodenough, he maintained no letterbooks, kept no constant journal, could hardly have been sure that the records of his government would survive. If he had gone overboard from the *Rosamond* there would have remained little more than the image of a man who had been false to his colour, liar and intriguer, a failed Rajah Brooke at best; for other men were to spend their lives denying what their own earlier words and actions had proved true.

He cared chiefly about completion of what he had fought for, the maintenance of Fiji as a political unit, as the year grew older

[98] Thurston to Layard, 9 June 1874, ibid.
[99] Goodenough to Layard, 29 July 1874, ibid.
[1] Thurston to Layard, 6 August 1874, ibid.

and he learned that the Governor of New South Wales was coming to re-negotiate a cession enabling Britain to govern other than at her own expense. Worrying things had been said in London about land, Britain's right of pre-emption; and the younger chiefs were still reluctant to resign their future into the foreigners' hands. But, with the Kingdom only held together with great effort, he saw no point in continuing to insist on formal conditions which would clearly not be acceptable to Britain. There was a fundamental difference between this commissioner and his predecessors: Robinson was actually empowered to accept an offer of cession. And if Thurston boarded the *Pearl* again apprehensively in September 1874, he was soon personally at ease. Robinson had approved the terms of his letter of December 1872, seeing clearly enough where the trouble lay in Fiji;[2] and he had lately been laughing at Goodenough's arrangements in the latter's hearing.[3] While the Commodore was trying to assure the Fijians they 'must see that the British Govt. cannot allow a British Subject to propose terms for natives',[4] they were actually left free to seek Thurston's advice.

His part in the discussions that ended in unconditional cession on 30 September 1874 was 'never recognized', as he said, 'for fear of interfering with a theory' of direct Fijian negotiation and sole responsibility. But 'my relation to Cakobau and the Chiefs was by no means an imaginary one'. 'Apparently, the Cession was a transaction with the Chiefs directly, but, as a matter of fact, it was by no means so direct as it looks on paper . . . .'[5] They appealed to him several times for advice whether British rule would be 'good, or not for them', and he tried to avoid more than detailed explanation on particular points. He gave no exact answer on the question of land settlement, saying merely he supposed that, as his own government had intended, a commission would mark out enough for the maintenance of chiefs and people and the rest would be crown land, at which they seemed satisfied. So he told Robinson —'but it is right to say that I used the words "necessary to the maintenance" in a very broad sense'.[6] When all the major chiefs of Fiji signed the Deed of Cession which resulted, it served as proof of his

[2] Robinson to C.O., 27 January 1873 (confidential), CO201/573.
[3] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 21 September 1874.
[4] Ibid., 24 September 1874.
[5] Thurston to Gordon, 18 August 1878, *Fiji*, III, 388.
[6] Thurston to Robinson, 29 September 1874, NSW 4/1633.

point that once Cakobau had put his name the others would do so too; even Tui Cakau's was forthcoming, though with ill-grace.[7]

Cakobau himself sought peace. 'If matters remain as they are', Thurston heard him translated at the cession ceremony, 'Fiji will become like a piece of driftwood on the sea, and be picked up by the first passer by'. Then Cakobau defended Thurston:

> I wish your Excellency to lend no ear to people, whoever they may be—missionaries or others—who may seek to set you against Mr. Thurston. He has a good many enemies who will not hesitate to say all bad things of him, but . . . he is a good man, and has been a faithful servant to me, and to Fiji and my people. He is the one man whom I trust before anyone else, and the Chiefs repose entire confidence in him.[8]

The Fijian flag came down at Nasova on 10 October 1874, to be kicked by *Daphne* Smith. And for all his leading part at Cakobau's side, Thurston often felt that he had been kicked too. 'More abuse and calumny has been heaped upon me by a local Newspaper and a certain section of the Settlers than admits of description', he told the Secretary of State.[9] He had been offended by the wording of the Deed of Cession's preamble. He had tried to remove the proposition that no law existed in Fiji before 10 October 1874. If he failed, 'I shall still be happy in the thought that up to the last hour of his political existence, I have, to the best of my understanding and ability, done my duty to King Thakombau'.[10] He was not unmindful, in this, of his parallel duty to himself.

Failing, he found his whole position reflected on early in 1876 when the defunct F. & W. Hennings was sued in a case already heard in the Supreme Court of the Kingdom. No 'Kingdom' had been ceded according to the Deed, the court decided. And the *Fiji Times* congratulated itself. This was the result of tampering with that original Constitution Act to which alone Cakobau had owed his existence as King: the so-called Ministers, as a result of their treason, had become the mere servants of 'a semi-barbarian'.[11]

In an editorial in the *Fiji Argus*, successor to the *Fiji Gazette*,

[7] Goodenough, MS. Journal, 2 October 1874.
[8] Notes of Conversation, transcribed by Wilkinson, 25 September 1874, GBPP, 1875, L11.
[9] Thurston to Carnarvon, 20 October 1874, encl. Herbert to Gordon, 3 March 1875, C.O. Despatches to Governor of Fiji.
[10] Thurston to Robinson, 29 September 1874, NSW 4/1633.
[11] *Fiji Times*, 2 February 1876.

Thurston replied. If prosecuting counsel's successful argument along these lines were really well founded, then under the Kingdom 'learned counsel himself had no legal existence, he imposed upon his clients, and should now . . . return them the fees they from time to time paid him'. As to the true interpretation:

> It was agreed that the rights of the Chiefs and people should be respected, and it became the duty of the servants which the 'semi-barbarian' King had about him to make the best arrangements for the protection of his interests. The interests of settlers were almost ignored as they had themselves destroyed them—but even then the servants of the barbarian were not unmindful of men who were too foolish and too full of mutual envy and hatred to protect themselves. They performed their duty to the satisfaction of themselves and of Her Majesty's representatives . . . They did their duty zealously and faithfully to the barbarians, and by resolutely holding their position to the end landed them at last the subjects and servants of the Queen with all their rights secured, and thus saved them from being the sport and victims of a few civilised kites and crows who fought amongst themselves for the barbarian's heritage.[12]

In July 1875 when passions were cooling sufficiently to enable his young friend Gus Hennings to preside over a thirty-place dinner to him, he had been more jocular about his personal position, to a chorus of cheers and laughter—and perhaps more revealing of the man within. 'If only a tithe of what is said about me is true, you are a very bold set of men to challenge our little world's sense of propriety by asking me to meet you this evening.' He had been accused of murder, kidnapping, even piracy. 'Bribery, corruption, and embezzlement of public monies are stated to rank among the most well recognized of my sins. Lying and deception among the more amiable of my characteristics.' He was 'gravely accused of having matriculated as a "shoe black", as a "deck scrubber", and, the force of fun or folly can no further go, even as local preacher'. He survived, he went on, and intended to do so. And he added, with satisfaction: 'It is very easy to say and to circulate the charge that I am not an honest man, but at all events, my detractors cannot say that I am a "non est" one.'[13]

[12] *Fiji Argus*, 11 February 1876.
[13] Ibid., 9 July 1875.

13

'A free lance, fighting my way in the world'

Now the King no longer ruled. And the fate of his Trusted and Special Adviser hung in the balance. Thurston was appointed Acting Colonial Secretary by Robinson, in a provisional government which had Layard as Administrator, with Swanston restored to a re-established Ministry of Native Affairs. 'Mr. Thurston is certainly the fittest person in Fiji to act as Colonial Secretary', the Colonial Office had been assured by Robinson who, shortly afterwards, sent on Thurston's application for permanent office with his own strong support. His ability and integrity were not in doubt, Robinson reported; he had written an excellent paper on Fijian society; and he had served at the consulate.[1]

Thurston expected to be kept in office. He would have felt it betrayal now to be sent back to Naveitalacagi. He felt a counterpart of the emotion aroused in Europeans at the rumour that he was to be made Governor which started when Robinson did not appoint Layard. Thurston did not expect or even want the office then; but he looked to have it before his hair was grey. For the present, he was a 'free lance, fighting my way in the world—and fighting fairly'.[2]

Robinson's recommendation, backed by the Colonial Office which thought he should be confirmed as Colonial Secretary, went on at once to the new Governor who was still in London: Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, youngest son of the fourth Earl of Aberdeen, former Secretary to Gladstone as Special Commissioner in the Ionian Islands and still the intimate of this and other great men midway between his own and his father's generation. Gordon

[1] Robinson to C.O., 16 October 1874, CO87/5; Herbert to Gordon, 3 March 1875, with encls, C.O. Despatches to Governor of Fiji.
[2] Thurston to Gordon [6 September 1875], *Fiji*, I, 185.

came from a stormy term in the Governorship of Mauritius to undertake that of Fiji as, he felt, a sacred trust. He had heard of Goodenough's objections to Thurston, was disposed to assess the man for himself before confirming him. And hard on the heels of Robinson's enthusiasm came Layard's blustering that he had taken office with Thurston only under pressure, having 'no trust or confidence in my Colleague from what I knew of him' and feeling that 'his appt. would be utterly unpalatable to me, & resented by the great majority of the White population, who distrusted him'.

This was sobering enough to the Colonial Office, even though men there recognised 'very strong personal animosity' with 'no very great amount of facts' in Layard's attack.[3] And had it been left to Layard's own department, to the correspondent there of well-connected rampant Anglo-Saxons whose own claims for appointment were now being pressed,[4] Thurston might have been retained temporarily as 'undoubtedly a man of very considerable ability', to be disposed of later as 'unscrupulous'—one who, 'if he had remained in power under King Thakombau, . . . would have brought about a war between the natives and the Whites . . .'.[5]

Thurston himself was aware that the hatred's springs were partly in the apprehension that the past might not be dead. Already, he suspected, a man like Forwood was 'not altogether satisfied perhaps with the first results of annexation',[6] afraid that the legal pickings under new land legislation might not after all be so great as he had hoped. Though the Governor was to be hailed as 'aurora', 'the messenger of light to those who have suffered a long and tedious night',[7] some Europeans had the sense that between themselves and the sun there might yet lie the shadow of Thurston, lengthened out of all proportion by those other shadows whose corporeal, Fijian forms were still seen entering the cottage above Nasova bay.

Other Europeans were behaving towards him as though confident he would go when the Governor and right-thinking man of honour arrived. He was marked down by Swanston for obscurity

[3] Gordon to C.O., 4 March 1875, CO83/8; Layard to F.O., 19 November 1874, encl. F.O. to C.O., 2 March 1875, CO83/8; C.O. Minutes, ibid.

[4] See, e.g., Robinson to Layard, 11 December 1874, F1/Temp. 19.

[5] Wylde's Minute, 23 February 1875, on Layard to F.O., 19 November 1874, FO58/142.

[6] Minute for Layard, 3 November 1874, on Kleinsmith to Thurston, 28 October 1874, F1/10.

[7] *Fiji Times*, 26 June 1875.

at Naveitalacagi; for the role of the Fijian people in the future scheme of things was the great question; and to be head Mumbo Jumbo was Swanston's object. In another form, it was Thurston's too. He found the humanitarians seizing on his belief in the strong arm, the desperate measure in desperate circumstances, to discredit him for the future as a humbug, a planters' man after all. His image was to be shown defaced, on a turn of the coin. Swanston attacked, as illegal, his warrant under the Ad-Interim government 'authorising private individuals to hold men to service against their will on condition of certain monies being paid periodically in to the Treasury'; and, having then removed the Viria and many Ra men from employers to whom, in the latter case, Leefe had enthusiastically consigned them, Swanston believed that he had 'saved the Executive of the Colony from the charge of continuing for political purposes a system of slavery which commenced by the *de facto* Govt of Fiji and continued in a more hideous form under the reign of the *ad interim* Govt was culminating into a war of races which nothing but Englands flag has stayed'.[8]

A 'vain man', the writer seemed to Sir Arthur Gordon, 'full of crude theories and inexact information'.[9] It was true that Swanston had not approved the mountaineers' being hired out; but it was equally true that it had been done for a purpose which he did not approve wholeheartedly, now superseded, and that he was removing them with *éclat* for another, personal, purpose. The Wesleyan Mission was similarly motivated. It lent Swanston its schooner *Jubilee* to bring prison-labourers home from Taveuni though, four years later, Thurston was to be refused the loan of her to take him as a commissioner from the Fiji government to Rotuma where war threatened between the Wesleyan majority under the then Marafu of Noatau and a small Catholic party led by Riamkau.

Thurston's old friend of the *James* and Rotuma had adopted the faith of political dissidence. And in 1878 when, 'after thinking the whole case over for 3 days', the Wesleyans 'did not see our way' to diverting the *Jubilee* to Rotuma from a projected passage to Bua,[10] Thurston could not altogether suppress the doubt 'whether Langham and Co. knew that the Catholic side were a mere handful of

[8] Swanston to Thurston, 25 January 1875, F1/10.
[9] Gordon to C.O., 20 August 1875, CO83/6.
[10] Langham to Chapman, 26 June 1878, MOM 103.

men, and that their leader was a particular friend of mine'.[11] He knew his missionaries. By their own account the Wesleyans had been labouring for the overthrow of popery on Rotuma since 1870,[12] with a zeal to which the Marists themselves bore witness: 'Vous ne pouvez pas vous faire une idée de la rage de ces Wesleyiens: on ne peut mieux les comparer qu'aux communistes de Paris'.[13] And the schooner was refused Thurston on the quibble that he had asked for her in a private note, not officially, and when the Wesleyans' own letters from Rotuma showed no emergency[14] —while Langham gleefully noted their late success on the island (marked by an unprecedented subscription of £450 in 1877)[15] along with apprehension at Thurston's projected going 'to do we knew not what'.[16] The Rotuma missionary wrote contentedly of 'rebellion' by Riamkau being suppressed;[17] and the Fiji people's letters from him undoubtedly indicated that, as Thurston said, 'Wesleyan Providence' was likely to decide 'for the strongest battalions'.[18]

Riamkau was killed in battle—fell 'with seven bullets in his body', wrote his former guest who was embroidering a little[19]—'and the Roman Catholic natives had to choose either to join the "Lotu Weseli" or join the great majority abruptly'. 'Rotumah was "pacificated"', Thurston continued, 'and no one now ventures on that island to deny that there is only one God, and John Wesley is His prophet'.[20] No worthwhile end, to the dead man's friend, was justified by the means the prophet's servants had adopted.

Now, in 1874, the missionary at Levuka—Wylie, who was equally with Langham worried about Thurston's hostility to the

[11] Thurston to Gordon, 23 July 1878, *Fiji*, III, 370.

[12] Osborne's letter, 30 May 1870, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, III, October 1870.

[13] Trouillet to Issarlet [?], June 1871, APM OF 208 *Epistolae*.

[14] Langham to Chapman, 26 June 1878, MOM 103; Webb to Langham, 19 July 1878, *Fiji*, III, 177.

[15] Langham to Calvert, 30 July 1877, MMS.

[16] Langham to Chapman, 26 June 1878, MOM 103.

[17] Moore to Chapman, 18 July 1878, MOM 165; see also his 23 September 1878, ibid.

[18] Thurston to Gordon, 23 July 1878, *Fiji*, III, 370.

[19] Draft Memorandum of 10 October 1879, FCSO 79/1749. The Marist priests' journals in the Archdiocese of Suva archives show that it was actually a supporter of Riamkau, not Riamkau himself, who was thus shot to pieces. The statement in Eason's *Short History of Rotuma* that Riamkau was shot by his own side is without provenance.

[20] Thurston to Gordon, 8 December 1878, *Fiji*, III, 466; for virtual confirmation of this, see Moore to Chapman, 2 December 1878, MOM 105.

vakamisioneri—lent Swanston the schooner and assailed Thurston for his 'inveterate hatred of the Mission'. Having, as he believed, risked life and lost more than superficial reputation in defence of a principle wider than the immediate fate of even scores of individuals, Thurston found himself accused of 'unworthy attempts to perpetuate slavery in this country' by a man who a colleague thought 'would do better in English work'. Wylie 'does not seem to care much for the natives—at least to be in sympathy with them', wrote Fison, while to Gordon he was to appear 'of a bad, ordinary type—professional . . .'.[21] Thurston tried to believe that he 'might treat with indifference the "inveterate hatred" with which Messrs Langham and Wyllie have honoured me',[22] while Langham in Australia wrote of his 'vicious & vindictive motives' towards the mission.[23] Thurston could safely believe this, on the whole. When Langham wrote, Swanston, Christian champion for the moment against the presumed atheist high in government, was licking his wounds around the Wesleyan Book Depot in Sydney.[24] He had claimed to be responsible only to Robinson for the running of his department and had perforce been dismissed.[25]

The *Star of Eve*'s wreck, the *John Wesley*'s errand, had brought a Triton to Fiji among the minnows whom other quirks of chance, escapism, and the former price of cotton had spread upon the group's shores. So outside observers came to believe, and even local Europeans sometimes admitted it. The *Fiji Times* itself published a survey of the white community's political personalities which set Swanston down as erratic, Woods as much attacked but better liked than Thurston, and added: 'We are inclined to think there is a spice of envy in the feeling against the latter'.[26] A little later he had a sufficiently gratifying letter from a former settler with continuing interests in Lau who 'congratulated the country upon having secured a continuation of your services and valuable experience—to me it is a source of confidence in the stability of the new order of things'.[27]

[21] Wylie to Thurston, 28 December 1874, F1/10; Fison to Calvert, 31 October 1877, MMS; Gordon, notebook, *c.* August-September 1875, *Fiji*, I, 164.

[22] Minute on Wylie to Thurston, 28 December 1874, F1/10.

[23] Langham to Chapman, 3 May 1875, MOM 103.

[24] Swanston to Langham, 14 April 1875, Brewster Papers.

[25] See, especially, Swanston to Thurston, 4 January 1875—and, for Thurston's view, his Minute of 2 January 1875—F1/10.

[26] *Fiji Times*, 10 June 1874.

[27] Levack to Thurston, 13 July 1875, F1/10.

Yet the minnows never ceased to resent the intrusion. Nor, especially at this time, did the other sea-creature feel the less inclined to assert his powers. Between about October 1874 and April 1875 he was involved in an argument with Chief Police Magistrate Garrick over implementation of the law on the licensing of billiard tables in Levuka hotels which plainly showed that he felt able, from an amateur glance over texts, to correct the professional.[28] He had appointed Garrick, but thought little better of his legal ability[29] than he did of William Scott's who, in support of his application for admission to practice as a barrister—according to the convention that all might who had done so under the Kingdom—received a testimonial to his qualities as man and translator, and a hint that, so far as Thurston knew, of law he had none.[30]

Thurston was the ablest European in Fiji and, in his sphere, the most energetic, Layard came to admit. His hand was seen in much that the Administrator did, although Thurston 'of course'—as Wilkinson said—was much more discreet than Layard in, for instance, the Native Department's renewed demolition after Swanston made himself unemployable.[31] In January 1875 Thurston was at Navuso with Layard to interview representatives from the hills negotiated down by Carew and, the Colonial Office learned, 'mingled freely with them, and ascertained their feelings and sentiments'—which were that they should not be forcibly Christianised from the coast and generally subjected to white men's law.[32] He was at Macuata island soon afterwards, haranguing the assembled Macuata chiefs on their darkness of mind, their unwisdom in pursuing old political ends in a new age. 'The next man who murders shall be hanged.' He left Ratu Timoci Tavanavanua behind in Ritova's place—probably truly to the anger of Cakobau, his father, as Swanston recorded, for Bauans had never had the close kinship ties in Macuata that would have made this supersession less unacceptable to the Caumatalevu.[33] A few weeks later came a letter for help from the uncomfortable young Ratu Timoci: Ritova had sent word that he could return on payment of

[28] F1/Temp. 31 and Temp. 36.
[29] Thurston to Gordon, 20 May 1878, *Fiji*, III, 139-40.
[30] Thurston to [Scott], 10 September 1875, F1/Temp. 31.
[31] Wilkinson to Robinson, 16 February 1875 (private), F1/Temp. 18.
[32] Layard to Robinson, 5 February 1875, encl. Robinson to C.O., 17 March 1875, CO83/6.
[33] Memoranda of proceedings at Macuata, 30 and 31 January 1875, F1/10; Swanston, Journal, 4 February 1875.

a fine.[34] When Thurston received it, the old man had died of dysentery under his care.[35]

The illness was brought on by measles. Cakobau and his other sons, returning from a visit to Sydney, had brought back measles along with a venereal disease. In the measles epidemic that followed, perhaps a fifth died of a Fijian population whose total Thurston himself sometimes placed lower than others' estimates, at about 100,000.[36] He found the *Fiji Times* rabidly insinuating that he had connived the epidemic's introduction with intent to decimate the Fijians—while in private men did not fail to remark that quarantine fell under either the Colonial Secretary's Office or the Native Department and 'In both departments Mr. John Bates Thurston is the head'.[37] Some of the Fijians took a different view; the Vunivalu of Serua, five years later, used as a fixed point 'the time of Mr Thurstons taking the wai [medicine] to Beqa . . .'.[38]

One of the first letters from Thurston which Carew preserved showed him in the thick of it:

> The Measles, imported by 'Dido', 'Wentworth' and 'Western Star' are playing sad work among natives. Draiba is nearly empty. Poor Savanaca, & Enoki both dead, & a number of nobodies. Savanaca['s] boy is with me and getting well—the widow was to have come yesterday but the rain prevented her. Dysentery almost always follows the measles. I have 8 boy's down with it here, and Mrs. Thurston is so ill that I cannot attend office. The French Missionaries and Mr. Floyd are doing all they can among natives, and we have two doctors engaged, but the natives will not obey orders & many die in consequence. What the result will be in the dirty damp towns of Fiji generally I fear to think.[39]

He had notice of those results soon afterwards, in a private letter addressed to 'Misi Coseni' from Ratu Puniani Vukinamualevu about the deaths at Ba. And he thought of them when Gordon landed in late June, referred to them briefly in the account of the Governor's reception which he wrote with an eye to newspaper publication.

[34] Ratu Timoci Tavanavanua to Thurston, n.d. [received 23 March 1875], F1/41.
[35] Layard to Thurston, 2 March 1875, F1/22.
[36] Norma McArthur, *Island Populations of the Pacific* (Canberra, 1970), 11.
[37] Waterhouse to ?, 21 June 1875, MMS.
[38] LCC P127.
[39] Thurston to Carew, 4 March 1875, Carew Papers, HL.

The reception Thurston cared about and depicted with feeling was the one by Fijians at Nasova, when few Europeans were present. His prose took on life as, having got Gordon to the converted government offices where the Governor was to live in discomfort for some four years, he wrote of the mountains rising forested above the areas cleared for planting, the files of Fijians approaching to give the *tama—duo! o!*—and then 'all the native women of the place': 'Strapping Tongan women full of grace and life . . . Samoans in morning gowns of the last centurys cut . . . Rotumans in scarlet and yellow, with sparkling eyes raven hair and a somewhat wild Zingari air about them'.

He recorded Cakobau's approach and heard him announce 'We ruled the land formerly—well we still remain in the land but our rule is gone'. Standing beside the Governor, as once he had stood beside the King, he translated all. But he had it in mind that Cakobau's pessimism should not be proved justified.[40] Both justice and expediency forbade it, he held—though the indications were that Fiji must follow in the path of those other British colonies whose history would show such pessimism to be well-founded. There was soon in the colony a respected Chief Justice of wide colonial experience who expected all races to bow to English law and 'regarded it as the duty of any Lands Commission to make good a white man's claim whenever a legal or plausible excuse for doing so could be found . . .'.[41] There was to be an Attorney-General from India who assumed that no native policeman could possibly be allowed to suppose he was 'capable of exercising *any* control over the ruling race'.[42] Old residents assumed, of course, that the inevitable role of Fijians in the future scheme was to work on plantations. And Thurston, too, had it in mind that they must work—'Work or die', he had heard Cakobau say—but believed it should be on no land except their own.

Nor, in his view, should their societies be judged by any values but those inherent in them. According to the moderate settler viewpoint put by Nathaniel Chalmers there was 'an ordinary native', with no individual land rights, who in aggregate constituted the 'great bulk of the natives' and would respond to European

[40] F1/Temp. 18; Gordon to Lady Gordon, 30 June 1875, *Fiji*, I, 127.
[41] Herbert to Gordon, 4 May 1875, Stanmore Papers, BM Add. MSS. 49199; Gordon to Selborne, 22 May 1880, ibid., 49218.
[42] De Ricci to Olive, 17 September 1875, *Fiji*, I, 224.

leadership, accept European values and dominance. This Fijian's administration hitherto under the Governor of Cakobau's government (the Roko Tui of the Provisional government) had involved his oppression by the chiefs; and in future while 'a certain status' might be allowed to the 'surviving hereditary chiefs' they should be allowed no 'actual governing power'. Thurston underlined 'surviving' and asked 'how would Mr Chalmers as the father of a family regard such a proposition in respect to himself?' If chiefs had been oppressive, it was often because Europeans had helped make it worth their while to be so. 'The Hereditary Chiefs of Fiji are the hereditary Lords of the Soil and people', he believed, '. . . and in ceding unconditionally their country and interests they were, and [Thurston] trusts never will be, under no apprehension of being levelled down to the standard of Mr. Chalmers coming Fijian.' Men who would legislate for Fijians would do well to apply the principles of their legislation to themselves and see how it hurt. Moreover the 'ordinary native' did not exist in any meaningful sense for the 'foundation of power and authority among the Fijians rest in the highest living male descendant of the tribe' and in their social relationships it was a principle '*not to recognise individuals*', though he believed that individual rights existed.[43]

This was doctrine that became irksome to individual Fijians—doctrine to be much leaned upon by the chiefs, who knew that their people often squirmed under their rule and were governed, at last, by the strong arm. But Thurston lived with the fear that 'the Fijians, demoralised and broken up, will follow in the ruck of other and somewhat similar races we have annexed, and unintentionally exterminated'.[44] He thought colonial government could avoid this in Fiji by accepting Fijian societies on their own terms. And it would have been to deny the evidence of his senses to suppose that the major Fijian societies were not chiefly. His doctrine was thus expounded for the sake of an end and a principle. Though Fiji had ceased to be a nation, in the sense that the lately-dead St Julian understood the term, yet Fijians were still peoples. With care, they might even remain so under British rule.

Thurston did not think it just to attempt to treat Fijians otherwise than as peoples. And he did not think they would submit to government action based on any other assumption. He took up

[43] See his several papers in F1/Temp. 18.
[44] Thurston to Gordon, 7 December 1878, *Fiji*, III, 445.

immediately what was to be described as Jacob's role in Esau's clothes and drafted a speech for the new Governor to deliver to the watchful, pessimistic élite at Bau—they whose women folk were bitterly telling each other that now all power and dignity had gone from their race it was no use bearing children.[45]

He could take up this role successfully because he had made an unrivalled impact on the aristocrat and egotist who had now formed his own opinion of Thurston, and who drew on Thurston's draft for the speech he actually made.[46] 'Of all the white men that I have seen in Fiji one stands far above others in ability and resource', wrote Gordon in his notebook some two months after landing. 'He is, in fact, on quite another plane from them, and, perhaps for that very reason quite as much as any other, he is hated and feared by those who do not in the least understand him. That man is Mr. Thurston.'[47] This impact only grew with time. And the relationship which resulted was to be, for years, the most important of Thurston's professional life—complicated though it seems to have been by Gordon's astonished, resisted perception that, in some at least of the attitudes he liked to suppose he had introduced to government in Fiji, Thurston had forestalled him. The egotist ('the most just, honourable and disinterested man I have ever met',[48] he seemed to Thurston) often spoke of his debt to 'experts' on 'Fijian custom' like Wilkinson and Carew who were undoubted subordinates. He felt the need to cast doubt on that which the world sometimes supposed he owed in ideas to Thurston. But he regarded Thurston as the man with the best natural claim to succeed him as Governor; when Gordon left Fiji in 1880, he prophesied in public that the C.M.G. which the then Colonial Secretary had lately been awarded was not the highest honour he would receive, nor his current office the greatest he would fill.

Thurston himself had the parallel confidence. He remarked to his sister Eliza: 'I have not done yet if my health keeps good . . .'.[49] It kept reasonably good for twenty years after Cession. In that time he was to plant upon Fiji marks that have never been erased, and to make his personality known in the Western Pacific islands

[45] Carew's Minute, extract, FCSO96/882.
[46] F1/Temp. 18; *Fiji*, I, 210-13.
[47] Ibid., 162.
[48] Thurston to Moss, 22 January 1880 [actually 1881], Moss Papers, AMIL MS. 215.
[49] Thurston to Mrs Eliza West Morton, 19 June 1880, Perrins Papers.

at large. He was to make it directly felt in Downing Street, as well as in the Chancelry in Berlin and the State Department in Washington. And his visits to Australia and New Zealand were to bring out journalists assured of eliciting caustic, quotable comment on almost any subject under the Western Pacific's sun.

The years of *Na Kena Vai* were not over; but the years beginning were to be, additionally, those of the Viceroy of the Pacific.

Sources

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

Personal biographical records

J. B. Thurston never kept a letterbook, holding that it was pointless to do so in the tropics where the ink, oxidising, ate the paper away; though he did retain some inward letters, he made no fetish of doing so; and none survived the nomadic life led by his family after his death. The family retained only what may, for purposes of differentiation, be called the Thurston Papers and the Perrins Papers.

Thurston Papers: a collection obtained from Thurston's second daughter, Alys, by Mr John Millington; on the assumption that the family was extinct, the collection was later disposed of to the National Library of Australia. The items important for *I, the Very Bayonet* are a commonplace book, containing five early journals besides essays and jottings, and one separate, invaluable journal of the crisis in February-March 1874:

Arabia journal
Don Juan journal
Kestrel journal

'The Wreck & plundering of the Brig[antine] "Star of Eve" At the Isld of Rotuma, South Seas'

'Diary of a passage from Rotuma to Fiji on Board the Brig John Wesley'

'The Cession of Fiji to Great Britain' (so entitled in a hand not Thurston's—a journal, extending from 30 January into March 1874, with later scattered entries)

Perrins Papers: a collection which I obtained from Thurston's eldest and sole surviving child, Mrs Eliza Perrins. It comprises genealogical notes by Thurston and his sons, a letter to Thurston from his father, photographs, press-cuttings, letters of condolence to Lady Thurston on her husband's death, letters from Baron A. B. d'Este to his niece Mrs Eliza Perrins, letters to the same recipient from her father's sister, Mrs Eliza West Morton, and —of importance to *Viceroy of the Pacific*—between thirty and forty letters and fragments from Thurston himself to Mrs Morton, who tells her niece that, since her brother's sons show no interest in writing his life, she has destroyed hundreds of other letters that Thurston wrote to her. Also included is a copy of the typescript of Thurston's journal kept aboard the

Strathnever—a typescript prepared by Miss Alys Thurston from the original which, apparently, she then destroyed; her version has some misreadings. This collection—small, miscellaneous, but valuable—will be placed in the National Archives of Fiji.

The most important single body of Thurston's private correspondence from the late 1860s until 1874 is his letters to Captain C. W. Hope, in the Turnbull Library. For the period to be covered by the second volume, his private correspondence is very large and varied.

National Archives of Fiji

Records of the Cakobau, Ad-Interim and Provisional Government, June 1871 to September 1875.

This complex, though not in actual shelf-extent gargantuan, archive was looked at by the late Professor G. C. Henderson whose 'History of Government in Fiji'—unpublished, but left ready for the printer by Henderson in 1941—has, for over twenty years, tended to mislead historians who have written about Cakobau's government without visiting Fiji. Egocentric, didactic, rather jejune, Henderson's work would not require notice here, but for this influence. For all his claims, his work was not firmly based upon wide reading in the Cakobau government records (they were not fully organised in his time). It owes more to the view which can be obtained from the documents in the Public Record Office. If Henderson read planters' letters to the government, he banished them from his mind. If he did more than scan the *Fiji Times*, and ever saw the *Fiji Gazette*, he resisted the conclusions they present. He saw none of the Goodenough, Swanston or Thurston manuscript journals and letters. Like Goodenough and Layard (the former of whom, revealingly, he idolised) he was blinded by white constitutionalism. He thought in terms of 'natives', of constitutionally-inspired Englishmen. And he could not believe that the latter would behave in the fashion that Thurston so accurately described.

Since the publication in 1964 of my revising article 'John Bates Thurston, Commodore J. G. Goodenough, and rampant Anglo-Saxons in Fiji', a Ph.D. thesis has been written on the Cakobau government from its own records—D. J. Routledge's 'Pre-Cession Government in Fiji' (A.N.U., 1965). It has, I repeat, failed to add to my understanding of its subject. A more perceptive and fruitful work is J. M. R. Young's 'Frontier Society in Fiji 1858–1873' (Ph.D., Adelaide, 1968). This is good on settler attitudes, though it is written from only a section of the available documentation.

The Cakobau government and associated records are as follows:

Archives Set No.

1 Executive Council (King's Cabinet). Inwards correspondence—general, Jan. 1873–Dec. 1873.

2 Executive Council. Copies of outwards correspondence—general, 9 Jan. 1872–20 Aug. 1874.

3 Executive Council. Minutes of meetings of the Council and papers relating to the Ba War, 1872–74.

4(1)-(4) Executive Council. Correspondence and other papers relating to the conduct of the Ba War and to the Court-Martial of Major Fitzgerald, Mar. 1873–April 1874.

5 Privy Council. Resolutions, Sept. 1873–Oct. 1873.

6 Legislative Assembly. Votes and Proceedings, 24 May 1872–12 June 1873. 2 vols.

7 Legislative Assembly. Minutes of meetings of Select Committees, 2 Nov. 1871–13 Dec. 1871. 1 vol.

8 Legislative Assembly. Working papers of the Clerk of the House, *c.* 1871–72.

9 Chief Secretary's Office. Name index to register of inwards correspondence–general, June 1871 to *c.* Mar. 1873. 1 vol.

10 Chief Secretary's Office–Colonial Secretary's Office–inwards correspondence–general, 30 May 1871–31 Aug. 1875.

11 Chief Secretary's Office–Naval and Consular correspondence –inwards, 1 Feb. 1872–29 Sept. 1874.

12 Chief Secretary's Office–Register of outwards correspondence –general, 8 May 1872–3 Jul. 1872; 3 Jan. 1873–29 Dec. 1873. 2 vols.

13 Chief Secretary's Office–Colonial Secretary's Office. Copies of outwards correspondence–general–of the Chief Secretary and Chief Clerk, 9 Sept. 1871–2 Sept. 1875. 5 vols.

14 Chief Secretary's Office–copies of correspondence exchanged between H.B.M. Consul and the Fijian Govt, 2 June 1871–16 Feb. 1872.

15 Chief Secretary's Office–correspondence received from the Town Clerk, Levuka, forwarding council bye-laws for approval by the Government, Dec. 1872–Feb. 1874.

16 Chief Secretary's Office–opinion of the Attorney-General on the announcement by the U.K. Government that British subjects are liable to the U.K. Government for their acts in Fiji, 2 Dec. 1872.

17 Chief Secretary's Office–correspondence received from the Attorney-General, April 1873–Dec. 1873.

18 Chief Secretary's Office: Correspondence relating to the *Volunteer* case, June 1872–Sept. 1872.

19 Chief Secretary's Office–returns of receipts and expenditure of the Postal Dept., Dec. 1873–Sept. 1874.

20 Chief Secretary's Office–Colonial Secretary's Office (Audit Dept.)–miscellaneous inwards correspondence addressed mainly to the Auditor-General, June 1872–Jan. 1876.

21 Chief Secretary's Office–resolutions of the representatives of native and foreign residents for carrying on the government of Fiji pending annexation by Great Britain, 23 March 1874.

22 Colonial Secretary's Office—copies of despatches from the Administrator and Colonial Secretary of State, the Governor of NSW and Fiji, and Officer commanding the Australian Station and other Govt. officials abroad, 15 Oct. 1874–15 June 1875. 1 vol.

23-4 Chief Secretary's Office—Ministry of Foreign Relations—copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Chief Secretary and Minister for Foreign Relations, 8 June 1871–6 Oct. 1874. 2 vols.

25 Chief Secretary's Office—copy of a letter from the Chief Secretary to the British Consul, 31 Jan. 1872.

26 Ministry of Finance—register of inwards correspondence, general, Jan. 1873–Dec. 1873.

27 Ministry of Finance—inwards correspondence, general, Aug. 1871–Dec. 1873.

28 Ministry of Finance—copies of outwards correspondence—general, of the Minister and of the Chief Clerk, 2 Jan. 1872–20 Sept. 1873.

29 Ministry of Finance—schedule of cancelled Treasury Notes, Dec. 1873–July 1874.

30 Ministry of Finance—revenue receipts and schedule of expenditure vouchers, 1872.

31 Ministry of Interior Affairs—Ministry of Lands and Works and Naval and Military affairs—inwards correspondence, general, June 1871–Dec. 1873.

32 Ministry of Interior Affairs—Ministry of Lands and Works etc. —copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Minister, 9 June 1871–July 1871.

33 Ministry of Interior Affairs—Ministry of Lands and Works etc. —copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Minister and Chief Clerk, 15 Apr. 1873–24 Dec. 1873. 2 vols.

34 Ministry of Interior Affairs—Ministry of Lands and Works etc. —copies of outwards correspondence of G. A. Woods, Premier of Fiji, written during his visit to Australia addressed mainly to persons in Australia and Fiji, 5 Sept. 1872–17 Jan. 1873. 2 vols.

35 Ministry of Interior Affairs—Ministry of Lands and Works etc. —correspondence and other papers accumulated by G. A. Woods, Premier of Fiji, during visit to Australia, Aug. 1872–Mar. 1873.

36 Ministry of Lands and Works etc. (Audit Dept)—copies of outwards correspondence, general, of

a) the Chief Surveyor, Land & Works, Oct. 1873-Jan. 1874
b) the Auditor-General, 27 Oct. 1873–c. Sept. 1875.

37 Ministry of Lands and Works etc. (*not* Audit Dept.)—despatches from the King's Private Secretary to the Premier and Chief Secretary, June 1873–Feb. 1874.

38 Ministry of Lands and Works etc.—despatches from Capt. I. Gore-Martin to the Minister reporting on the progress of the Rewa campaign, April–June 1873.

39 Ministry of the Interior—Ministry of Lands and Works etc.—applications by planters for the services of Fijian labourers, 14 June–4 Oct. 1871.

40 Ministry of Native Affairs—register of inwards correspondence, general, June 1871–April 1873.

41 Ministry of Native Affairs—inwards correspondence, general, June 1871—Aug. 1875.

42 Ministry of Native Affairs—copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Minister of Native Affairs and the Chief Clerk, 28 June 1872–April 1873. 2 vols.

43 Ministry of Native Affairs—Secretariat for Native Affairs—copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Minister for Native Affairs (afterwards Secretary) and the Chief Clerk, 8 April 1872–24 Aug. 1875.

44 Ministry of Native Affairs—copies of outwards memoranda and minutes of the Minister and of the Chief Clerk, 3 Aug. 1872–18 Jan. 1873. 1 vol.—last item dated 25 Sept. 1873.

45 Ministry of Native Affairs—copies of outwards memoranda, Aug.–Sept. 1873.

46 Ministry of Native Affairs—memoranda addressed to the Chief Clerk of the Ministry of Native Affairs mainly by the Premier, G. A. Woods, and the Chief Clerk of the Chief Secretary's Office, Feb. 1873–June 1873.

47 Ministry of Native Affairs—reports and other documents of the Native Commissioners sitting to enquire into certain disputes in Dreketi, Cakaudrove, Bua, Serua, Kadavu and Ono, June 1872–Dec. 1873.

48 Ministry of Native Affairs—applications for the services of prisoners in the Ba War, June 1873–Nov. 1873.

49 Ministry of Native Affairs—miscellaneous correspondence, March 1873–Dec. 1873.

50 Ministry of Native Affairs—Minister to Governor and Secretary of Namosi Province, 21 Mar. 1872–3 April 1873.

51 Ministry of Native Affairs—copies of outwards correspondence, general, of the Provincial Secretary, Naitasiri, 21 Mar. 1872–26 Dec. 1873. 2 vols.

52 Ministry of Native Affairs—miscellaneous letters and memoranda addressed to the Minister, July 1872–Jan. 1874.

53 Minister of Trade and Commerce—inwards correspondence, general, 15 Aug. 1873. (The rest of the records of this Ministry are missing.)

54 Auditor-General's Dept.—miscellaneous papers, 7 Dec. 1872–12 Jan. 1874.

Archives Temp. No.	
1	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: Register of miscellaneous deeds, 1 Feb. 1872–9 Oct. 1874.
2	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: miscellaneous deeds, 1872–74.
3	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: conveyances, 1872–74.
4	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: leases, 1873–74.
5	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: preferable liens on crops, 1873–74.
6	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: mortgages, 1872–74.
7	Registrar, Colonial Secretary's Office: grants, leases, certificates of title and deeds of transfer, 1866–73.
8	Chief Secretary's Office: ledger containing details of Government expenditure, 1872–74.
9	Ministry of Finance: cash books, 1871–73.
10	Ministry of Lands and Works and Naval and Military Affairs: cash book, 1872–73.
11	Registrar, Chief Secretary's Office: miscellaneous papers, 1871–75.
12	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: register of applications for crown grants of land, 1871–74.
13	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: claim files, 1872–73.
14	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: Oaths of the Commissioners, 1872–73.
15	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: Minutes of meetings of the Commission, 1872–74.
16	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: miscellaneous working papers and correspondence, 1871–74.
17	Royal Commission to Quiet Land Titles: miscellaneous receipts and claims for payment on account of services rendered to the Commission, 1872–74.
18	Government House: miscellaneous papers, 1873–75.
19	Government House: Despatches from the Governor of NSW and Fiji to the Administrator of the Provincial Government of Fiji, 1874–75.
20	Colonial Secretary's Office: correspondence and other papers relative to the Polynesia Company, 1868–1881.
21	Ministry of Native Affairs: copies of outwards correspondence of Nathaniel Chalmers and Henry Bentley, 1873–75.
22	Chief Secretary's Office: Secretariat for Native Affairs: papers relating to Censuses of population and to the collection of taxes, 1872–75.
23	Office of the Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate of South Viti Levu and Kadavu: inwards correspondence, general, of the Commissioner and S.M., 1874–75.

24 Office of the Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate of South Viti Levu and Kadavu: Records of the Provincial Court, Rewa and Kadavu, 1873–74.

25 Office of the Warden and Secretary, Kadavu: inwards correspondence, general, of the Provincial Secretary and Warden, Kadavu, 1873–74.

26 Office of the Controller of Labour: permits to land and transfer immigrants, 1873–75.

27 Office of the Controller General of Labour: contract for service by an intending immigrant, 1874.

28 Supreme Court: Judges Notebooks, 1873–75.

29 Supreme Court: Case papers of the Central Court of the Supreme Court—in criminal jurisdiction. 1871–74.

30 Supreme Court: Register of civil causes (Plaint book). 1874–76.

31 Supreme Court: Case papers of the Central Court—in civil jurisdiction. 1872–75.

32 Supreme Court: Register of causes in equity. 1872–74.

33 Supreme Court: Case papers of the Central Court of the Supreme Court—in equity. 1872–74.

34 Supreme Court: Case papers of the Central Court of the Supreme Court—in Admiralty jurisdiction. 1872.

35 Supreme Court: Register of probates and letters of administration. 1874–75.

36 Supreme Court: Case papers relating to probates and letters of administration filed in the Central Court of the Supreme Court. 1872–75.

37 Senior Magistrate's Court: Copies of outwards letters of the European judge of the Central Court and Chief Police Magistrate, and the Registrar-General. 1874–1880.

38 Offices of the Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate, South Viti Levu and Kadavu, and of the Stipendiary Magistrate, Rewa: copies of outwards correspondence of the Commissioner, and of the Stipendiary Magistrate, Rewa. 1874–79.

39 Office of the Warden and Secretary, Kadavu: copies of outwards correspondence, and lists of names of inhabitants of villages in the district of lower Rewa. 1873–74.

Records of the British Consul for Fiji and Tonga 1858–1876

Archives Set No.

1 Copies of outwards correspondence, general, 30 Jan. 1863–27 Aug. 1869.

2 (a) Copies of outwards correspondence addressed to Fijian Chiefs and to the King of Tonga. 6 Sept. 1865–27 Mar. 1869. (b) Register of the sale and mortgage of British ships. 29 Apr. 1870–10 Dec. 1872.

3 Copies of despatches addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and to the Chairman of the Board of Trade. 13 July 1872–4 Apr. 1876.

4 Copies of correspondence addressed to persons other than the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Board of Trade. 11 March 1872–7 Apr. 1876.

5 Correspondence addressed to persons other than Government officials. 14 March 1874–9 May 1876.

6 Despatches from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 3 Nov. 1871–21 Jan. 1876.

7 Despatches from the Board of Trade. 14 March 1874–7 July 1875.

8 Despatches from the Governor of New South Wales. 20 Dec. 1874–31 March 1875.

9 Despatches from the Senior Naval Officer of the Australian Station. 30 Jan. 1871–10 Nov. 1871.

10 Inwards correspondence, general. 1861, 1863, 1866–72, 1874–5.

11 (a) Register of Certificates of ownership and of provisional certificates of registry of British owned vessels. 1 Jan. 1872–28 Jul. 1873.
(b) Register of British ships and their owners. 4 March 1870–15 Aug. 1873.

12 Miscellaneous Papers, 1862–74.

Archives
Temp. No.

1 Register of Deeds, Sept. 1858–Oct. 1874.

Records of the Colonial Secretary's Office, Fiji

Inwards Correspondence, general, 1875–1900: a massive collection, but naturally one more important for *Viceroy of the Pacific* than for *I, the Very Bayonet*
Colonial Secretary's Outwards Letters, 1875–1900
Colonial Office Despatches to Governor of Fiji, 1875–1900
Governor's Confidential Letterbook
Letters from Chief Justice to Governor of Fiji, 1877–81
Papers relating to German Land Claims
Government House Miscellaneous Papers
Land Claims Commission: files in the hearing of European claims to land acquired before Cession
Native Lands Commission: Outwards Letters and Reports, 1890–1900

Private Collections

Im Thurn Papers: a magpie collection. Much of it does relate to Sir Everard im Thurn's own Governorship and may genuinely be regarded as his papers; but many documents were abstracted by him from the Fiji and Tonga consular archives, while others were borrowed from C. R.

Swayne, for instance, and likewise never returned; some relate to R. S. Swanston, the *Tovata*, and the Cakobau government.
Section I: Miscellaneous Papers relating mainly to Fiji 1871–1919
Section II: Consulate Papers, *c.* 1870–5

Papers relating to William Hennings: a collection of letterbooks, inward letters, ledgers, plantation journals, ship and store accounts. In various stages of decay, the fragmentary remnant of a once-magnificent business archive, they remain invaluable as the only surviving body of business-papers of any size relating to the Western Pacific in the nineteenth century. The papers of the other Hennings brothers have been sought but not found.

Place Papers: a small collection built up by Captain Francis Place, seaman and settler, who acquired some letters and fragments written by Thurston to other men.

'Journal of a voyage from Ovalau Fiji to the New Hebrides in search of Voluntary Emigrants Kept by John B. Thurston—Schooner "Strath-never".'
(Thurston's slightly truncated fair copy of the original journal which was, apparently, destroyed after typing by his daughter Alys)

Journal and Narratives of E. J. Turpin

Portion of a diary kept by Nat Turner, manager of a plantation belonging to W. M. Moore at Labasa, together with copies of letters from Turner to Moore.

Biography of the Reverend Arthur J. Small by his daughter

Papers and photographs on McIntosh and Spiers murders

Captain Alexander Barrack, 'Thirty Years in the South Seas' (microfilm)

Other collections

Methodist Church of Australasia: Records of the Fiji District
Register of Marriages of Europeans 1842–1924
Letterbook 1869–95
Correspondence Inwards and Outwards 1874–99
Cakobau government estrays: correspondence relating to the Ba campaign (almost certainly the collection of R. S. Swanston)

Fiji Museum

(Some of the miscellaneous papers listed under National Archives of Fiji actually belong to the Museum and may be returned there)

Journals of R. S. Swanston
Letters of R. S. Swanston
Tripp Papers (H. Landseer Tripp was Swanston's son-in-law)
Diary of Richard Philp
Papers of Captain Robert Cocks
Various miscellaneous single documents

Mitchell Library

Records of the Methodist Overseas Mission

MOM 32 Letters to Fiji 1856–1859
MOM 33 Letters to Fiji 1864–1881
MOM 35–9 Mission Office Letterbooks 1867–1881
MOM 98 Letters from Rewa, Rotuma, Ovalau, Bau and elsewhere, 1855–1879
MOM 99 Letters from the Reverend James Calvert and others 1855–1863
MOM 100 Letters from the Reverend Joseph Waterhouse 1855–1878
MOM 103 Letters from the Reverend Frederick Langham 1862–1879
MOM 126 Relics of the Reverend Thomas Baker
MOM 128 Diary of the Reverend Thomas Baker
MOM 129 Letters to William Collis 1855–1876
MOM 133 Journal of the Reverend John Hunt 1839–1848
MOM 165 Letters from Fiji 1855–1903
MOM 295 Letters from the Reverend Frederick Langham and others to the Reverend H. Worrall, 1886 onward

Other collections:

Methodist Missionary Letters from Fiji 1835–1857
Methodist In-Letters, Fiji 1836–1854
Journal of E. W. Lomberg
Papers relating to the Waterhouse family
Pioneering in the South Seas: being reminiscences of G. L. Ryder, of Mago Island
Papers of the Reverend Jesse Carey
Letterbook of the Reverend Jesse Carey
Press Copy Book of the Reverend Lorimer Fison
Diary of G. H. W. Markham
Journal of Commodore J. G. Goodenough
Journal of the Reverend A. J. Webb
Commonplace Book of the Reverend Isaac Rooney
Parkes Papers
Papers of the Reverend Dr J. D. Lang
Papers transferred from Attorney-General's Department (7/2698—includes depositions taken by Consul March on the *Carl* case)
Historical Records of Fiji (miscellaneous papers)

The Mitchell Library also holds one original watercolour by Thurston's mother, and a photograph of another.

Dixson Library

Letterbooks of Commodore J. G. Goodenough

University of Melbourne Archives

Letterbooks of James Graham & Co.

Archives Office of New South Wales

N.S.W. Shipping Reports, Port Master's Office
Sydney Shipping Master's Office, Inwards Passenger Lists
Fiji correspondence of Sir Hercules Robinson 1874–75 (4/1633)

State Archives of Victoria

Governor's Correspondence: Bundle 11, item 12

Turnbull Library

Letter-Journals of Captain C. W. Hope
MS. No. 390–J. B. Thurston to the Reverend Joseph Nettleton, 20 October 1872
Papers of Coleman Phillips

Auckland Museum and Institute Library

Papers of F. J. Moss

Hocken Library

Journals and Papers of W. S. Carew

National Archives of New Zealand

Records of the British Consul, Samoa
Royal Navy, Australian Station, Records of the Commander-in-Chief

British Museum

Gladstone Papers
Stanmore Papers

Public Record Office

Admiralty records: letters from the Australian Station
CO 83 Original Correspondence, Fiji
CO 201 Original Correspondence, New South Wales
CO 309 Original Correspondence, Victoria
CO 537 Western Pacific Supplementary Correspondence
FO 58 Consular and Associated Correspondence, Pacific Islands
FO 84/1355 Slave Trade 1872
PRO 30/6 Carnarvon Papers

Methodist Missionary Society, London

Letters and other material relative to Australia, New Zealand and the South Seas
Letters from missionaries in, and letters about, Fiji, 1835–1884
James Calvert: personal papers: journals 1838–1863, and 1886

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

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Deryck Scarr is Senior Fellow in Pacific History, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University. He first became interested in Sir John Thurston whilst working on his study of the Western Pacific High Commission, published as *Fragments of Empire* (Canberra, 1967). From the little-used records of King Cakobau's government, Dr Scarr came to challenge the accepted view of Thurston as man and politician. Since then he has pursued Thurston's Fiji in the archives and libraries of the Pacific, Europe and America—but above all in the Fiji Islands themselves.



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