Precedence and Privileges of the Clans in the Monsara.

The clans had hereditary privileges or duties connected with the ceremonial of the Monsara, which they must solemnly perform and guard. Among these, the group of the Karangona or the Karongona (Karongona = Kings), as its name suggests, was a family paramount. Karongona means King of the Monsara; at all ceremonial gatherings within the Monsara, its chief man—that is to say, the senior descendant through eldest son of the original ancestor—assumed the first word and the last word in debate, which meant in practice that none would open the subject of discussion until he spoke the introductory word, while the summing up or judgment, as the case might be, was entirely in his hands.

As a badge of supremacy in Council and ceremonial, he wore a fillet about his head, made of a single Kahoko or coconut palm leaf plucked from the young—white topmost sheath of the tree, and knotted above the middle of his forehead. This fillet must be made of a leaflet which had grown facing the sunshine on the eastern side of the island and was called

**Kumanara** = 'the amulet of the sun'.

It rendered the wearer **Kamana**, which means that he would cause to be mansed (accused or in danger of sudden death) any person who contradicted him or otherwise offended his dignity while he performed his ceremonial functions. It seems, however, that this quality of 'powerlessness' was attached to the person of the senior Karongona as a man even without the presence of the amulet of the sun, as will be seen later. This amulet, sometimes called alternatively **Kumanara** Kamana (the amulet of making accused), nearly enhanced the sovereignty which was already inherent in the individual as a manifestation of his birth and function.

*Elemona* in English means to mean to act or to retain the pen.
Harry took his seat in the lot a little in advance of the rest of the clan members, so was the junior of all persons of the clan in ceremonial gatherings, the elder of Karongo n wa first assumed his own amulet and then, in a low voice, muttered the magico-religious formula called *tawotau*, of which the object was to make clear the path of his words. I have been unable to obtain a specimen of this formula, but it is said to have been recited with the head lowered, while the hands were slowly rubbed together, palm on palm. After three consecutive repetitions, the hands were thrown out with palms inwards and elbows against the body, and lifting his head the performer said, 'anaa; ra no agoga' (Take it up, for I will speak). The debate or the ceremony might then begin.

Attached to Karongo n wa was a very clear-cut doctrine of infallibility concerning certain race-traditions. This clan is considered still to be the only genuine authority on the myths of the people, especially the creator-myth with its appendices, and on the legends of the immigration from Somoa. This does not mean to say that no other clans are in possession of myths and traditions; many people outside the Karongo n wa group can give versions of the creator-story and the arrival from Somoa, which are the more interesting because they sometimes differ considerably from the Karongo n wa rendering; but they would never dream of putting up their versions in competition with those of Karongo n wa, nor indeed even of mentioning them in the presence of an elder of that clan. In the more informal discussion of tradition that a little gathering of old men will often engage, it was, and still is, considered a great impropriety to question a detail given by a member of Karongo n wa, a to-point-out as

* Kaitaka mean one teeka.

make clear front of his words.

The head was poorly bowed only to prevent the amulet from being the words of the formula, which in this position would be muttered into the chest.
mission, even though it may be glaringly patent to all present. To dispute such a motive in the past was considered to render a man mānau, and liable to moral sickness; and this applied whether the discussion took place in the mānau or in a private dwelling.

This infallibility in matters of tradition seems to indicate that Karonga nūvua may have been an organisation closely allied to the ōkākau of the Māori, and the priestly colleges of Polynesia, which were also the repositories of such knowledge. It is very far from my purpose to oppose the idea that this was originally a priestly clan, but one of its principal differences from the sacred organisations of New Zealand and Polynesia is that it seems never to have performed the office of public genealogist. While pretending to absolute knowledge of the names of the ancestors who arrived from Samoa, and of the social groups to which they belonged, it does not claim to be an authority upon the generations locally descended from them. Thus the members of a clan will decide for themselves upon the validity of any man’s claim to belong to their group, and will only go to Karonga nūvua for information concerning their legendary ancestor who took part in the Samoan migration.

Nevertheless, it seems possible that all genealogical information may at one time have been in the keeping of Karonga nūvua; for it is certainly a fact that the only magical details that now subsist concerning the Samoan founders of those clan-ancestors who took part in the migration to the Bulbeite are obtainable from members of this clan alone. That it does not now perform the function of public genealogist may be due to the scattering of the clans over various sixteen islands, which was the immediate result of the migration from Samoa to the Bulbeite group.

at all ceremonial feasts, when the food was divided formally between the clans in the manner to be described later, Karonga nūvua was given the first portion (to mean
The island of Tokeri was told that after the

fardana's harvest had been gathered in, which in a normal year

would be about the time of the autumnal equinox, no native

was allowed to taste of the various products made with the

fruit until a feast had been held in the manceba of his

settlement, and Karongoa n usa had eaten the first-fruits. But

there seems to be some doubt about this on the island

named, and I have been unable to confirm it elsewhere.

In the construction of the manceba, the first pile

of thatch to be laid on the roof was that covering the

middle rafta of the eastern side, whereas the people

of Karongoa n usa were grouped.

A native explanation of the pre-eminence of this

clan in the ceremonial of the manceba is that 'it is

Samoa'; that is to say, it represents the victorious immigrants

from Samoa into the Gilbert Islands. It is not asserted that

Karongoa and its allied groups were the only clans whose

ancestors took part in the invasion, or the series of invasions, from

Samoa; but it is stated that the progenitors of

Karongoa n usa were kings on Upolu before the immigration, i.e.

the ancestors of those legendary dynasties of kings which were

established on Tanarua, Bem, and Honuati as a result of the

successive waves of invasion from the south. That all the

evidence of tradition supports this claim will be shown by

reference to the sections in which the legends of the coming

from Samoa are analyzed. What seems to be fairly well
substantiated by the analyses of these traditions so that the final immigration from the South was made by a swarm in which Karangaroa was very strongly represented. It is true that an earlier movement from Samoa had already infested in Tuamotu a dynasty of kings called Kristo, whose clan is also known to have been Karangaroa in era; but this movement seems to have immediately affected only that single island, whereas the later swarm is shown by direct evidence to have settled upon at least eleven out of the sixteen units. Coming as conquerors to the group, covering so large an area, and having the prestige of a kingly ancestry upon Samoa, it is easy to understand how the people of Karangaroa in era were able to assume all their hereditary privileges in the marae of their new homes, and to establish them so securely as part of the infested system that even when the political organisation became modified to the extent that the kingly and chiefly régime developed into something approaching a democracy, as happened in many islands, the clan still continued to enjoy its ancient pre-eminence in the social and religious ceremonial of the marae.

Besides the title of 'Samoa', which is known throughout the group, common consent in several islands, especially Haokei and Blasaro, also confers the epithet of 'Sun' on the clan of Karangaroa in era. It has already been seen that the title-worn on ceremonial occasions by the elder of the group is called the amulet of the Sun; that the stone stud of the marae, which is included within the clan sitting-space is named Sun; and that an inhibition rests on one who behoves in an ancestor's mana within the edifice to the expression, 'Ia Tai Tai i raraon te marae - The Sun is in the marae.'

In the native mind of Haokei and Blasaro the various components of this complex of ideas connected with the Sun are so dependent one upon the others that they must be regarded simultaneously. We cannot afford to examine them separately
and individually if we are to obtain a true view of their
significance, since the teller himself does not methodically
distinguish between the elemental parts of any given compound
of beliefs, but regards them, however conflicting and contradicting
they may seem in detail to us, as one and indivisible. It is
then very quality of togetherness that gives them vital meaning
to him. For example, in the complex of beliefs
connected with the sun before us, he does not evaluate the
force of the sun-title as applied respectively to a clan and a
stone in the waraka; he does not say to himself, "The
stone is so-named because it is a representation of the
sun's body, and the clan because it is a representation of his
power; he does not even wonder why he simply
accepts and states what to him is a perfectly satisfying fact,
that both stone and clan are the sun, and because the
fact is so, the are so permanently and indivisibly bound
in his mind with the other. Similarly, in his use of
the expression, "the sun is in the waraka," he does not
stop to ask himself whether he refers to the sun
itself, or its invisible emanation; or the clan, or the stone bearing
its name. As he speaks, he means all these things; that
is to say, that just as an unscientific mind will view a
complicated machine of chemical solutions as one simple liquid,
so does he embrace in a single thought and evoke in a
synecdochic word the triple unity of sun, clan, and stone.
Only by realizing this do we obtain a true view of the
significance of the sun-title bestowed upon Karonga in waraka
on Warakal and Waraka, though the high ancestry of this
clan connected Simba in its application of "waraka" contributed
inwardly to its persistence in the ceremonial of the waraka, its
title to precedence is considered to rest chiefly upon its
identification with the sun. Ch. Abana and Tarawa, the
so still efficient, though not so generally known; on
Tabilewua and Bene it is claimed to be a few very old men.
who are themselves members of the clan; on other islands it seems to be the Samoan connection that now entitles Karongoa n'ua to its privileges, both in the estimation of its own members and that of the general public.

Though there can be no doubt that the people of Karongoa n'ua came as conquerors and chiefs to the Group, their prestige in the mona'aba is now entirely divorced from the idea of temporal power, and their privileges are largely independent of political vicissitudes. In Alemanoa, indeed, when the High Chiefs belong to the clan of Kabunara, the incidentally diaphoretic Binoka of 50 years ago, whose particular pleasure it was to override all religious custom and to display his power, became jealous of Karongoa's ceremonial prerogatives and deliberately assumed them to himself. Since then, Kabunara has performed in Alemanoa all the offices in the mona'aba that used to be in the hands of Karongoa n'ua. This is an exceedingly interesting illustration of the modification in a social system that may take place in a single generation as a result of local politics. This coup d'etat of the High Chief of Alemanoa affected also the two tributary islands of Amukua and Kenia. Had an engineer been able to conduct his researches only in these three units of the Group, he would have entirely missed the importance of the Karongoa clan in the social organisation of the Collettis; he would have heard nothing of its connection with the sun; and he would have failed to find any of the Karongoa immigration myths, which throw so much light on the coming from Samoan for these two faded out in memory with the passing of the privileges of the clan.
The deliberate stroke of disorganization which Broka
was obliged to effect in Abemama, in order to retar
dor its precedence, only seems to throw into greater relief
the durable character of its privileges, for before their abolition
they had subsisted intact through successive generations
of powerful High Chiefs. Then, eventual loss for political
reasons was quite exceptional, being without a parallel in
any other Gilbert Island. Elsewhere, whatever may have been
the accidents of war or other material circumstances, Kaieroga
remained supreme in the maneaba from the time of the
Samoan immigration right up to the coming of the British
Flag in 1892. A Kaierogan man might be stripped of all
his lands and forced to do menial work for the victorious
chief of another clan, but in the maneaba he spoke with all
the old authority; his chief listened meekly to his words,
and forbade to contradict him, lest he should become mana.
This was recognized on every island, (except Abemama and
its tributaries) when the chiefly system prevailed. Furthermore,
a chief could not save his face by excluding a Kaierogan
menal from his maneaba for the members of this clan held
the sacred right of demanding entry on any ceremonial
occasion, to refuse which was to become immediately mana.
Neither did the accidents of war affect the internal
organization of the clan. It happened several times during the last
two centuries of Tarawa political history that a younger branch
of Kaieroga was in the victorious side, while the senior branch
had joined the conquered faction, and consequently became the
'exterminator of the clan' of its junior. But this had no
effect upon its rights of paramountcy for ceremonial purposes; its
eldest representative still remained the spokesman of the entire group in

Read, Amen, Tarawa, Kanawa, and Rotui. But some had
the chiefly and high-chiefly system, but as shown elsewhere, did
not possess the same clan-organization as the other islands.
the notion. The application of the genealogical method of
inquiry on five islands has shown me no exceptions to this rule
with reference to temporal power, there is a saying
current throughout the group, that only a dynasty of the
(High Chiefs) descended from Karonga can stand firm for very long
on any islet. The theory is but feebly supported by facts on
Alamana, where perhaps the most powerful of the three lines of
High Chiefs found in the Cabinda belongs to the clan of
Karuna, and is connected with Karonga only through an
ancestries of ten generations back. It is true, however,
but in Alamana the Mea Karua; the fourth of his dynasty,
so one of the Karonga men group; whereas on Buteitani,
though this clan is not an entity of the local social
organization, the High Chiefs, of whom an individual also
named Karua, in the row with his successors, are known to
be descended in the male line from the ancient Karonga king
of Tana. Certainly when temporal power is added to
the ceremonial prestige of Karonga, as in Alamana, the respect
paid to the clan is most potent; and this is natural, since
its functions are so large confined to the macebela but
embrace also the duties and privileges of physical kingship.
It is natural, too, that when both ritual and temporal
importance are vested in the same person, a certain amount of
confusion should be apparent as to the exact limits of his
title to respect on the one ground or the other. In Alamana,
the High Chief's membership of the Karonga clan seems in the
past to have endowed his person with a sweetness not enjoyed
by the infinitely more despotic Karuna Kings of Alamana,
not only within but outside the macebela. It was on offence to
discuss the slightest word of the isea, and a man was considered to be
danger if he made the smallest of impatient references to his
greatness of habits or fame. Thus it seems that the accident of
temporal kingship on Alamana extended to political and mundane life.
The scope of those sanctions by which Karonga was annually surrounded
only in the Kanongoa during the performance of its ceremonial functions. We have also an example of this in the legend of Neu Ki-manoe and Bea-ma-Tekai. Bea-ma-Tekai was King and at the same time member of Kanongoa; therefore, according to the tradition, they were Kanongoa both inside and outside the Manoeela; and when Tabuna or Terente expressed his impatience that the heroes should have closed him and his folk to that island, he fell dead on the spot. It may be mentioned here that all the Kanongoa clans on the group trace their descent from Bea-ma-Tekai through one another of the Beman conquerors, who settled upon their islands 9 or 10 generations ago.

The precedence and the privileges enjoyed by Kanongoa n man appear to have been the same in all three styles of Manoeela known to the Melanesians; the functions of the other clans, however, varied according to the type of building in which the feast or ceremony took place. The differences between the Tabuny and the Hau-mategalu styles, as far as concerned the precedence of clans and the nature of their duties, were not very pronounced. I shall therefore deal with them together, taking the Hau-mategalu Manoeela as the basis of my description, and noting in the text any divergence noted in the Tabuny building. The Tabuny style I shall treat separately, as the organization of the ceremonial therein was markedly different in detail, although similar in general character.

Hau-mategalu and Tabuny Manoeela.

The clan of Kanongoa n maike was considered the companion (taga) and the acolyte (tabonkai) of Kanongoa n man in the ceremonial of both these Manoeela; its members carried messages, generally in whispers, from the sacred clan to the other groups, and in the northern islands it existed often 'lifted the word' from the lips of the Kanongoa n man.
Spokesman; which is to say, the latter whispered his nation a his judgment into the ear of the Karongoa waroeko man who then published it to the masake at large. The privilege of the group was to 'partake of (Katanga) the fat of
Karongoa n ari in the feast, and for this reason it received no individual share in the distribution of food. Its duty was
to supervise the laying of the first nai (nate of green
planted coconut leaf) on the single floor of the masake. The
'first nai' consisted of a single file of these nate, laid end to end
from the southern extremity of the building to the northern gable,
against the western side of the central pillars supporting the
ridge-sole; and a second file laid from north to south up
against their eastern side. While these were being laid by
youth men of the clan, the elder stood in the middle of
the building, facing east, and recited a magic formula of which
the object was to prevent division among those who were
to sit in the building. By a stroke of ill-fortune, the old
man of Abranji who remembered this formula died suddenly
two days before an interview at which he had promised to give
it to me. From a conversation I had with him in public, it
appears that the materials used in the ceremony were the leaf of a
newly sprouted coconut, whose formulas had not yet separated
(LE LUNI LENAINAI), and a huo n ari, or cup made of
half a coconut shell wherein oil had been boiled and which
had subsequently been taken for magical purposes, a potion
was made in the vessel and drunk by the officiates before
the laying of the nai; while the work was in progress, he
recited his formula, at the same time moving the grant
leaf towards the four sides of the building. The time
for this ceremony was any hour of the morning, before the sun
had passed the zenith.

The nai thus laid by Karongoa waroeko, were not
furnished by members of the clan, but by the women of the
settlement at large. After the first two files were laid, the rest
was introduced in any order by any clan.

The clan of Katamake shared with Karongea the privilege of fetching the portion allocated to Karongea's seat in the feast. Its duty was to fetch this portion from the middle of the mensesa, where the food was divided, to subdivide it into three shares and, keeping one for itself, to hand the other two to their respective owners, giving the choicest bits always to Karongea's seat. In payment for this office, it had the privilege of using the likina (remnant) and the 'mange' (waste) of the food; the likina being any 'odd one out' left after counting round such things as puddings or baba-roots, and the mange the broken bits that might fall during the process of subdivision.

The Tabiari group had the privilege of receiving the second slice of the feast. If a fahrose were included in the food, the head of the creature belonged by right to this clan. In debate, its elder 'used the second word', i.e. he spoke as soon as Karongea's seat had opened the discussion, with reference to these privileges of following land on the heels of Karongea's seat, and to its position in the northern gable of the mensesa. Tabiari is sometimes called Tewar Merie (King of the North).

The groups of Te Kukvina and Te Ba took of the fahrose of Tabiari in the feast, the former fetching it from the middle of the mensesa and setting it before the latter, which subdivided it and handed out the shares. In reward for its office of subdivizer, Te Ba had the perquisites of likina and mange, exactly as Katamake in the case of the Karongea group.

The third fahrose of the feast, and the 'third word' in debate, was taken by the people of Te Bakabaka; the fourth by Te Bakoa; the fifth by Taurosoro, the sixth by the clan of Te Kua, which also took the task of the tahrose when it was included in the food.
The seventh faction and the 'seventh road' belonged to Tabuuka'ao. It was the eldest of the clan who supervised the collection of food in the middle of the marasla, making scathing or complimentary remarks upon it as it arrived, in the manner described in the former and it was he who made the general division from the central point. This was a highly hallowed function, the officiater being the cynosure of all eyes. He had the right of the most absolute freedom of speech in respect of the departure of the various people, and it was expected of him that he should pour forth a stream of humorous remarks during the performance of his duties. One of his chief methods of being funny was to make right allowances to race-tradition, such as the legends of the coming from Sarcoa, an illustration of his points; the human lying in the consequence of the gross mendacity of his quotations. It was said of the Tabuuka'ao people that 'they knew no traditions but they were clever in causing laughter', and it is certainly a fact to this day that the most successful reciters of humorous stories in the various islands are generally found to be Tabuuka'ao men.

The young men of the clan did the manual labour of dividing the food, under the direction of the elder, and they handed out the portions to thosesent to fetch them. In payment for its work, the clan took the niviu and the larger liftare from the general division.

The eighth stone and 'road' belonged to Nukumua. This group had the very important function of evening the edge of the marasla with its covering of floated pandanus coconut leaf.

After the eighth portion of the feast had been given, the other clans appear to have followed in any order, and similarly, after the eighth speaker in debate, the discussion became general.

The clan of Karuma'eto was architect of the marasla called Tobrang, its ancestor being the Tomata of Motang
who built the first edifice of that type on the north end of Burr, twenty odd generations ago. In his possession was all the magic formulas connected with the Tobiarng style of construction. Ablon and Neraua shared between them the method and the magic of the Maungatapu architectural style. But although in theory it was admitted that a Karuaetoea man was the best architect for Tobiarng, and a member of Ablon a Neraua for Maungatapu, a certain amount of confusion existed in practice. When the people of a settlement wished to build a new maecabe in a particular style, say that of Tobiarng, a Karuaetoea man might not be available; they might then obtain the services of a Neraua or Ablon architect, who would copy the Tobiarng style, but use the magic associated with Maungatapu. This would be considered satisfactory, the magic and the ritual connected with it being the essential thing. Taketa of Marakai, who built the Maungatapu maecabe at which I have just given the ground floor, was a Karuaetoea man, and therefore strictly the architect only of the Tobiarng style. But his constructive ability was so great in the Gilbertese estimation that he has been called upon to build in all of the three styles, in preference to persons whose clan gave them in theory the first claim to construction. In all cases, he used the magic connected with the maecabe of Tobiarng style.

Te Kauki led the duty and the sole privilege of blowing the ecoh, at whose signal the people gathered in the maecabe. The idea to sound it was sent by the elder of Karuaetoea, who transmitted it first to the elder of Karuaetoea, who in his turn defeated a junior of his clan to carry the message. As noted elsewhere, the ecoh was one of the titles of Te Kauki, being the invention of the clan ancestor and god Te I-Mane, King of the Underworld.

Members of Keake led the right of honour entry into the
members, not in the sense that they took their places before anyone else went in, but that when one or more arrived in a crowd at the western side of the building, their companions of other class would stand aside to let them pass first.
number once used for purposes of navigation. That list was compiled twelve years ago; so quickly is the old lore dying that it is doubtful whether one half of the names then recorded could be dredged from the collective memory of old men left alive today. As for details concerning the application of astronomic theory to seafaring practice, they are gone forever. It remains only to record what fragments can now be collected of the traditional seacraft and geography which, in addition to astronomy, helped the old voyager to make his landfalls.

As Europeans use landmarks, so the Gilbertese ancestors relied upon seamounts (betia) to check their daily position. These sign-posts in mid-ocean consisted of schools of fish, flocks of birds, groups of driftwood, or conditions of wave and sky, discovered — and once discovered never forgotten — to be peculiar to certain zones of the sea. Hundreds of such traditional betia were stored up in the race memory as a result of the cumulative experience of generations. It is difficult for us to appreciate how very concrete and significant to the native mariner were the signs of sea and sky which to us seem so precarious. The people had, in fact, a sea-sense which we do not possess in anything like the same degree, and it was obviously this gift more than any other agency which guided their migrant ancestors safe to land across a vast and strange ocean where their star-lore could no longer serve them.

The following tabulated list of betia bears mostly upon conditions of travel between island and island of the Gilbert Group, and should be read from the viewpoint of a navigator whose home port was Butaritari, in the extreme North Gilberts; but though thus local in their application they do serve to suggest the bold technique, the shrewd observation that enabled the ancestors to undertake voyages of immensely greater duration.