

THE PYGMIES OF NEW GUINEA.¹

MAFULU is the Kuni (Melanesian) pronunciation of Mambule, the name of a group of Papuan-speaking mountaineers who occupy the crests dominating the head waters of the St. Joseph River. Although the boundaries of their territory cannot be re-

of the watershed of the main range, and it is likely that no substantially different people intervene between them and the tribes occupying the sources of the Aikora and other northward flowing streams. This probability is borne out by the results of Mr. Monckton's expedition to Mount Albert Edward by way of the valley of the Upper Chirima, one of the affluents of the Mamba River on the northern slopes of the main range, for, as Mr. Williamson points out, there are many similarities between the implements of the Kambisa villagers described by Mr. Monckton and those made and used by the Mafulu, while their languages are the same, or at least closely related. In any case Mr. Williamson is to be congratulated on having produced the furthest inland account yet published of any Papuasian people, and all students of the Pacific will be grateful to him for this.

The people Mr. Williamson describes are short, muscular mesaticephals, with "a very marked tendency to brachycephaly."

Their hair is frizzly, and generally dark brown, often quite dark, almost even approaching to black, and sometimes perhaps quite black. But it is frequently lighter; and indeed I was often, when observing men's hair lit up by sunshine, impressed by the fact that its brown colour was not even what we should in Europe call dark. I often saw marked variations in the depth of hair colour on the head of the same individual. I saw no examples of the comparatively straight or curly type of hair which is found in the Pokau district and elsewhere.

These characters lead Mr. Williamson to consider that there is a strong negrito element present in the Mafulu, and though it does not seem necessary to assume this in order to account for the facts, the discovery of pygmies in Netherlands New Guinea greatly strengthens his position. The Mafulu live in "small groups or clusters of villages or hamlets," called by Mr. Williamson a community, the members of which regard other communities as outsiders. In spite of this the relationship between all the villages in a community is not identical, for the Mafulu have a clan system, and each clan has its own "villages or sometimes one village only." Further, each "village" consists of a single clan and no one clan occurs in more than one community.

But the relationship between a group of villages of any one clan within the community is of a much closer and more intimate character than is that of the community as a whole. These villages of one clan have a common *amidi* or chief, a common *emone* or clubhouse, and a practice of mutual support and help in fighting for redress of injury to one or more of the individual members; and there is a special social relationship between their members, and in particular

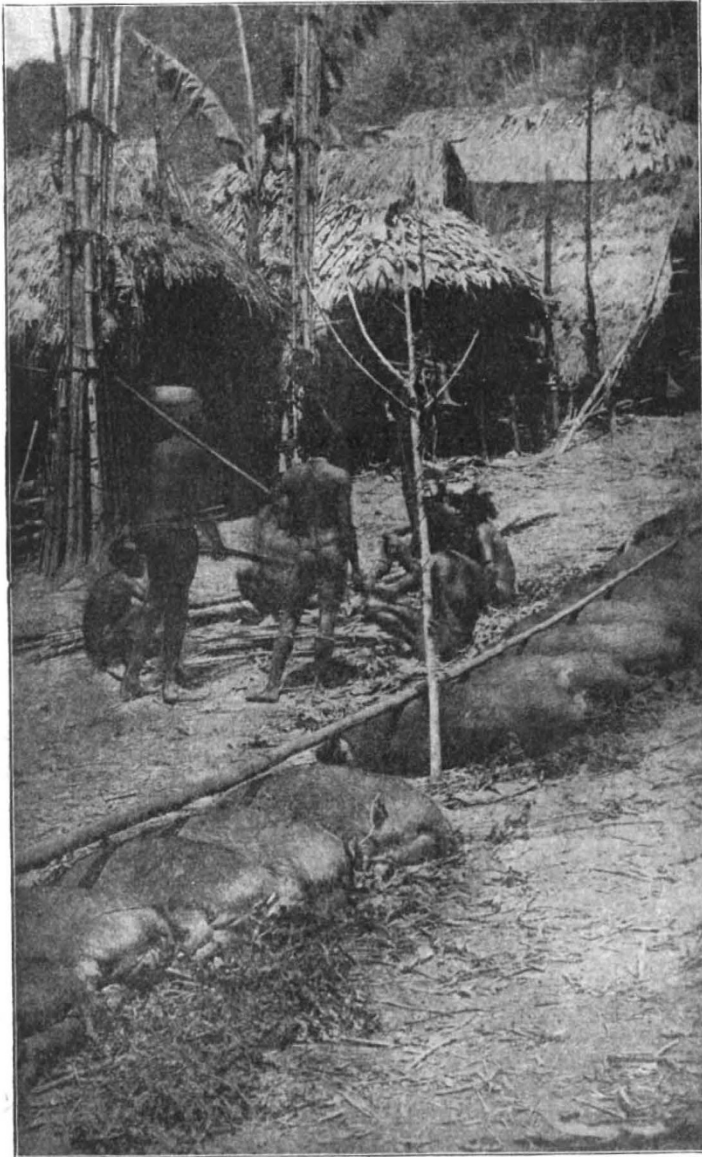


FIG. 1.—Row of killed pigs at big feast at village of Amalala. From "The Mafulu Mountain People of British New Guinea."

garded as accurately ascertained, a glance at the map shows that it extends within a short distance

¹ "The Mafulu Mountain People of British New Guinea. By Robert W. Williamson. With an Introduction by Dr. A. C. Haddon, F.R.S. Pp xxiii+364+plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1912). Price 14s. net.

"Pygmies and Papuans: The Stone Age To-day in Dutch New Guinea." By A. F. R. Wollaston. With Appendices by W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, Dr. A. C. Haddon, F.R.S., and S. H. Ray. Pp. xxiv+352+plates and maps. (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1912). Price 15s. net.

clan exogamy prevails with them, marriages between people of the same clan, even though in different villages, being reprobated almost as much as are marriages between people of the same village.

Mr. Williamson could discover no trace of totemism, nor "any idea which might be regarded as having a totemistic origin," nor could he find any trace of mother-right, and a youth owes no special service to his maternal uncle, and even when he assumes the perineal band his mother's relatives are of no special importance.

There are thus marked differences between the Roro and Mekeo tribes and the mountaineers of the hinterland, and this difference is emphasised by the absence of any elaborate system of chieftainship, such as is found among the dwellers of the plain.

On the other hand, the "Big Feast," most carefully described by Mr. Williamson, has so many common features with the *tabu* feast of the Motu and kindred tribes, and even with the *torehu* and similar feasts of the Massim, that this resemblance cannot be accidental. All these appear to be *Rites de Passage*, by which the dead are more or less permanently and successfully dismissed from the sphere of the living and segregated in the "other world." Like the *walagu* feast of the Bartle Bay tribes, the "Big Feast" is arranged and prepared for long beforehand and held at quite uncertain periods; a further similarity is that there is now no known occasion or event in reference to which it is held, yet the clue is given by the decking of the village with the bones of important men, by the formal destruction of the grave-platform of a chief, and by the dipping of the long-bones in the blood of pigs, which are then used to anoint with blood the skulls of chiefs and big men, after which, though these skulls may be hung in the clubhouse, they will never again be used in any ceremony.

Space permits of reference to one other matter only. Few who know this part of New Guinea and read Mr. Williamson's cautious presentation of the evidence will hesitate in accepting a suggestion made to him by Father Clauser, namely, that while the slow shuffling, dancing steps of the plainsmen imitate the dancing movements of the goura pigeon, the livelier hopping and zigzag progress of the Mafulu mimic the livelier movements of the red bird of paradise.

While other travellers besides Mr. Williamson have found evidence which may be accepted as indicating the existence of a strain of pygmy blood as far east as the eastern portion of British New Guinea, no one before Mr. Wollaston and his colleagues had met an undoubted pygmy

population. But although the Tapiro are brachycephals averaging only four feet nine inches in height, it does not seem sure that they are pure negritos, and culturally it is certain that they have been profoundly modified by outside influence. They build excellent houses on piles, make gardens, grow tobacco, and terrace their hills for dancing grounds; indeed, in material culture they seem to be scarcely inferior to the Papuans of the low-lying ground between the mountains and the sea. Their weapons are the bow and arrow and bone dagger; they make excellent netted bags; perhaps the latter may be the clue on the material side to the foreign influence which has made them the most "cultured" of pygmies, for similar string bags are found among the hill and mountain folk of a large part of British New Guinea, and every additional collection seems to enlarge their area of distribution. Indeed, Mr.

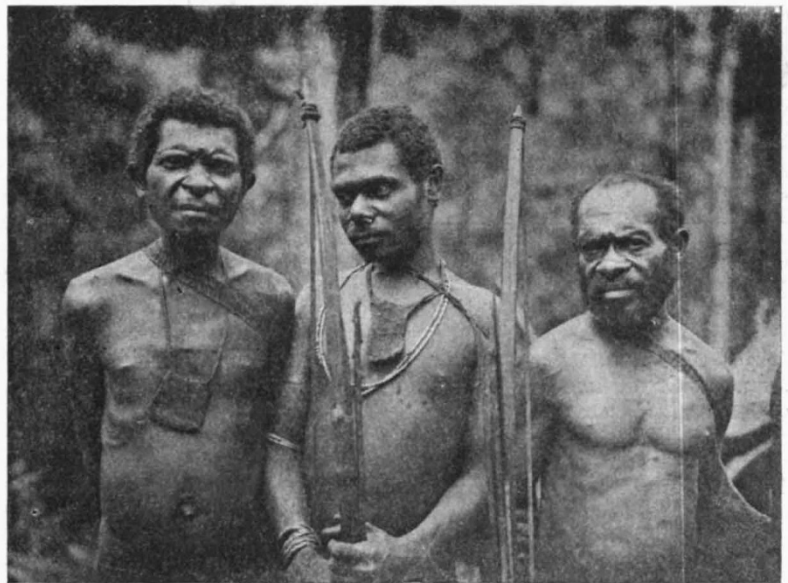


FIG. 2.—Types of Tapiro Pygmies. From "Pygmies and Papuans: The Stone Age To-day in Dutch New Guinea."

Williamson tells the writer that the same sequence of loops is found in the network of the Mafulu and the Tapiro pygmies. Of their social system nothing could be ascertained, nor could any word of their language be recorded. Nevertheless, the supreme fact of their discovery stands forth, and our knowledge of the whole pygmy question is still further advanced by an interesting and critical *résumé* contributed as an appendix by Dr. Haddon.

It will be seen that the expedition did not learn much about the pygmies; indeed, the account of them only takes up one chapter of Mr. Wollaston's book. Two other groups of people differing little from each other were met with; that these are Papuan is proved by their physical appearance and language, the latter forming the subject of an appendix by Mr. S. H. Ray, who takes the opportunity of reviewing our knowledge of the languages of Netherlands New Guinea. How

poor Papuan culture can be will be well appreciated by reading Mr. Wollaston's description of these people, yet they use paddles for propelling their canoes, whereas it is very doubtful whether the Toro on the Bensbach River, forming the boundary of British and Netherlands New Guinea, know paddles at all, and they certainly propel their canoes in deep water by using their long bamboo punting poles as if they were paddles.

Everywhere the expedition, which was clearly too large, was hampered by a lack of knowledge of the country; a little preliminary surveying in a launch would have obviated this difficulty. Indeed, in spite of the money, some, alas! public, lavished on the expedition, the organisers seem to have made up their minds to ignore the experience of previous explorers. Much might have been done by the expedition had it been better planned, but Mr. Wollaston's book, which must be taken as the official account of the expedition, and candidly admits the blunders made, shows that the somewhat scanty results attained are not in any way due to lack of energy or *morale* on the part of the members of the party, and every reader will join in wishing Mr. Wollaston good luck and all success on his second expedition to the country towards which he is now speeding.

C. G. S.

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL EUGENICS CONGRESS.

IT is the general feeling of those who attended this Congress (which extended from July 24 to 30) that it has been a complete success. A membership of about 750 is an indication of the widespread interest taken in the subject, though an analysis of motives might reveal that the largeness of the number is partly due to other causes. In particular it can scarcely be doubted that the series of brilliant entertainments organised by the hospitality committee, under the secretaryship of Mrs. Alec Tweedie, was a bait which attracted many.

It may be useful to give some account of the general trend of opinion, judged partly by the views expressed by the speakers and partly by the behaviour of the audience, in an assembly of so many persons from so many countries, representing all those, with one or two exceptions, who hold that eugenics is a subject of serious importance.

The lead given by Mr. Balfour in his speech at the inaugural banquet in striking the keynote of diffidence and moderation was followed throughout the meeting. The application to human society of the methods found useful in the breeding pen is not advocated by the modern eugenicist, neither does he wish to see permanently confined or castrated all those whom he considers undesirable mentally, morally, or physically. He does not plead for the repeal of all humanitarian legislation or for a return to "the good old days of natural selection."

He only urges that the possible eugenic or dysgenic results of fresh legislation may be seri-

ously considered, and that the business of parenthood may be conducted by husbands and wives well informed as to their duties and regardful of their responsibilities to one another, to their children, and to the race. As a token of the feeling with regard to the latter point it may be mentioned that such phrases as "the dignity of motherhood" elicited applause as regularly as do the virtuous sentiments expressed by the heroine in melodrama.

Since the idea of practical eugenics was first mooted, its scope has naturally been much increased, so that there is room for a greater variety of views among those who pronounce a sort of general blessing on the eugenic ideal. This variety is expressed, for instance, in differences of opinion as to the relative importance of "nature" and "nurture." A regrettable result has been to debase the meaning of the word "eugenic," so that some speakers seemed to regard it as synonymous for "hygienic," whereas originally the two words were generally used in antithesis.

The presidential address by Major Leonard Darwin (which follows) was a worthy prelude to a series of papers many of which were of considerable interest and scientific importance. Among those which call for special mention are the following:—Mr. Raymond Pearl's paper on the inheritance of fecundity (in fowls); "La Fertilité des mariages suivant la profession et la situation sociale," by M. Lucien March, Directeur de la Statistique Générale de la France. M. March's work, based on the French census of 1906, adds materially to our knowledge of the subject in that he shows that although the rate of lower fertility in the higher social classes is generally true, exceptions frequently arise from the fact that other influences, such as the actual nature of the profession followed and the locality of domicile, produce definite and well-marked effects.

An admirable account was given by Mr. Bleeker van Wageningen of the preliminary report of the committee appointed by the Eugenic Section of the American Breeders' Association to study the best practical means for cutting off the defective germplasm of the human population. The eugenic legislation carried into effect by permitting or enforcing in certain cases specific sterilisation operations, in the several American States into which they have been introduced, was described, but not recommended. A considerable body of evidence as to the effect produced on the subject by such operations was summarised.

In conclusion, it must be said that heartiest congratulations are due to the president, Major Darwin, and to the secretary, Mrs. Gotto, on the organisation of the Congress. They have the satisfaction of knowing that the hard work involved has had its justification and reward in its successful issue. The Congress cannot fail to have a wide effect in promoting general knowledge of the aims of eugenicists, and thus perhaps in meeting some of the undue criticisms which have been directed against them.

E. H. J. S.