

prettily marked, and in shape it resembles a Rugby football, but is not so large. These three vegetables—the yam, the taro, and the bread-fruit may best be described as taking the place of our potato.

We all delight in a piece of coral, its delicate form, its infinite variety of design, but when one has been among the living coral, in the riotous marine flower garden, where the most resplendent colors vie with each other and revel in their warm bath, then the corals of our drawing-rooms appear in their true light, as skeletons, dead things, bereft of their pristine beauty. A visit to a coral reef, resting midst those exquisite blue blue waters at low tide, is one of the greatest charms that the South Sea has to offer. The varied life seen, the intensely rich colors displayed, enchant one. The coral reef is to the naturalist an *El Dorado*, to the navigator a *bête noir*.

Another article of commerce is the *bêche de mer* or *trephang*, which may be seen at Suva by the ton in its dried or commercial stage. It is a sea-slug about as thick as the wrist and nearly a foot long. It is one of the greatest delicacies of the Chinese epicure, and no dinner amongst the *bon ton* in China is considered complete without soup of the *bêche de mer*. It is said to take a week to cook. Dinner orders must be given rather early.

The South Sea Islanders, especially the Samoans and Tongans, are cleanly in their persons. The Polynesians, after their daily bath, generally rub themselves with scented coconut oil. Formerly sandalwood, which was abundant, served the purpose of perfume by grating it on coral. Now, sweet-smelling flowers are used. Many a time in the early evening was I made aware of my approach to the Samoan quarters by the fragrance borne on the balmy air. Undoubtedly these people of the coral strand are far cleaner than the average white man.

Many months were spent on the coral-ribbed islands, resting in these fascinating waters of the South Seas, where the natives dream life away, oblivious of the "strenuous life" we have invented. Their astronomy and time-reckoning are based on no solstices or equinoxes, but simply on the yam, their staple food.