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NOTES ON REV. J. B. STAIR'S PAPER ON "EARLY SAMOAN VOYAGES AND SETTLEMENT" (*Journal*, June, 1985).

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THE absorbing interest and importance of such a paper as this cannot be exaggerated. The late lamented Robert Louis Stevenson, in his copy of Fornander's "Polynesian Race," has a comment to the following effect: That Samoans can never have been the navigators Judge Fornander believes them to have been. No one would have been more interested than Mr. Stevenson to find so much confirmatory evidence of a fact now generally admitted—that upwards of six hundred years ago Samoans made long and extensive voyages to various groups of islands in Eastern Polynesia. Mr. Stair has not felt it necessary to refer to the fact that the Tokelau and Ellice Groups were colonized by the Samoans, and that there is undoubted evidence of the settlement of Samoans from Manu'a amongst the original inhabitants of the Tarawa Archipelago (Gilbert Islands).

From the King of Atafu (Tokelau Islands) I received a few years ago interesting confirmation of the inter-island communication which was almost constantly going on in those days. In the course of the king's narrative he recited the following verse:—

"Ai sa Sulu 'e vave mai,
O le aitu o Sa Sulu,—
E ave le vaa ia Fafie;
O Masu ma Loga e tautai
O le vaa na alu ai Fafie (i Fakafo)
A ua nofo Futa e fai
Le vaa na oo mai ai
O le igoa o le vaa, o 'Tautele'
Ua ave i Samoa le vaa na fai."

Fafie here referred to was the god (*aitu*) of the clan Sulu. He became on the death of Leua (King of Fakafo) king of that island.

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But before this no less than two hundred people made allegiance and offered sacrifice to him. Now, this Fafie had as his *auauna*, or servant, a Samoan boat carpenter, referred to here, named Futa. The canoe in which Futa had come from Samoa, being out of repair, Futa set to work to repair it. The name of that canoe was Tautele. In that Futa returned to Samoa with some of Fafie's children.

In the course of the same narrative the King of Atafu recited the song which has preserved the legend in Atafu (which is carefully kept by the royal family of Malietoa in Samoa), viz.: that during the course of a great war between Atafu and Fakafo, a party of natives from the former island, being driven out to sea, found their way to Samoa, and arrived at Malie, in Upolu, where Malietoa had his royal seat. The fugitives were asked by Malietoa, "Whence they had come?" To which they replied, "From Atafumea." "How had they found their way?" "*Kua hau a matagi*" (Brought by the wind) they then replied. The principal man of that party became Malietoa's *tulafale*. The orator (*fai lauga*) of Malie is the descendant of that man, and bears the name of Tuiatafu, and the title of *Auimatagi*.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Stair has not preserved in the rendering of the names in the course of his paper a uniform system of spelling.

P. 100.—Rata is Lata on the south side of Savaii, where the legend of the sacred forest is still preserved.¹

No Samoan will admit, as Mr. Stair thinks it necessary to do (pp. 101 and 117), that the *pusi* referred to in the legend is other than the *pusi* of the sea (the sea eel). They see no difficulty whatever in the *pusi* being able to live in the *lata* forest which is on the coast.

P. 124.—The Samoan *fafa* is still pointed out in the west of Savaii, near to Falealupo.

P. 127.—The ceremony of *Lulu'u* observed, as Mr. Stair says, on the occasion of deposing a chief and depriving him of his *ao*, was performed in the case of Malietoa Mataafa, now in exile in the Marshall Islands, by those who had bestowed on him the title of Malietoa. His body was sprinkled with coco-nut water on board of the German ship-of-war that was about to convey him and his companions into exile. And the fact that this ceremony had been duly performed was publicly made known, the name of *Aimatagi* appearing amongst others on the printed notice.

It is interesting, however, to note further that it is possible to remove the title from a chief by another and an allied ceremony called

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both *Lulu'u* and *Faalanu*. Young warriors of rank in the clans, having the traditional power to confer or remove the title in question, may be selected, or, as some say, would volunteer to perform the ceremony of *Faalanu*. These young men would have to take a bowl filled with water in front of the house in which the chief was sitting with his *tulafale* and attendants. They would then be required to lave out the whole of the water on to the ground with their hands. Meanwhile, however, the chief whose title was to be thus removed could, with his assistants, prevent by violence the accomplishment of the purpose. History tells of some who were clubbed to death whilst attempting this task.



¹ It must be remembered that Matatia, from whom Mr. Stair procured the narrative of the voyages, was a Rarotongan, and he naturally uses Rata instead of Lata, in accordance with his own language, just as the Maoris do, who have very full traditions of Rata and the building of this celebrated canoe, and its conveyance to the coast by birds.—Editors.