to the highest pitch. . . . In their firmness we find reassurance for our hope and belief in the cause of world peace and are reaffirmed in our judgment that foreign mission work has been highly effective. In fact, it is only in the success of Christian foreign missions that we dare to hope for world peace."—G. R. W.

Hawaiian Riddles and Proverbs

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MR. HENRY JUDD'S recently published collection of riddles and proverbial sayings of Hawaii, issued as Bulletin 77 of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, in so far as they represent a native art adds one more to the links which connect old Hawaii with the culture area of the eastern rather than of the western continent. No American Indian tribe has developed riddling as a social art with anything like the security of wont which this collection and other evidence from Hawaiian legend and romance prove native. Even a three-hundred-year contact with European riddling and wisecracking has not given to the Indian any conspicuous taste for the pithy and sententious saying or the paradoxical analogy which constitute these forms of oral-art. It is therefore safe to assume that the proved facility of the Hawaiian in both accomplishments was gained, not independently, but from a long period of usage before his migration to this island group, and since the Hawaiian shares arts with other Pacific Islanders, it is likely that they were practiced in some culture center prior to migration into the Pacific. They are not the gift of American contact or of Polynesian invention, but are a part of the old-world culture which the Polynesians brought with them into their island homes. In what form, then, did they bring over the practice?

Our own folk riddle is composed about everyday objects. The trick is to describe one object in terms of another which it resembles in some particular, generally in the form of a paradox, or in the sound of the name, commonly called "punning." It is this sound analogy which has survived today in sophisticate wit. An even more primitive conception of riddling is that which describes an object by a single trait like color, motion, number. Or it poses a question impossible to answer, such as the number of stars in the sky or of drops in the sea, or one based on a particular experience like Samson's, who made a riddle out of the honeycomb formed in the carcase of a dead lion by the roadside.

These riddlings are found in old European folk tales which tell of competitions of wit upon which high bets are laid or even life itself, as the stake. In an old Scotch-English ballad the devil woos a maiden with riddles; the witty answer alone frees the maiden from his power. The Scandinavian *Edda* contains "encyclopedic poems" which enumerate all the wisdom of the world. In one of these the god Odin contends with the wisest of the giant race and traps him at length with the question "What spoke Odin himself in the ears of his son (Balder), ere in the bale-fire he burned?", a question impossible for any but the god himself to answer. The Edipus riddle seems to reflect some old pre-Greek culture in which the riddling contest was a recognized mode of rival competition. The visitor to the recently excavated town of the magician Sirikap near the site of Taxila in the Punjab will recall how the hero Rasalu defeated Sirikap in riddling before he was admitted to the "white seat" within the palace. Rasalu is still a well-known hero of the Punjab and the sites of his adventures are still known to the folk. In the Arabian Nights tales the slave girl, Tawaddud, challenges to a contest of learning the learned doctors who gathered about the court of Haroun al Raschid. The physician is routed by means of a quaint riddle about the loop-shaped handle of the water-skin, the philosopher by the riddling calculation, common today in the Spanish West Indies, of the pigeons on the tree who said to those on the ground, "If one of you come up to us, you will be a third part of us all."

Some scholars believe that the riddle form is derived from that of the proverb or sententious saying. It is true that many proverbs are themselves couched in riddling speech. They are meant to convey, under cover of a figure, a threat, a curse, or a warning. In a society where secret conference is denied to political or domestic plotters who live always within earshot of spies, a somewhat complicated course of action may be conveyed in the form of apparently innocent speech. This habit seems to have been common in the South Seas. Several of Fornander's stories record such an occurrence. In a tale recorded by Fison from the Tongans, a chief on a canoe voyage runs out of food. He bids his man "Go now and see if there be any *banana stalks* left on the weather half of the canoe." The words convey an order to club one of the women, whose place is in that part of the canoe. But such riddling speech as this is not directly related to the proverb, which is regularly formed upon an abstract or general idea and applied in popular use to a specific case, or it is derived from a particular case which, like our "Hobson's choice," takes on a general application. An illustration of such a case in Mr. Judd's collection is the saying of Kamehameha to his men that "Six islands are free to all but the seventh is for Kamehameha." The chief wittily uses the biblical restriction upon the Sabbath day as the model for his own tabu upon his favorite wife. On the other hand, the saying, "Back like a precipice, face like a moon," is a general compliment to any perfect form. "Small canoes dash up the spray" is said to one who gets angry over trifles. "Never mind if the layer at the bottom of the oven is burned, but watch that at the top" is a councel to watch the mood of chiefs and ignore that of commoners.

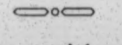
On the whole, Hawaiian proverbs referring to old legendary persons are rare. A reference to the "nets of Makali'i hanging high" is used as a reproach to a stingy person, the "rattling of the bones of Hua" to warn against impiety. Liloa is mentioned as rising to greatness through "the steps of the temple," that is, through fostering the priests. The missionaries knew well how to make use of the Hawaiian taste for sententious sayings. When his parishioners reproached Mr. Lyons for letting men into the church too easily he answered, "What holds fast to the heavens (the faultless) belongs to God, what falls below (the faulty) belongs to Lyons." More common are allusions to place names. A wanderer is likened to the parasitic vine—the "trunkless tree"—of Mana on Kauai. The "mirage of Mana" is alluded to by the skeptical listener to an unlikely story just as we say "tell that to the marines." Lele, the old name for Lahaina, and Kou for Honolulu, occur in proverbs.

Hawaiian riddling involves a different

technique from the proverb. Although one art doubtless plays into the hands of the other, it is doubtful whether one is a direct development of the other. Proverbial sayings use popular allusions in a riddling fashion, but riddling seems rather to derive from the discipline of learning in the hands of the ruling classes. It is an expert rather than a popular art. Skill in the art implies a knowledge of the geography and the natural features of the group. So far as I can see, riddling in Hawaii does not extend to social history, genealogy or legendary allusions. It demands complete objective knowledge about the material world, a retentive memory, and quickness in matching analogies, either in the sounds of words or in descriptive elements of objects. The skilled riddler learns about "the things above and the things below, in the uplands and in the lowlands; the things of day and the things of night; of death and life; of good and evil." It is the natural philosophy of opposites which he must master.

In Hawaiian riddling the question is not so much one of guessing an answer as of matching one skilful analogy with another, and if a pun is successfully employed it scores for the contestant. The game of riddling has a name and a technique. The famous Lono-i-kamakahiki acquired it among his other accomplishments useful to chiefs. The debates are accompanied by high betting. In the legends a ruling chief bets all his possessions, a wandering one his bones, that is, his life. The Fornander collection contains a fine version of a legendary contest between a chief of Kauai famous as a riddling expert and the son of one of his victims from Puna on Hawaii. A fuller version of the same tale was printed by Moses K. Nakuina in 1902 in a little pamphlet called *Kalapana*, dedicated to all true Hawaiians "bone of my bone and blood of my blood, from Hawaii of Keawe to Kauai of Mano." Folk versions of a similar story are current. Mrs. Pukui says that in Puna certain families refuse to answer riddles, saying *"Ka mea keia i holeholo ia e ka iwi o na kupuna*—"It was for this that the bones of our ancestors were stripped (of flesh)."

This touch of reality leaves us in doubt whether the legend does not represent actual custom. An examination of this collection indicates that the more native Hawaiian riddle follows the form set in the riddle contest rather than that of our own folk riddling. *Po iuka, po iwaena, po i kai,* says the riddle; that is, "Night in the uplands, night between, night on the shore." The expert in riddling however knows that the words do not refer to the sense of universal and brooding night over the landscape, but to three plants typical of these regions and which all contain the syllable *po,* "night,"—the *popoulu* banana growing in the uplands, the *popolo* plant of the coast land, the *pohuehue* of the beaches. Evidently the riddle is not to be guessed but to be matched. I think the riddle of the *ka ele,* the dark, is the retort, but the translation is unsatisfactory. For traditional wisdom, too, note the riddles that enumerate processes, like "The food that is shaken, the food that is cracked, the food that is crushed, the food that is roasted," that is, the *kukui* nut. Not that analogy is absent with its accompanying tendency to personification. The riddle of the grass house,—"Plaited all around, plaited at the bottom, leaving an opening," may also be given as "The men that stand (posts), the men that lie down (battens), the men doubled up (thatch). The *kukui* nut is "the fat fish that dances on the tips of the fingers" or "my little fish that you eat and twist, eat and twist," with reference both to the substitution of the nut for fish as a relish and to the movement of the fingers in taking up a pinch of the grated meat. Or it is "the fish indulged in by the hunchback" because of the crook of the fingers in pushing up the morsel. A fishnet has "four hundred hills (knots), four thousand streams (strands)." A hook and line is "a little hunchback with long guts." The sea is "a log for tapa-beating, ceaselessly sounding." Some of these simpler riddles must be of late composition; for example, the flat-iron as "a boat which sails between islands," "the long-bearded race" of the goats, the "fish, head downward, tail upward" of the onion, or the pun on the name of Kalakaua—"This is the day (*la*) to declare war (*kaua*)." But there are other much more obscure riddles which seem more genuinely native, such as (8-12) on the taro, (184) on the scrofulous neck, (224, 225) interpreted as poi pounder and gourd container, (235) on the group marriage of brothers or sisters. The exact translation of such riddles as these may throw more light on the old native art of Hawaiian riddling.



An interesting article, "Samoan Education," by Dr. Peter Buck, of Bishop Museum, will be printed in THE FRIEND for April.

NOTES *from the* FIELD

Hawaii Advisory Council:

The Advisory Council for Young People's Work on the Island of Hawaii met in Honokaa on February 3, 1932, and in Hilo on February 10.

At the former meeting Mr. Frank C. Atherton was guest of the group. Plans for more thorough and extensive work with the young people of the "Big Island" were considered.

Distributing the Financial Load:

The Hawaiian Board adopted President Berndt's phrase about the cut in its budget. The cut is an attempt to "distribute the financial load." Several churches are seeking to raise a little more money this year so as to refund to the pastors the cut which had to be made in salaries.

It may be that this cut is going to be a valuable experience after all. If the churches find it possible to carry a little more of the financial cost of their work, the results ought to be beneficial. Certainly the pastors ought not to be obliged to take a cut in their already meagre salaries.

The Pastor's Family:

Someone made a very significant statement in our office the other day. He was speaking of the marvellous influence of the pastor and his family in the various communities of our Islands. He said, "If the pastors and their wives did nothing more than to raise a family and educate them, the value to Hawaii would justify their salaries."

Some day we may find time to list the splendid work for our Islands by the splendid sons and daughters from pastors' homes. It will be a long list, and they have rendered great service.

Evangelism:

The Hawaiian Department is sponsoring a series of Evangelistic meetings on Oahu. These meetings are arousing much interest among the people.

Crossroads Confers With Vories:

The Crossroads new plant committee had a very interesting meeting on February 11 with Mr. W. M. Vories of the Omi Hachiman Mission in Japan. Mr. Vories was passing through Honolulu on that day. He has been much interested in the Crossroads Church and has donated