

FRANK BURNETT, SOUTH SEA COLLECTOR.

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urgings and entreaties that she stay in Montreal, his staunch partner in life's lot had absolutely refused; and insisted on staying by his side, a feat doubly courageous, for she had two babies to take care of, aged only eight and twenty-two months old.

The prairie province of Manitoba in the year 1880 was not an inviting land. No railroads served the sparsely scattered settlers. Yet here, a hundred odd miles west of Winnipeg, Frank Burnett became a farmer. Today this region is one of the most fertile and bountiful yielding in Canada. But in 1880, like most lands before much breaking up has been done, its prairie stretches were subject to unexpected and blighting frosts descending in the very days when the farmers' wheat was first sprouting, and again just when it was maturing; hail storms and flattening winds too beset the early adventurers of the plough. Frank Burnett suffered with the others of his scattered companions who had taken upon themselves the taming of this titan frontier. Frost one year killed his grain in the spring; hail battered down the headed crop in another; and again frost nipped it just ahead of his binders' beginning. Still he fought grimly on. Gifted with a splendid ability for organization, and by experience an able boatman, knowing both the ocean and the river, Frank Burnett saw a way to overcome the lack of transportation that was hampering the farmers from getting their crops to a wider market. He became a grain buyer. He stored fifty thousand bushels in his own elevator erected on the banks of the river. The grain was autumn bought of course; had to be held for shipping in the spring. To make this enterprise possible he had invested all his lifetime's savings. But this had not been enough, so he had borrowed from the only bank in the region as much again as he had invested. The banker, a shrewd business man and judge of character, took a chance, giving the money without security, a thing not uncommon in the good old days of the Canadian west when men partook more of the nature of the free and open land in which they lived than do men today in this same land now so civilized.

It looked to Frank Burnett that after so many years of striving he was at last to be rewarded with a little of the world's goods for his labors. But he had not reckoned on old Dame Nature. She sent a flood in the following spring and swept his elevator and his wheat to an irreparable destruction.

But Frank Burnett was Scottish, a word synonymous with doggedness, determination, a stubborn refusal to be beaten. Worse than "broke", he still saw a future in the grain business. He could quite easily have shirked his debt to the banker. Instead he paid it back out of the next four years of his earnings. Then prosperity swept the western province with a tremendous wave: that hysterical bountifulness of boom times. And at last, after fifteen years struggling, Frank Burnett was fairly successful.

With a little wealth in his possession, he again felt the urge to journey on, see new lands and places. He came first to the still farther western province of British Columbia, that of all Canada the most balmy in climate. He became a dealer in land; but shortly after reaching Vancouver, he took a trip to the south seas, visiting Honolulu and adjoining islands. In that trip was fostered a desire to see more of this wonderful part of the world; not merely the regular haunts of travelers, where the ways of civilization had encroached on the ancient native customs and mode of living. At the same time there cropped out in him a thing atavic, the love for collecting rare things. His father had had it, and on his many voyages

in far corners of the world had picked up countless unique things. But for thirty years, ever since he was a boy of fourteen, Frank Burnett had been too busy battling with life for this atavic impulse to make itself felt. But once in the south seas—so perfect an environment for a collector—he was seized strongly with a desire to do as his father had done before him.

After a few months at Honolulu he came back to Vancouver filled with ideas and plans for the future. But grim-visaged "Business," so stern a mistress, held him to her rule for another five years.

In 1901 he at last found himself free to devote what time he liked to roaming and adventuring in the southern seas, and to begin in earnest the collecting of what in the following eighteen years probably grew to be the most representative collection of south sea objects ever by one man collected. After a year of cruising, in which many islands thousands of miles apart were visited, and in which time he began to get really acquainted with the wondrous region of the south Pacific ocean, where across five thousand miles of way coral atoll and larger groups of firmer territory present spice and variety of different races and customs, Frank Burnett returned to Vancouver and placed countless treasures in his first small room that served as a museum. During the next few years the south seas called him often, till in latter days half his time is spent among one or other of the groups of islands.

The Tongan, the Fijian, the Marquesas, the Carolines, the Gilberts, and a score of other groups he knows intimately. He has rubbed shoulders with head hunters, and risked his life to gain implements they use in all the acts of life. Spears and clubs, gods, tapa cloth, a wonderful assortment of canoe models, cannibal plates, forks and human meat hooks so rare and difficult of obtaining, he finally ran to earth and brought home to his museum, after travelling tens of thousands of miles on trading schooners and small canoes, and walking into the very remotest corners of the islands. Today at sixty-seven years of age he is as sturdy as most men half his years, and continues adding to his collection.

Sitting in his museum of today, one that is as large as the feasting hall of a baronial castle, which he built in later years to replace the first small one, and which of course requires a huge house in keeping—seated here among all these rare and odd things he has gathered, he looks a little of all the things he has been and is—deep sea sailor, farmer, business man, author of three books that do justice to the southern seas, a subject so difficult to do justice to, and one often unsuccessfully essayed; keen collector given to selecting with that rare knowledge possessed only by the born collector.

This is Frank Burnett at sixty-seven years of age, a real life figure in the romance of actual adventure which most of us seek in the pages of a book. But besides all these things Frank Burnett thinks of others, for just recently he bequeathed his entire magnificent collection to the University of British Columbia, to be one of the finest institutions of its kind on the Pacific coast when it reaches completion.

The University of British Columbia is to be built on one of the most beautiful sites in the world, overlooking the Pacific at Point Grey on the outskirts of the city of Vancouver. A hundred thousand dollars would not buy this great South Sea collection, which in the years to come will be an object of interest and instruction to countless students who will throng to this hall of learning. Thus the labor of Frank Burnett for a quarter of a century will bring pleasure and instruction to many just as it did to the collector himself in the years of gathering.