

(continued from previous page)

About ten years ago Dr. Beaglehole accepted a fellowship from the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, which enabled him, with his wife as co-worker, to spend over seven months of 1934-35 on the tiny and isolated atolls of Pukapuka (total area 1250 acres), which lie far to the north of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. Here they dutifully applied themselves to the detailed description of fish-hooks, adzes, canoes, clothing, houses, and lashing patterns, and duly added to the Bishop Museum's Bulletin series Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole's *Ethnology of Pukapuka*. But their purpose was wider than the backward-looking objective of museum studies. "For us it was adventure . . . the great adventure of trying to understand the life of a people whose outlook, traditions, and conventions are the antithesis of our own."

Islands of Danger takes its title from the name applied to Pukapuka by its first European discoverer in 1765, and may be regarded as the literary counterpart of the Museum Bulletin, aimed at a wider public. The value of the book is that it sets out to interpret modern Polynesian life, less colourfully than in the adventurous narratives of the voyagers and castaways of over a century ago, less one-sidedly than through the distorting spectacles of the pioneer Christian missionaries, more truly than by the recent romantic school with their unclad hula girls dancing by blue lagoons. This is the first time that such a task has been attempted, in such a way, and by an author as well qualified to record objectively, dispassionately, and minutely, his Polynesians (the Pukapukans of the mid nineteen-thirties).

Here we have the South Seas debunked; we live the monotonous, strenuous, unromantic life of the coral atoll, with its diet of romance as unattractive, to any but the scientific student, as its physical diet of coconuts, taro, and fish. We plunge back in time to the church-going pattern of mid-Victorian England—Pukapuka was converted in 1857, and has remained fossilized at that level—with family prayers each night, and virtually continuous services from 6 to 6 on Sundays. We observe the manoeuvres of three Christian sects in competition for the 600 souls of Pukapuka. Clothes have come to stay, Mother Hubbard's for the women, and trousers for the men, and the descendant of virtually naked ancestors of four generations ago could no more envisage a future without these essential garments than without tobacco or bibles or sewing-machines or hot irons or soap. But the Christian Pukapukan still remembers his heathen past, and like most of his relatives, still fears the spirits of his dead. Thus when Apolo died, his Christian soul presumably went by the usual road, but the double or heathen soul remained to haunt the grave, to bewitch and kill two of his sons who had neglected the old custom of interring with him his treasured pearl-shell fish-hooks. The third hastening to do this opened his father's grave and was no more troubled by the ghost.

As the author devotes most of a chapter to the manner in which the Pukapukan eats candy, or analyses why he enjoys an American cigarette, we can scarcely regard as out of focus some

frank notes on his private life. With a super (almost cynical) tolerance Dr. Beaglehole records everything from the favourite terms of abuse to the manner in which the small children are alleged to spend their time while their elders are away at Church (some of which I find it difficult to believe). As a good social anthropologist he displays his emancipation from the taboos of sex by a rather constant and aggressive emphasis on it. Here I think he is too dependent on his informants for the peccadilloes he delights to record, which must come not only through a formidable language barrier, but from an amiable class of subjects who do not, like the American Indians, defend themselves by charging a fee for their information, but may exact their price nevertheless. As Dr. Beaglehole knew so little of Polynesian dialects on his arrival that he mistook the noises of the local deaf-mute for a speech by the local chief, it was quick work being able within eight months "to listen with easy amusement to the snatches of conversation which came from a house near by, conversation delightfully outrageous in its full-blooded analysis of a recent wife-stealing episode in our village."

As Dr. Beaglehole would be the first to admit, the topics chosen reflect his own personal interest in the Pukapukan culture. As these were written down in intervals of his field work, they have a freshness of treatment which is their greatest strength. But this is also their greatest weakness, and justifies the one criticism I feel like making about the book. This is, that while the author cleared the way for a popular work of literature, by criticising the backward-looking student of the dead bones of old Polynesia, he in his turn reveals that dissection is no less dear to him in dealing with the flesh and blood of modern Polynesia. While undoubtedly one of the most important books on the South Seas, it must still be regarded less as a work of literature than as the diary of a social anthropologist, or rather as his after-dinner discussions with his wife.

The book is excellently printed and produced, I suspect under the guiding hand of Dr. J. C. Beaglehole. The few photographs are well taken, but are not particularly relevant to the theme.

—R.S.D.

YOUR OWN DRESSMAKING

DRESSMAKING AND CUTTING OUT. By K. D. Woodgate. Whitcombe & Tombs.

HAVE you ever looked in a shop window, seen a lovely piece of material, and wished that you could take it home and turn it into a smart frock for yourself? This little book tells you how to do just that. The author, who is teacher of Senior Dressmaking at Waitaki Girls' High School, has had years of practical experience of dressmaking both as a teacher and as a mother. Her aim is to provide a simple, efficient method of cutting and making garments. The most inexperienced home dressmaker would have no difficulty in following the instructions, as they show how to draft patterns to individual measurements, with diagrams covering every phase of the making of a dress. Hints on patching, smocking, etc., are also given, so that the book can be fairly called invaluable to any woman.

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DEPT. OF HEALTH

BUILDING BODIES



A building job slows down or stops if building materials are not available. Similarly the building up of a child's body slows down if the building foods are not provided for it.

WHICH ARE THE BODY BUILDERS?

Milk and cheese, eggs, fish and all kinds of rationed and unrationed meats. Also dried peas, beans, lentils and oatmeal which, though not quite so valuable are most useful additional builders, especially when eggs are in short supply.

When a building is finished, it must be kept in repair. The same building materials are needed for this, too. And when the human body is full grown, and all through life, it must be kept in repair by means of the same foods as were needed for growth.

HOW MUCH BUILDING MATERIAL IS NEEDED

FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR?

3-4 glasses of milk daily for the child and 2 glasses for the adult; 3 or 4 eggs a week, 1 a day for the children, if possible; 1 ounce of any type of meat or fish at 1 year of age — up to 3 ounces daily at least, for the adult.

After 18 months occasionally introduce grated, uncooked cheese.

In-between snacks of sweet foods cannot replace the solid building foods.

YOUR FOOD — DOES IT BUILD? DOES IT REPAIR?

19A

FOR A HEALTHIER NATION