

History of Most Interesting of Many Gods in Little Known Lands—By Francis Dickie.

Even the most primitive tribes of men, as far back as their history can be traced, have been found to be possessed of a conception of an Infinite Being, or Beings. The strange powers that savages in various parts of the globe even today attribute to their gods, and the trouble they go to to propitiate them makes a study of never failing interest to

the workers in the leaf factories were basking in the warm sunshine; or the leaves refusing to work because the aristocratic flowers gave them nothing in return for the large quantities of capital they commandeered. Yet such things do happen, and as the motto of plant society is "He who will not work, shall not eat," it is interesting to see how plants overcome strikes.

Dealing With "Strikers."

The Lily family has had to deal with strikes and the result has been in every case disastrous to the strikers. In *Ruscus* the Butcher's Broom and in the well known *Asparagus*—both belonging to the Lily family—we have plants whose leaves struck work, they ceased to perform their regular duties of manufacturing food from raw materials. The leaves were the first to suffer, they did not work neither did they feed. Branches which in many cases would have remained as dormant buds were called on to act as strike-breakers, and you may see from their business-like appearance (in nature or picture) with what measure of success they filled the breach. The shrivelled remains of the starved leaves show as minute scales at the base of the leaflike branches.

In most of the higher plants an enormous expenditure is made to provide ample support for the whole organization. Large quantities of manufactured material are used to build rigid pillars for support; and strong, more or less elastic cords or fibres which take the strain when the plant bends before a strong wind; when the gale subsides these elastic cords pull the plant back to the vertical position again.

Degenerate Plants.

In some plant families we find that certain members have not maintained the high social position of other members of their family. Through laziness or negligence, little or no supporting tissue is provided, they—as it were—fail to "Keep their end up," so they fall prostrate on the ground, degenerate weaklings, a disgrace to their family.

That such degeneracy—in plants, as in human society—leads from bad to worse and often ends in crime can be illustrated by at least two families of B. C. plants. In the *Araliaceae*—the Devil's Club family—we have the *Aralia*, well known as a beautiful indoor foliage plant. It carries on all its functions and duties as every honest, upright plant should do; and so does the Devil's Club whose diabolical array of sharp pointed prickles warns us to avoid an intimated knowledge of their defensive properties. But, who would recognize the Ivy as belonging to this noble family? Yet such is the case. The Ivy, whose trailing branches spread over the surface of the ground like the tentacles of a gigantic octopus, is not a parasite, but woe unto the tree that comes within its grasp. Slowly but slowly the Ivy climbs and twines holding on by strong sucker-like roots until it reaches the tips of the branches, here it competes with its unwilling host for light—the source of energy for the manufacture of food—and the result may frequently be seen in the numerous trees dead and dying, smothered and starved through the machinations of a "low down" member of a noble family.

(To be concluded.)



Photo by W. Forsyth, Mission.
Francis Dickie.

the white explorers, ethnologists and missionaries who are today laboring in these fields.

What first strikes the white investigator is the immense number of deities which the natives in most places have conceived to exist and which they believe greatly affect their lives for good or ill. Each different tribe has a separate collection, generally peculiar to themselves. The deities or spirits which the primitive men are chiefly concerned with are the malevolent ones. A kindly spirit is given little attention, as the savage argues that such a spirit, being by nature well disposed towards him, does not require any attention. The accompanying illustration in which are gathered the principal gods of various South Sea Islands, Borneo, Sumatra and New Guinea, are selected out of a very large number in the collection of Mr. Frank Burnett, Vancouver, Canada, as having the most interesting histories, the data of which Mr. Burnett collected during some twenty-five years of roving the South Seas and adjoining territory, where many primitive tribes still remain.

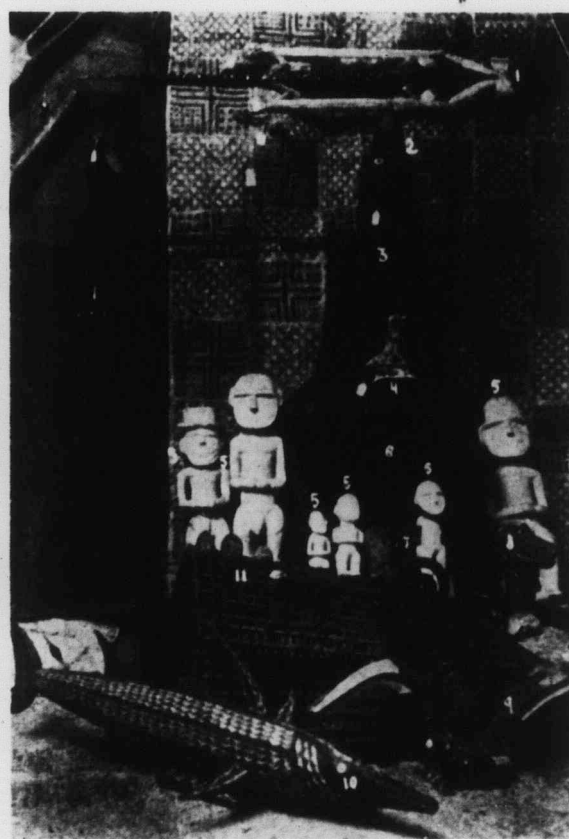


Figure number one is a carved representation of the crocodile god in which resides the death-bringing spirit "Ingret na Matinet," of the Benning tribe in New Ireland, part of a group of islands in the South Pacific, inhabited by people of Papuan stock. The sorcerer, when desirous of causing the death of any of the tribe invokes the spirit in the carved wooden