

Commercially the principal products of Fiji are sugar, copra (dried cocoa-nut) and green fruit (bananas, pine-apples, etc). One might be tempted to say that everything grows or will grow in Fiji on account of the richness of the soil, ample moisture and warmth. But this is not the case. Its very exuberance and fertility, and want of seasons of rest for nature's work, are incompatible with the successful growth of grapes, apples, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes and other of our common and valued products. Prodigal as nature is in the tropics, it is the temperate zone that produces the staff of life.

I was interested in a visit paid to a plantation where were grown the vanilla bean, turmeric, allspice, coffee, tea, cacao (from which chocolate is made), the cocaine plant, cotton, pepper, pine-apples and ginger. It may be remarked that the vanilla plant belongs to the orchids, and is trained or grown on cotton trees planted for the purpose. Another peculiar thing about the plant is that the flowers are not self-fertilizing, and the fertilization is done by hand. Whether the introduction of bees would obviate this manual labor, I am not prepared to say. The vanilla bean when pulled from the plant, would readily pass for our long green vegetable bean. At this stage it is wholly devoid of aroma. This is only developed in the kilns and by a sweating process, when the alkaloid vanillin is produced.

The South Sea Islanders are essentially vegetarians, although fish form an important part of their diet too. The hunt furnishes them nothing but the wild pigeon and the duck. There is no other game or wild animal. The principal food of the Fijian is the yam, a big root something like our mangle, as a rule though far larger. The next vegetable mostly eaten is the taro, which belongs to the Arum family, and is grown on very wet ground. Probably the finest tree in the South Seas is the bread-fruit tree with its large, glossy, indented, bright-green leaves. It will be remembered that the mission of the ill-fated ship "Bounty," Captain Bligh, whose crew mutinied (1789), was to gather bread-fruit trees for transplanting to the West Indies. The bread-fruit is green, its surface