The Catholic Church in Fiji

1844 to 1886

By

Alfred Deniau SM

(translated from the French manuscript by John Crispin SM)
COVER PHOTO
Photographed in Kadavu,
a green coconut is about to wash up on the beach.
It will put down roots on the beach,
it will sprout and grow into a tree,
and the nut will die.
Rather like the young French Marists
who came ashore in Fiji.
They planted the Catholic Faith,
which has taken root and grown.
They gave their health and lives for it.
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Introduction

This history is not well known in Fiji, and it deserves a wider audience.

The original manuscript is kept in the archives of the Marist Fathers’ general house in Rome. It is a hand written document, and written in French: so no wonder that it is not well known in Fiji.

Father Walter Deniau was a Marist priest who arrived in Fiji in 1865. He worked in Rewa, Tailevu and Taveuni. He left Fiji in 1888 to join the first group of Marist priests sent to Vanuatu. So his history contains a lot of material that he witnessed: especially in Verata (Tailevu), and Wairiki (Taveuni). He started the first catechists’ school in Fiji, at Lokia, opposite Naililili. He started the mission of Verata (which later shifted to Natovi), and he was ten years in charge of Wairiki. He was an energetic priest, who used catechists well. It is a pity he was not allowed to stay in Fiji. Even the material from before his time in Fiji he was able to gain from first hand accounts of the priests from that time, with whom he lived when he arrived, e.g. Father Favier and father Breheret. After his time in Wairiki he was sent to Vanuatu, to help establish the newly opened Catholic mission there.

Bishop Blanc of Tonga wrote in the 1920’s a history of the Catholic Church in Fiji. This, too, is not well known today, but there are two copies of the printed book (in French!) in the archives of Marist Provincial house in Suva. In a footnote he mentions that Deniau’s history is the best of the old histories written by the early Fathers in Fiji.

Several years ago I was able to get a part of Deniau’s history photocopied and sent to me in Wairiki, where I used his account of the battle with the Tongans in the short history I prepared of Wairiki. After that I always wanted to get the whole text, so when
my work took me to Rome in December 2013, I was able to scan the whole hand-written document, and bring it back to Fiji in my computer.

So I now offer it to those who are interested in the history of the Catholic Church in Fiji.

**Wesleyan – Catholic relations.**

There was very bad feeling between the Wesleyan ministers and the Catholic priests of that time, and this comes through very loud and clear in this history. These were the conditions prevailing at that time, and it is necessary to understand this to appreciate the difficulties that the first Catholic missionaries laboured under. I would not want the use of this text to harm the good relations that now exist between the Wesleyan and Catholic churches, but at the same time information on the period needs to be made available.

The Wesleyan ministers were probably afraid that what had happened in Tahiti might happen here. In Tahiti an LMS missionary arrived first. Catholic priests followed, and the French government expelled the LMS missionary, and declared Tahiti French. That fear would explain some of the vehemence of the Wesleyan missionaries against the Catholics. As well as that, we need to understand that this sort of thing was common enough in many countries at that time. Thank God it is no longer so.

John Crispin SM
Suva
21 May 2013
The Protestant ministers were the first to arrive in Fiji. The Catholic missionaries came only much later. Before the arrival of the Catholics two Protestant sects came in succession to Fiji: the Independents (London Missionary Society) and the Wesleyans. The Independents arrived in Fiji about 1825, and established themselves at Lakeba.

Lakeba is an island in the east of Fiji, which had about fourteen villages, some Tongan and some Fijian. The Tongan villages were governed by a Tongan governor, and the Fijian villages by a Fijian chief.

In 1835 the Independents were replaced at Lakeba by the Wesleyans, who arrived there not so much as ministers of the Gospel but as diplomatic agents of George Tupou of Tonga. They had with them some assistants, but they were above all accompanied by a man called Finau, who was made governor by King George, and came to replace in Lakeba the recently deceased governor. He had received as his mission:

1. To take command of all the Tongans who were spread through all the islands of Fiji, to give them the order to abandon paganism and even the religion of the Independents (LMS), which they had embraced; to make them all Wesleyans if they did not wish to fall under the blows of the terrible bludgeon of George Tupou.

2. To always take the advice of the Wesleyan ministers in all things, and to give that advice full attention, so that they would be helpful to take possession of Fiji.

3. To protect people from the Catholic missionaries if they arrive in Fiji one day. And until that time comes to instil in everyone a great horror of these priests; to make sure that they will never be welcomed in any way.
Arriving at Lakeba the Wesleyan ministers came ashore at the home of the Independents, and they were accompanied by Finau. At first they had a most courteous conversation with the Independents, in which they expressed regret that they had arrived without anyone knowing at an island where there were already ministers of the Gospel.

They then went to talk with Finau. He declared first of all to the Independents that the Tongans both in Lakeba and also through the rest of Fiji came under the authority of King George alone, and they could do nothing without his orders or against his orders without incurring his anger. He then told them what his position was, why he had come, and the orders he had received.

After a very long meeting the Independents, understanding that there was no chance of success for them if they got into a contest with the Wesleyans in view of the power, the mission and the orders given to Finau, invited the Wesleyan ministers to dinner with them, and also after the dinner invited them to a meeting together concerning their present circumstances.

The Wesleyans accepted. After dinner they had a meeting: it was very long and very lively. At the end the head of the London Missionary society stood up and made a long speech, a summary of which is as follows: “After hearing all that you have said, and what the governor Finau has told us, and wanting to avoid any harm which would surely follow if we stay any longer in Lakeba, we announce that we are going to get ready to leave Fiji, and to go and rejoin our brothers in Samoa, who have already been there more than ten years. We ask only one thing of you: that you swear to never go and evangelize Samoa. Leave the care of Samoa to us, and we today leave to you the care of evangelization in Fiji.”

The Wesleyans swore this, and the meeting finished. Some days
later the ministers of London Missionary society left Lakeba, and went to Samoa. It was the 8th of October 1835.

**The First Two Wesleyan Ministers at Lakeba 1835**

On the 9th October 1835 two Wesleyan ministers, having arrived unrecognised the night before, and who were Rev. W. Cross and Rev. D. Cargill after a good meeting with the Tongan governor Finau, went to the home of the Fijian chief of Lakeba, called Tui Nayau.

Finau introduced them. He gave the Fijian chief a letter of recommendation from the king of Tonga for the new arrivals, which he read to him, in which he announced to him the new naming of Finau as governor of the Tongans living in Fiji. The letter read, Tui Nayau received the two Europeans with kindness. These two then placed at his feet rich presents which they had brought from Europe, it is said. They talked for a long time about the naming of the new governor of the Tongans, and the chief ordered that everyone prepare a feast (magiti) in honour of the new governor.

The ceremony finished, the two Wesleyan preachers went out. Finau took them with him to the home of the Tongans. In their presence he gave the order to all the Tongans to become Wesleyan, and he announced that whoever refused would have to endure the anger of King George Tupou. One of the Tongans spoke on behalf of all the others and announced that since this was the will of King George, and also the will of the governor Finau, they would obey and all would be Wesleyans, even those among them who had already embraced the religion of the Independent preachers, as this had been foreseen. The day passed in secret meetings, using diplomacy in the fullest sense of the word.
The next day the two Wesleyan ministers went to again offer gifts to Tui Nayau, and they requested through Finau for him to have built for them and their two families a beautiful big Fijian bure. Tui Nayau agreed and put the plan into action.

The first house finished, after again receiving presents, Tui Nayau had built a second bure to serve as a store house, so that the two preachers could put all their materials and tools which they had brought to trade with the Fijians.

**The First Wesleyan Church in Lakeba**

The ministers of the London Missionary Society did not lose any time in leaving the island. Once they had gone, the Wesleyan preachers had built by the Fijians (by more rich presents) a third huge bure, which was to become the first Wesleyan church in Fiji.

One month after the building of the church, says the Protestant Vernon, besides the 300 Tongans who lived at Lakeba, and who had obeyed the orders of Finau and King George Tupou there were seven or eight Fijian women. Two months later only 31 Tongans had received Baptism.

Unfortunately, adds Mr Vernon, the Wesleyan preachers had acted too quickly to catch the seven or eight young Fijian women. Tui Nayau was offended and irritated by the less than noble measures used by the Wesleyan preachers to introduce these Fijian young women into their church, and he publicly sent people to seize them and keep them in his house. They were made to submit to interrogation and the matter would have become quite serious if Finau had not reassured and calmed Tui Nayau.

Reverend William Cross did not remain long in Lakeba, he left in 1836 and went to establish himself in Rewa. There remained only Reverend Cargill at Lakeba, and he was replaced in 1838 by the
Reverend Calvert and the Reverend Lyth.

Reverend Calvert, who was a clever and crafty man, used all his cleverness to cultivate the pride and ambition of the governor Finau. He knew admirably how to use him to spread the most abominable lies against the Pope, against bishops, and against the Catholic missionaries, which lies, it is said, did not take long to appear.

The Pamphlet: “A taro ka kaya kei na Lotu Popi”

In 1839 Reverend Calvert put into the hands of Finau the infamous pamphlet “A taro ka kaya kei na Lotu Popi”, where the Pope was represented as a monster, bishops as excessively corrupt men, Catholic missionaries as liars, hypocrites, desiring human blood, who would only come to Fiji to deliver it to France, and to carry off its inhabitants into slavery. (Reverend Langham in his Fijian book “Jubilee of the lotu in Fiji 1885” page 32 himself declares that this pamphlet was printed in 1839.)

Finau, faithful to the instructions of his master in spreading everywhere this pamphlet and commenting on it, announced that it was important to be careful to hear about such missionaries, who would soon arrive. “You will know them”, he said, “by their big black robes which reach down to their heels. Protect yourself well, never receive them on your island”.

Such were the noises spread by the governor Finau on the island of Lakeba and in all the neighbouring islands up till 1844, the period when the first two Catholic missionaries arrived at Lakeba: Father Breheret and Father Roulleaux, brought by Bishop Bataillon, the bishop of central Oceania.
The Catholic Missionaries Arrive in Fiji August 1844

on the French vessel “l’Adolphe”.

It was on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of August 1844 that the first two Catholic missionaries, coming from Tonga, dropped anchor in front of Lakeba. These two missionaries were Father Breheret and Father Roulleaux. They were accompanied by a coadjutor brother and two Wallisians. The brother was Brother Annet, and the two Wallisians were named Pako and Apolonio. Bishop Bataillon had undertaken to bring his missionaries himself to Fiji.

The captain who brought them was Captain Morvan, who was captain of the French vessel “l’Adolphe”. This is what Captain Morvan himself wrote of the event:

“l’Adolphe” anchored at Lakeba on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of August at 8 a.m. It was on this island that Bishop Pompallier on his first voyage had left a catechist named Mosese, lacking priests to leave here. When “l’Adolphe” had dropped anchor, I sent ashore my pilot Simmonet, to see if people could come ashore. Simmonet left, but he wasted no time in returning, bringing the three following bits of news:
1. The English vessel “Triton” had passed here three days ago. It had taken the Wesleyan ministers from Lakeba to their annual synod. They had put all the chiefs on guard against the invasion of the papists and the French in the near future.
2. The chief of Lakeba curtly refused the invitation that I made to him to come on board to see the bishop. He replied to me: “If your bishop wants to see me, let him come himself to find me’.
3. The catechist Mosese has, it is said, left Lakeba some time ago, and is now in Namuka.

I gave Bishop Bataillon the news brought back by Simmonet. The bishop, taking my hand, said to me smiling, ‘Since the chief of Lakeba refuses to come to me, I shall go to him.’
I then put a crew in the whaleboat, and the bishop, taking with him Father Roulleaux, the pilot Simmonet, and the Wallisians Pako and Apolonio, went ashore. The chief of Lakeba, accompanied by the Tongan chief Finau, received the bishop, not in his bure, but on a rock on the shore. He spoke contemptuously, and to the request that the bishop made for his help and for his protection for the missionaries whom he wanted to leave on the island, he replied, ‘Your people can remain here if they wish, but I cannot house them, feed them, or defend them.’

Bishop Bataillon kept silent and waited. A moment later he sent the whaleboat back to the ship and along with the two Wallisians he remained on the island, to spend the night there. The next morning, seeing that the attitude of the old man had not changed in any way, he decided to go elsewhere for the good of the faith. He came back on board and gave me his decision. Immediately I got under way, and made for the small island of Namuka, where, it was said, the Catholic catechist Mosese was.

**Arrival of the Catholic Missionaries at Namuka.**

After terrible difficulties I arrived at Namuka on the 11th of August. Bishop Bataillon accompanied by Father Roulleaux went ashore. He was well received by the two chiefs of the island: by the Tongan chief, and by the Fijian chief, who after a cordial and respectful welcome promised both shelter and protection to the foreign missionaries. The bishop slept ashore with Father Roulleaux, and the next day coming aboard he asked me to prepare a cross to be erected ashore. The ship’s carpenter made a cross seven feet high from two well-planed pine planks which were painted white. I put a crew in the whaleboat, then Father Breheret, Father Roulleaux, Brother Annet, Pako and Apolonio went down on their knees and asked for the bishop’s blessing.
Having received the blessing they stood up, and Father Breheret, after blessing me for the last time, made his way to the whaleboat. Pako., triumphantly carrying the cross, got in first and sat in the bow of the whaleboat. Apolonio sat beside him and both of them, lifting the cross, held it in front of them. Brother Annet got in next, and after him the two priests. The whaleboat set off.

The bishop stood on the poop deck of “l’Adolphe. I was at his side, behind us all the equipment was piled up. When the whaleboat pushed off the bishop again emotionally blessed his generous apostles, and suddenly intoned in a strong voice “Vexilla regis prodeunt”. The priests, brother and catechists replied “O crux ave, spes unica”. It was the 12th of August at 9a.m. when the missionaries set foot on the shore of Namuka.

On board everyone was on the poop deck in the stern of the ship, and all had their eyes fixed on the shore. Suddenly a little procession appeared. We could see it file onto the white sand on the beach, and it arrived at a small hillock. At the head of the procession marched Pako with his white cross. Soon, arriving at the spot where the cross was to be erected, he propped it up on the ground. Father Breheret seized it then, and lifting it towards the sky, after having first faced to “l’Adolphe” in salute, then towards the island as a sign of their calling, he planted it in the soil.

From on board “l’Adolphe” at that instant, there were three canon shots, the ship was decked in flags, and everyone on “l’Adolphe”,

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together with those on the small hillock, fell on their knees and reverenced the cross. A moment later everyone, both on “l’Adolphe” and on the little hillock stood up. The bishop first intoned the Te Deum, and the Te Deum finished, “l’Adolphe” said a last goodbye to the apostles of Fiji, and set out for Wallis, where it took the bishop.”
The apostles of Fiji then set out for the village, where they were kindly received by the chiefs. They found out where to find Mosese, and they were told that he had just returned to Lakeba, and they were taken to the bure of a relative of his, and finally they were able to learn from the relative everything they wanted to know.

**Two Masses Celebrated at Namuka on the Assumption.**

Let us now hear from Father Roulleaux:

“The relative of Mosese received us into his bure, and soon we saw the whole population gathered around us. The first day and the first night were spent talking about religion and breaking down the prejudices brought to these poor people by heresy. Not knowing of the refusal we had met with from their chiefs in Lakeba, they were satisfied with our arrival, and they seemed content to think that we were going to live among them. We profited from their good disposition, and on the feast of the Assumption we celebrated Mass for the first time, and furthermore we had the happiness to baptize a baby, who later died, and whose soul was the first of the Fijians to go to heaven.

That evening a canoe from Lakeba arrived at Namuka. The people on it said that the chiefs of Lakeba had refused to receive us, and they repeated all sorts of lies against us. At that moment the attitude of our people changed completely, and from then on they stopped approaching us.

Namuka was a small infertile island, without a good water supply. There were scarcely 80 inhabitants, so it could not offer a convenient centre for our mission. So, two days afterwards, acting on the authorization I had received from Bishop Bataillon, I went to find the master of the canoe, which was getting ready to return
to Lakeba, and I asked him to take me in his canoe. I wished, I said, to spend several days at Lakeba to see Mosese, who had been left there by Bishop Pompallier two years ago, and above all I wished to meet with the chief and ask him if he could please get us to Taveuni. The master of the canoe accepted my request, and received me as a passenger on board. I took with me the catechist Pako, and I left, leaving Father Breheret at Namuka for some time with Br. Annet and catechist Apolonio.

Arriving at Lakeba, the master of the canoe on which I had travelled said to me, “Stay a while on the canoe and wait for me to come back; I am going to tell the chief of your arrival.” Having said that, he ran quickly to the bure of the chief, who had at his side the Tongan chief Finau. All the members of the chiefs’ council were also present. After the usual greeting, the master of the canoe said, “I have brought on my canoe a Popish priest, he wants to go to Taveuni with his group, and he is coming to meet with you, to ask if you have him take to Somosomo (Taveuni).”

“Ah, that is good,” said the chief, “so we are going to get rid of these Popi.” All his councillors rejoiced with him.

Finau then said to the chief, “I need to go to Taveuni, and I can take the Popi with me.” The proposal of the Tongan governor being accepted, Finau followed the master of the canoe and came to find me. Coming up to me he said, “The Fijian chief of Lakeba and I are in agreement with your request that you have made to be taken to Taveuni. I have come to tell you that not only do I undertake to take you myself, but before going there I shall make a short trip to Namuka. I undertake to go and search for all your associates whom you have left in Namuka and I will bring them here, and then I will take you all together to Taveuni.”

I accepted this offer of Finau with gratitude, and I asked him if it would be alright while waiting to go and stay with Mosese. Finau
then offered to take us there, and I accepted this second offer, and followed him. Some minutes later I was installed in the poor bure where Mosese was banished with his only convert Filipo Biu, who was baptised in danger of death, and in baptism he had found both health and faith.

Certainly it was a time when I came to the help of poor Mosese: persecuted by the chiefs, abandoned by his family, hated and scorned by all for his faith, scarcely able to find a little food, even ridiculed for the misfortune of the continual attacks of the Wesleyan ministers, his external conduct had already given away to their invitations. He was already reading their bible, and had stopped wearing his rosary around his neck.

After consoling and reaffirming him I adorned a small altar in his dim and smoky retreat, and I had the good fortune to celebrate Mass there on the feast of Saint Joachim.

The next day the Tongan governor left for Namuka to look for Father Breheret, Brother Annet and the catechist Apolonio. I took advantage of his absence to make a tour of the island, and to see what sort of impression the sight of a Catholic priest would have on the people of Lakeba. They received me favourably everywhere in the fourteen villages on the island. My clothing excited the curiosity of the children, and my missionary cross especially attracted their attention. Everyone, one after the other, wanted to see and touch it. I was constantly surrounded by a crowd of Fijians, who did not leave me a single moment to rest. I made the whole tour of the island with an entourage of Fijians.

In the evening, returning to my hut, my Fijians wished to entertain me in their turn with the spectacle of their dances. I then told them through Mosese that I had come to announce to them our religion, and to instruct them. The interpreter had barely told them this news when they all took flight, and I judge by that that
their hearts were little disposed to receive the divine seed, because since then no one has been back to see me.”

**Father Breheret Leaves Namuka and Arrives at Lakeba.**

Several days after Father Breheret abandoned Namuka he arrived at Lakeba with Brother Annet and the catechist Apolonio on the canoe of the Tongan governor. On the same day the Wesleyan ministers also arrived back from their synod. They were very astounded to find two Catholic missionaries, I won’t say installed, but introduced to the island, and they wasted no time in making their presence felt.

This was the first occasion that they used: A Fijian had fallen dangerously ill, and he begged for our ministry. After instructing him we baptised him. Once he had been reborn by the holy water the sick man felt relief, and eight days later he was almost completely cured. I set to work to complete his instruction. But unfortunately I could speak to him only through an interpreter who knew only a little Futunian (the language in which I spoke to him). The Wesleyan ministers, taking advantage of this, also came, they reproached the relatives of the sick man, they placed a Wesleyan catechist as a sentinel by the bed of the sick man, and ordered him not to leave until he had got this new Catholic to apostatize. On their part they visited him constantly, and filled him with so many lies and so much deceit that it was impossible for me to destroy the impression made on him by all the unworthy conversations of the Wesleyan preachers. The poor sick man gave me back his medal, and to take him away from my exhortations they took him to a distant village, where he died three days later.

Meanwhile the chief of Bau, at war with a powerful people, sent to ask the Tongan governor for the help of the Tongan people in the east, and requested that the Tongan governor place himself at the
head of the Tongan warriors. Finau accepted the request of the chief of Bau: he left with his many canoes, and our voyage to Taveuni was delayed.

During the absence of Finau Father Breheret baptised the child of one of the messengers from Bau, who had fallen sick. This was a child about twelve years old, who several days later had a very edifying death. The child continually clasped the crucifix in his hands, and he looked at it almost unceasingly. When occasionally he lifted his eyes it was to look up to the heavens, or to thank the priest who had baptised him; then lovingly kissing the feet of the crucified saviour, he washed them with his tears.

After the death of that child Father Breheret asked the chief and the child’s father for permission to give him a Christian burial. Having received permission he began the funeral ceremony with all possible solemnity. It was the one public act of worship that we were able to have at Lakeba before our definitive installation on the island.

After a long absence Finau returned to Lakeba. The day after his arrival he came to tell us to prepare to leave, that he was going to take us to Taveuni as he had promised. We said nothing, but when Finau had gone out we reflected and prayed to God, and after consulting with each other we decided:

1. That the first idea of our bishop was that we should establish ourselves in Lakeba
2. That the restrictions against us having been partly lifted, we were not able to abandon the few neophytes which we had for the uncertainty of a new enterprise.

So we decided that we ought to remain in Lakeba.

We went and told the Tongan governor, who got into a terrible rage, and hurled insults and threats at us. We withdrew to our quarters. The news spread to every corner of the island and it
made quite a disturbance, and the Wesleyan ministers went to the home of the Fijian chief Tui Nayau to ask him to go and order us to leave, and that if we should refuse, to chase us out immediately. The chief replied that he was not concerned solely with this matter, and he had other things to think about.

Three days passed, and Finau came again to find us. “Very well”, he cried, accosting us, “Will you finally leave?” I took some kava and offered it to the Tongan governor, which meant according to the custom of the country: Let us drink this kava first, then we shall talk after that. The kava ceremony was done first, and when it was over I said calmly to Finau, “we are tired from travelling, and furthermore we know (and you yourself know better than anyone) what danger there is travelling on a boat as fragile as a Fijian canoe, which the smallest reef can smash. On the other hand we know your affection for us, we have no doubt that you would not want at any price to be the cause of harm to us, like what happened last week to those poor travellers you are still mourning. On our part we don’t want you to be responsible, for us being eaten by sharks or cannibals. So we are resolved to remain in Lakeba.”

“You have a point”, said the Tongan governor, and left. But his approval has only a feint, because from the next day he forbade anyone on the island to bring us food to eat, or to build us a home. The chief of every village received an order to carefully obey these restrictions, and the rigour with which they were followed even exceeded the restrictions themselves. They even went as far as to steal Mosese’s yams at night, and this was the only food for the mission. So we were reduced to a deplorable state. Some of our neophytes went several days without eating, others, going out to steal, fed themselves on the first food that fell into their hands. For us, we had no other food than small wild pawpaw, which Pako and Apolonio went to look for in the bush with Mosese.”
Around Christmas time Father Breheret, Father Roulleaux and Brother Annet all fell sick. Father Roulleaux especially had a bad case of dysentery, and he asked Father Breheret to please send and ask for some medicine from the Wesleyan preachers. They found in this a means of lifting themselves up in the opinion of the followers, making them admire their generosity and their pity. They cared for Father Roulleaux with admirable zeal, but even while caring for him they never stopped spreading terrible lies about him: stealing women, etc. etc., even as far as things which an honest pen refuses to write. This caused him to say to Father Breheret that he had never paid so much for medicine as for medicines which he had received free at Lakeba from the Wesleyan preachers Calvert and Lyth.

1845 started as 1844 had finished. “During the first two months”, wrote Father Roulleaux, “Father Breheret, Brother Annet and I were all sick, and we had almost nothing to eat. If only sickness and hunger were the only suffering. Alas, the apostasy of our neophytes brought us the greatest suffering. Up till then the opposition had used only begging and mockery to make our neophytes dislike our religion, and our neophytes had held up well. But in 1845 the Wesleyan preachers had recourse to the Tongan governor Finau. He, at their urging, used force and even death threats. Our Neophytes left us!

Finau had gone too far. God punished him: he fell sick, his whole body became one sore in which many worms moved, which cause him intolerable suffering. He died as all persecutors of the Catholic religion die: with terrible suffering and despair.

With the Tongan governor Finau dead, we thought we were going to have a little peace. Alas, we were wrong. A more formidable enemy was named governor of the Tongans in Lakeba. He arrived during March 1845. This new governor was Ma’afu, the general of the armies of the king of Tonga. Ma’afu, having lit the fire of war
in Wallis, having cause terror in Futuna, about whom the most sinister stories had spread in Fiji, came to bring about our expulsion. A terrible persecution began, it was so violent that we had only to pass a village once to be insulted and have stones thrown at us.

But Providence looked over us: it permitted that the remedy came from the very excess of evil. The Fijians were so indignant at the infamous lies which Ma’afu spread about us, at the shameful conduct he had towards us, that one day Tui Nayau came to find us and said, “Priests, don’t worry, we Fijians know that all the words of the European Wesleyans, all the words of Ma’afu are pure lies. We know that their conduct in your regard is unworthy, and we are revolted by it. See, here is a piece of land, establish yourselves there, build your house on his land, and remain in Lakeba.”

The Definitive Establishment of the Catholic Mission at Lakeba in July 1845

“For a long time the old bure in which we lived (which was Mosese’s house) had offered us no more shelter than a leaking roof and some ruined walls. We profited from the permission and the gift of the chief of Lakeba, and we ourselves built a good house, which was able to protect us from the tropical rains, and above all which allowed us to celebrate Mass more fittingly.
Our neighbours, thanks to the intrigues of Ma’afu, showed themselves little disposed to help us. They even threatened to set fire to our house when it was finished, but their words, which we took more as insults than as the expression of a plan of action, kindled our enthusiasm.

Father Breheret, Brother Annet, our three catechists Pako, Apolonia and Mose, and our one neophyte Filipo Biu went into the hills to search for long pieces of wood, which they put on their shoulders, and carried home. Finally, after a thousand difficulties the house finished. From now on we could conveniently celebrate Mass.

The sole fruit of our labour in 1845 at Lakeba was the conversion
of a Tongan chief, who after being instructed, received baptism with his two children on the feast of the Assumption 1845. The two years of 1846 and 1847 were for the Catholic missionaries two years of crosses, contradictions and sufferings.

In 1847 Ma’afu made a trip to Tonga. He brought back several double canoes, and more than 200 Tongan warriors to help him convert the islands of Lau to the Wesleyan religion under whatever pretext he could find. That first pretext which he had waited for presented itself towards the end of 1847. A Tongan catechist from Lomaloma having been massacred by the pagans of the village of Daku, Ma’afu sent Lua, one of his officers, to avenge the insult made to the Tongan Wesleyan catechist.

Lua left Lakeba with a flotilla of eleven double canoes, and as well as the Wesleyan minister Calvert, there were 60-80 men on each canoe. The expedition of Lua lasted 17 days, during which time he ravaged Vanua Balavu, Cicia, Nayau and Mago, he imposed by force of arms the Wesleyan religion in the name of our Saviour Jesus, and he left in each village a Tongan Wesleyan catechist, who everyone had to obey under pain of death. When finally he returned to Lakeba, his eleven canoes were laden with loot which he had taken from all villages he had passed.

As in 1846 and 1847, the Catholic missionaries in 1848 had only crosses, contradictions and sufferings. It was in 1848 that Brother Annet, suffering from a severe bout of dysentery, died in the arms of Father Breheret, and went to receive in heaven the eternal reward for all the trials he had so courageously endured for the love of his God during the years he had spent in Lakeba.

Encouraged by the exploits of his lieutenant Lua, Ma’afu undertook to himself conquer to the Gospel the people of the whole Lau group. He began at Lakeba. From January 1848 he compelled by force of arms all the Fijian villages of Lakeba to
become Wesleyan. He then did the same thing to the people of the small islands. Then in May he left with all his flotilla to conquer the Gospel the islands of Moala, Totoya and Matuku. He came ashore first at Moala, tied up all the chief and influential men and loaded them like cattle onto two schooners. During this time, remaining there himself on land with a big number of warriors, he assembled all the rest of the people at the feet of the Wesleyan catechists whom he had imposed on them, and obliged them to worship, watching the worship himself like a verger, and hitting with blows of a rifle butt all those who did not bow deeply enough.

Several days later he took the prisoners he had tied up back to Lakeba, and delivered them to the Wesleyan catechist, telling them that they would return to Moala only when they had become fervent Wesleyans.

After Moala he made a tour of Totoya and Matuku. There also conversion to the Wesleyan Gospel was again made by rifle butts and head blows, but always in the name of Jesus the Saviour. After a great number of deaths in one place or another, the entire Lau group was converted to the holy Wesleyan religion. Everywhere Ma’afu left Tongan catechists, and he ordered that they be obeyed under pain of death.

All this happened under the eyes of the Wesleyan ministers, who said that while not approving all the crimes that were committed, they rejoiced none the less at the great good which resulted from it for all the Fijian people.

It was also in 1848 that Father Matthieu, the pro-vicar of Bishop Bataillon, came to visit the missionaries at Lakeba. Let us listen to his report, which he summed up thus: “I found Father Breheret and Father Roulleaux in a state which made me weep. Oh how I admired them. The good priests had nothing else to offer to God
except their crosses. How beautiful are those crosses, and how many! The suffering and each day since they arrived in Fiji is almost the only food they find in Lakeba. Their efforts are nearly sterile: three neophytes and eight catechumens are the total fruit of their ministry. Everywhere heresy has taken alarm, and never stops moving heaven and earth to chase them out.”

In 1848 Reverend Calvert left Lakeba to go to Viwa, and was replaced at Lakeba by Reverend Watford, who produced only lies and unworthy violence against the Catholic missionaries. He depicted the Catholic priests as invaders of land, carriers of daggers, drinkers of human blood. Tui Nayau himself was so annoyed by these words that one day he said to him, “You should be ashamed to talk like that about the Catholic missionaries. For myself, who never stop hearing you use such language I assure you that if one day I would want to become Christian, it is not your religion that I would take, I would become a Catholic.”

The Chief of Lakeba Tui Nayau Says he is Wesleyan 1849
19 October 1849.

In 1849 an unexpected event occurred. A chief of Bau named Ratu Mara became engaged in Lakeba. One day he sent for the lady he was to marry, but the father of the girl, influenced by Ma’afu, refused to give his daughter. Ratu Mara, on hearing this news, flew into a rage. He equipped a small flotilla and left for Lakeba to avenge the refusal he had been given. Arriving in front of Lakeba, he sent a message to the chief to say that he was coming with the intention of burning all the Fijian villages on the island, and to take him prisoner.

The Wesleyan preacher learning of the affair went to call Ma’afu, and by the use of gifts he obtained from the crafty Tongan that he would dissuade Ratu Mara from carrying out his intention, or in
the case of Ratu Mara refusing, he would declare to him that he was lending a strong hand to Tui Nayau to help him, and that he would himself fight against the army of Bau with his Tongans. ‘Impress always on Tui Nayau,” added the Wesleyan minister, one condition: that first of all he is to accept the Wesleyan religion if you are to rescue him from the hands of Ratu Mara and save his villages.”

Ma’afu accepted the rich presents he was offered and going to Tui Nayau’s house found him trembling there, and said to him, “Don’t be afraid, Tui Nayau, if Ratu Mara comes ashore on our island. I promise you the support of my Tongans. We will fight together against him. If he decides to fight he will not be able to hold out against our two armies. But first I am going to try and meet with him, and I think I can succeed.” In any case, if I save you and your people from the hands of Ratu Mara, promise me the one thing I want from you: that you become Wesleyan.” A trembling Tui Nayau promised to do what Ma’afu asked if he was to be saved from the hands of Ratu Mara.

Ma’afu then sent a messenger to Ratu Mara to tell him, “Don’t come ashore with your warriors, because I have made my promise: if you come ashore it will be not only the Fijians of Lakeba that you will have to fight, but all my Tongans as well, and I shall be obliged to be at their head. Help me avoid this obligation. Besides, the reason for which you wish to burn all the Fijian villages of Lakeba and take Tui Nayau prisoner is not a just reason, because the wrong that you wish to avenge is an individual wrong, and it should not recoil either on the whole island or on the chief. Come ashore, but come alone with a few of our people, and come to my house. We shall discuss with the father of the girl; all will be accomplished according to our desire.”

Ratu Mara, not expecting that he would have to fight against the Tongan army at the same time as the army of the Fijians of Lakeba,
had brought with him only a small number of warriors, so he was forced to accept the proposition of Ma’afu. He came ashore accompanied by only ten warriors. The crafty Ma’afu obtained the girl who had been refused to Ratu Mara, and satisfied, Ratu Mara returned to his canoe and disappeared with the small flotilla.

Tui Nayau and his Fijians were saved. It only remained for the chief of Lakeba to say that he was Wesleyan. He fulfilled his promise on the 19th October 1849, and made his solemn entrance into the Wesleyan church.

The Catholic missionaries during the years 1846-1849 had not harvested a single fruit of their ministry. Once Tui Nayau was Wesleyan, all Lakeba became Wesleyan with him. At the same time the Catholic missionaries were insulted, and their few Catholics persecuted.

At the beginning of 1850 the schooner “John Wesley” arrived. It brought news that the Pope had become a Wesleyan, and that he had sent an insulting letter to his two co-religionists in Lakeba. Then they began to assail the Catholic missionaries with a hail of stones when the passed through villages. They tore off and threw in the sea the rosaries and medals of the few Catholics in Lakeba.

Two months later, Reverend Laury arrived in Lakeba. He had succeeded Reverend Waterhouse as superintendent of the Wesleyan church. He came to make a visit. He brought the news that Bishop Bataillon, having violated a woman of Wallis and having a child by her, had married the unfortunate woman, to the great scandal of the Wallisians. Judge from that the state of the poor Catholic mission and the poor missionaries. The Catholic mission was then more and more persecuted with more and more lies told by the Wesleyan preachers. The poor priests made up their minds to groan at the foot of the cross, while waiting for a happier time.
At the end of 1850 the number of baptised Catholics had risen to five, and the number of catechumens to eight. Father Breheret, who was seen as the author of these last conversions, failed to pay for them with his blood: some individuals, excited by the lies and the jealousies of the Wesleyan preachers, came armed to the bure of the priest with the intention of killing him. But Providence changed their disposition immediately, and Father Breheret was saved. They were so touched by the gentleness and affability with which he received them that, far from causing his death, they became his friends, and went away full of respect for him.

One unhappy story, which did a lot harm to the Catholic religion occurred at the end of 1850. A bad French Catholic named Martin, a former pupil of St. Nicholas College in Paris, from which he had been expelled for bad conduct, made a trip to Fiji. Invited to dine by the Wesleyan ministers, he had such an impious conversation with them that these gentlemen thought that they would be able to draw out from him some good information against the priests and the Catholic Church. They agreed among themselves to invite him to their social evenings, load him with presents, and make him favourable offers, if he wanted to be part of their society.

Several times Martin refused. But finally, won over by the prospect of money, by the good positions offered to him etc, he denied his faith and became a Wesleyan. From then on he declared himself the enemy of Catholicism and the Catholic priests, against whom he stirred up even the Fijians. What can I say? He even had the impudence to write to the priests at Lakeba: “Wanting to save my soul, I have finally renounced all the abominable things which are done in the Catholic religion, I have converted, and I have entered the holy religion of the Wesleyans. I pray, fathers, do the same as me. Yes, renounce your stupidities and the depravities in which Catholics live, and embrace the holy Wesleyan religion.”
Arrival in Fiji of Four new Missionaries and Three Brothers
1851

When he came to visit Lakeba, Bishop Bataillon brought with him four new missionaries (priests), whom he wanted to leave in Fiji, as well as three coadjutor brothers. These four new missionaries were: Father Mathieu (pro-vicar) Father Ducretet, Father Michel and Father Favier. (Father Favier was not with the bishop, but he was designated and due to arrive soon from Rotuma where he was, and in fact he arrived on the 24th December of the same year.) The three brothers brought by the bishop were Br. Paschase, Br. Sorlin and Br. Augustin.

Before leaving, Bishop Bataillon, having taken advice, called all the priests and brothers together, and declared that his intention was to:
1. Maintain the station of Lakeba
2. Establish three new stations, one in each of the three most important chiefdoms of the time, i.e. one in Bau, one in Rewa, the third in Cakaudrove.

(We have seen that in the beginning there were only two main chiefs who had formed their chiefdoms: the chief of Bau and the chief of Verata. We have seen that a little later, the Verata people were divided, and had formed two chiefdoms: Verata and Rewa. By 1851 these things had changed: Verata had been beaten by Bau and its chiefdom destroyed. There remained on Viti Levu two chiefs and two chiefdoms: Bau and Rewa. Another was formed in Vanua Levu: that of Cakaudrove, derived from Bau, from which it had become a chiefdom and master of all Vanua Levu and Taveuni, and whose chief would soon bear the title of Tui Vanua Levu.)

Father Breheret, asked about establishing a station in the chiefdom of Cakaudrove, replied, “If the bishop wants to establish a station at Somosomo, the capital of the chiefdom of Cakaudrove,
and to have information on this village and the people of Cakaudrove, there is here a chief of Lakeba who has relations in Somosomo, and he will be able to give some information. He has proposed several times to Father Roulleaux and me to take us there."

The bishop sent someone to find the chief. He came and spoke very favourable of Somosomo and its people. The bishop was pleased with the information he had received, and when the chief had gone out he said that he had decided to establish a mission station at Somosomo, and he added: “Father Roulleaux will remain here at Lakeba with Father Ducretet, and they will have Brother Paschase with them, who will replace Br. Annet, who has died.”

Father Breheret was to found the station of Somosomo with Father Michel, and the two of them had Brother Sorlin with them.

“As for me”, said the bishop, “I am going to go with Father Mathieu, my pro-vicar, and Brother Augustin to Bau, close to its chief. If I am successful I shall establish there Father Mathieu, who will remain my pro-vicar, and at the same time the superior of the Fiji mission. Once that is done I shall try, if it is possible, to establish another station in Rewa, because Father Favier should arrive shortly. But if I can’t succeed to establish this last place, I will leave it in the care of my pro-Vicar, who will establish this fourth station as soon as possible.”

The next day Bishop Bataillon left for Bau.

A serious affair had taken place in the Bau district – a French ship had been pillaged, and its crew massacred. The chief of Bau feared reprisals, and waited day after day in the expectation of seeing a French warship bombard his island. The bishop profited from these events. He went to find the chief of Bau, Cakobau, and he
requested his good will to allow his missionary (pointing to Father Mathieu) to settle on his island. The chief did not want to agree, because the Wesleyan minister Waterhouse had asked first to establish himself on Bau. Not wanting to absolutely refuse the bishop the authorization to his missionaries to establish themselves in his chiefdom, because of the state of fear that he was living in, he undertook to establish the missionaries at Levuka besides the Europeans, adding that he was afraid that what happened to the captain of the French ship who had been massacred at Viwa might happen also to the missionaries.

The bishop, thinking that the station would be more advantageously placed at Levuka than at Bau, because Levuka was the residence of the Europeans, the meeting point for all ships, and the central point of the archipelago, replied to Cakobau that he thanked him for his advice, and asked him to give a small piece of land either in Levuka, or on the outskirts of Levuka.

Cakobau agreed, and he called one of his messengers and sent him to Ovalau to tell the chief of the village of Totogo (on the outskirts of Levuka) to give a small piece of land to the bishop. The chief of the village of Totogo hastened to give the land at the word from Cakobau. Father Mathieu took possession of it, and put up his house on it.

So began the station of Totogo or Levuka on the island of Ovalau. The bishop had the pleasure of seeing it start, and he returned happy to Wallis.
Station of Levuka (Ovalau) 1851
Feast of the Seven Sorrows, September 1851

The first months that Father Mathieu spent in the station of Levuka were marked only by crosses, opposition and sufferings. The Wesleyans with Calvert at their head spread terrible accusations against him. Calvert went as far as to pretend that the Catholic missionary had strangled unfortunate women whom he had abused, and hidden under the altar of his church the children born to them. The reputation of poor Father Mathieu became so bad as a result of all this that it was impossible for him to go outside without being abused, without having several stones thrown at him.
Finally Father Favier arrived on 24 December. He had been unable to find an earlier opportunity to come from Rotuma to Fiji.

The following year began with new crosses. Father Mathieu received news of his confreres on the other stations, and he learned that, if his efforts on Ovalau were sterile, or nearly so, the efforts of the others were just as sterile as his, that the fruits of the ministry of each one was limited to three or fewer new members.

However, at the end of several months Father Mathieu had a consolation:

Before leaving for Wallis, Bishop Bataillon, as we have seen, had recommended that he make every effort to establish a mission station at Rewa. Father Mathieu had not neglected to achieve this. In gaining information about Rewa, he had already learned a long time before that the true chief of Rewa, named Roko Bati Vudi, having been beaten in a war which he had with Cakobau of Rewa, had escaped from Rewa, and had been replaced by his younger brother Cokanauto, and he lived in Levuka with the brother and long-time enemy of Cakobau, named Ratu Mara.

Father Mathieu was put in touch with Roko Bati Vudi, and had frequent meetings with him. One day Roko Bati Vudi told him of his misfortune:

“Formerly”, he said to Father Mathieu, (according to Calvert it was in July 1846) “my brother Ratu Bunuve, the Roko Tui Dreketi, prepared for war with Cakobau, and he plotted with Ratu Rai Valita, the brother of Cakobau, vasu to Rewa, who came to help him. But the famous Varani, the assassin of the captain of the “Aimable Josephine”, having been told about the plot, went to inform Cakobau. The following night Cakobau had his brother Rai Valita put to death, and having put together a large number of warriors marched on Rewa, which he surprised and he surrounded
the main village during the night. At daybreak when the village of Rewa woke up, they found themselves surrounded by a great number of Bauan warriors. All the inhabitants, with the exception of a few, were made prisoner, were chained and taken to Cakobau. There were about 400 of them. Cakobau looked at them, and recognized the Roko Tui Dreketi, my brother. Then he said to his warriors, ‘Keep this man for me, but kill all the others without exception.’ The orders of Cakobau were carried out and there remained only my brother Ratu Banuve. Cakobau wanted to know where I was, and someone told him that I had escaped. He then asked where his own sister was, who was the wife of Ratu Banuve. He was told that she was in the village with her three children. He had her brought to him and under the eyes of their mother he cut the throats of the three young children of Ratu Banuve, then turning to Ratu Banuve he killed him with his own hands and set fire to the village of Rewa.

Since I was the enemy of Cakobau, he made a search everywhere for me, but, his searching not being fruitful, he went back to Bau. Before he left he established Filipe Cokanauto, my young brother, as chief of Rewa. Filipe was a weak man, and had always been a faithful follower of Cakobau. As I was the friend of Ratu Mara, brother of Cakobau and his enemy, I retreated here to Levuka, where everyone, especially the Europeans, are guarding against Cakobau, since the burning of Levuka by the famous Varani.

I am only waiting for the people of Rewa, who wish to avenge the death of their chief with the blood of Cakobau, to come and look for me to proclaim me the chief in the place of my young brother Cokanauto, and to ask to put me at their head to march against Cakobau, as they wish to do.”

Another day a representative of Rewa came to ask Ratu Bati Vudi to return to Rewa, which was being threatened again by Cakobau. Ratu Bati Vudi came to find Father Mathieu, and to get advice from
him. The missionary had a long meeting with the Rewa chief, with which he was so happy that he asked Father Mathieu to come and live with him in Rewa, assuring him that if He accepted his offer, he would treat him as a friend, would give him land, would have a good house built for him, and would take good care of him.

The missionary, who wanted nothing more, accepted with joy the offer of Roko Bati Vudi, and promised that he would come as he desired. “It is true,” he said, that it is impossible that I depart immediately with you, but I give you my word that I will follow as soon as it is possible to do so, and I will come and live near you.

Ratu Bati Vudi took the lead, arriving at Rewa he took the place of his brother Cokanauto, who retired into the fort of Nukui and remained faithful to Cakobau. He announced also to his people the proximate arrival of the Catholic missionary from Levuka, his friend who was going to live among them.

Station of Somosomo (Taveuni) 1851
Begun 10 August 1851, abandoned in 1852

Father Breheret had left Lakeba and gone to Somosomo (Taveuni), taking with him Father Michel and Brother Sorlin, as had been decided by Bishop Bataillon at Lakeba.

The two priests and brother struggled for a whole year against dreadful paganism, and even more against the infamous calumnies of the protestant ministers, who stirred up the pagans against them and made them feared. However, the fathers and brother never let slip any complaint.

Father Mathieu, had bought for the service of the mission a little boat called “Ta i Navutu”, and he used it above all to visit his confreres, and in particular the poor missionaries of Somosomo. He never ceased to be sad at the fate of Father Breheret, Father
Michel and Brother Sorlin. It seemed to him that it would never be possible to implant the faith among the people of Cakaudrove, who neither wished to listen to the missionaries, nor house them, nor feed them, and who never stopped not only insulting them, but who at each instant threatened them with death.

So when the chief of Rewa, Roko Bati Vudi, had proposed establishing a mission in Rewa, and he had made the promises of which we have spoken earlier, Father pro-vicar sent the order to Father Breheret to abandon Somosomo, and to come immediately to Levuka with Father Michel and Brother Sorlin on the “Ta i Navutu”, which he had sent.

The fathers of Somosomo abandoned their station and came to Levuka, following the order they had received from their superior. When they got to Levuka, they found there Father Ducretet, who had just arrived from Lakeba, where Father Favier was preparing to go and replace him.

They rested there for several days, after which they met together. They then made a resolution on what they should do. They decided that for three days they would each offer the sacrifice of the Mass, and they would ask the Lord for the grace to know his will on the subject of Rewa, Lakeba and Levuka, and that after that they would meet again to discuss and decide who would be in charge of each of these three stations which remained in Fiji, because Somosomo was definitively abandoned.

On the third day, after coming out from Mass, they came together again, and after everyone had been heard together, Father Mathieu, the pro-vicar and superior, announced the following decision: “Father Ducretet will remain in Levuka, and would be in charge of the station. Father Favier will go to Lakeba, where he will be the assistant of father Roulleaux; Father Breheret is asked to take him in the “Ta i Navutu”, and when he returns he will
remain in Levuka with Father Ducretet. Father Michel and I will go to Rewa to establish there the station that Bishop Bataillon, before going back to Wallis, had recommended be established.”

The next day Father Mathieu and Father Michel left for Rewa on the “Ta i Navutu”, and when the boat returned Father Favier embarked and went to Lakeba, taken by Father Breheret.

On leaving for Lakeba the “Ta i na Vutu” touched a rock and was quite seriously damaged opposite Naikorokoro, and was plundered by the people of Totogo, Naikorokoro, Nasinu and Tokou. It was obliged to return for repairs in Levuka, and from there to set out again.

**Stations of Lakeba and Levuka (continued)**

When the “Ta i Navutu” had been repaired and re-provisioned, it left for Lakeba. Arriving there, Father Breheret found Father Roulleaux in the same state in which he had left him the year before, that is to say prey to the same vexations created by the protestant ministers, and to the barrenness of the ministry. He shared with him the bread of suffering – alas almost the only food - and after fifteen days he left for Levuka, leaving behind in Lakeba Father Favier and Father Roulleaux.

Father Favier did not remain long in Lakeba: circumstances forced this because Father pro-vicar sent him to Levuka and ordered Father Breheret to replace him in Lakeba, and to go with Brother Sorlin because Brother Paschase, who was at Lakeba, was dangerously ill.

On returning to Lakeba Father Breheret shared once more with Father Roulleaux the daily sufferings. With his eyes on the crucified Saviour, he waited for Providence to send him better times. Alas, they never came. First of all in 1853 the two priests buried Brother
Paschase, who died in their arms. If afterwards there were some conversions, more than half of those they had before went over to the Wesleyans. The persecutions were so violent, and the Catholics were too new in their faith to hope that they would be martyrs. We shall see again the poor fathers in Lakeba in 1855.

**Station of Rewa: Begun 19 March 1852**

When Father Mathieu and Father Michel arrived at Rewa they never met any Wesleyan ministers. They had been there in 1836, but they had been forced to leave in 1844, and since then they had not come back. The Rewans did not want them.

The Catholic missionaries, without ignoring that they found very great difficulties in implanting the faith in this of all the chiefdoms of Fiji, where the people were the most hypocritical, the most cruel, the most cannibal, rejoiced none the less at the thought that in Rewa they were not exposed like the fathers in Lakeba to all sorts of vexations arising the Wesleyan ministers. The good Lord, who wishes all his works have a difficult beginning, did not spare them from suffering.

To give an idea of the cruelty and of the cannibalism of the Rewans, we are going to tell here two stories told by Father Mathieu, which help us to understand why it was difficult for our missionaries to implant the faith in hearts like this.

“In 1852”, wrote Father Mathieu, “the Rewans were at war with Bau. They had taken a prisoner. They made him suffer all sorts of torture before killing him, and there was great rejoicing everywhere. Having been told of what was going on, I went to the chief’s house to intervene. I had come close to the house of the chief, when he, seeing me coming, and having some idea of what I was coming to do, sent someone to tell me not to intercede for the prisoner, because he was too guilty to be spared, and that I could
achieve nothing. I intervened none the less, and I begged the chief to spare him both torture and death. All was promised to me, and as it was late I went home. But in the middle of the night the women of the village began to torment this poor wretch, raking his skin with rasps, burning him with burning small branches etc.etc until it was almost daylight. The men then came to prepare the oven where he would be roasted, they pierced him with many arrows, and amused themselves for a long time without killing him until just before daybreak.

Another time, an enemy canoe having run aground on a nearby island, the crew were tied up and dragged ashore. Their children, five in number, were taken to a house nearby and well guarded. Near the men who were tied up an oven was prepared. While it was being prepared they went and cut off, some an ear, some a finger, roasting these a little before eating them. The oven being now hot, they approached the unfortunate captives, and they began to cut them up while they were still alive. The captives gave out hideous howls, but the executioners did not even pay attention to them. At each amputation a dish was brought forward to preserve the blood to the last drop. When the cannibals had finished, they lit a second oven. They brought to the side of the oven the five castaway children, they surrounded them so that they could not run away, then they gave them over to the children of the chiefs to amuse themselves with, and to make them suffer the most frightful and abominable torments. They cut them up alive, and in their way they practised the cannibalism of their fathers.”

Needless to say with such people there was no hope of succeeding for a long time to make converts. 1852 and half of 1853 passed without the fathers being able to exercise any ministry.

Towards the end of 1853 war flared up again between Rewa and Bau. Father Ducretet, having been obliged for serious reasons to
go and visit Father Mathieu at Rewa in April 1853, was seen on his return by the people of Bau, who were lying in ambush in the mangroves of Navuloa at the mouth of the Rewa river. They fired at him. Father was not hurt, but the sail of his boat was riddled with musket balls. Then Father Favier had arrived. A Wesleyan minister, hearing of what happened, hurried to find the chief of Bau. He explained the danger in which his people were placing themselves in attacking the French missionaries. France will come with its warships, he said, France will have vengeance for the crime, it will transport you all to some distant desert island, and will take possession of Fiji. There is only one means of safety, he said, embrace my religion with your people, and you will be saved. I shall write to the Queen of England, she is my sister, she will hear my request. She will send many English warships who will come to defend you, or who will undertake to gain pardon for you from France.

The frightened chief of Bau gave his response the next day. He called together his council. The Wesleyan minister not only worked on the members of the council before the meeting, he asked permission to take part in the meeting. He tried his hardest there, and finally received the promise he wanted.

On 20 April 1853 the chief of Bau became Wesleyan, and sent out the command to all his chiefs that all his subjects were to do likewise. And so at one single blow all the chiefdom of Bau was completely Wesleyan.

But this was not enough for the Wesleyan ministers: they wanted all Fiji. To succeed in this, here is what they did. They went to find the chief of Bau, and urged him to appeal to the king of Tonga to come and help him to overcome the chief of Bua, with whom he was at war.

They promised him, it seems, to write themselves to Tonga, where
there were many Wesleyans, and to get through the Wesleyans the king of Tonga George Tupou, who was himself a Wesleyan, to come and bring him help. The Wesleyan ministers wrote, it is said, to king George not only to come and help the chief of Bau, who was at that time abandoned by his subjects, even by his relatives, who were always against him, and also by the Europeans of Levuka, but even to come and take possession of Fiji, as he had always shown to be his intention. They added: don’t even seem to come to bring help, and so to win victory over Rewa. You force the chiefdom of Rewa to become Wesleyan, and we and our catechists will be always on your side to make that happen.

At the same time, since they were afraid of missing out on their goal, they wrote to the English government that Cakobau, whom they called the king of all Fiji, had come to embrace their holy religion, and that his wish, which he had not been able to achieve, was to give the archipelago of Fiji to the Queen of England.

What had turned the Europeans of Levuka against Bau was that several months before, the cutter “Wave” have been taken and plundered by the people of the island of Malake, and the Europeans of Levuka, with Tui Levuka at their head, had gone to look for the cutter and its crew, and had killed 14 people from Malake. Cakobau and Varani of Viwa (his right hand man) had written to the American consul that because the Europeans had taken vengeance on the people of Malake without their consent and permission, they wished to cease all commerce in the dependencies of Bau and Viwa, and in consequence in Ovalau.

The Europeans made fun of the defence, but they became enemies of Cakobau and Varani, and we shall see that it would cost them.

But we return to Tupou: the king of Tonga certainly wanted to enlarge his territory. (The conquests of Napoleon, of which he had heard tell, kept him awake, wrote Father Poupinel. He prided
himself in imitating him. Also, he said, I am to first conquer all of Fiji, I shall then go on from there to Wallis and Futuna, and when I have conquered these islands I shall go on to invade the Navigator Islands [Samoa].) He was very pleased with the proposition. However, cunning islander that he was, he wished to go to Fiji first, to investigate. He left Tonga in the company of the Reverend Young on the Wesleyan mission boat “John Wesley”. He arrived at Lakeba on the 6th November and met with Ma’afu, and from there went to Bau, where he had secret meetings with the Wesleyan ministers, and many long discussions with the chief of Bau. Then, believing that it would be easy to take possession of Fiji, he went to Sydney to make certain preparations, promising to come back to Fiji as soon as possible.

King George did not remain for long in Sydney. In January he returned to Tonga, from where he wrote a letter to Cakobau that was taken to Bau by Ma’afu himself. It was dated 28 February 1854, and arrived in Bau on 22 April. Whether this letter was from King George or from the Reverend Young or someone else, it is none the less true that it was decisive.

King George, it was said in this letter, had read in Sydney a very bad letter against Cakobau. This letter was from the consul Williams. The consul said in it that someone had written against him in England and in America. Tupou counselled Cakobau to deal with the Europeans, to humble himself, to truly take with all his heart the religion he himself had adopted. Besides, he would soon come back and talk with him himself.

It was said in this letter (it is not certain that it was from king George) that in an article which he had read in a newspaper in Sydney that the consul Williams was demanding for humanity’s sake the destruction of Bau, the cannibal island par excellence, making assurances besides that it was as easy to destroy Bau as it was to smoke a cigar.
This letter made a lively impression on Cakobau. He saw then, said the Wesleyan minister Waterhouse, that his only hope was in the Wesleyan ministers, but that he must give himself to them, and to count on the Tongans, because his army had been beaten soundly at Kaba, and furthermore Koroi Ravulo had revolted against him and retired to Sawakasa, where he had taken part of the warriors of Bau. He therefore called Ma’afu and asked him to tell the king of Tonga to come as quickly as possible, and sent him as a gift his boat the “Ra Marama”.

Before the departure of Ma’afu, the Reverend Calvert asked the Tongan governor to send him a good number of Tongan catechists, so that it would be possible to then push into Rewa, and so make easy what the king of Tonga was preparing to do. Ma’afu promised the reverend Calvert that he would ask him, and a little late he sent about thirty Tongan catechists to the Reverend Calvert to spread out in the chiefdom of Rewa.

When the Tongan catechists arrived, hiding what he was up to, Calvert went to find the chief of Bau, and telling him that he wanted to use all possible means to make him king of all Fiji, he sought his authority to spread a large number of Tongan catechists in Rewa to work for this purpose. Cakobau agreed, and then the thirty Tongan catechists were distributed to all the chiefdom of Rewa. The ministers made frequent visits, and by giving presents they obtained from Roko Bati Vudi some land for one of them, and a place even in the village of Rewa.

Reverend Moore went to establish himself there towards the end of 1854, and built there a fine house and a magnificent college. Around the same time, or even a little bit earlier, Reverend Waterhouse went and established himself in Bau, and this is how it happened:
He was established in Levuka, where had a catechist named Taniela, when on 20 September 1854 his catechist Taniela was told by Varani to burn the township of the Europeans and to burn all the houses. Taniela set Levuka alight, and escaped in a canoe. After this master stroke, which cost the Europeans 2,000 pounds sterling, Taniela retreated to Lovoni (in the interior of Ovalau) with Varani, who claimed to be chief of Lovoni. From there Varani gave the order for all the inhabitants of Lovoni to attack Levuka and massacre all the Europeans. The chief of Lovoni was embarrassed and went to consult the chief of the Fijian village of Levuka, who replied to him, “We have guns and lead here. You can come. We will be waiting for you. But don’t carry out these orders, return to your village, assemble your people and we shall kill this Varani.

The chief of Lovoni obeyed the same day. He arranged for his people in the village of Lovoni to massacre the famous Varani. Taniela escaped, but his master, Reverend Waterhouse was not able to remain comfortably in Levuka; he left there and went to live at Bau with the Cakobau, who was as equally culpable as Varani, because the burning of Levuka had not been ordered by Varani alone, but by Varani and Cakobau.

In April of the same year 1854, when Ma’afu had gone to carry to Cakobau the letter of King George, he met at Bau with Ratu Koila of Somosomo, who had come to Bau on Fijian matters. Ma’afu, having got him to the home of the Wesleyan minister, proposed to him to have him named the chief of Cakaudrove in the place of his brother (uncle) Ratu Lalabalavu, if he would become Wesleyan and serve the Tongan interests. Ratu Koila promised all of this if he was named chief of Cakaudrove and a few days later he became Wesleyan.

Without following the stories which spread among the people on the subject of his being often called to the houses of the Wesleyan ministers, and of his entering the Wesleyan church, this is what we
can affirm: One day he was called by Cakobau who gave him an axe, saying to him, “Ratu Lalabalavu your brother (uncle) is a pagan and a bad man, who will never consent to embrace the Wesleyan religion. You alone are capable of implanting religion in Cakaudrove and all Vanua Levu. Take this axe and strike your brother. When he is dead you will be the rightful chief of all Cakaudrove. If there is any difficulty you can always count on me.

Ratu Koila took the axe and promised to kill Ratu Lalabalavu, and the next day he left for Taveuni. But Ratu Koila was a traitor, and even more than that he was a schemer and a hypocrite. He sought to become the chief of Cakaudrove, but he did not want to compromise himself, so this is what he did when he arrived at Somosomo.

Ratu Lalabalavu, chief of Cakaudrove, had ten children. The oldest was Ra Turaga mai Tavuki; the second was Ratu Vakalolo; the third was Ratu Kalou; the fourth was Ratu Golea, and the last was Mata ki Toga. Ratu Lala detested Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, the oldest of his sons, and he was particularly fond of his second son, Ratu Vakalolo, whom he wished, he said, to make his successor.

Ratu Koila hypocritically went to find Ra Turaga mai Tavuki. He said he was moved with pity for his lot, and told him that the conduct of his father towards him was hateful, and that his preference for Vakalolo was absurd. He said that all Cakaudrove was indignant about it, that not one of the chiefs was disposed to accept Vakalolo as chief. But on the contrary all Cakaudrove was longing for the day when it would have the good fortune to have a chief such as Ra Turaga mai Tavuki.

He even went as far as to say to Ra Turaga mai Tavuki that on his last visit to Bau Cakobau had spoken to him a lot of Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, of his excellent qualities, and had said to him, why doesn’t Cakaudrove get rid of the father to make the son the chief.
Ratu Koila returned to the attack a number of times, and by a thousand hypocrisies he so stirred up the passions of Ra Turaga mai Tavuki that he decided to consent to the death of his father. Having contained this consent Ratu Koila said, “I am going to try hard to find someone to kill the chief, and when the favourable moment has come to kill him, I ask only one thing of you, that you take the responsibility for giving the order to strike the blow when the time comes.” Ra Turaga mai Tavuki promised this.

One night, Ratu Koila accompanied by a young chief of Somosomo, went to find Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, he took him aside and said to him, “Your father is alone in his house, he is asleep under his mosquito net; all the surrounding area is empty. Come, take this axe, hide it under your clothes; this is the assassin, let us go to your father’s house. When we are at his side, I will lift the mosquito net. If your father wakes, don’t show him the axe, but if he is sound asleep give the axe to this young man. He has been told, he will split the head of your father.”

Having said that, the three assassins went in silence to the house of the chief. Ratu Koila lifted the mosquito net; the chief was sound asleep. Ra Turaga mai Tavuki gave the axe to the young man, and gave him the sign to kill the chief. He, instructed beforehand, seized the axe, and in a single blow split the head of the chief. The murder committed, the three assassins went in silence to a canoe which they had prepared on the beach, and they escaped to Welagi village, a few miles from Somosomo.

Ratu Koila being the brother (nephew) of the chief, had his followers, who were throughout nearly all of Fiji. That very night he sent messengers in all directions, to the people who were his followers, asking them to come to his help and to the help of Ra Turaga Mai Tavuki, and he continued to do this on the days following.
At Somosomo it was only known the next day that the chief had been murdered. They knew who the assassins were, and they recognized the axe which had been given by Cakobau to Ratu Koila. The sons of the chief all swore to avenge the death of their father, but they did not do it straight away, custom was against them, and the assassins had time to get their followers together. According to Fijian custom, before the chief could be buried it was necessary to follow all the ceremonies of mourning, to do all that will be explained when we shall speak of the death of the chief of Rewa, Roko Bati Vudi on 10 January 1855. But when the mourning was over Ratu Vakalolo and his brothers stood up, and addressing all the assembled chiefs, said, “Go home, and be here in three days with all your warriors, because we have to avenge the death of the chief.”

Three days later the war began. It was in Welagi village. From the beginning, Ratu Vakalolo, impatient to avenge the death of his father with the blood of his murderous brother, advanced towards Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, whom he wished to kill with his own hands, but getting too far ahead of the rest, he was killed and was the first to fall on the battle field. The two sides then retired. The warriors of Somosomo went to bury Ratu Vakalolo. In the evening all the chiefs assembled and Ratu Golea, standing up, said to them, ”My brother Ratu Kalou is older than I. You ought to appoint him to lead our taking vengeance for our two deceased, because he is the oldest. But since he is sick, I will lead you to Welagi.” All those present said, “You lead, but tomorrow death to the assassins”.

The next morning at daybreak the battle started again. At the first encounter, Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, the killer of the chief, was killed, and fell under the fire of Ratu Golea, who cried out, “Death to Ratu Koila”. But Ratu Koila was not the man to face up to combat. When he saw that Ra Turaga mai Tavuki had been killed he escaped, and going through the bush he reached Wainikeli, where
he took a canoe and escaped to Lauca and from there he reached Lau, and went to Ma’afu, who sent him to the residence of the Wesleyan ministers in Lau.

The fighting at Welagi continued until the evening, and there were many dead on the side of Ratu Koila’s followers. In the evening, learning that Ratu Koila was on his way to safety, they sent their soro to Somosomo, announcing that Ratu Koila had escaped to Lau. The soro was accepted, and war was ended.

The two armies came together the next day at Somosomo to elect a new chief of Cakaudrove. As we have said, the first four sons of Ratu Lala Balavu were Ra Turaga mai Tavuki, Ratu Vakalolo, Ratu Kalou, and Ratu Golea. Now the first was the killer of Tui Cakau, and he was dead. The second had been killed in the battle. The third, that is to say Ratu Kalou, became the oldest of the survivors, and so was elected chief. But as he was always sickly, it was decided that his brother Ratu Golea would govern in his name.

When Ma’afu learned of the death of Tui Cakau Ratu Lala Balavu from the mouth of Ratu Koila himself, and he knew what had happened at Welagi, he concluded that there was nothing to fear for the moment from Somosomo, and from there he resolved to realise his projects on Vanua Balavu (territory of Cakaudrove). The people of Lomaloma, who had previously become Wesleyans for political reasons and out of fear, rejected the Wesleyan religion, killed 17 of the most ardent Wesleyans of their village, and set fire their houses (by order of Tui Cakau, said Calvert). Ma’afu left with his warriors on the pretext of going to avenge the 17 dead. He went to conquer Vanua Balavu for the Tongan cause, before King George could come himself to conquer the south of Fiji. On the 3rd of July he came back to Lakeba, after having burned and killed in Vanua Balavu. He had killed a great number of Fijians, taken off sixty as prisoners of war, established Tongan chiefs in all the villages of Vanua Balavu from that time on like land conquered for
Tonga, and he demanded an annual tribute from all the inhabitants.

Let us return to Rewa, where we have seen the Reverend Moore was established. From the 1\textsuperscript{st} January, the chief of Rewa, Roko Bati Vudi, was eager to go to Kaba and from there to attack again the army of Cakobau. Cakobau was then sick with fear, because nearly all his warriors had abandoned him, even the Lasikau people had fled from him. Ovalau and all the Europeans were against him. Suddenly, says Calvert, on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February a letter arrived from Tubou which announced that the cooked taros had predicted that soon Bati Vudi would be dead. At this news Cakobau regained confidence, says the consul Pritchard, because it was decreed that Ratu Bati Vudi would die from poison, and the cooked taro only announced as a warning what would infallibly happen.

On the 8\textsuperscript{th} January, said Pritchard, the chief of Rewa was very sick. The women of Bau who had come with the Reverend Moore, and among others Adi Civo, who were preparing food for him, would be able to tell us what his sickness was, what he was made to swallow the evening of the 10\textsuperscript{th}, and finally what he was made to swallow that killed him, and so carry out this barbaric commission. During the night of 10\textsuperscript{th} January Bati Vudi died.

So the story was spread through all the chiefdom of Rewa that Reverend Moore had been sent to Rewa by the chief of Bau to poison Roko Bati Vudi.

The son of the chief, Ratu Rabici (in fact he was the nephew, since Roko Bati Vudi had no children) was at that time in Kadavu. People went to look for him, and he came to bury his uncle. When he arrived all the chiefs of Rewa were assembled around him to decide, according to custom, who among the women would have the honour to follow the chief into his tomb. Four of them threw themselves at the feet of the judges, asking them to strangle all
four of them. They were already preparing the rope and the place to hang them when Father Matthieu, notified in time, arrived, and he remarked what an abominable execution this was that they were getting ready to carry out.

At first he met with strong opposition: they told him that the gods willed it so, that it was the custom of the whole archipelago, that besides all noble Fijian women regarded it as an unsupportable shame to survive a king they were married to. But the authority of Father Matthieu was very high, he insisted and obtained that they would not execute anyone. He probably would have carried the day, but at that moment the youngest of the wives of the chief stood up, all shining in coconut oil, having no other clothing except a belt of swamp grass, with bracelets of sea-shells, a crown of flowers in her hair, and a cigarette in her mouth. She threw herself into the arms of the pagan priest, begging most earnestly to be reunited as soon as possible with her husband, without whom she could not bear to face the light of day. The pagan priest refused because of the presence of Father Matthieu. She then struck herself with a knife. Two barbarians laid her lifeless body with the body of her husband.

The next day the funeral of the chief and his wife was held, after which the great mourning commenced with all its ceremonies. The men of the chiefly family shaved their hair and their beards; the women burned their arms and their shoulders in different places with burning bundles of sticks. The cut off the little finger of a great number of children, and they circumcised all those who had reached the age of reason. The old men committed themselves to a profound solitude, remaining hidden in their darkened houses, where one could only speak in a lowered voice, for ten days. Finally, on the night of the tenth day, when the last ceremony was publicly performed by all the assembled chiefs, the nephew and successor of the chief, Ratu Rabici, stood up and addressed everyone saying, “The mourning is over, but before you
return home remember that it remains for you to avenge the death of your chief. Go and set fire to the houses and college of the Wesleyan minister.”

Immediately a band of Fijians armed with torches rushed outside, and a minute later the house and college of the Reverend Moore were set alight. The Catholic missionaries were already a long time in Rewa, and they had not yet converted a single soul, even though they were continually preaching the Gospel, but at least they had gained the respect and confidence of all. This passage from a letter of Father Michel is the incontestable proof of this:

“I was woken with a start by the frightening noise of exploding bamboos which the flames were engulfing, and which rang in my ears like rifle fire. I ran quickly to the bank of the river, thinking that an enemy tribe was attacking us. But how great was my astonishment when I recognised that the light was from the burning house and college of the Wesleyan minister, which had been reduced to ashes to avenge the death of the chief. I still had my eyes on the disaster when the arsonists came up to me all breathless and told me that I could return to my house and rest there in peace, because the gods who devour the wicked recognise the one sent by the Almighty, and respected his sanctuary.”

At daybreak, wrote Father Michel, the Wesleyan Minister and all his family escaped to Bau.

The following week the Reverend Moore returned to Rewa, more audacious than ever. He ran from house to house, clattering on his horse and shouting here and there, “Convert, or you will be lost. The British thunder will crack over your heads. Choose between life and death. You have burned my house, you must all embrace my religion, or I will call the British warships against you.”

Great then was the terror. The women and children especially
flung themselves on the ground with loud shouts, and the Wesleyan minister disappeared. At the same time the crowd of Tongan catechists spread out through all Rewa begged the chiefs to make peace with Cakobau. They said with all possible expression how happy Cakobau will be once they are all Wesleyan. They even said quietly that soon he was going to be made king of the whole archipelago. Nothing expresses it better than the sight of this band of Tongan catechists and the Reverend Moore, and all commentary becomes useless.

Things were at that point when on 20 March 1855 there arrived from Tonga the help waited for by the Wesleyan ministers and by the chief of Bau: it was an army of 3000 Tongans, who came ashore at Bau. This army was Wesleyan, and was divided into three bodies. The first body had at its head Tupou himself, the second was commanded by Wainiqolo, the third was commanded by Ma’afu, and was made up of Tongans from Fiji.

After a long rest on shores of Viti Levu, the Tongans set siege to Kaba, one of the strongest of places, an ally of Rewa and commanded by Ratu Mara, brother of the chief of Bau. The Tongans surrounded Kaba from all sides during the night, and the next morning they took these villages in the first attack, and reduced them to ashes. There were 20 Tongans and 200 Fijians killed.

This victory caused consternation among all the other tribes allied with Rewa. Without giving them time to catch their breath, the Tongans advanced as far as Buretu, which they first devastated, then reduced to ashes, as they had done in Kaba.

On the 10th of May the Tongans boarded their fifty double-hulled canoes, and came ashore at Rewa close to the poor grass hut of Fathers Matthieu and Michel, not far from the new establishment of the Wesleyan minister Revered Moore, who was triumphant at
the good fortune, and who pointed his finger at the Catholic missionaries with a Satanic smile. At the sight of these forces, which were extraordinary for this country, that is to say at the sight of fifty double canoes and all the forces of the chief of Bau, all of Rewa was frozen with fear.

Cakobau, Tupou and the Reverend Calvert, instead of making war, made a religious appeal to the people of Rewa, and they sent messengers to the chiefs to say, “Come together and form a council. We will wait for you until tomorrow. If you are willing to embrace the holy Wesleyan religion we shall not make war on you, and you will be safe. But if you refuse to embrace the holy Wesleyan religion, you will have the same fate as Kaba.”

Immediately all the chiefs of the different tribes were summoned, and when they had all arrived, they joined together to take counsel on what path they should follow. After a long discussion says Father Matthieu, the summary and conclusion of which I heard with my own ears, was: “The Wesleyan ministers are numerous, rich and wicked. England protects them ceaselessly with their warships, and we are not able to resist them. Furthermore, we are now incapable of carrying on the fight with Bau, which is supported by the terrible bludgeon of the Tongans. What can we do? If we accept war, we will all perish. Let us go to Bau, and to save our women and children let us say that we are Wesleyans.”

The three reformers, Cakobau, Tupou and Calvert, did not stop then in the unhappy village of Rewa, which was still mourning its chief. After several days, during which they had received the submission and the gifts of all the chiefs of the tribe, they then went to the island of Kadavu 63 miles south-west of Bau.

An unfavourable wind put them on the west coast of Viti Levu, on Vatulele etc. Everywhere people bowed their heads before them,
or became Wesleyan. There was only one chief who dared to resist them – this was Koroiduadua. This old mountain man was a great and formidable savage, who governed with a strong arm the numerous tribes in the interior of Viti Levu. When Cakobau and Tupou made their demands of him, he smiled and said, “If you want to fight against me, first return to your country, assemble ten times the warriors you have with you now, then comeback. I shall wait for you in my fortress of Namosi. As for you”, he said to Calvert, “I make fun of your clowning.”

The flotilla, its members aware of their power, set out again for Kadavu, where they desired to convert in this manner all the south of Fiji to the holy Wesleyan religion. They landed first on the island of Beqa, which they completely ravaged, not leaving a single coconut on the trees. They demanded the profession of the Wesleyan faith, and continued on their way to Kadavu.

Father Matthieu, who had left Rewa to go to Levuka on the “Ta i na Vutu”, and who had gone out through the Nukulau passage a little after the departure of the flotilla, had been also surprised by the storm and had been thrown on the reef at Beqa, where his boat had been damaged. At the moment when Cakobau was going towards his canoe to board it and leave, Father Matthieu approached him, told him of his misfortune, and asked if he would be able to take him to Levuka. The chief replied, “Very well, come in my canoe. We will go to Kadavu first, then from there we ought to go to Levuka, and we shall take you there.”

Father Matthieu thanked him, and got onto his canoe. The flotilla set sail, and in good time reached Kadavu. Hardly had they come ashore when the Tongans and the Fijians, like a pack of hungry wolves threw themselves at anything they could find, whether it was on the trees, in the plantations, or in the storehouses. The chiefs were called, and it was demanded that the population, laid low by this onslaught, make their profession of faith into the hands
of the minister of the Wesleyan religion.

The next day, the chief of Bau being about to send a canoe to the small island of Ono to warn the chief of Vabea of his arrival during the next few days, Father Matthieu asked Cakobau for permission to go on this canoe, and to wait for him at Vabea. The chief agreed, and Father went to take the Catholic religion to Vabea. He gained for the Catholic religion the chief of Vabea and several of his subjects. Several days later, when the chief of Bau landed at Vabea, Father Matthieu went to find him and said to him, “There are some people here who have freely joined the Catholic religion if you permit it. Would you agree?”

“Priest”, replied the chief, “all Kadavu is now Wesleyan. If Ono wants to be Catholic, I consent.” Father Matthieu thanked the chief, and went to carry his response to the chief of Ono and the Catholic religion began freely from that moment at Ono.

The flotilla remained two days on the island of Ono, after which it set sail again and steered for Rewa, so that from there it could go to Ovalau. When Father Matthieu arrived at Rewa he learned that Bishop Bataillon was in Levuka, and that Father Michel had already left Rewa several days before and was now with the Bishop. He then went to find the chief to inform him of the news that he had just received, thanked him for his generosity for taking him onboard, and requested that he go as soon as possible to be with the bishop on a canoe that he had found in Rewa. The chief agreed and Father left for Levuka the next morning.

**Third Visit of Bishop Bataillon to Fiji**

July 1855

When Father Matthieu arrived at Levuka the first person he met was Bishop Bataillon, who had arrived some considerable time before, and who had met all the priests. The bishop told him that
he had come from Lakeba, where finding that the station offered only no more than feeble hope, in spite of the heroic efforts of the missionaries for eleven years, he had suppressed the station, and had definitively brought back Fathers Breheret and Roulleaux and Brother Sorlin.

He had told the fathers of Lakeba to abandon their few catechumens, numbering between ten and twelve, three of whom were sons of the chief, and in whom Fathers Breheret and Roulleaux had placed great hope. These remained faithful, because a long time after the fathers had left these three young men fought with true heroism against the persecutions of the Wesleyan ministers. The oldest was exiled in view of his energetic resistance which he had shown to the Wesleyan minister in Lakeba. The second was killed for the same reason. The third, who is now the chief of the entire eastern district, remained Catholic for a long time. Several years after the departure of the priests he showed great zeal in baptizing those who were dying and wished to be baptised in the Catholic religion. Today he is not Catholic, but he says that Catholic religion which had been obliged to abandon is always the religion of his heart, and he still has a love for it today, a love that will never be extinguished.

The day when the bishop took with him to Levuka the fathers of Lakeba, a Catholic name Mathew threw himself into the arms of Father Breheret, and begged him to take him with him as his servant. Father Breheret, having asked permission of the bishop, took Mathew with him to Levuka, where this young man remained devoted all his life, and died the death of a saint.

**Bishop Bataillon Reunited all the Fathers on the 15th August**

When Father Matthieu arrived in Levuka he was in such a weak state that he was the cause of very serious fear. He had already
been sickly for a long time in Rewa, but his shipwreck at Beqa, and the privations that he had suffered there, had greatly increased his sickliness. Bishop Bataillon left him to rest for several days, then seeing the state of his health, he called all the fathers and brothers together on the feast of the Assumption 1855 and told them the following decisions:

1. Father Matthieu, too wearied to remain here, will go and rest in Wallis. Since he is my pro-vicar, he will replace me in Wallis during the trip I am preparing to make to France.
2. Father Ducretet is going to Tonga.
3. Father Roulleaux will be my companion on my trip to France.
4. Brother August has permission for what he has asked of me.
5. The stations of Lakeba and Rewa are suppressed. There will be only one station in Fiji, that of Ovalau, where there will remain the three priests, Fathers Breheret, Favier and Michel, having with them Brother Sorlin. They will visit the different islands when and how they are able. Father Breheret will be the superior of the mission of Fiji.

(The illness of Father Matthieu got worse in Wallis. He was sent from there to Sydney to rest. He died there of typhoid fever in May 1856.)

Levuka the only Station of Missionaries from 15 August 1855

Father Favier wrote:

“Father Breheret, Father Michel and I, together with Brother Sorlin, had been in Levuka for about one month when Mr. JB Williams, the American consul, returning from the USA, let us know that a US warship, followed by a French warship and an English warship, were soon going to visit us in Levuka.
In fact, the US warship, named the “John Adams”, entered the port of Levuka on the 19 September. The ship was commanded by Captain Rothwell, a devout Catholic, who was just, prudent and sincere. He did good things for us, and may the Lord repay him and protect him always. He demanded justice from Cakobau for the losses he had caused his consul in Nukulau in 1849, and for the losses suffered by the Americans in the fire in Levuka etc. He claimed 9,000 pounds sterling.

(Cakobau was not able to find the 9,000 pounds sterling. A company from Melbourne claimed that Cakobau had given them 2,000 acres of land, but he was not able to find 2,000 acres of land, just as he could not find 9,000 pounds. It was England who, having accepted Fiji on 10 October 1874, undertook to pay the debt of the Americans. [footnote of Father Deniau])

The next day the French warship named “La Prevoyante” arrived commanded by the excellent Commander Laurent, who came to visit us. We shall never forget the interest shown to us by this true friend of the missionaries. He went also to avenge the murder of Commander Bureau and the pillage of “L’Aimable Josephine”.

It was as if the whole world had come to visit us. Those people from Tokou, Nasinu, Naikorokoro and Totogo who had pillage the mission boat “Ta i na Vutu”, as we have described above, were seized with fear. Thinking that we were going to lay a complaint against them to the Commandant of the French warship, and that they were going to be very seriously punished, they came the first thing next day to say that they all wanted to be Catholics. Although their conversion was far from having a good motivation, we gave them a good welcome, knowing that the Lord can raise up from these first stones true children of Abraham. These who were the first to ask (to become Catholics) with the grace of God and instruction have become for the most part, and still are today,
excellent Catholics.”

Finally on 21st September the English warship “Herald” appeared, commanded by Captain Denham, a truly loyal man. He was sent to Fiji to take possession of it following a letter written by the Wesleyan ministers, in which they announced to the English government that the wish of the chief of Fiji was to give his lands to the Queen of England.

The three reformers, Cakobau, Tupou and Calvert and their fleet of Wesleyan recruiters had decide to carry both iron and fire throughout Ovalau. But when they saw the three warships of which we have been speaking, they were disconcerted, and they remained peacefully in Levuka. Two days later Commodore Denham wished to proceed with taking possession of the country, and for this purpose he had the document all prepared, so he convoked a solemn assembly. There could be seen the Chief of Tonga in the full dress uniform of a commodore, the chief of Bau in Fijian dress, Father Breheret and I, then finally the Wesleyan minister Calvert, interpreter of the Commodore.

At the arrival of the two Catholic missionaries Calvert became pale, turning towards the captain asked, “Why are these men here?”

“I only wish”, said Captain Denham, “that you come face to face immediately.”

Finally things proceeded in order. The captain addressed himself to the chief of Bau, “Do you wish to give these lands to the Queen of England?”

Calvert translated into Fijian, “Do you want that the archipelago belongs to Queen Victoria in the manner that we spoke of last night?”
The chief replied “Yes”, and the captain wrote the reply.

In the face of such a deception Father Favier was not able to keep silent. “Captain”, he said, “may I be permitted to say something?”

“Most certainly”, replied the captain “because it is for that reason that I have brought you here.”

“I believe, captain, that the chief has not understood your question. Would you like me to translate?”

“Certainly.”

“Tui Viti, the captain is asking if you wish to give your lands to the Queen of England.”

“Certainly not,” replied Cakobau. “I want her warships to come and protect my lands, but nothing else.”

“What did he say to you?” asked the captain.

“He answered in the negative.”

Furious at having been deceived by the Rev. Calvert, the captain tore up the document on which he had written the affirmative response, which the Wesleyan minister had given him, and he left the gathering without saying a word. The taking possession of Fiji did not go ahead. Calvert disappeared also from Fiji to go and give an account to London of his conduct in this matter. It resulted in the Wesleyan ministers trusting only the Tongans, and they spread such stories against us when the warships had left, so that we could no longer go out without being insulted, even to the extent of firing shots when we went past.” (end of quote from Father Favier)
The chief of Bau remained several days in Levuka, he talked with the Europeans, getting them to talk often and at length, and, crafty Fijian that he was, it did not take him long to understand that the English ship “Herald” had come to take possession of Fiji at the request of the Wesleyan ministers.

Once all three warships had departed, the fleet of Wesleyan recruiters went to impose by arms the Wesleyan religion in all of Viti Levu, which they toured around. When they had made a tour of all Viti Levu and the islands in the centre (Lomaiviti), Tupou came again to Bau together with the rest of the fleet to receive the presents that were prepared, and then returned immediately to Tonga.

It was the beginning of 1856, and the Chief of Tonga was in no hurry to leave, for it was the hurricane season. Cakobau was always suspicious that the King of Tonga had perhaps come to Fiji for another reason than to help him gain victory over Rewa. He also desired to increase his territory.

Less than a month later there was a massacre in the chiefdom of Cakaudrove. As we have seen, the war in Welagi was finished, but the followers of Ratu Koila were not all dead. They wanted to avenge the defeat they had suffered in Welagi, and the many warriors among them who had been killed. They killed and ate at Rabi two young brothers of Ratu Golea, who had gone ashore on that island to rest a little, and to wait for the wind to freshen, which would taken them quickly to Somosomo.

Cakobau profited from the occasion. He went to find Tupou, and said to him, before his departure for Tonga, “I would like to give you a present. There is in Cakaudrove near Taveuni a beautiful island, the island of Rabi. The inhabitants, who are only a few hundred, have killed the younger brothers of the chief of Cakaudrove. If you wish, we will go to Rabi, you take Rabi, which
will be very easy for you. You will say that you are doing it to avenge the death of the brothers of the chief, and in recognition of that Tui Cakau and I will give you the island of Rabi.”

Tupou was suspicious that Cakobau wanted to get him away from his territories, however since he saw in the occasion that was offered to him a means to achieve the goal which he had set himself, he accepted the proposition of Cakobau, and he departed with him for Somosomo, from where they would go together to Rabi.

When Tupou arrived at Somosomo he was well received by Ratu Golea, but the latter said to the chief of Bau that if he did not want to get killed it would be good for him to not come ashore, since he would be obliged to take revenge for the death of his father, for he was his father’s first assassin, because it was he who had given to Ratu Koila the order to kill Ratu Lalabalavu, and the hatchet with which to kill him. Ratu Golea even forbade his people to carry to Cakobau the customary feast.

The chief of Bau sent a messenger to Ratu Golea, assuring him that he had come to Somosomo only out of affection for him, and to go with Tupou to avenge at Rabi the death of his two young brothers.

Ratu Golea replied to the messenger: “Tell Cakobau to leave quickly, otherwise I am going to massacre him”.

Cakobau did not need to be told twice. Immediately, in a Fijian trick, he informed Tupou of the need he found himself in to withdraw, and to console the king of Tonga he told him in secret that he was going to go to Natewa, and that he would send the people of that whole great bay to help Tupou with his war with Rabi. He left, and in fact went first to Tunuloa then to Natewa as well, but instead of telling the people to help Tupou in his war with Rabi, he gave the order for them to fight for Rabi against Tupou,
and to exterminate the Tongans and their king.

Tupou spent several days in Somosomo, after which he said to Ratu Golea, “I have come here out of affection for you, to avenge the death of your two brothers, whom told me have been eaten in Rabi last month. Cakobau has asked me to render this service, and has told me that if I take Rabi, then Rabi shall be mine.”

Ratu Golea was a young man of 25 years, an ardent and noble warrior. He replied to Tupou, “It is not for you to avenge the death of my brothers. It is for me to avenge them, and I will do so. You ask me for Rabi to be yours. Very well, it shall be yours. If you come to make war there so that you have the right to say that you have conquered Rabi, go. If in the war you have some men killed, I will avenge their deaths.”

The next day Tupou left for Rabi, but instead of having to fight only the people of Rabi, he had to fight, because of the trickery of Cakobau, against Rabi, Tunuloa, Natewa and Navatu. He was beaten, and he left on the battlefield a large number of Tongans.

King George then discovered the plot, and full of just indignation he swore the death of the person who had wished, he said, to repay him for his services with the most monstrous ingratitude. He sent Ma’afu to Bau, in order to declare to Cakobau that he was going to return to Bau and take his measure. Ma’afu left immediately for Bau, and let Cakobau know Tupou’s intentions.

Cakobau, believing himself lost, and seeing that the chain of his evil deeds was going to be broken, humbling himself before the envoy of the kind of Tonga, strongly protested his innocence, and maintained with imperturbable hypocrisy that what he was accused of had never entered his head.

Ma’afu replied to him: “The King to Tonga has discovered your
trick, and has commissioned me to reclaim at once 12,000 pounds indemnity for his boats, Tongan blood, etc. etc, and to declare to you that if you do not pay this sum within five years of this date he will come back and declare war against you.

As for Tupou, he returned to Somosomo, where he told Ratu Golea what had happened. Ratu Golea heard Tupou, then he stood up furious and called his mata ni vanua, and gave him orders to immediately send for and assemble his warriors”. The warriors arrived from all directions. Then Ratu Golea said to Tupou, “Wait here. It is for me now to go and avenge your dead warriors.” He left for Rabi. By evening he had cut to pieces the army of Rabi, the remnants of which found safety in Koroivonu, where they had gone. They all came to him to make their submission. He spared their lives, and allowed them to rebuild their bures at Koroivonu, “Because”, he said, “I have burned all your bures on Rabi, and I have given your island to the King of Tonga.” The next day Ratu Golea was again in Somosomo.

The King of Tonga, ashamed of his defeat, and in a hurry to return to Lau, went and said goodbye to Ratu Golea, and in a secret meeting which Tui Cakau himself reported to me,, Tupou said to him, “Thank you, Tui Cakau, and at the moment of my leaving I ask you for a mark of friendship: Give me the pleasure of making you Wesleyan, together with all your people. Already all of Fiji, apart from Taveuni and Vanua Levu, has accepted religion. Don’t remain the only pagans.”

Ratu Golea made a lot of difficulties. However, in the end he accepted, and after the meeting he sent his mata ni vanua to all the tribes to order that all his people become Wesleyan. The next day all Cakaudrove was Wesleyan. Tupou then said to Ratu Golea, “I am leaving this Tongan catechist in whom I have confidence; let him be your catechist at Somosomo, and promise me to allow a Wesleyan minister to establish himself in Wairiki.” Ratu Golea
again agreed. The king of Tonga went to his canoe, and set sail with all his army for Lau, where he was soon joined by the famous Ma’afu.

Arriving in Lakeba, Tupou remained there for a long time with all his Tongans. Finally, towards the end of 1856 he sent for Wainiqolo and Ma’afu and said to them, “I am going to return to Tonga with my first section of the army. You two remain in Fiji with your troops, and busy yourselves with the conquest of Vanua Levu and Taveuni to the Tongan cause, as you have already done in Lau, Viti Levu and all the south of Fiji. Vanua Levu and Taveuni will not be difficult to conquer. You, Ma’afu, are to conquer for us the small chiefdom of Bua with all its dependencies: Nadi on one side and Yasawa on the other. This matter will be easy for you, it will be enough for you to succeed if you make an agreement with Tui Bua, who will fall into your lap because he is Tongan, only his mother is Fijian.

“Once you have conquered Bua, take the war to Macuata through Tui Bua, because you have nothing to gain from Ritova, who is a stubborn person. Look well and see if there could be in Macuata a second Ratu Koila. If you can find such a person, win him over to the side of Bua and get him to revolt against his chief. Tell him that your intention is to support him with all military force, that your intention and the intention of Tui Bua is to establish him as chief of all Macuata in the place of Ritova, and you place only three conditions:
1. That he become Wesleyan, and that he occupies himself with forcing all Macuata to become Wesleyan once he is the chief.
2. That he is to occupy himself with governing all Macuata in the name of the king of Tonga alone.
3. That he will not allow the Catholic religion to be introduced into his chiefdom.

In this manner the Wesleyan ministers and the Tongan catechists
that you will get for them will be always on our side when needed.”

Tupou then said to Wainiqolo, “For you, Wainiqolo, remain on friendly terms with Ratu Golea, and don’t push to get Ratu Koila to return to Cakaudrove. Let him remain with the Wesleyan ministers in Lau, until such time as you judge that he can return without problem to Cakaudrove to increase more easily the number of his followers. If one day you make the decision to declare war on Ratu Golea, let it be for a reasonable pretext, and only after being assured that the party of Ratu Koila is sufficiently strong to give you hope of victory. When you have beaten Ratu Golea, or when you have been able to remove him from power in some way, set up Ratu Koila as chief of Cakaudrove, with the same three conditions that I have given to Ma’afu for Macuata. After this has been put in place I will return to Fiji.”

**The State of the Catholic Missionaries on Ovalau**

During all this time the Catholic missionaries on Ovalau were always in the most deplorable state where we have left them. Father Favier and Father Michel suffered greatly, but were perfectly resigned. Father Breheret encouraged them, and ceaselessly repeated to them with his unruffled calm, “After all, God does not allow a single hair to fall from our heads without his permission.” And he said his rosary.
One day Fathers Favier and Michel were bemoaning their forced inactivity, and deploring the two thousand people who had left, whom they were unable to help, Father Breheret said to them, “The state that we find ourselves in will not last for long. God will not permit it. If you are agreeable, I will tell you an idea that has come to me: Let us make a boat. If we have the good fortune to see soon that good weather has returned, we will then be able to go from island to island to glean a few chosen ones for the Lord. A similar proposition had been made to the apostles when they were inactive by one of the apostles, and was received as it should be. All resolved to give themselves to the project. They showed their
good will to Father Breheret and offered him their best wishes.

Several days later Brother Sorlin and the three priests were in the bush, where they chopped and sawed trees with difficulty and incredible weariness.

“Oh”, said Father Breheret one day, “how I have admired Brother Sorlin. Poor brother, how many times I have seen him climb up on the pit saw which we had ourselves built, waiting for a Fijian to help by taking one end of the saw, and seeing that no one came he tied a big stone to the bottom handle then going up on the scaffolding he took the upper handle of the saw, and his wood all alone, singing a well known song ‘Heaven, heaven, heaven is the prize’. And I can say that during this long series of days, with all the suffering of the work his courage never lessened for a moment. Oh, the good little brother! May he receive a good reward in heaven!”

After several months of work, where everyone had been employed with all the moral and physical energy that they were capable of, Brother Sorlin, child of the mountains who before his departure from Langogne had never seen the sea, built the boat named after the Blessed Virgin: “Nai Vola Siga” (Morning Star), and some time afterwards we had one of the prettiest and most solid boats in the port of Levuka. The workers of the port then offered to Father Breheret to make the sails and the rigging. For that they asked the sum of 800 francs. Father Breheret took charge of the work, and by his patience he was able to save this sum for other more urgent needs, as he himself tells it, adding, “From then on we were able to give ourselves to the great need: to begin to work for the conversion of our dear Fijians. We had two whaleboats to visit the nearest places, and a decked boat to take us to the most distant island.”

“While the missionaries of Fiji”, wrote Father Pavel, “were making
their boat the Wesleyan missionaries had profited from the conversions that the arms and the army of the Tongans had won for them. They had lined up a certain number of large casks which their followers had filled with oil in exchange for one hour of listening to their running down Catholicism, which they and their catechists had poured into their ears with a Satanic frenzy.”

But as Father Breheret had said, that could not last. Whatever is too violent does not endure. The Fijians ended up by knowing these priests, who had been shown under a terrible light. They began by examining them, and they were certainly able to do that easily because the priests, their boat finished, never ceased travelling around the villages for the good of the people. Father Michel, with the first whaleboat, ceaselessly visited Rewa, which he had left with such sorrow. Father Favier with the second whaleboat went as far as Solevu, and the “Nai Vola Siga” with Captain Breheret at the helm visited the most distant islands like Yasawa, Kadavu, etc. Soon enough some Fijians loved these admirable Fathers, and at the end of 1857 in a large number of islands there were a certain number of Fijians who had sincerely embraced the Catholic religion.

This is how these Fathers shared the work, and how success was theirs at the end of 1857:

District of Father Favier:
Batiki 30
Wakaya & Makogai 32
Solevu 140

District of Father Michel:
Ovalau 61
Rewa 119
Verata 12
District of Father Breheret:
Gau, Nairai, Taveuni  19
Lau  21
Yasawa & Kadavu  74

Total 508.

The Catholic Missionaries, already apostles by the grace of God, have become mariners. They never ceased to cross the seas, going above all to preach the Gospel.

Listen to an eye witness who saw them at work (Father Gavet): “Truly I am afraid to tell of their daily travels. What they endured, what dangers they faced on those reef-strewn seas. How often surprised by a thunder storm in the middle of the night, they are seen to be driven ashore on inhospitable islands, struggling in the middle of reefs which are out to wreck them. How many times, when day comes, they have had to bless the hand of God which had protected them in an obvious way. What can I say of Father Breheret, so worthy of the admiration of angels and men, this man who is never shaken. Hunger, thirst, weariness, dangers of all kinds, nothing could stop him. You can see him fighting the sea day and night to go to the help of his sheep who have no shepherd, burned by the heat of the sun, soaked by torrential rain, wilting with fatigue, between life and death in the middle of the reefs which are everywhere in this archipelago. What does he do? The tiller in one hand, his rosary in the other, he reminds Mary that it is for the glory of Jesus that he faces danger. If the sky darkens, if the storm approaches, if the thunder begins to growl, if the waves become big you ask Captain Breheret, what do you think of? He replies with his imperturbable calm, ‘Not a single hair shall fall from your head without the permission of God.’”

All of 1857 was a year of violent persecution against the Catholics, who are already 500, as we have seen, and in Rewa, Kadavu,
Ovalau, Solevu and Yasawa offered the greatest hope.

Seeing this, the Wesleyan ministers went into action so their bands of Tongan catechists had recourse to arms as usual, and implored the help of those two recruiters for the Wesleyans: Ma’afu and Wainiqolo. Ma’afu left Lau with the body of his army and came according to the orders of Tupou to place himself beside the king of Bua, Ra Masima, and took command of his army. Wainiqolo remaining all this time in Lau, started making frequent visits to Taveuni, holding frequent meetings with members of Ratu Koila’s party, above all those who were in Wainikeli.

Happily in 1858 there arrived in Fiji Commandant le Bris, sent by Monsieur de Bouet in the name of Napoleon III. The commandant heard all that had happened concerning the king of Bau. A treaty was made and signed. Freedom of conscience was given to Fijians in the treaty. It was said also that the missionaries and the Catholics, also ships and French citizens would be respected from that time on. Our priests breathed more easily, the Catholics were less anxious, as were some of the catechumens who had already in a good number of places come to join the Catholics. Their number increased, especially in Ovalau, Rewa, Solevu, Yasawa, as we can see in the figures below.

At the end of 1858:
District of Father Favier:
Batiki 51
Wakaya, Makogai 56
Solevu 172

District of Father Michel:
Ovalau 89
Rewa 235
Verata 23
As for the Wesleyans, their numbers grew considerably in 1858, and it could even be said that at the end of 1858, apart from the interior, the Fijians were nearly all Wesleyan, thanks to Cakobau and especially thanks to the famous Tongan Ma’afu, who, without it costing him a thought, could commit either himself or through his envoys, the most terrible atrocities, as we shall see in a little while.

Difficulties with the Wesleyans

But before we come to an account of these atrocities, let us see the account given by Father Breheret, which lets us know of the easy triumph of the Wesleyan ministers, and the five causes of this triumph:

1. Their style of preaching
2. Their army of catechists
3. The army of Tongan warriors, by whose weapons they enlisted chiefs and people under the Wesleyan banner
4. Their huge financial resources
5. Calumny, which was their favourite weapon.

1. Their preaching: He who has not seen their manoeuvres would have difficulty forming an exact idea of their manner of indoctrinating the Fijians. Their zeal on this subject is like a consuming thirst, which never rests. They are continually in action to seduce souls and make them fall into their nets. Lies and hypocrisy are their inseparable companions. They preach for hours with truly diabolical shouting and convulsions. Their sermons are a fabric of things which do not follow, and it is not
uncommon to hear from them words that offend not only chaste souls (which are not unknown among their hearers), but the most wicked savage also. If they want to convert someone, they will approach him, they will begin with honeyed words, and they will exhort, beseech, plot, groan, cry and roll on the ground. At the sight of this trick the ignorant savage opens his eyes wide, and often enough he declares himself converted. Often in these sorts of cases they are seen going to excess when their preaching has not been successful. For example, in 1848 Mr Watford held a container of burning alcohol in the face of the chief of Lakeba one time when the chief resisted his preaching on hell. Haven’t we seen also a minister who so harried the kai Vutia in 1856 that he was fired on, and he greeted only the clumsiness of the shooter. Don’t we equally know that Mr Moore, pushed by a curious zeal in 1855 used his horse as a mobile pulpit to shake more effectively the people of Rewa, who for a long time had been deaf to his voice? Every morning he ran from house to house, making a racket and crying, “Repent, or you will all be lost!” Great was the terror, and the women and the children above all didn’t know where to hide. They fell down in fear, and the minister then disappeared with his mount.

2. Their army of catechists. These they taught to interpret the Bible, to hate Popery, to perform the Last Supper with bananas and breadfruit, to hear public confessions and to preach to their people to not do evil in such a manner, to tell some people not to commit certain sins, to others even not to commit sins that the Fijians did not know about until they had been told about them, to preside at meetings of people with convulsions where big girls rolled about completely naked in their churches, the catechist invited those nearby to come and see what he called the fruit of his prayer.

3. Their army of warriors. In 1855 the king of Tonga, having come to Fiji at the head of 3,000 warriors, he spread terror above
all, and he forced the pagans to take the Wesleyan religion. Messengers went before the army, crying out, “Wesleyanism or death”. The ministers accompanied the king of Tonga and the king of Bau, the two recruiters of the Wesleyan religion, filled with joy at seeing the actions of the Tongan catechists in the eastern islands of Fiji: everyone obeyed them, because they knew that they were the agents of two kings. We find that the Wesleyans were ingenious at reaching their goals. They had perhaps some little scruples on the subject of the human blood which they spilled or allowed to be spilled, but the scruples disappeared in view of the great results achieved. The gain was greater than the loss, and that was enough. Besides, they said, if the Israelites did well to exterminate paganism from the land of Canaan by force of arms, why would the Wesleyans do badly to exterminate paganism from the land of Fiji. Conversion to heresy, they added, is like baptism, it washes away all the crimes of the Wesleyan recruiters. Only conversion to Catholicism is an unforgiveable crime, which it is necessary to avoid and to cause to be avoided, and that even by the most cruel means.

4. Their abundance of riches. Without speaking of their luxury, of their establishments fitting for a noble, who would be able to calculate the pieces of calico, axes, knives, cooking pots, tabua etc, etc which they have hawked in all Fiji since 1835? They agree among themselves that the expenses that they have incurred in Fiji are outrageous.

a. Should a village resist their preaching, these gentlemen send presents to the chief until they have won him over, otherwise they shall wait for war. One day a minister began to preach like this in a public place,”Up till now you have not wanted to accept my invitations to convert. Very well, I have come today to buy you: there is calico - four metres to whoever will give himself to me.”
b. “What religion are you?” asked Mr. Waterhouse on another occasion of one of our Catholics. “I am a Catholic”, he replied. “Take these tabua and this knife, and come to our place. The religion that you follow is bad.”

c. One of their followers, having left them to become a Catholic, one of their catechists went and found him, offering him an axe, and spent the whole night trying to get him to go back to the Wesleyans. Such are the steps that they take, and the Fijians, desiring wealth, fall easily into their nets, without foreseeing that later they will give to their ministers a thousand times more than they have received. Soon they would have to give to the catechist oil, cassava, taro, mats etc.

5. Calumnies. Before the Catholic missionaries arrived in 1844, the Wesleyan ministers, foreseeing their arrival, had portrayed us to the Fijians as invaders of the earth, carriers of daggers, violators of women, drinkers of human blood etc. They had spread the famous pamphlet “A taro ka kaya” etc. etc. From this we can understand why Bishop Pompallier was sent away from Lakeba with his priests in 1844, why king Cakobau refused to let the priests step ashore in his capital in 1851, why the same year his Excellency was violently repelled from Viwa, or why it was decided not to pilot his ship at Ovalau. Not having been able to prevent the establishment of the Catholic mission in the archipelago, the Wesleyans employed, by fair means and by foul, all in their power to prevent the spread of Catholicism. We can ridicule their efforts: such news as that the Pope had become a Wesleyan, that Mgr. Bataillon had sinned with a Wallisian woman, had had a child from her and had married this unfortunate woman; that Father Mathieu had ceaseless relations with women in Levuka, that he had several children, whom he buried under the altar of his church. They besmirched us with their lies in all their Sunday sermons, in the drawings they put up everywhere. If only we had had French warships that we could have appealed to in order to help us fight against these calumnies. But we lacked all
these, and the only resource of the Catholic missionaries was to groan at the foot of the cross, waiting for happier days.

Semisi in Yasawa 1858

That said, let us come to the atrocities committed in 1858 in Yasawa. We have seen that Ma’afu, called by the Wesleyan ministers to help, set about following the orders which he had received in Bua from Tupou towards the end of 1857, to make of it a second Tongan province.

Since the beginning of 1858 he sent men to conquer the island of Yasawa to the Tongan cause. This was easy because Tui Bua, who was Tongan (from his father) entered perfectly into the plans. But in Yasawa there were some Catholics, as we have already seen. They were the object of a terrible persecution, in spite of the treaty which Commandant le Bris had signed. The people of Yasawa sent several of their members to bring a complaint to Father Breheret. Breheret, indignant at what had happened in Yasawa, went to find the English consul Pritchard, and asked him to hold an enquiry to find out exactly what had happened in Yasawa, so that he might be able to lay a complaint to the first French warship to arrive in Fiji.

The English consul held the enquiry that had been requested, and he was so indignant at the conduct of Ma’afu’s lieutenant named Semisi towards the Catholics of Yasawa that after the enquiry was held he wrote the following report, where he gave testimony that the Catholics had been persecuted in Yasawa. Here is what Pritchard wrote, and we reproduce it faithfully:

“Moi Togitogi, chief of Nacula (Yasawa) declares: ‘28 days ago the Tongan chief Semisi arrived at Tamasua. The next day he sent me a messenger telling me to go and find him at Tamasua. I went,
accompanied by Riga, Tabualevu and some other small Catholic chiefs like me. When we arrived at Tamasua we found the king of Bua, Semisi and the Tongan catechist of Yasawa, named Maika. They were seated waiting for us, and were armed, like all the people of their party. Once we were in front of them the Tongan catechist Maika pointed his finger at me, and Semisi said to me, “Togitogi, you are a wicked man. Why are you bad, and why don’t you follow the religion of Maika and of Tui Bua? You are bad, and it is necessary that you be flogged. At that moment several Tongans put down their guns, pulled my hands behind my back, tying me with cuffs and ropes. Two Tongans held me, one on my right, one on my left. Semisi then said to me “You are going to reject the Catholic religion and follow that of the Wesleyan catechist Maika”. I replied, “No”. At this single word a Tongan called Lawaki made a rod from five Walai vines, which he made about as thick as my cuff. At each blow given by Lawaki the two Tongans who were holding me added kicks to my kidneys. Before long I fainted and fell. My blood flowed and poured everywhere, even on those who were beating me. They picked me up (my parents who were present told me), and they beat me until they could see that I was unconscious. Some time afterwards, after regaining consciousness, I passed my hand over my back (I had been untied) I felt that I had no more skin, that my flesh was as if it had been cut and was hanging in scraps. I had more marks than the others. See for yourself, Mr. Consul. After me Riga and Tabualevu were treated in the same way.

When Semisi saw that I had regained consciousness he said to me: “Togitogi, you must:
1. Give the Yasawas to king George Tupou
2. Obey the Wesleyan catechist Maika
3. Reject the Catholic religion and embrace the true religion (i.e. Wesleyanism).

At that moment Mr. Hicks, an Englishman, arrived, and said to
Semisi, “It is bad to flog these people. There will be stories about this. You hurt them because they are Catholics, because they do not follow your catechist, because they will not give their land to Tonga. It is forbidden for you to do this. I will tell the consul what you are doing. Each individual is free to follow whatever religion he wants, and you dare to flog these people who have done no wrong.”

“They have misbehaved,” said Semisi, “and I want to make them good by making them embrace the true religion”.

“Very well,” said Mr. Hicks, “And I will free the first Fijian that you will tie up, and I will put myself between you and the person you beat.”

Maika then said to Semisi, “We should not put white people in this business.”

Semisi then said to us all, “That is good. I am going to send people to look for Ma’afu, and he will judge you himself.” But instead of sending people to look for Ma’afu he sent people to sack the village of Nacula. Everything has been stolen and carried away: mats, tapa, pigs, chicken, yams, taro, boxes, nets, axes, knives, sails, canoes etc.

Once Mr. Hicks had left, he made Tabualevu get down on his knees as if to pray, and while he was kneeling like this they flogged him until he fainted. The marks of the whips are still on his back. Five others were flogged in the same way.”

To this report the consul Pritchard added: “When I held this enquiry I saw for myself the backs of the unfortunate men. This was after 18 days, and was still horrible to see. They were unable to hold themselves upright. The vines which had served as whips were covered with stains and clots of blood, and all this had been
done in the name of religion, and the murderers have found their defenders, Fijian and non-Fijian.

On returning to Levuka I met Semisi and reproached him for his conduct. He replied to me, “How can we convert these pagans to the true religion? We have done this to convert them. It is not as some people say, that we did it to conquer Fiji and give it to Tonga.”

The consul went himself to give this report to Father Breheret, who kept it to give to the first commander of a French warship that would come to Levuka. Pritchard added, “When the French warship comes, call me and I will give my witness, as I ought. I could give a lot of other depositions, because I have plenty.”

The Fourth Visit of Bishop Bataillon to the Fiji Islands in 1859

At the end of August 1859 Bishop Bataillon paid another visit to Fiji. He found 2,000 Fijians who had declared themselves Catholic, and of these 200 were baptised, of whom 80 were communicants. He admired the courage of these three indefatigable missionaries, and he wept on account of their small number. Three for an archipelago of 200,000 souls! But Father Michel, who in Rewa especially had done marvellous things, was completely worn out. It was necessary to take him for a rest. Bishop Bataillon said that he was going to take him, but he said at the same time to Father Breheret that in place of Father Michel he was going to leave in Fiji two new priests and one brother: Fathers Favre and Leberre, and Brother Edward.

A large number of people of Rewa, whom Father Michel had converted, at the news of the arrival the bishop went to Levuka. They were deputed by Roko Tui Rabici to ask for a missionary. The bishop, without committing himself, made nice promises to them,
and sent them away happy.

Before returning to Wallis, the bishop wanted to get the advice of the two priests, Frs. Breheret and Michel, who were alone in Levuka (Father Favier was in Solevu at the time) to know if it was appropriate to re-open the station of Rewa.

Father Breheret replied to the bishop: “If your Excellency were to wait for a few days, I will go in my boat and look for Father Favier, I will bring him back and we can have a meeting together.” The bishop accepted the proposition, and Father Breheret left for Solevu. Arriving at the chief village of their clan he went ashore. How surprised he was to find the village of Solevu burnt, sacked, abandoned. He searched for a long time on all sides, but nowhere did he find any trace of any human being.

Very anxious, he returned to his boat, resolved to search all along the coast where perhaps Father Favier and the people might be. He had already weighed anchor and hoisted his sails when a young man appeared on the shore. Father Breheret called. The only response from the Fijian was to make the sign of the cross. Father Breheret, understanding that he was a Catholic, lowered his sails and went ashore. This young man then told him that Tui Bua and the warriors of Tonga, after coming to Nadi (the home of the Wesleyan ministers), where they were going to meet with Cakobau, they came to Solevu. They had ravaged the clan, and learning that the inhabitants had become Catholics, they had burned their villages, and led the people in chains to Bua, to force them to become Wesleyans, and Father Favier was at Bua, where he wanted to be with his Catholics.

Father Breheret went to Nadi, where he admonished Cakobau, recalled the treaty that he had signed, threatened him with a French warship if Tui Bua did not return the people of Solevu to their land, and if he allowed Tui Bua to force them to become
Wesleyans.

He left immediately for Bua, admonished Tui Bua in the same fashion, encouraged the people of Solevu to hold firm until they were able to return to Solevu, told them that he was going to take Father Favier to Levuka to see Bishop Bataillon, but promised them that before long he would return to see them in Solevu. He took Father Favier on board, and took him to Levuka.

Once the “Nai Vola Siga” returned to Levuka, the bishop assembled the fathers and consulted them on the subject of Rewa. The fathers were all of the opinion that the mission of Rewa should be opened again. The bishop then called for the envoys of the chief of Rewa (because they had not yet left Levuka) and said to them, “Go tell our chief that I am going to send him two priests in response to his request, but he is not to forget that it is he who has asked for them, so he must receive them well and take care of them.” Then the bishop immediately appointed Father Favier to go and reopen the mission of Rewa, and also added Father Leberre to join him. As for Father Favre and Brother Edward, the bishop decided that they should remain in Levuka with Father Breheret and Brother Sorlin.

The next day the bishop baptised 21 Fijians, and he gave confirmation to fifty others who had already been baptised. Two days later, on the feast of the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1859, the bishop celebrated a Pontifical Mass All the Catholics who could got together at Ovalau and took part, and they were dazzled by the majesty of the religious ceremonies which they saw for the first time.

On the 9th of September the bishop left for Wallis, taking with him the beloved Father Michel.

This is the list of neophytes or catechumens of Fiji on 8 September
1859:

District of Father Favier:
Batiki 52  
Wakaya & Makogai 69  
Solevu 250  
Savusavu 80  

District of Father Michel:
Ovalau 500  
Rewa 880  
Verata 82  

District of Father Breheret:
Gau, Nairai, Taveuni 116  
Lakeba & Lau 54  
Koro 85  
Yasawa, Beqa, Kadavu 178  

Total 2,346.

**Station of Rewa Reopened 1859**

Feast of the Holy Name of Mary 12 Sept 1859

Two days before the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, Father Breheret took Father Favier and Father Leberre to Rewa. They were welcomed by the chief of Rewa and all his people, and they found there 880 Catholics whom Father Michel had already converted.

It was at the end of 1859 that the death occurred of Ratu Mara, brother of Cakobau, and the father of Ratu Madraiwiwi. These are the sad details:
For a long time Cakobau and his brother Ratu Mara had been enemies, and had been at war with each other. But since the defeat of Ratu Mara at Kaba, there was no more question of war. The two brothers were distant from each other, but it was not an issue for either side.

One day the very Christian king Cakobau, wanting he said to put an end to his old enmities forever, and to pardon all his former enemies, sent the chief of Lasikau, Koli Visawaqa to ask his brother Ratu Mara to come to Rewa to come and make peace with him, and to cement this peace with a solemn feast. Ratu Mara, who was burning with desire to go to Bau to embrace his young son Ratu Madraiwiwi, who had just been born, accepted the invitation of his brother, but not without some apprehension and he replied to the messenger, Koli Visawaqa, “Koli, I believe that I am going to my death, but I have such a great desire to see and embrace my son that I am going to take the risk and expose myself. Very well, I will follow you.”

Having said that, he got up, took a box of tabua as his present of submission, and went to Bau. He got off at the shore, went to the house of Cakobau, and offered him his gifts. Cakobau made a sign, and at this sign Ratu Mara was strangled, they tied his hands and feet, and put him down in front of the king of Bau, who said to them, “It is late, he can remain strangled all night, and tomorrow he will be hung up in a public place.”

The next day the hypocrite Cakobau had Ratu Mara brought out under the eyes of all Bau, and even under the eyes of the Wesleyan ministers. What a great type of very Christian king! I will not add that many people pretended that he acted in this way after taking the advice of the ministers, because the matter is not proven. We like to believe what did not happen.
The year 1860 began well. From January there was a change of disposition on the part of the Fijians of Rewa: at first there was a real surge towards the Catholic religion. It was the same in Kadavu, where the number of those who had declared themselves Catholics rose to about two thousand.

At Solevu a large number of Fijians accepted the Catholic religion, and also on Ovalau. This was indeed a case of “The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.”

Ma’afu and his lieutenant Semisi strongly desired to persecute the Catholics of Solevu, even to destroy them, but they were afraid, as also was Tui Bua Ra Masima, because Father Breheret on the occasion of their action in Yasawa and at Solevu had promised them that he would refer the matter to a French warship. Leaving for the moment the district of Solevu, they started to make war on the coast of Macuata, as far as the Dreketi River.

Always under the pretext of religion, in the name of the Saviour Jesus, and to turn the pagans into good people, they obliged them to embrace the true religion (Wesleyanism), and for that they allowed the most revolting atrocities in this regard. If from all these happenings there was one dreadful example, it is however one of the least horrible that they committed on the coast of Macuata. One day they had attacked a village of Ritova in the area around Dreketi. The villagers had been conquered by the forces of Ma’afu and Tui Bua, and were hiding in the bush. Ma’afu remained in the village and the nearby area with one part of his men to pillage and sack, as was their custom, the plantations, coconuts, breadfruit, houses and everything that belonged to the vanquished. But he sent his lieutenant Semisi in pursuit of the fugitives. Semisi, not being able to catch them, had resort to a trick: he sent a messenger to tell them that if they came back to the village and submitted to Ma’afu and laid down their weapons, no harm would be done to them. The Fijians gave witness to their
defiance, and sent the messenger to express this to Semisi.

Semisi replied, “How can they think that, I who follow the religion of our Saviour Jesus Christ am able to deceive them? Very well, they won’t come today, let them wait for Sunday, the day of the Lord, let them come and find me in God’s house, where it is not permitted to do evil, and certainly they could not be deceived.”

The Fijians, numbering about thirty, went on the Sunday to the Wesleyan church. They went in with confidence, laying down their weapons, which were placed in the centre of the hut. Semisi then surrounded them with armed Tongans, and addressed them in these words, “Because you are pagans, and have fought against us, the spreaders of the religion of Jehovah, you are all going to perish”. Having said that, he gave a sign. At this sign one Tongan called Maafi and several others began tying the hands and feet of all those unfortunate men who were rolling around on the ground, then Maafu, seizing a bayonet fixed to a lance cut an eye from the head of each one. After this, sharpening an American axe on a stone put there for the purpose, he gave each one a blow on the head, and that in the house of God!

“When I heard this terrible news,” said Pritchard, “I refused to believe it. But having met Semisi I asked him, and he assured me it was true. The minister to whom I told this story, refusing to believe it, I was resolved to convince him. I took Semisi to meet with Rev. Royce, the minister in Kadavu. The minister asked if it was he who had committed these atrocities. Semisi replied that it was indeed he.” “Ah,” said Pritchard, “he has done a lot of other things too horrible to tell.”

But that is enough, we have said enough for you to understand how Fiji has been converted to the Wesleyan religion by the Tongans. These wretched Tongans have done too much. God will punish them.
The Fifth Visit of Bishop Bataillon to the Fiji Islands in 1861

The year 1861 was a year of conversions to the Catholic religion. When in July 1861 Bishop Bataillon revisited Fiji, he found here more than 4,000 catechumens, 500 baptised, 150 communicants, and a good number of Fijians who, without being catechumens, had declared themselves Catholic.

Here is what Bishop Bataillon wrote on the subject in his report:

“The progress made in Fiji has well exceeded my expectations. Up till now we have as it were vegetated in this archipelago. We had certainly some catechumens, but they were less numerous and less fervent. Today we have the nucleus of many Catholics who are always increasing in numbers. Rewa above all gives the greatest hope. Father Favier, assisted by Father Leberre, has already obtained an immense result. I went to Rewa to do a solemn baptism of a large number of people, who greatly edified me. I have also confirmed more than 100 baptised persons. For the Pontifical Mass that I celebrated in Rewa the Catholics were inside the church, while outside was a huge crowd of Wesleyans. So dazzled were these Fijians that the fathers told me that for three days people have spoken of nothing else in all Rewa except our imposing ceremonies.

Seeing the progress made in Fiji, I resolved to leave there two priests: Father Aubry and Father Jay, so that a new station could be established, leaving to Father Breheret to take charge of founding the new station when he judged the time was right.

Some time before the arrival of Bishop Bataillon, there arrived in Fiji the French corvette “La Cornelie” under Captain Leveque. Father Breheret and Mr. Pritchard spoke to Captain Leveque on
the persecution and atrocious tortures which had been inflicted on the Catholics of Yasawa by the army of Ma’afu, which he had sent to Yasawa under the command of Semisi.

The captain heard the depositions of Father Breheret, and read the report (which we have already spoken about) which had been given to him by the consul, Mr. Pritchard. The captain was indignant at the conduct of the Tongans, and was touched by a strong compassion for the Catholics of Yasawa.

The English consul said, “If you wish, Captain, order the king to bring onboard both the persecuted and persecutors, and you will easily be able to have for yourself the exact knowledge of all that happened.”

“That will not be necessary,” said the captain. “I need only the king of Bau to appear on my ship.” As soon as he arrived, the captain said to him, “Send someone to look for a man by the name of Semisi, who, contrary to the treaty which you yourself have signed, has badly mistreated the Catholics of Yasawa.”

“Semisi is a Tongan”, replied the king of Bau, “I can’t make him come.”

“Very well,” replied the captain, “You shall remain here, and you will be my prisoner, until Semisi arrives”. Having said that, he had the king of Bau taken to the cell of the corvette.

The frightened king sent someone to tell the captain that they would go and search for Semisi.

“Say to Cakobau,” replied the captain, “that he can send someone to search, but until the arrival of Semisi he will remain my prisoner.”
After a number of days Semisi arrived. The king was then called with Semisi, and the interrogation began. Semisi confirmed all that had been said in the report that the captain held in his hand. When the captain asked him why he had done it he replied, “It is only for one reason, because there was no other way of converting these pagans to the Wesleyan religion. Don’t believe those who tell you that we want to conquer Fiji and give it to the king of Tonga.”

At these words, the captain said to Cakobau, “You can go home, but I shall take Semisi.”

Several days after the departure of the French corvette several villages, which for a long time had wanted to become Catholic, but which had not dared to do so, declared themselves Catholic.

This was the state of affairs when Bishop Bataillon arrived.

The Foundation of the Station of Solevu

15 August 1861

After the departure of Bishop Bataillon, Father Breheret himself took Father Favre and Father Jay to Solevu, where they were to found a third station. The priests were received with pleasure and with the simplicity which distinguishes the people of Solevu. For some time the church did not grow much in numbers, but those who could be called Catholics became virtuous Christians, by the grace of God and by the zeal of the missionaries, and the holiness of their example,

Since the captain of the “La Cornelie” had taken Semisi to New Caledonia, Ma’afu did not remain quiet in Bua. His apprehensions redoubled when he learned that two Catholic missionaries had come to establish themselves in Solevu. He wanted to put some distance between himself and them. He had until then been
waging war along the coast of Macuata as far as Dreketi, and he began, following the orders he had received from King Tupou, to work to gain the kingdom of Macuata in one piece by attacking Ritova. It was not easy for him to implant the Wesleyan religion in Macuata: the people of Macuata, and above all their chief Ritova, did not want it. Nor was Ritova the kind of man to listen to the words of Ma’afu or above all to make his district a Tongan province. Ma’afu knew him well, so according to the advice that Tupou had given him before returning to Tonga, he searched to see if he could find someone of the calibre of Ratu Koila of Somosomo. He finished up finding a man called Bete who because of his conduct was afterwards called Kato ni Vere (Box of Snares). He came to him secretly one day, paid him strong compliments, and said that he thought him to be the most capable person to become the governor of Macuata. After several long interviews he went as far as to say that it was his intention to make him the chief of Macuata and that according to what he knew, he had no doubt whatsoever that he would be able to carry out his project. “If you do make me chief of Macuata”, replied Katonivere, “I will be all for you, and you can count on me”.

“This matter will be easy for me” replied Ma’afu. Katonivere promised everything.

Then Ma’afu said, “Go, and increase the number of your followers, and I will help you myself to do it, and to include the Wesleyan ministers. I have heard it said that Tui Bua will soon make war on Ritova. Tui Bua is like a father to me. I will join my forces with his Fijian forces, then you and your party will join us. We will have the victory. We shall hunt Ritova, and you shall be the chief of Macuata.”
The War in Macuata 1861

Ratu Golea and the Tongan war

That which was said was done, and towards the end of 1861 Tui Bua declared war on Ritova. Ma’afu and his Tongans joined in with the warriors of Tui Bua and went to Naduri where the battle was to be fought. Kato ni Vere and his party came to the side of Bua and the Tongans, and fought against his chief Ritova.

Ritova, seeing that he had to fight against three armies, knew that he did not have the strength to be able to resist for long. All the time he retreated, and his enemies pursued him.

He then sent a messenger to the chief of Dogotuki (a tribe of Macuata). He was a close friend, called Kuliloa, and he asked him to send warriors from all parts of Macuata, but above all to leave immediately for Somosomo, and to ask Ratu Golea to come as quickly as possible to his help, otherwise he would lose.

During this time there were some fights between the party of Bua and the party of Ritova. Ritova always lost ground.
Kuliloa sent messengers to all the neighbouring tribes, and a good number of warriors of Macuata flew to the rescue of Ritova their chief. As for Kuliloa, he left the same night for Taveuni, and the next morning he was in Somosomo, where he talked with Ratu Golea, the most famous warrior in Fiji.

Ratu Golea, with the prodigious energy that he had, gathered all the warriors of Taveuni. By that night all the warriors were gathered together in Somosomo, and the next morning he left with them for Tawake, taking as he went the warriors of Mabuco and Tunuloa, sending messengers in all directions to his tribes on Vanua Levu, commanding them to come by land from all directions, and to go and wait for him the next day.

The evening of the same day Ratu Golea arrived with his canoes at Tawake, where he rested all his followers. He was told where Ritova was, and he learned that he had come to take refuge at the island of Druadrua, and that the allied armies of Bua would gather the next day at Raviravi to surround Ritova during the night at Druadrua. It is well, he cried, we have arrived in time.

The next day at the break of dawn he gave his men the signal to leave. His warriors were already on the move when a Tongan arrived.

“Where are you coming from?” Ratu Golea asked him.

“From Laucala.”

“What news?”

“Wainiqolo sent me to tell you that if you march against Ma’afu and his Tongans, he will be obliged to march against you in Taveuni when you return.”
“Go and tell your master”, said Ratu Golea, “that before Ma’afu can encircle Ritova who is taking refuge at Druadrua, I shall have burned Raviravi where Ma’afu, Ramasima and Bete are staying. Tell your master that when I have burned Raviravi I shall have people light a big fire on top of the highest mountain. Tell your master also that when I shall return I shall respond to the war that he wishes to declare. Go!”

After this conversation Ratu Golea rejoined his warriors who had gone on ahead. It was still day time when he reached Raviravi. He saw the canoes in which Kato ni Vere, Tui Bua and the Tongans had come to encircle Druadrua where Ritova had taken refuge. He divided his army into two groups. One attacked Raviravi and burned it, the other group seized the canoes and burned them or destroyed them with hatchet blows, then rejoining to do battle, they put to flight the army of Ma’afu, of whom they killed at least half. That done he returned to the island of Druadrua where Ritova was, and slept there with all his army. The next day and for the following days he pursued Ra Masima, and went with Ritova to burn all the villages which had followed Bete in his party, and the villages of Macuata which are on the coast of Macuata. He made a prisoner of Kato ni Vere, and took him with him to re-establish Ritova in his territory as before.

Ma’afu was no longer proud: he had lost half of the Tongans, and his canoes had been destroyed. But that was only the start of his trouble.

**Return of Ratu Golea to Cakaudrove**

After some time Ratu Golea returned to his territory. He went first to Tawake, and from there to Wailevu in Tunuloa. There he learned that Wainiqolo and his warriors were at Waikava, together with Ratu Koila and his party. Addressing Tui Tunuloa, Ratu Golea said to him: “Send messengers to all the tribes: all warriors are to
go as quickly as possible to Wairiki. We will fight with Wainiqolo, and we shall see if Cakaudrove is afraid of the Tongans.”

Ratu Golea also learned at Wailevu that Wainiqolo had been in communication with the people of Natewa, who had promised to kill him (Ratu Golea), so as a result he had to be on his guard.

“Very well”, replied Ratu Golea, “I shall go tonight to Natewa.” He immediately left. He arrived in the night at Natewa, with all his warriors, and sent word to tell of his arrival.

All the men of Natewa came quickly to meet him, he counted them, and when all were in his presence he surrounded them with his warriors and said to them: “I know that you have promised to kill me. Very well, if by a certain time you have not finished this alliance, I will massacre you all.”

The kai Natewa all trembling obeyed, and when they had finished, Ratu Golea mocked them, got into his canoes with all his men, and went to Koroivonu.

At Koroivonu, without leaving his canoe, he sent for the chief of the village, and asked him: “What news?”

“Sir”, he said, “Wainiqolo has gone to Somosomo and removed your brother Ratu Kalou, and taken him to Lau. He has also taken your son to Wainikeli, where he is being held. Ratu Koila has gone to search for the Wesleyan minister who was in Wairiki, and has taken him to Waikava.”

“Very well,” said Ratu Golea to his men. “Let’s get going, we shall sleep at Korodogo.”

They left immediately. Passing in front of Nawi he saw a whale boat at anchor. “What is that boat”, he asked. At the same time
there appeared on the shore a Catholic priest (it was Father Favre, who had come to visit some Catholics in Nawi.) “Good”, said Ratu Golea to his mata ni vanua, “Jump into the water and go tell the priest that I don’t have time to stop here, but I need to talk with him. Ask him to come and see me this evening at Korodogo.”

Ratu Golea continued his journey and reached Korodogo at sunset. Ratu Koila was there scouting the area; as soon as he saw Ratu Golea he took off with his men and went to tell Wainiqolo that Ratu Golea had returned.

Shortly after, Father Favre arrived. He had a long meeting with Ratu Golea, in which Ratu Golea told him how the Tongans had come to overthrow him and his brother Ratu Kalou, to replace them with Ratu Koila, the assassin of their father. He said that the Wesleyan ministers were far from being strangers to this enterprise etc. etc. He spoke to him of the battle in Raviravi, of Ritova, Kuliloa.
Ratu Golea ended by saying to Father Favre: “Remain at Nawi until after the battle. After the battle is over, come and visit me in Wairiki. If I am victorious over the Tongans, I shall be Catholic, and all Cakaudrove with me.”

Having said that, Ratu Golea stood up, and Father Favre returned to Nawi, his heart full of hope.

Some time afterwards a Tongan arrived; he approached Ratu Golea respectfully and said to him, “Wainiqolo has sent me to tell you that instead of a battle, an agreement between you would be preferable. He therefore proposes that you go to Viani with ten of your Fijian chiefs, and he will go there with ten Tongan chiefs. You will have there a meeting, which you should not miss.”

“Well”, said Golea, “tomorrow I shall go to Viani with ten of my chiefs”.

The messenger stood up and left. When he had gone, Ratu Daunivavana, younger brother of Ratu Golea said to his brother, “What have you done? Don’t you know that all Tongans are treacherous? Who knows if tomorrow Wainiqolo might surround you with part of his army hidden in the bush and massacre you without pity?”

“That makes sense”, said Ratu Golea, “send someone after the messenger, and tell him that I have changed my mind, and that I am going to Wairiki.”

Someone ran after the messenger, caught up with him, and gave him the new decision of Ratu Golea. Several hours later Ratu Golea and his warriors left for Wairiki, where they arrived before daybreak.
After resting for several hours, and having rested his warriors, Ratu Golea called the old chief of Tunuloa and said to him: “Tui Tunuloa, you know that my son Ratu Lala is in Wainikeli, where he is being held by force. Take you warriors, go to Wainikeli, and see that before sunset today my son will be in my arms.”

“He will be there, sir”, said the old warrior. Getting up, he called his warriors and left. That evening before sunset Ratu Lala (a one year old child) was in the arms of his father.

The Battle of Wairiki

During the time that Ratu Golea was in Macuata, Ratu Koila, who had come with Wainiqolo to Laucala, had renewed his former alliance with Wainiqolo. Since he was in Waikava he had grown in stature. He had renewed his following in Vanua Levu. Also, two days after the arrival of Ratu Golea at Wairiki there could be seen out to sea Wainiqolo with his canoes. He was followed by Ratu Koila and the people of his party. They all went to Somosomo, but the people of Somosomo were in Wairiki.

Three days afterwards someone came to tell Ratu Golea that the enemy armies were going to advance on Wairiki, that the Tongans were coming inland, and the Fijians with Ratu Koila at their head would come along the coast. Ratu Golea had at that time three thousand warriors around him at Wairiki. He replied, “Let them come.”

Ratu Daunivavana, his brother, then spoke to Ratu Golea: “Take care of yourself, Ratu Golea, because Ratu Kalou is in the hands of the Tongans; if he is not dead, he is certainly half-dead. There is no-one else capable of being Tui Cakau, therefore you must be our chief. Look after yourself, then, and don’t go into the fight. Give me command of the warriors, victory is ours.” (He was called Daunivavana because he was a marksman: when he shot he never
missed his target, and he always hit the smallest bird in the highest branch of a tree with his first shot.)

Ratu Golea replied: “I have confidence in you. You be the general of our army.”

Ratu Daunivavana then divided his army into two groups: he took the first group under his command, and gave the second group to Matakitonga, his other brother. Then, addressing the warriors of his first group of the army, he said to them: “Because the Tongans are coming by the interior, we will take the interior. Matakitonga can have the assassin and his followers who are coming along the shore.”

Having said that, he hurried to meet the enemy. Soon he met them, overcame them, and their dead covered the ground. The terrified survivors fled as fast as they could, and disappeared into the bush. In the heat of the battle Ratu Daunivavana had not seen whether his enemies were Tongans or Fijians, because it was the custom in Fiji that in battle the warriors covered their whole bodies in black. When he approached the dead to look at them, he saw that they were all Fijians.

Addressing his warriors he cried, “We have been deceived: the dead are all Fijians. Let us run quickly to Wairiki and reach the shore: the Tongan army is following the shore.” They all went running to Wairiki. And when they were no more than one hundred metres from the village, Ratu Daunivavana heard the first rifle shots.

“Here are the Tongans”, he cried, “Death to the Tongans”.

But then he was astonished to see four Fijian chiefs carrying Ratu Golea in their arms. He recognised his brother, went up to him and asked, “Are you fatally wounded?”
“No”, said Ratu Golea, “but I have perhaps a broken arm.”

“Who wounded you?”

“A man hidden in this bush, Wainiqolo perhaps.”

And in fact they saw a man who rejoined the Tongan army at the distance of a rifle shot.

Daunivavana then addressed the two groups of his army, now joined together again: “Forward”, he said, “The Tongans are yours, Wainiqolo is mine.”

The men of Cakaudrove attacked the Tongans like lions. They brought about a terrible carnage. One was about to strike Wainiqolo.

“Stop” cried Daunivavana, “that one is mine.”, and having said that he fired, and fatally shot the Tongan general.

Two hours later the Tongan army was annihilated. Only one in fifty Tongans survived. They abandoned their weapons, threw themselves into the sea, and swam to the small island of Koro Levu.

Ratu Daunivavana left them to live for now, and went straight away to get orders from Ratu Golea. He replied that a messenger should go to them and tell them to wait with confidence. Someone should go and look for them in a double canoe. They will be received like friends, like brothers. Someone went quickly to look for them. There were just 46 survivors.

Ratu Koila, brave warrior that he was, didn’t risk his life in combat, but remained hidden in Somosomo. Hearing of the pardon given
to the survivors of the Tongan army, he sent word to ask pardon for himself. Ratu Golea replied that the assassin must come himself, otherwise he would die. Ratu Koila arrived like a crouching dog, and placed his soro (presents of submission) at the feet of Ratu Golea and begged for pardon.

“Pardon!” replied Ratu Golea, “You don’t deserve it. However, I give it. I despise myself for having been afraid of you.”

The war was finished, the army of Wainiqolo was annihilated and the power of Ma’afu was extraordinarily weakened. Tupou, king of Tonga, had from now on to renounce all hope of ruling Fiji. The Wesleyans had lost their great spreaders of the Gospel, those who converted with the crack of the whip were beaten by the shots of rifles. They took the last option which was left for them: they proposed Cakobau to be king of all Fiji.

Two days later Ratu Golea sent his 46 Tongan prisoners back to Lau. He sent this message to the Tongans still in Lau: “Take back your Tongans, and send me my brother Ratu Kalou. If in fifteen days my brother is not here, I will go to Lau with all my warriors, and I will wipe you out to the last man.”

Six days later Ratu Kalou arrived, but, as Ratu Daunivavana had said, he was half dead. He addressed all the assembled chiefs and said to them: “I don’t have much longer to live. Agree together, and name Ratu Golea chief of Cakaudrove.” All the chiefs then assembled.

Ratu Golea was named Tui Cakau (chief of Cakaudrove). He was then asked to name Ratu Daunivavana as his second in command. “No”, he said, “because Daunivavana and I are as one. Let Ratu Koila be my second in command, so that he will remember by that that I have pardoned him, and above all that he will never forget that he is obliged to me for that.”
Father Favre had not returned to Solevu; he had waited at Nawi for the outcome of the war at Wairiki, and also the return of Ratu Kalou from Lau, of which he heard the story. Learning of the arrival of Ratu Kalou, he went to Wairiki to help care for him, and at the same time to congratulate Ratu Golea and Ratu Daunivavana on their victory.

Tui Cakau (this would in future be the name of Ratu Golea) received Father Favre very favourably. He invited him to sleep in his house, and told him that the next morning he would tell him what he wanted to say.

That evening, Tui Cakau called all his chiefs, and the leaders of his three thousand warriors, and said to them: “At the request of Tupou I had already ordered you to be Wesleyans. But now the Wesleyan ministers have deceived us and have tried to have us wiped out by the Tongans. I wish that you should all be Catholic. All those who wish to become Catholics attend tomorrow morning at the prayer and the instruction which the priest will give himself.”

The next day he called Father Favre, and said to him: “Father, all Cakaudrove is Catholic. I beg you to receive us all today into the Catholic religion, and to reunite us all for prayer.”

The lali was rung, and everyone came to the shore. It was now fully daylight. Everyone was seated there except for the famous Ratu Koila.

When the prayer and the instruction were finished, Tui Cakau made a sign with his hand to the three thousand warriors to remain in silence. He then in a loud voice thanked Father Favre, and said to him: “Please go and say to Father Breheret that all Cakaudrove is Catholic, and ask him for a priest. Tell him that we
will all follow the word of the priest whom he will send; that I take on myself to take good care of him, as is my duty.”

Father Favre promised in an equally loud voice to carry out this commission. Everyone rose, and two hours later Father Favre left for Solevu, his heart full of joy.

At the moment he was about to leave the district, passing close to a warship, he was approached by a small rowing boat. The officer commanding the rowing boat said to him: “The commander of the English warship asks you to please come on board.”

Father Favre went. At first he was not well received by the commander of the warship, who had been wickedly informed by the Wesleyan ministers. But Father Favre explained everything to him, and the commander made him warmly welcome, and there was no consequence for anyone.

The Catholic Church in Kadavu

The year 1862 began well. In early January a deputation came from Kadavu to see Father Breheret in Levuka, telling him that a good number of people in Kadavu and the whole village of Vabea on Ono-i-Kadavu wished to become Catholics. These people had sent the deputation to ask for a missionary.

Father Breheret, who at that time was alone in Levuka with Father Aubry, replied to the deputation that for the moment he was not able to give them missionaries to go and live with them, but he promised them that Father Aubry would go from time to time to visit them regularly.

Father Breheret was able to promise this because he had with him a young missionary with a cast-iron constitution, of proven zeal and fearlessness. This missionary was Father Aubry, who like an
old sailor crossed the seas in all seasons and all weathers to hurry to the salvation of the many souls that were at that moment to be won.

Father Aubry undertook the care of the mission in Kadavu with great zeal. He made a good number of trips there in 1862, and thanks to his zeal the number of Catholics there grew considerably.

Some months later Tui Cakau paid a visit to Levuka. He went to ask Father Breheret for a missionary. He was accompanied by Ritova, the chief of Macuata, who also asked for a missionary. Tui Cakau had 6,000 people in Cakaudrove and Ritova had 3,000 people in Macuata, and nearly all of them wanted to be Catholics.

Father Breheret replied that he had no missionary for the moment, but he added that since this was the second request that Tui Cakau had made, he promised that the first station that he would found would be in Cakaudrove at Wairiki, the village of the chief. The time should not be too far off, because he hoped, he said, to receive some missionaries from France within a year.

He also said to Ritova that he would send him a missionary as soon as possible, but he could not fix a date by which he could fulfil his promise. At the same time he added that he would write to the priests in Solevu to visit Macuata from time to time.

**The Death of Father Aubry 1863**

As we have already said, Father Aubry was a missionary of proven zeal and courage, and he crossed the seas in all weathers, like an old sailor. Unfortunately he did not pay enough attention to the advice and knowledge of the Fijians. His boat was wrecked on 14 January 1863, some metres from the Makuluva passage, which he missed, and this is how it happened.
He was in Kadavu, at the village of Nakasaleka. The wind was strong, great for returning to Rewa and making the Nukulau passage, which is opposite the shore of Rewa.

He said to the young men who were his crew: “Let’s leave quickly, so that we can reach the passage before nightfall, and not run the risk of missing it”.

“Father”, the young men replied, “It’s true that it’s a great wind but it is too late in the day, Nukulau is too far, and we won’t arrive there in the daylight. You know that the nights are dark, and there is no moon, the passage at Nukulau is difficult, and if we miss it we will be lost.”

“Let’s go”, said Father Aubry, We shall arrive there during daylight. Let us leave now, but let us leave quickly”.

Father Aubry had spoken, and his young men knew that he would not listen to a second response from them. They got up, with tears in their eyes, sadly shook hands with the people of Nakasaleka, and went in silence to the shore.

Then the chief of Nakasaleka spoke to Father Aubry: “Father, remain here. Don’t risk your life, and the lives of your young men. It is too late, you will not arrive in daylight at Nukulau passage. IF you miss the passage you will all perish”.

Father Aubry replied: “Don’t be afraid, I will arrive in the daylight”. Having said that, he got up and left.

The whale-boat ran with astonishing speed, because the wind was excellent, but nevertheless when night fell, they could not even see the reefs, for they were still a long way off. One of the youths went to the top of the mast, a second went forward to look out,
and a third listened. Father Aubry had the helm. Suddenly, the youth up the mast called: “Be careful, here is the reef.”

Everyone anxiously searched for the reef, but the night was too dark, and they could not distinguish anything.

Suddenly the youth in the bow called out: “To the right, to the right”.

Father Aubry turned to the right but alas it was too late, and at that instant the whale-boat hit the foaming reef. It leapt forward with the wave that was pushing it, but was then swept back into the open sea and capsized, and the priest and the Fijians fell into the sea.

Father Aubry came up to the surface, he seized the boat which was near him, and called out, “Boys, are we all safe?”

“Yes, Father,” replied the Fijians.

“That is good”, said the priest, but at the same instant a second wave pushed the men and the boat onto the reef.

The Fijians like fish slipped under the wave, suffering some abrasions, but they managed to set foot on the reef. Then they turned around and called Father. Father Aubry did not reply. He had disappeared and he was not seen again. For a long time his boys called, they searched everywhere for him, weeping, but he did not reappear. Poor boys, they spent all night looking for Father Aubry. When daylight came they searched, they called, and they cried again. He did not appear. They did not even see his body.

One of the boys saw the boat a good distance away on the open sea. The three boys jumped into the sea to go to it, but seeing a shark they let out a shout and got back on the reef.
After a long time they arrived at Rewa and told Father Favier of the misfortune that had happened. Father Favier sent quickly the fishermen of Nasilai to look for Father Aubrey. Twenty men went with their canoes, they found nothing, not even Father Aubry’s body. They brought back only the smashed whale-boat in which there remained just one box. Inside was the chalice and other things used for Mass.

Several days later there were brought to Father Favier the remains of the head of a European which had been found on the reef at Nukulau. But this head had been so damaged by the reefs and sharks that it was impossible to identify. However it was thought that it could be the head of Father Aubry, but since there was no certainty they were content to bury it with respect.

Father Breheret, on hearing of the death of Father Aubry, said “What a misfortune it is for the mission of Fiji. The most robust, fearless missionary! If only God had allowed that his boat be smashed, and that he received some injuries in the shipwreck, I would have gladly offered a Mass of thanksgiving, for giving this young priest a good lesson, and making him more prudent for the future. But alas, the Lord has judged otherwise. In tears let us kiss the hand of God who has struck us!”

**Three New Priests Arrive**

Two months after the death of Father Aubry, three new priests and a lay brother arrived in Fiji. These three new priests were Father Bochettaz and Father Louyot (both of whom came from Central Oceania) and Father Grosselin, who arrived from France, accompanied by Br. Emery.
The three priests set themselves with great energy to learn the Fijian language, and by the end of July they could understand and speak sufficiently well to begin their ministry.

**Foundation of the Station of Wairiki 1863**

From as early as the first days of August Father Breheret was able to found the station of Wairiki in Taveuni, as he had promised to Tui Cakau. Father Grosselin remained in Levuka with Father Breheret.

Father Bochettaz and Father Jay were well received by Tui Cakau and all his people. From the material point of view the two priests had everything they needed; but from the spiritual point of view they had hardly any consolation. Cakaudrove, like its chief, was Catholic in name, but pagan in practice. For several years religion for these people consisted in giving their Sundays to listen to instruction from the priests, and that only took place formally, because they did not hear, and did not want to hear. They had declared themselves Catholic because Tui Cakau had told them to declare themselves Catholic, just as beforehand they had said that they were Wesleyans because Tui Cakau had told them to say that they were Wesleyans, but deep down they remained, with their chief, what they had always been: pagans, and a people whose immorality was indescribable.

The two missionaries suffered enormously at the beginning. However, they had what no missionary had ever had or would ever have in Fiji: they had in the one village of Wairiki five thousand people, and that lasted for two years. This is how this came about: we have seen how Tui Cakau had brought together 3,000 warriors in Wairiki for the battle with the Tongans. After he did not let most of them go back to their villages, but he ordered them to bring their wives and children and to continue to live with him in Wairiki. It would be impossible in any other part of Fiji except
Taveuni to have five thousand people in one village: they would all die of hunger. In Taveuni it is not possible to die of hunger even today, although the European farmers with their thousands of workers have destroyed the countless tivoli plants, which provided the richness of the countryside. Besides, Taveuni, whose name means Island of delights, is well named.

Tui Cakau was a clever man, and his reason for forcing his people to remain close to him was to know them better, to examine well the followers of Ratu Koila, to win over those he could win over, to weaken and punish with work those he was not able to win over. He began by declaring that he had not forbidden them to follow the Wesleyan religion inasmuch as it was a religion, but he said to them:

“You need to know:
1. That having been beaten in the battle of Wairiki, all your villages and all your land belongs to me. I am able to sell it to the Europeans to punish you for revolting against me, and if I permit you to stay and plant your land it is only because of my affection for you.
2. I declare that if I ever see anyone follow the Wesleyan religion, I will regard him as a warrior with face painted black so that he can’t be known, and I will challenge him, as one challenges a man who has the slightest hidden intention to rise up one day against his chief, who has the hidden intention to accept one day from the hand of Ratu Koila a hatchet to kill his chief, just as Ratu Koila did when he accepted a hatchet from the hands of Cakobau, with which he killed my father.”

Anyhow, even though they had 5,000 people in their one village of Wairiki, the priests could only minister to the babies and the dying. They baptised the very small babies and they assisted the dying, working to prepare them well for death.
The good fathers, how many souls they sent to heaven!

It was only after the departure of Frs. Bochettaz and Jay for Wairiki that there arrived at Ovalau the Brief from the Holy Father [erecting the Prefecture Apostolic of Fiji, and appointing Father Breheret as Prefect Apostolic]. Upon receiving this document, Father Breheret was filled with great anxiety. The Fijians who had declared themselves for the Catholic church numbered more than 13,000, as follows:

- Bau and Verata: 1,000
- Rewa: 1,000
- Cakaudrove: 5,000
- Macuata: 3,000
- Solevu: 600
- Kadavu: 2,000
- Ovalau & others: 1,300

Total: 13,900 (at the end of 1863)

The poor Prefect Apostolic had with him to care for these 13,000 people only seven Missionaries: Frs. Favier, Favre, Bochettaz, Grosselin, Louyot, Leberre and Jay.

“How can we respond”, he asked, “to all these needs that are being made known, above all when those who are declaring themselves for the Catholic religion are being ceaselessly solicited by the presents of the Wesleyan catechists, while others are being threatened by them, all are persecuted in an atrocious manner by their different chiefs at the instigation of the Wesleyan ministers and catechists. Moreover”, he said, “the Wesleyan mission has immense resources: it has Fijian books, it has an army of Tongan catechists to instruct the young and to form Fijian catechists. And we have none of those things!” However, full of confidence in God he added: “It is true that the soldiers of Gideon were only 300
against 130,000 Midianites! What God was able to do at that time he can do now in our time. He has only to will it!"

Father Breheret, in spite of all his work, had written a long time before this a small Fijian catechism. He had also long before this instructed Father Favier to compose a book of Fijian prayers and a big catechism. Father Favier had done his work; he had even added the Fijian translation of St. Matthew’s Gospel, but it was only in manuscript form, and nothing was printed. Meanwhile the need of a printed book was becoming urgent.

Father Breheret asked Father Favier to send him his manuscript. Having received it, he read it carefully with Father Grosselin, and having found it well done he resolved to have it printed immediately. For this purpose he sent Father Grosselin to Sydney at the end of 1863, to supervise the printing of the book, and to correct the printer’s proofs.

So Father Grosselin left for Sydney, and remained there until the first printer’s proofs had been completely corrected. As soon as that was done he hastened to return to Fiji to take up his work again. He left Sydney for Fiji in March 1864, and brought with him a new priest, Father Camu, who had arrived from France for Fiji, whom he had met in Sydney.

**Arrival in Fiji of Father Camu**

As soon as Father Grosselin and Father Camu arrived at Levuka, Father Breheret took Father Camu to Solevu to assist Father Favre. (This was when Father Breheret, learning that the people of Cakaudrove would soon be leaving Wairiki where they were all together in one place, as we have said above, to return to their different villages, he divided in two the island of Vanua Levu, and told the sickly Father Bochettaz that he would take care of only the northern part of Vanua Levu as far as Savusavu exclusively, and
that the south of Vanua Levu, as far as Savusavu would be looked after by the priests from Solevu. So about a thousand people were taken away from the priests at Wairiki.)

He took with him to Ovalau Father Grosselin and Father Leberre. He himself took charge of the ministry to the Europeans, who were starting to get quite numerous, he put Father Grosselin in charge of the ministry to the Fijians on Ovalau, and he put Father Leberre in charge of visiting the islands of Gau, Batiki, Nairai, Koro, Yasawa and Kadavu from time to time in the “Nai Vola Siga”

The people of Kadavu who had declared themselves for the Catholic religion numbered at that time nearly three thousand. From time to time they came to Ovalau to ask Father Breheret for a missionary. In spite of their desires Father Breheret was not able to answer their request, because he had only one missionary who, if it were really necessary, he could send, and he merely led them to hope that one day they would receive a missionary.

Finally towards the 20th December 1864 a canoe from Ono, Kadavu visited Levuka, and on board were a number of Catholics who had come to celebrate the feast of Christmas. These Catholics went to look for Father Breheret, and they renewed their request for a missionary, and they announced that the island of Ono (which had eight villages) had nearly completely declared for the Catholic religion. When they announced this news to Father Breheret, he held in his hand a letter by which he was informed that two new missionaries had left France for Fiji. He listened with attention to what the people from Ono-i Kadavu said, and he replied: “Here is a letter announcing that two new missionaries are on route for Fiji. When they arrive, you will have missionaries in Kadavu. When you return to Ono after Christmas tell your people that they can count on two missionaries,” He also asked them to take good care of the new missionaries.
After the Christmas festival was over, the people from Ono-i-Kadavu went home very happy, and the whole island of Ono-Kadavu prepared to receive the two missionaries which he had promised them.

**The arrival in Levuka of Father Deniau and Father Fauvel**

Finally on 16 April 1865 the two expected missionaries arrived in Levuka. These two missionaries were Father Fauvel and Father Deniau. (On passing through Sydney they were given charge of carrying to Fiji the boxes of books which Father Grosselin had gone to have printed in Sydney, and which had now been bound. The news brought great joy to Father Breheret who exclaimed: “Now we are going to have the ability to start schools.”

**The Foundation of the Station at Kadavu.**

**June 1865**

From June Father Breheret hastened to fulfil his promise to the people of Kadavu. He took to them Father Leberre and Father Fauvel to found there the fifth station of missionaries, and he kept Father Deniau with him in Levuka.

The station of Kadavu that Father Breheret wanted to found was not on the big island of Kadavu, but on the island of Ono, which is very close (two miles), and nearly all of its inhabitants had declared themselves for the Catholic religion. The chief village of this island is called Vabea. It was at Vabea that Father Breheret placed Fathers Leberre and Fauvel, who were received by the chief of the island and all his people with great good will. A crowd of people from the first days asked to be instructed and prepared for baptism, and the two priests’ hearts were filled with hope.

On taking the two priests to Kadavu Father Breheret had stopped at Rewa and left there Father Grosselin. He had said to Father
Favier: “Because you district is going very well, and there is a very good spirit there, divide your district into three parts. You will be in charge of Rewa, Father Louyot will be in charge of the district of Bau, and Father Grosselin will be in charge of the districts of Verata and Namena.

But on his return from Kadavu, Father Breheret passed again by Rewa, and he found Father Louyot dangerously ill. Since there was a distinguished doctor in Levuka, he took Fr Louyot on board, and took him to Levuka. Arriving in Levuka, he said to Father Deniau, “There is not a lot of work to do here, and I feel the lack as long as Father Louyot is sick. As there is a huge work to do in Rewa, and two priests are not enough, I am going to take you to Rewa, and you will be in charge of the district of Bau, which had been confided to Father Louyot.” So Father Deniau left for Rewa, and arrived there on the vigil of the feast of St. Peter.

Father Louyot was very sick until September, and he started getting better in September. In October he began to do ministry in Ovalau. In September, while Father Louyot was getting better, Father Poupinel, the General Visitor of the Mission, returned to central Oceania, and he passed through Fiji, but he was able to stop for only a few days. While in Fiji he learned that the number of Catholics had increased in Kadavu, and there were now great hopes for the Fiji mission. As he left he promised that he would return the following year, and that he would bring together all the priests for a common retreat.

**Visit of Father Poupinel 1866**

In 1866 Father Poupinel, in a letter which he wrote the following year, said, “I embarked in Sydney to make a visit to our confreres attached to the Fiji mission. The reverend Prefect Apostolic of Fiji [Father Breheret], having come to Sydney on business, returned with me.
Arriving in Fiji, I visited with him the different stations in the Fiji group. Everywhere I found clear proof that this mission has made real progress, but I must also say that in several places I found that the spirit which had so strongly consoled and encouraged our confreres, was beginning to slacken. At Kadavu, first of all, where there were then 2,000 Catholics, Father Breheret and I saw a negative point which disturbed us a lot, and we asked ourselves if these Kadavu people, who had at first appeared so ardent and eager to follow Our Lord on Thabor, had the courage to follow him on Calvary.

At Solevu we were more satisfied. But at Rewa I experienced a consolation which I had not expected. I had heard it said that there were 500 Catholics in Rewa and 600 catechumens. I had to spend the Sunday there, and I promised myself to look carefully at how eagerly the Rewa people came to church. I had the happiness to see an immense assembly of baptised Catholics assisting at Mass. And when the Mass finished and the bell rang for the instruction of the catechumens, I again had the happiness of seeing an equally great number of catechumens assembled for the instruction of the priest. I was amazed.

On Ovalau I found less enthusiasm. I did not see Wairiki, but I heard say that the people there were still only Catholics in name..

It has seemed to me, in a word, that what above all was weakening the progress of the true faith in Fiji, was that our missionaries when they left after visiting a village, they had no helpers or catechists at all to get the people together to pray, to remind people of the advice of the priest, and to learn the catechism and the prayers.

Also, at the retreat (where we were all together, that is to say twelve priests and three brothers) when I gave some conferences
to the priests, I spoke strongly in support of this point. I said first of all to all my confreres: ‘last year you were sent Fijian books which have been printed in Sydney. Very well! Let every one of you have a school where from now and for some years we can find young people able to become good catechists and with them to feed into a central school for the mission, where they can be given further instruction and education.’ I then added:

‘That is not all: look for and find as soon as possible young married people, good Christians, sufficiently instructed, with know-how and zeal and make them learner catechists. If you are able to place such catechists in the villages, they will achieve good results, and religion will make progress. Without catechists, all the good that you will do in your visits will perish for want of follow-up. Before you come back to revive the flame that you have already lit, it will be extinguished, because no one was there to stoke the fire.’

Also after reaching an agreement with the Prefect Apostolic and his vicar Father Grosselin, I requested Father Deniau, who was the youngest, to agree to be in charge of beginning the work of the catechists, and it suited that they be established at Lokia, which was a property of the mission and was opposite the station of Father Favier. He should take with him a certain number of young intelligent married men, who knew how to get things done, and were good Christians, that he get them to know Father Favier, that he would instruct them, form them and send them into the villages that were most distant from the station where he lived. (I added that so long as they knew the faith sufficiently, it would do for the moment that they could read, and write well enough to send a letter to the priest in case of need.)

Father Deniau accepted my proposition, and several days after his return to Rewa he commenced his work with the catechists. (Three days later, 22 January 1867, the sickly Father Camu
brought me a letter of Father Grosselin, in which the good Father said that Father Deniau had already sent eight catechists, one to Tokatoka, one to Nakelo, one to Daku, one to Kaba, one to Cautata, one to Nakorolevu, one to Nakalawaca, and the eighth to Nukurua.)

At the end of the retreat Father Breheret, prostrating himself before the altar, pronounced in a loud voice the act by which he consecrated to the Heart of Jesus himself, his co-workers in the mission, his Christians, heretics and pagans. Before departing all the fathers signed a humble petition to our Holy Father the Pope, humbly begging His Holiness to ratify the gift that had been made of the Fiji mission to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to decree that the feast of the Sacred Heart should be the patronal feast of this prefecture apostolic.”

The next day each of the priests returned to his district, especially Father Deniau who hastened to make his way to the district of Bau, because battle was about to be joined the next day between Bau and Vugalei, aided by the high chief of Verata, followed by all those of his people who were Wesleyan. He wanted to be there to aid the wounded.

As it was easy to predict, Ravoka, the chief of Verata, was killed, all the villages of Vugalei were burnt, and all the chiefs, big and small, were taken as prisoners to Bau. There the chief of Bau began by tying them up, then he and all his people mocked them, he whipped them one after the other, then gave them as domestic servants for some months to the different chiefs of his territory. After that he allowed them to go and rebuild their villages. But they found that there were no more coconut or breadfruit trees, nor fruit trees or anything of that sort. The victorious army of Bau had cut the trees, taken all the animals, and ravaged all the plantations.
In 1866 Father Breheret had gone to Solevu, and finding Father Camu dangerously sick he brought him to Levuka, so that he could be better looked after. But the doctor at Levuka declared that he had no hope of recovering from his sickness in Fiji, so Father Breheret sent him to Sydney. “He arrived at our place in Sydney,” wrote Father Poupinel, “on 22 January 1867. I sent immediately to find the doctor, who said that Father Camu had lost one lung, but added that he thought that the second could be saved by sending the sick man quickly to New Caledonia, where he could live for some years and exercise a useful ministry. In spite of my apprehensions I sent Father Camu to New Caledonia, but a little later he died like an angel in the arms of Father Vigouroux. All the priests at Saint Louis were full of admiration, and said to one another that they hoped that God would give them the grace to die like that.”

Since the beginning of 1867 the Wesleyans undertook to realise the plan that they had conceived, since the Tongans, conquerors at first of all the south of Fiji, had been resoundingly beaten by the warriors of Tui Cakau both in Macuata and in Wairiki. This plan was to crown and name as king of Fiji the famous Cakobau, the chief of Bau. Not being able to succeed by this means with those Fijians who did not recognise Cakobau as chief of Bau, they called a meeting at Bau of the less important Europeans, who crowned and named Cakobau King of Fiji; then they made an attempt at a constitutional government in which Mr. St. John was named the first minister, acting with the chiefs of Bau in the name and under the authority of Cakobau.

The news of this new crowning made a lot of noise in Fiji. The Fijians were very happy with it. When Tui Cakau heard the news, the Tongan Ma’afu was in Somosomo. Tui Cakau came to him and said, “Do you know that the Europeans have crowed and established Cakobau as king of all Fiji. I am happy that Cakobau is recognised as chief of Tailevu; but I will never allow that he be
recognised as the chief of Vanua Levu. Furthermore, if seeing you have no more army he wants only Lau, I understand.

The crafty Tongan replied to Tui Cakau, “Aren’t you the chief of Lau as well as Vanua Levu? What can Cakobau do in Lau? Since the Europeans have crowned Cakobau king, call together all the chiefs of Vanua Levu and Lau, and name a king of Vanua Levu and a king of Lau.”

“That makes sense”, replied Tui Cakau, and he called a meeting at Somosomo of all the chiefs of Taveuni, Lau and Vanua Levu to elect a chief of Vanua Levu and of Lau. The election took place, and Tui Cakau was unanimously elected chief of Vanua Levu and of Lau.

“No”, said Tui Cakau, “I accept to be chief of Taveuni and Vanua Levu, but to make amends to Ma’afu because we made him submit at Macuata and at Taveuni, I name him chief of Lau. From now on there will be three great chiefs in Fiji: Tui Tailevu - Cakobau, Tui Vanua Levu - Tui Cakau; Tui Lau - Ma’afu.

Ever since then, up till the cession of Fiji to England which took place in October 1874, there were three paramount chiefs in Fiji: Cakobau, Tui Cakau and Ma’afu. It was hardly a month later when an English warship arrived and ordered the chief of Bau to avenge the murder of a Wesleyan minister named Baker who had been killed by the pagans in the interior of Viti Levu, and who wanted to impose by force his doctrines under penalty of taking them and bombarding them with his worships if they refused to be Wesleyans. Cakobau went on the campaign the following year, as we shall see.
The Arrival of Father Montmayeur and Brother Stanislas

May 1867

Towards the end of May a new priest arrived in Fiji Father Montmayeur, and a new brother, Brother Stanislas. Father Breheret let them rest for more than a month at Levuka, and finally, at the beginning of July he called them and Father Grosselin and said to them:

“The wind is good, and I have been thinking of leaving tomorrow for Kadavu, passing by Rewa on the way. I will take Father Grosselin to Kadavu where he will replace Father Leberre, who will go to Solevu to take the place of the unfortunate Father Camu. As for Father Montmayeur and Brother Stanislas, I will take them to Rewa. Father Montmayeur will go and live at Lokia with Father Deniau. On my return from Kadavu I will take the two of them to found a new station. Brother Stanislas will go and help Father Favier and build for him the church for which he has prepared nearly all the materials.”

Father Grosselin was cheerful, he did not know that he was going to assist at the agony of the poor station of Kadavu, where a wicked and violent persecution was weakening the faith of the new converts, and where the work of poor Father Leberre was nearly ruined. Father Breheret believed that he should not tell him what he knew. Father Grosselin loved Kadavu. He knew the place because he had in the past visited it several times, and he had always found there a bright hope which made him rejoice, as one rejoices at seeing a beautiful tree in flower whose fruit one will soon be picking. So he set off and arrived there with a cheerful heart. But imagine his sadness when at the end of several months he saw that in spite of all his care the last branches of his beautiful tree were drying up. Poor Father Grosselin, how many prayers he offered up to God for his beloved people of Kadavu, how many
mortifications he joined to his prayers and to his acts of zeal for his poor people. But let us leave there this desolate land.

Let us say only that there had been in Kadavu up to 3,000 Catholics, of whom 800 had been baptised, 400 of whom had been admitted to communion. Now in 1868 there are 186 of the Catholic religion, some of whom have died, and there remain only 120 baptised Catholics. All the rest have left the Catholic religion. If only these 120 baptised Catholics were good Catholics, but alas how many of them were Catholic in name only. We must hope however that one day they will all be good Catholics and reach heaven.

Father Breheret did not remain for a long time in Kadavu. He took with him Father Leberre, who was going to lavish on the people of Solevu the zeal which he had not been able to use on the people of Kadavu. The “Nai Vola Sigar” did not delay, and was soon back in Rewa. It dropped anchor in front of the compound of Father Favier. Father Breheret found Father Favier with Brother Stanislas occupied with the preparatory work on his church, on which he had not ceased working for two years with great difficulty, going himself to search for timber in the bush, using a saw, bringing it to a sawmill, marking it, etc etc. After hearing what Father Breheret said about poor Kadavu, Father Favier said to the Prefect Apostolic (Father Breheret) that his suffering was great enough for him, and he told him of the misfortune which came to him in the form of a persecution which took place at Nakelo, where 150 of his new members in whom he had put a lot of hope had abandoned the Catholic religion and fled to the Wesleyans.

(Some months later the chief of Nakelo, seeing that all his people were dying like flies, went to find Father Favier and said to him: “God is punishing me because I have persecuted the Catholic religion; all my people are dying. Take your Catholics, I have told
them to return to the Catholic religion. About a hundred will therefore come back to you.”)

Father Breheret shared in the pain of the apostle of Rewa, then both of them found consolation as two saints would by each looking with love at the cross, and lifting themselves up, they generously committed themselves to continue with zeal the work which they had both begun. Father Favier returned to his sawmill, and Father Breheret went to Lokia, where he went to take Father Deniau and Father Montmayeur to Verata, where he wished to establish a sixth station.

Arriving at Ovalau where he had gone with Father Leberre, he found already in the water the “Pio Nono" (Pius the Ninth) a boat built by Brother Sorlin to visit and so understand the stations, and to replace the “Nai Vola Sigar”, which had grown old, which had scraped a good number of rocks, and was in a deplorable state.

Brother Sorlin had worked for one year on this new boat. The preparatory work had taken six months, during which time he had had to go into the bush to cut down and saw the timber, then transport it to the station at Levuka. For that he had to make a considerable number of trips. Then the actual construction of the boat took another six months, during which his courage was not lessened for a single instant.

At the sight of the Pio Nono already in the water Father Breheret experienced a great consolation. He landed at Levuka where he found Father Favre from Solevu, who had come to look for Father Leberre, since Father Breheret had written to him. The news that Father Favre brought from Solevu gave Father Breheret further happiness. Father Favre told him that the Catholic religion was prospering in the district of Solevu, that fifteen new Wesleyans were leaving their church and had declared themselves for the Catholic religion, and that he was going to build three new Fijian
churches in three villages that had not previously had churches, and that a certain number of catechumens were preparing for baptism.

Father Favre remained several days at Levuka, then he took with him Father Leberre, and they both returned to Solevu.

**Foundation of the Station of Verata 1867**

On the 10th of April 1867 Father Breheret send Father Deniau to found the station of Verata with Father Montmayeur. This station began at Kaba, comprising the districts of Bau, Verata and Namena.

“On our arrival”, wrote Father Montmayeur, “we found on the land that Father Breheret had given us a residence that the chief of Bau had ordered to be built.

This Fijian house was about one mile from the village. When we visited our land I was able to convince myself that if we knocked down some things we would be able to make our place not only habitable, but even pleasant. Besides we have brought with us our house from Lokia (made with lumber from the wood used for the church in Rewa). and Brother Stanislas had followed us to erect it. But one thing absolutely necessary was missing: there was neither a source nor channel of water near the building, it was necessary to dig a well. I set myself to do the work, and had the happiness to find a good source. Following that we had to clear the land with perseverance, and after living there for six months our place was totally transformed. Today our little house on a pleasant little hill looks out to the sea, where the waves from the open sea die at our feet. An immense horizon opens up in front of us to the north and lets us contemplate the ocean with all its beauty and its fury. Behind us and to our left we look out over a vast stretch of trees and green. To the east are the mountains of Ovalau, which remind
me of my Savoy. Close by our house all the newcomers of the
district joined us in building a church of reeds and bamboo, in
which they assemble on Sundays and feast days.

Our district is very extensive, it comprises the whole east coast of
Viti Levu. Moreover we have fifteen young men destined to be
catechists and we always have 25 children in our school, and they
are very keen to learn.”

From the beginning of 1868, wrote Father Breheret, the chief of
Bau set out to avenge the death of the Wesleyan minister Baker.
Confident of his strength, his ambition and in the promises of the
Wesleyan ministers, Cakobau set off into the mountains which he
did not know. He had divided his army in two in order to more
surely block the enemy. Instead of victory he had a sad defeat:
160 of his soldiers, and among others 57 inhabitants of Bau
became the fodder of man-eating mountains. A warship arrived
finally to help the chief of Bau. It had gone for three days, taking a
certain number of people. But in this land where there are no
roads, the soldiers of the queen had not been able to penetrate to
the villages which were the lair of these cannibals. The greater part
of the English soldiers had been killed, and the captain had
gathered together the survivors as quickly as possible.

What will be the definitive outcome of this war? I know nothing,
but what I am sure of is that whatever is the outcome it won’t be
advantageous for us. If, unlikely though it be, the natives are the
winners, it will be bad for us for these people do not distinguish
between the religions. That is the least of their concerns. On the
other hand if the English and Cakobau win, their enemies will be
forced to join the Wesleyan church, and our poor Catholics,
already in a minority, would have to suffer for being faithful to us.
The situation is therefore very critical. But we put our confidence
in divine Providence.
Let us come now to the improvements brought about in our situation in Fiji in 1868 and 1869. Commencing under the heading of material improvements, I will then have a few words on the religious state of each of our stations.

**Material Improvements**

1. **At Ovalau**: Father Louyot built in 1868 two small schooners, one smaller one for the use of Father Breheret, and the other for use in a station which he knew he was about to be put sent to found. He had gone himself to the forest to cut the wood necessary for the construction of these two schooners. He set himself to work, and the second one especially was a small work of art: elegant, solid, sure, fast, lacking nothing. It was able to compete favourably with all those in the port of Levuka.

In 1869 the same Father Louyot built with the help of Brother Edward a beautiful wooden two-storey house to replace at Levuka the old house which Father Mathieu had built in 1851, as this old house had fallen into ruins.

In 1869 he set out to build as we shall see a magnificent church in Levuka, which he finished later.

2. **At Rewa**: Father Favier, helped by Brother Stanislas built in 1868 a large and beautiful timber church covered in galvanised iron which was 80 feet long and 28 feet wide. This church was completed at least on the outside when a violent cyclone which ravaged Fiji in the middle of March 1868 tore it down to its foundations and shifted it eighteen feet away. This accident marvellously caused no other damage, and the only inconvenience it caused was the trouble and fatigue to put it back in place. This church, which was the first in Fiji to have a small graceful steeple, was very pleasant to the eye.
3. **At Verata**: In 1869 Father Deniau with the help of Brother Stanislas put up a magnificent wooden church with three arches which gained the admiration of all the Fijians of Viti Levu. The preparatory work for this church had cost Father Deniau and Brother Edward a whole year of unheard of distress to cut all the necessary wood in the bush, to transport it by sea, and to saw it partly in the bush and partly on the coast.

**The Religious Condition of the Different Stations in Fiji in 1868 and 1869**

**Kadavu.** Father Grosselin had been in Kadavu for eight months with Father Fauvel. They experienced the greatest sadness that the heart of a priest can know. In spite of their fervent and continual prayers, their mortification and their zealous work, their neophytes and their catechumens more and more abandoned the religion of the Lord to follow the Wesleyan church. Father Breheret, who kept himself up to date with all that was happening in Kadavu, knelt at the foot of the tabernacle. One day Ritova the chief of Macuata arrived at Levuka, and renewed his request for missionaries, which he had already done several times before. This time Father Breheret gave in to his request, and promised that he was going to send two missionaries. To this purpose the next day he sent Father Louyot to go to Kadavu and look for Fathers Grosselin and Fauvel, and told him to tell the two priests that the station of Kadavu was closed.

When Fathers Grosselin and Fauvel arrived at Levuka, Father Breheret told them to rest for a few days, then he himself took Father Grosselin to Verata and left him with Father Deniau, and then he took Father Montmayeur, who he destined to found a station in Macuata with Father Louyot. He then took Father Fauvel to Rewa to join Father Favier, who was alone. Having done all that, he returned to Levuka with Father Montmayeur and
announced publicly that the station of Kadavu was closed, and was replaced with that of Macuata.

At this time the establishment of Ovalau was in a pitiful state, so Father Breheret bought at great price and effort sufficient timber to build a new house. Putting aside for the time being the founding of the station of Macuata, Father Louyot offered to first build the new house in Levuka of which we have spoken, and also built a whaleboat for the use of the future station before he departed for Macuata with Father Montmayeur.

The Attempt to Found a Station at Macuata at the Beginning of 1869

A sudden and unexpected change had occurred, the Fathers who had been sent to Macuata were not received, and they were obliged to return to Ovalau several days later after a terrible trip of the most bitter deception. The only cause that I can find is the favourite son of Ritova, and I have heard this from the three men who remained Catholic in 1895 who were there the day Father Louyot arrived:

Ritova, the chief of Macuata, having obtained missionaries for Macuata, had remained in Levuka. He waited to see the missionaries leave, and he said nothing up until the time they left. But the missionaries did not leave for the reasons of which I have spoken. Ritova did not complain, but he was very upset, because he imagined that people were deceiving him. Some days later he fell sick in Levuka, and he sent to ask for medicine from Father Breheret. who had no more medicine to give him. Ritova was annoyed, and imagined that Father Breheret refused the medicine that he had asked for. He shared his unhappiness with one of his people who was the father of a Wesleyan catechist in Levuka. The matter came to the ears of the Wesleyan minister in Levuka. Each day and several times a day for a whole week the minister took
medicine to Ritova, as well as specially chosen potions etc. When Ritova was better the minister sent and asked him to come and stay with him, to rest a while before returning to Macuata to there build up his strength and restore his health. Ritova enjoyed the special potions of the minister, to which were now added some liquor such as l’eau vive. He shifted to his house and stayed there some time, and he was fed with European food and treated like a prince. The minister worked then to make him abandon a religion which had promised him missionaries, but which refused to give them to him even refusing the medicine and care which he needed. When Ritova, restored to health, said he was about to leave, the minister made him promise that he would embrace the Wesleyan religion. Ritova refused for a long time, and finally won over by reason of personal knowledge etc which were endlessly made to him, he ended up by consenting. The minister then gave him a catechist, and Ritova left with this catechist for Macuata. (The catechist was a black minister a Revered Black). Upon arrival in Macuata, pushed by his black minister, he obliged all his family to become Wesleyan, and gave the order for all his people to become Wesleyan. (3000 souls). There remained thus just over 9,300 Catholics in Fiji.

Father Breheret and Father Louyot know nothing of all this, and when Father Louyot and Father Montmayeur arrived in Macuata, all Macuata was already Wesleyan for some time. The people refused to receive them, and the Reverend Black insulted them. The designs of God are unfathomable!

**Wairiki.** Fathers Louyot and Montmayeur were still resting in Levuka after the trials of their trip to Macuata when a letter arrived from Father Bochettaz announcing that the station of Wairiki was beginning to move, and he was going to start a small school. But he also announced to Father Breheret that Father Jay was quite seriously sick. Father Breheret then got Father Louyot to take Father Montmayeur to Wairiki, and to take care of Father Jay.
There were then 4,000 Catholics in the district of Wairiki, 1000 of whom were given over to the care of the priests in Solevu.

Solevu. The poor station of Solevu had been tried for several years. The war that Tui Bua had initiated in hatred of religion had brought good from evil. Happily Providence set to Fiji the French warship “La Megere” under Captain Aube, who had powerfully helped the fathers of Solevu and had dealt out justice to the savage aggressions of Tui Bua.

Rewa. This station which had been strongly tested in 1867 is the station whose reports gave the greatest consolation in 1868 and 1869. The Fijians had begun to give the strong impression of good will towards helping, insofar as they could, the construction of the church. Then also the baptisms, the confessions and the communions had doubled. The station of Rewa has become like one of the good parishes of France.

Verata. The number of neophytes and catechumens grew considerably in 1869 in this district. As Father Breheret said himself in a letter to Father Yardin, he divided the station of Verata in 1870. The two missionaries were placed at a little distance from each other. Father Deniau was left at Verata itself and Father Grosselin was sent to Namena. Unfortunately the humility and simplicity of Father Grosselin was not able to overcome the pride of the greater Fijian chiefs. He did not dare to set himself up at Namena where however there were 200 Catholics, including the big chief, who had given to Father Deniau, sent by Father Breheret, a magnificent piece of land for Father Grosselin. He had implored Father Breheret to allow him to go and establish himself in a little village of the tribe of Namena called Lawaki, where the people were simple and good. Father Breheret consented. Father Grosselin then went to set himself up at Lawaki where the people of this village gave him some land without the consent of the chief. The chief of Namena was furious, and went and sold to Europeans
the land which the villagers of Lawaki had given to Father Grosselin. This signified to Father Grosselin that judgement had been passed on Lawaki, and the missionary had to abandon Lawaki. Father Grosselin then returned to Verata with Father Deniau.

But later Father Fauvel had fallen ill at Rewa. He had gone to Levuka to recuperate, and he found there Father Jay, who had recovered somewhat. Father Grosselin was sent to Rewa to replace Father Fauvel, and some time afterwards Father Jay was sent to Verata to be with Father Deniau.

**Ovalau.** On returning from Macuata Father Louyot had taken up his old position as assistant to Father Breheret in Levuka. But this good priest had experienced too great a trial, and he was discouraged, and he needed some time to calm his distress. At that time the chapel in Levuka was falling in ruins, and seeing the state of Father Louyot, Father Breheret proposed to him that he replace this chapel with a beautiful church. Father Louyot received Father Breheret’s proposition with pleasure, and he found again at that moment his old energy. He set to work with the aid of some Fijians to construct the new church of Levuka at the end of 1869, but overcome with fatigue he was obliged to leave his work unfinished. He fell ill, and was sent to Sydney to rest.

After several months in Sydney, Father Louyot, finding himself much better, returned to Fiji in 1870 and finished the beautiful church. He put up at the back of this church a magnificent steeple, which was higher than all the buildings round about. The golden cross which stood atop it was a joy to all the Christians who arrived in Levuka, and it showed to the ships the entrance to the harbour. The three beautiful bells which were suspended in it sang for a long time the praises of the Lord up until the time when a cyclone destroyed everything.
Nothing stands out more during 1870 than what happened in the district of Culanuku when about a hundred pagans declared themselves for the Catholic religion, and secondly in Bau there were 27 Wesleyans who embraced the Catholic religion, and Cakobau, the chief of Bau, himself made them construct a church while he supervised the work and requested from Father Deniau a catechist for these 27 Catholics, which he hastened to give. (At the end of 1870 there were 10,127 catechumens or neophytes).

 Everywhere there was a certain amount of persecutions but I will speak in the future only in cases where it was very strong.

 On the 14th March 1871 Father Louyot died, a victim of his charity: having learned that one of the catechists was gravely sick, he went to give him the last sacraments. It was a fiercely hot day, and the sea was dead calm. Poor Father had to row for a long time, and he was very tired. When he got near the village of the sick man there was heavy rain, and he was soaked. He had no change of clothes so he could do nothing before returning to the station, where he arrived at eight o’clock in the evening. the next day he had an attack of pleurisy, which changed into typhoid fever of the worst kind, which claimed his life after fifteen days. (It was some time after the death of Father Louyot that there appeared again the famous Wesleyan pamphlet “a taro ka kaya”, which was reprinted in 1870).

 After the death of Father Louyot, Father Breheret found himself alone at Levuka, and recalled Father Montmayeur who was at Taveuni, took him with him to Levuka and sent to Wairiki to replace him Father Jay. Father Deniau remained alone at Verata where he began to build a beautiful wooden house covered in galvanised iron.
War on Ovalau: the People of Lovoni

Towards the middle of 1871 there was a war on Ovalau, which had unfortunate consequences. I want to speak of the Lovoni war. The tribe of Lovoni, which occupied the interior of Ovalau and some villages on the cost, revolted against Bau, to which it had been subject for several years. It was at a time when efforts were being made to form a government. Strengthened by the support of the Europeans the chief of Bau was soon keen to get the rebels. A Wesleyan minister went to them to propose a meeting, promising them the clemency of the chief. They submitted and allowed themselves to be brought to Levuka. There they were immediately sold to planters for five years. All had to submit to this treatment: women and children as well as the men. More than a thousand souls were thus delivered up without any judgement to a common penalty. The Europeans were pleased that day to find such a big number of men to work in their plantations. But above all what I want to remark on about this act of savagery is the manner in which these poor conquered people were distributed. They were people from five or six villages herded together like sheep into one place. No one took the trouble, even more no one allowed them to group together in families. They were taken any old how and spread around more than six different islands sending children to one place and the parents to another, the wife here and husband there. The young girls became the slaves of chiefs, or became prostitutes of the Europeans, to the profit of those whom they served, and meanwhile all these people were no better than pagans, all who said that they were Wesleyans or Catholics.

Once the people were dispersed, all their lands were sold under the title of empty land. The exile of five years was changed to a perpetual exile for these poor unfortunates. That is not all. A more hateful thing to add to all of that is this: our village of Totogo was all Catholic. It was in no way part of the tribe of Lovoni, but for a
long time they were obedient to the chief of Bau. Three bad subjects of this place were in the know with the rebels of the interior. Because of these individuals all the village was threatened with death. Fear, which plays a very big role in Fiji, pushed the inhabitants of Totogo to take flight. They retreated to the nearby islands. When the war was finished, when they chose to return to their place, they were condemned to work like the rebels. The chief allocated their lands, and now our little Christian community is dispersed and given into slavery. The village of Totogo disappeared, in its place can be found the prison, the barracks and other like institutions. Such things are grave evils; on the part of the savages they are less so, but when the Europeans, who are Christians, glory in these acts of injustice, this arouses indignation and demands vengeance.

**Care of Melanesian Workers**

Father Montmayeur wrote in the name of Father Breheret, “This presents a question which preoccupies us: we have in Fiji thousands of workers brought from the principle groups of Melanesia and Micronesia. These people, after finishing their work, will be carried back to their islands. Can't we give them religious instruction, and give them the desire to be missionaries to their own people? Fiji could become in this way like the centre of an apostolate which would not be slow to open to religion the doors of many islands in the Pacific? This is certainly an idea which merits to be seriously examined. Speculatively this matters appears easy, and beckons to us all. But I believe that it is necessary to wait a bit longer until the faith is better anchored among the Fijians, in order that their example will be useful and not harm the church.
An Attempt at Central Government

“I am going to say something of the history of Fiji from the point of view of political life during these recent years”, wrote Father Montmayeur in the name of Father Breheret, “and after that I will speak of the religious state of the different stations of our Prefecture Apostolic.

“Since 1867 the Europeans living in these islands had felt the need to have a government. Adventurers like these appealed to the English government, holding incessant meetings to ask of whatever king they could that they give him the honour of giving him these islands. The Fiji Times reported each week in its columns the ardent sighs of the planters in Fiji. Some crafty fellows from Australia whose star had begun to fade, and who were prevented from sleeping by their creditors and the police, boarded a ship hurriedly to come to the rescue of their brothers. They quickly found a king and wrote a constitution. The affair was launched in June 1971, and the Fiji Gazette together with the Fiji Times resounded with the great news: His majesty Cakobau by the grace of God the first King of Fiji, to all his brothers seated on their thrones: Greetings. Henceforth the warships of all nations will give a 21 gun salute to this king who has no trousers, flanked by all his white ministers in their attire. They were happy to announce that they had a constitution with 78 articles. But one could easily predict that this deplorable government, having some unpleasant crimes at its foundation, would soon fall.”

In fact in 1873 the same priest who wrote this added: “As I had foreseen along with everyone else, this attempt at constitutional government which the Europeans had made with the agreement of the Fijian chiefs under the nominal authority of Cakobau, had so completely collapsed that there remained no other course of action except annexation by England. Cakobau himself felt the need, and said to anyone who would listen that he was not
capable of governing the Europeans, that they were consuming him and his Fijian people all the time. Some commissioners were appointed to prepare for cession to England.”

**Religious State of the Stations 1872-3**

Some words now on the religious state of the different stations of the Prefecture Apostolic in 1872 and 1873:

**Ovalau:** The number of Catholics went down a lot in 1872 and 1873 because the entire village of Totogo, and also all the Catholics of Lovoni, were in exile. These Catholics never abandoned the Catholic religion for that reason. They all persevered, except perhaps for some immoral people.

**Wairiki:** The station of Wairiki had a small leap in the right direction in 1872, but in 1873 it lost nearly 600 catechumens.

**Solevu:** The station of Solevu, more tranquil after the visit of a French warship, of which we have spoken, made true progress. The number of catechumens increased by 200 in 1872 and 1873, and the neophytes became more fervent.

**Rewa:** Christianity in Rewa really flourished in 1872 and 1873, with 600 neophytes and 700 baptised. On ordinary Sundays and all Holy days of Obligation its big church was really full.

**Verata.** The station of Verata grew again in 1872 and 1873, and at the end of 1873 there were 1500 neophytes and catechumens. That is to say 500 baptised and 1000 catechumens. Unfortunately, as the villages of this station were a long way away, it was not possible to bring together as in Rewa all the faithful on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The people came together only monthly and there were then about 300 or up to 350 baptised persons. There were then at Verata 15 catechists who each had a
school in their village. The district school was made up from the wisest and most learned of the village schools, and was composed of 20 or 30 students who were supported at the expense of the station.

**The Death of Brother Stanislas Gabriel Claret.**

On the 8 December 1863 our beloved Brother Stanislas died in Levuka from dysentery, which was complicated by the fact that it lasted for 15 days. The seven years that he had spent in Fiji had been occupied with building, the first of which was the church in Rewa. He did great work also in the foundation of the station in Verata. He helped Father Louyot a lot in the building of the bell tower at Levuka. He left at Levuka an altar and a communion table which would have been the envy of a good number of churches in France. He had also been of great service with regard to shipping, and he took Monsignor Elloy to Futuna on the Pio Nono. His strong constitution, his energy and his abilities made him very valuable to the mission, which had expected to have the joy of his presence and service for many years. But the designs of the Lord are unfathomable, blessed be his holy name! He prepared well for death, and received the sacraments in the most edifying manner. Then he died without agony, in the peace of the Lord, with trust in his loving Father.

**The Great Political Events of 1874**

Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor of New South Wales, furnished with full powers from the Queen, came to Fiji to conclude the business of the Cession of Fiji to the English crown. In his first interview with Cakobau on board the frigate “Pearl” on the 25 September 1874, he declared that in the interest of the country and of future good government, he would accept only an unconditional cession, and that the chiefs would become
answerable to the justice and the generosity of the English government. The chief of Bau accepted.

(The war with the interior of Viti Levu had recommenced in July 1873. Many died on both sides, but finally the people of the interior were beaten and they surrendered.)

But the biggest chiefs of Fiji after Cakobau, and among others the Tui Vanua Levu and the Tui Lau were absent. The solemn act of cession did not take place on that day. That solemn act took place on the 10th of October. Only on that day did all the big chiefs of Fiji put their signature on the deed of cession, which the Governor then signed. Then he addressed the assembly and declared that from that moment Fiji was a possession of the British crown. Then the Fijian flag was brought in, and there also appeared the royal standard of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. All the crowd greeted this with loud applause, the musicians of the frigate played the national anthem “God save the Queen”, and the Pearl fired a 21 gun salute.

Sir Hercules, before leaving Fiji, decreed that Cakobau would receive an annual pension of 900 pounds sterling. And the paper “Na Mata” of August 1891 page 11 adds that England paid the debt that Cakobau owed to America. After the abdication of the “King” of Bau, the Governor of New South Wales proposed to him as a consolation prize to visit Sydney, and to spend some time there.

(In 1874 in the district of Wairiki lost another 500 Catholics. Culanuku gained the same number. Therefore the number of Catholics in Fiji at the end of 1874 remained more than 10,000. The station of Wairiki had no more than 3000 souls.)
The Measles Epidemic of 1875

Cakobau brought back from Sydney, and passed onto his people, a terrible epidemic. It was he who had passed on to the Fijians, and above all to the chiefs, the poison of heresy, and it is he who now in the justice of God caused them to be infected with a second chastisement: the measles. This sickness is not in itself so dreadful, but by a complication of unfortunate circumstances, for example the persistence of bad weather such as had not been seen for a long time, and the imprudence of the Fijians who sought the coolness of the night and frequent bathing to help their over-heated bodies, they were consumed. Also they took no notice of the advice they were given. The sickness was terrible: 50,000 Fijians lost their lives.

As to the means by which the sickness was brought into the country, one was tempted to believe, said Father Grosselin, in an explicit fact. The chief returned by the “Didon” to Levuka towards Christmas 1874, accompanied by two of his sons. It was known that all three of them had contracted the measles, and they came ashore without any precaution, as if this sickness was not imminently contagious. Not only did the authorities take no precautions to prevent communication with the sick people, but all the big chiefs were called together. They came quickly from all parts of Fiji, not so much out of respect for their ex-sovereign, but rather to share in the riches which they supposed he had gathered in Sydney. Alas, when they returned home they returned only with the germ of the epidemic, which was quick to cover the whole archipelago.

**On Ovalau:** In February 1875 up to 45 were counted dead in one day. Among the 90 dead whom the missionaries had counted among the Catholics, there were 25 children who had not yet reached the age of reason. Many adults who died were well disposed.
At Rewa: The epidemic had begun at the end of March. It had begun at Verata at the same time. As much as the priests of Rewa and Verata had spent themselves, they did not with hold themselves from visiting the dying, helping them in their needs, ministering to them in their danger. But they were not able to give themselves for as long as they wished, for soon the last of the rowers who took them to the different villages were themselves infected, and the priests were obliged to remain at home.

One day, wrote Father Deniau, the children in my compound started to get better. Three of my rowers particularly seemed capable of taking me to a reasonably distant village where I knew that the sickness was still raging in full force. I went and found them: “My children” I said, “Do you have the strength to take me to this village so that I can baptise and minister to those who are dying?” “Father”, they replied, “We shall try”. We ourselves, after suffering much on the way, arrived at the village we wanted to visit. During three days I was able to baptise a good number of catechumens, and to give confession, the sacrament of the sick to the baptised. After three days, the sickness having got a lot less, we left. We returned very satisfied, when reaching close to the station we were struck by a very strong wind. We were no longer able to use the sail; we were between two reefs that were very close together and we could not tack, and my young men were not capable of rowing for a long time, as they were still too weak from their sickness. They tried, however, but after ten minutes of useless effort they dropped from fatigue, and lay down in the boat unable to get up. What a problem we had! Happily the good Lord came to my aid, and helped us to reach a small village where I waited for four days for my poor boys to recover. At the end of four days, seeing them sufficiently strong and seeing that there was a great wind, I asked them to come with me to the boat, and two hours later we returned to our station and gave thanks to the good Lord who had pity on us.
At Solevu and Wairiki the fathers gave every effort that they could, and they spared nothing to visit the sick, help them in their needs, and assist them in their hour of danger. But they also, like the priests on the other stations were soon obliged to stop, as there was no longer anyone who could take them to the more distant villages. All they could do was find someone to bury the dead.

It was in 1874 that after the example of Rewa, Verata and Ovalau Father Favre in Solevu built a beautiful wooden church with three arches that was 86 feet long and 36 feet wide. But just as trials are never far away from those who do the work of the Lord, when this church was completely finished and needed only to have put on it the sheets of galvanised iron to cover it, when these sheets of iron were even at the foot of the church and were ready to be nailed the next day, and the church was temporarily covered with plaited coconut leaves, during the night there was a furious cyclone which swallowed up all the long plaited coconut leaves, and shook them with great violence. They became like sails on a boat to carry and overturn the church, fruit of so much effort and work, and this beautiful church was soon a pile of ruins.

Father Breheret was there to witness the disaster. He lifted up the shattered courage of the fathers, and invited the father of Solevu to start again on their church, and he undertook to pay himself all that needed to be bought, and which the fathers were not able to do themselves. The Fijian workers left again the next day for Kubulau. They went to cut down and saw up stronger timber. Brother Edward was their leader. He had been there a certain number of months when in 1875 the famous epidemic of which I have written came. Brother was one of the victims.
The Death of Brother Boisson

It was 7 April 1875 when our dear Brother Edward died at Kubulau. This good brother was a man who was a Jack-of-all-trades, and a master of none. His good will more than made up for anything he lacked in special skills. He gave himself willingly and always to whatever was asked of him. The numerous services that he gave to everyone must have got for him a good crown in heaven. The Fijians loved him a lot because of his likeable simplicity. He like to spend his recreation time with them. He had been sent to Solevu to lend a hand with the building of the church, of which we have spoken. The first works of reconstruction of the ruined church consisted in cutting down in bush a long way away 130 big trees, and to bring them to Kubulau. It would not be easy to say at what price and with what fatigue he was able to bring this wood. Finally the job was done, thanks to Brother Edward. He then set himself to saw this wood with some of the Fijians, and they were all cut up except about five or six when the measles came to Kubulau. Brother Edward caught the disease, and he died like a saint after receiving the last sacraments and Holy Viaticum from the hands of Father Leberre, who was not able to find a single healthy Fijian to bring the boat to Solevu with his body. He could only with great difficulty find someone to dig the grave for brother, where he buried the poor man not in a coffin but in a miserable mat like the least of the Fijians. Oh poor brother, what a beautiful crown he must have in heaven.

When the epidemic was finished, that is to say after Easter 1875, Brother Sorlin and a Frenchman named Francois Chenier set to work to build the second church at Solevu, which was finished three monthly later, thanks to the help of all the district of Solevu, whose generosity was all that anyone could wish for.
List of the Dead and the Survivors after the Epidemic

Wesleyans:
Deceased:
9 native ministers
200 catechists
200 preachers
700 school teachers
800 baptised
25,900 auditors.
Survivors:
10 European ministers
48 native ministers
785 catechists
635 preachers
2,233 school teachers
16,838 baptised
63,946 catechumens

Catholics:
2,900 dead
Survivors:
Ovalau: 300 baptised, 350 catechumens
Rewa: 600 baptised, 500 catechumens
Verata: 450 baptised, 800 catechumens
Solevu: 500 baptised, 900 catechumens
Wairiki: 500 baptised, 1400 catechumens
The islands: 180 baptised, 920 catechumens.

Total for the Catholics: 7,400 souls.

Add to that a very big but unknown number of pagans and you have the number of 50,000 dead.
Political Matters after the Epidemic

Here is the state of things in 1875 which existed in Fiji from the political point of view after the epidemic:

The government for a start did nothing and said nothing. You could say that there remained the two questions that most preoccupied it:
First was the question of the land: how to judge the old titles? There are so many different ways of doing this. How should one act to satisfy everyone?
The second question that preoccupied the government is that of workers. Where could one get them from?

The great political fact was the conversation which the Governor had with all the chiefs, where it had been decided that he would not suppress any of their ancient chiefly practices: that all the chiefs continued as a result to be as in the past little tyrants in their districts and villages. The Governor, while being in agreement with this, said to himself interiorly that he would stop all abuse when it was presented to him, and it would be signalled by the European magistrates that he was going to place in the twelve provinces that he was going to establish.

An important question was that of the schools. The Governor had declared that he had maintained and would maintain them, that he would encourage and support them, and he would support the two religions.

This question of the schools preoccupied us a lot. The Governor would be able to find people capable of doing this only among the Wesleyans. For us Catholics, it must be admitted that we are really too small to fight against such power. But we will not despair. For the divine heart of Jesus would want that we be masters of the situation.
Schools

This is what Father Breheret wrote in the middle of 1877:

“Since the Governor Mr Arthur Gordon in a meeting which he had with the Fijian chiefs in 1875 had declared that he would hold absolutely to the schools. The question of the schools preoccupies me a lot. I said to myself that there must be at least one in each station, but how will we establish them? Father Favier, Father Favre and Father Grosselin are too old for me to ask them to occupy themselves with schools. I can scarcely count only on Fathers Bochettaz, Deniau and Montmayeur.

After having been in discussion with Father Favier and Father Grosselin, this is what I have decided: Father Bochettaz is too sick to continue to look after his big district of Wairiki and to occupy himself at the same time with schools, I am going to send him to Solevu. There he will be responsible exclusively for the schools, and Father Favre will be responsible for looking after the district. I am going to replace Father Bochettaz at Wairiki with Father Deniau, since he has good health and is very active, he will be able at the same time to look after the district and to set up the schools. Since the district of Verata where Father Deniau is at present is the district most advanced in the support of schools, where there are already schools in a good number of villages, and because he has also a good number of catechists, I am going to replace Father Deniau at Verata with Father Leberre, who will occupy himself only with the district, leaving to the catechists the work of the schools.

Finally, since Father Montmayeur seems to me to have great aptitude for instructing young people and forming good catechists, I am going to keep him with me, and start him off being in charge of all the children collected from all the corners of Ovalau. If after some time I see that his school is going well, I will establish on
Ovalau a central school for catechists, where they will come to instruct the young people of all the districts, who will work for us as school teachers everywhere. It is to Father Montmayeur that I confer this catechists' school.

At the end of December 1875 then I shall make the following changes: Father Bochettaz to Solevu, Father Deniau to Wairiki, Father Leberre to Verata, and I will keep Father Montmayeur on Ovalau."

Here is the state of the mission at that time, its hopes, its difficulties; let us look at the different stations.

**Ovalau.** The school which Father Montmayeur had begun here has succeeded well. He has taught his students reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and above all religion with a success that surpasses all that one could have hoped for. Finally he has given a public performance at Tokou, where he has shown evidence of the progress of his students. The Governor, having heard of this public exam, wanted to help. Several chiefs of Bau, including Cakobau also wanted to help. The students won general admiration and showed on one wall map the different countries of the world, giving various information on each one. Also admired was the quickness to write numbers and do different calculations on the blackboard. The help of the Governor especially and also of Cakobau drew much admiration. An old Wesleyan catechist named Ratu Marika, the first Fijian magistrate of the kingdom, said to all the other chiefs: “I used to make fun before of the Catholic schools, but I see today that they have got the advantage of many of the Wesleyan schools.” It was a sort of revelation for our Fijian chiefs. Their observations went on at length about the difference they had found between our schools and theirs.
Also with this obvious success our faithful, who were generally ashamed of their religion in the presence of the Wesleyans, ended up by being proud of the name that they carried.

For me, I was so happy with the result obtained, that I am going to buy some land in Ovalau, and next year 1878 we will begin our central catechists’ school under the direction of Father Montmayeur.

**Wairiki.** The population of this district (of which one part, Savusavu, has been detached on account of its position and joined to the district of Solevu) was 1,900 Catholics after the epidemic. Father Deniau had hardly arrived in the district with some of his young men from Verata when he got everything moving: catechists placed in 12 villages, a considerable number of children in the station compound and supported by the population, thanks to the support of Tui Cakau. A church not yet constructed, but for which all the timber had already been sawn, gatherings organised made up of 600 people: these were the first results during two years of bubbling activity, which supported the best efforts of Father Jay. The number of Catholics grew by 150, as a result today there are roughly 2,050.

**Solevu.** This district which also takes in na Savusavu (which while belonging to the kingdom of Cakaudrove has been entrusted to the priests in Solevu because of its position) is in the care of Fathers Favre and Bochettaz. Father Favre, who is already getting on in years, needs more than ordinary patience to put up with the weariness that comes from visiting the villages which are difficult to access. He has done a lot of good, and the number of his Catholics has gone up again by 35 since the epidemic, and today totals 935.

Father Bochettaz, the state of whose health has been set back by long and difficult voyages, is far from remaining inactive: he gives
his care to a numerous population around Solevu, and above all makes efforts to implant the faith in young hearts. According to the notes which he has sent me, he has a dozen children living at the station, and as well he has about 20 boys and girls from round about who come each day to school. He has also almost as many young people who go to the school of two educated and zealous catechists, who are quite a long way from Solevu.

**Verata.** The district of Verata, which extends from Kaba point in the south to the vast Viti Levu Bay, and two days’ walk into the interior, was at the end of 1876 attacked by persecution, and from that moment Father Leberre has not ceased to fight it. On his doorstep are two Wesleyan ministers who cause him many anxieties. To stop conversions to Catholicism, and even to turn Catholics away from their faith, they have at their service a bold army of catechists, almost all the minor functionaries of the government.

Father Leberre however has the advantage of being helped by the Fijian prefect of the province, who is the son of Cakobau. Also after losing 250 Catholics, behold he has started to regain some souls. There are hardly 1,000 Catholics. He has always in his district the beautiful church which Father Deniau built, 12 chapels and 12 catechists which Father Deniau left for him. There are more than 264 students in the schools of the catechists. And his people are always faithful to come to the monthly gatherings which have long been established. There are usually, he said, 250 to 300 people who come.

**Rewa.** Here are the statistics of Rewa at the end of 1877. 1,130 people, of whom 660 are baptised, 9 catechists, about 100 students in the schools of the catechists. The station of Rewa is, without doubt, the most advanced, and it continues to be more and more so under the wise and careful direction of Father Favier.
The distant districts which Father Grosselin visits: Father Grosselin, in spite of being 56 years old, and his 16 years of weariness and privations, continues to spread himself, goodness knows how. Here is the field that he cultivates, without speaking of the Rewa river:
First, the district of Kadavu, where he has already regained some souls. He has actually 125 Catholics in Kadavu.
Second, the district of Serua where he already has 720 Catholics.
Third, the district of Yasawa, where he has 80 Catholics. Unfortunately these last districts can only be visited rarely, since we are so few missionaries.

A summary of Catholics at the end of 1877:
Ovalau: 300 baptised, 430 catechumens
Rewa: 660 baptised, 470 catechumens
Verata: 530 baptised, 635 catechumens
Solevu: 645 baptised, 835 catechumens
Wairiki: 650 baptised, 1500 catechumens
Distant districts: 360 baptised, 745 catechumens.
Total: 3,145 baptised, 4,475 catechumens
Altogether 7,620 souls.

Father Breheret’s Report in 1879

We look at a report, written by Father Breheret to the Marist Procurator for the Missions, and it is a more agreeable task than in the past.

“The Heart of Jesus, touched no doubt by the prayers of fervent French souls, spread over Fiji his most abundant blessings. I am going again this year to run through our different stations, so that you can know the actual state of the mission.

Ovalau. Our station of Ovalau has grown this year and last year. We have today in Ovalau 420 baptised and 360 catechumens.
Also, we have founded last year, 1878, the central catechists school of which I have spoken, it is established four leagues (about twelve miles) from here on the west coast of Ovalau, at a place we have called Nazareth. Father Montmayeur is in charge.

Thanks to the clever direction of the good Father, the school is progressing, and we have 25 young people. At the end of one year, when the first plantations will be mature, we will easily be able to have 50 students. For the moment religion, reading, writing, mathematics, history, and geography are taught and we have a certain hope of going further.

Father Lenninger, newly arrived, had been placed at Nazareth with Father Montmayeur, and I thought he would be of great service, but he fell ill and has been obliged to return to France.

They have finished at Nazareth a beautiful church 72 feet long. So we can say that our catechists’ school is completely finished. What we need now are some sisters. Without doubt we have a great need of missionaries, you will be convinced from my report, but we have a still greater need of religious sisters. If it is a question of one or the other, I would say without hesitation: send first the sisters.

**Wairiki.** The station of Wairiki is quite established. Father Deniau in 1878 had 450 new catechumens. The number of catechists whom he has been able to form and send out to the main villages has already risen at Christmas 1878 to 30. This year he has built a magnificent church 100 feet long and 36 feet wide, a wooden church with three magnificent vaulted arches. His schools are considerable and they are flourishing. He has organised also monthly gatherings which have about 1,200 persons attending.

One dark spot however has appeared from the death of Tui Cakau, who died near the end of April 1879. He died in such a sudden
manner that it has given rise to dreadful noises. I wrote to Father Deniau, and expressed my concern to him.

(Tui Cakau was poisoned with at least two spoonfuls of laudenum, which had been given to him in the evening by an Englishman, at that time employed by the government, whose name is well known. Tui Cakau drank the laudenum, he went to sleep and could not be wakened.)

How, I asked Father Deniau, would his successor conduct himself? His successor was a young man of twenty years who arrived from Sydney where he had received his education in a Wesleyan college. Already, I hear, the Wesleyan church has resorted to its usual weapons, and is pursuing the missionaries and the Catholic catechists with calumnies and repeated accusations.

Father Deniau replied to me: “The persecution has started, but I am not very worried about it. I need a strong wind to shake my people, and force them to cling to their faith, and to take root in the Catholic church. There will be other results if they are cowards! Persecution could well rid us of perhaps a hundred or so who are Catholic in name or for political reasons, for whom pride and liberty does more harm than good, and they will be quickly and advantageously replaced. But true catechumens can be in chains and put in prison, even flogged, you will not take ten of them, and if there are ten it would be weak children, and because they will be flogged to the bitter end. Cakaudrove has no fear: it is a warrior and doesn’t bow the head before persecution. Ratu Golea’s son, who is the persecutor, will make them true brothers of the crucified Lord. Let us wait and pray.” (There were in fact about a hundred or so deserters, who were compensated for by new conversions, as we shall see in the next statistics.)
Solevu. This district since the end of 1877 had again made some progress and it counts today more than 1000 persons who follow the Catholic religion. The number of baptised has also increased.

Father Bochettaz now has about forty boys at his school, and at the girls’ day school he has about forty girls who come assiduously to be instructed.

Verata. This district, which had defections in 1877 because of the persecutions, which the Wesleyan ministers brought about, has finally regained in 1878 and 1879 about sixty souls.

Rewa. This district is always going forward. These are the statistics for this district at the end of 1879: 1170 people of whom 700 are baptised, 12 catechists, 249 children in schools. There is in Rewa a pious congregation, which comes together every Sunday evening, and the prayers of these gatherings united each week form at the end of the year a surprising total.

There is furthermore on a piece of land belonging to the mission and separated from the presbytery by the great Rewa river there is a school shelter where about fifteen children are fortunately removed from harmful influences. Also, all the catechists come together every fifteen days, to improve the teaching, receive useful advice and return to their villages.

Would you believe that in spite of all that Father Favier is complaining. The cause of his complaint is a very sad lack which he says will bring about little by little the extinction of Catholicism in Rewa if someone doesn’t hurry up and do something. The Wesleyan church will end up by taking all the young women, above all at the time of marriage. To hold on to them, the only other way is to have women religious come and start a shelter for the girls.

Districts far away that Father Grosselin visits:
In the district of Kadavu Father Grosselin has 150 persons. He has in the district of Serua a Catholic population of 800 people. At Ba and Yasawa he now has 130 members.

**Summary of Catholics at the end of 1879:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Baptised</th>
<th>Catechumens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ovalau</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewa</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verata</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solevu</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wairiki</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other districts</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,607</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,650</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Towards the end of 1879 a new priest arrived in Fiji named Father Lahaye. Father Breheret, who at that time was alone in Levuka, kept him with him, and even put him in charge of the Fijians on Ovalau, while he himself cared for the Europeans in Levuka.

Father Lahaye was already completely involved in his ministry when at the end of January 1880 another new priest arrived: Father Bertreux. As soon as Father Bertreux had rested a little to get over the long trip from France, Father Breheret sent him to Nazareth to be with Father Montmayeur, who was alone. Father Bertreux had been only a few days at Nazareth when Father Montmayeur fell sick. In fact, it was on the 11 February that Father Montmayeur first became sick.

It seemed at first to be only a slight illness that Father Montmayeur had, which did not stop him from his ordinary occupations on that day and the following day. “It is nothing” he said, “I notice some lumps, but l’eau vive with camphor will make them disappear.”
On Friday 13 February, after stopping the medicine, the sickness only got worse. The fever was strong and continuous. On the 15 February there was no cure of his sickness. There was almost no hope: delirium was frequent, his voice had changed. It became urgent to give him the last sacraments.

Father Grosselin arrived at Nazareth and had been there for a day or two. Father Montmayeur asked him to give him the last sacraments. “Sobs stifled my voice”, said Father Grosselin, “while I heard the confession of the dying man, who was quite resigned, and the good priest was also quite moved. At his wish, and in the hope of a little calm, the reception of the holy Viaticum was put off to the next morning. The night was very disturbed: the sick man kept trying to get up and wanted to go to the chapel to receive communion. You couldn’t praise too highly the devotion of Father Bertreux and Brother who were looking after him. They had a distressing night.

In the morning he was completely prostrate. He could only speak by signs, but he was fully conscious. There was no time to lose to give him the holy Viaticum and anointing of the sick. The final agony began very shortly afterwards, but it was gentle. It was a touching scene when the 60 students of Nazareth came one after the other to kneel before their dying father, and in tears kissed the hand which blessed them. After the prayers for the recommendation of the soul and a last blessing, at 8.30 in the morning of Monday 16 February our lamented confrere who had remained confined to bed for only two and a half days gave his last breath, clothed in the scapular, holding in his hands the rosary and the crucifix, his back girded with a penitential chain.

We lost no time in taking his body to the chapel, where prayers, the rosary and the stations of the cross followed each other up until the following day when he was placed in the tomb. May God, in accepting our tears which fell on this tomb, give to the students
of Nazareth a worthy successor to continue the work of our dear lamented brother.

**Father Bochettaz put in Charge of the School at Nazareth.**

After Father Montmayeur died Father Bochettaz was appointed to replace him at Nazareth and to lead the school. Father Bertreux, who had just arrived in Fiji was asked to remain provisionally at Nazareth to await the arrival of Father Bochettaz.

Father Breheret then sent Father Lahaye, who was in charge of the care of the Fijians on Ovalau to replace Father Bochettaz in Solevu. He wrote to Father Bochettaz and told him to come immediately and take over as director of the school of Nazareth.

When Father Bochettaz arrived in Levuka, Father Breheret sent him to Nazareth and told him to send him Father Bertreux, who was looking after the mission since the death of Father Montmayeur. When Father Bertreux arrived at Levuka, Father Breheret said to him: “You will remain with me in Levuka; I will take care of the Europeans, and you will take care of the Fijians on the island of Ovalau. As well as that, you will have the responsibility to visit from time to time many Christians who live a long way away, and who have no missionary living with them: principally the Christians of Ba, Yasawa, Kadavu, , waiting until I can fulfil my intention, as soon as I have received the missionaries that have been announced to me, to found a new station at Culanuku, and to send there Father Grosselin, who up till now has been in charge of Ba, Yasawa and Kadavu.

**Founding of the Station of Culanuku**

November 1881

In November 1881 there arrived in Fiji two new priests, Fathers Marion and Passant. Father Breheret then made haste to found
the seventh station, which became the sixth station, because that of Kadavu had been suppressed.

He sent Father Grosselin to found this new station, and gave him Father Passant as his assistant. As for Father Marion, Father Breheret kept him at Levuka to help Father Bertreux in the double ministry which he had been given - on Ovalau, and in the distant islands.

Some months beforehand Father Bochettaz, having been attacked by a general dropsy, was obliged to leave Nazareth, and he had been provisionally replaced by Father Lahaye, who had spent several months at Solevu, to take there several baths in the hot water springs at Wainunu. But he had become extremely feeble, and he returned to Nazareth. It was one of the reasons why, when the two new men arrived, he kept Father Marion with Father Bertreux at Levuka, not knowing if the sickness of Father Bochettaz would oblige him to replace him at Nazareth.

The years 1880 and 1881 were years of progress for the Catholic church, and above all there were conversions, and, quite surprisingly there was, apart from in the district of Cakaudrove, almost no persecution.

**Persecution in Cakaudrove**

The young Ratu Lala, who had been baptised by Father Bochettaz, and who had received the baptism name of Joseph, was named by the government to replace his father Tui Cakau, who died in 1879 as I have already described. Since this Ratu Lala had been sent to Sydney by Thurston, and brought up in a Wesleyan college, it was feared that he would persecute the Catholic religion. That is what happened, but as Thurston his protector was also employed by the government he gave his lessons with prudence, which tied up
somewhat his passions. Also, he only persecuted the Catholic religion shrewdly.

His first act against the Catholic religion was to gather all the members of his chiefly family: uncles, brothers, cousins. He declared that it was his wish that they all abandon the Catholic religion, and become Wesleyans. He was obeyed only by one of his uncles (who finally repented and returned to the Catholic religion and had an excellent death. His name was Ratu Semi, and he lived at Wairiki), and by two of his cousins who were scoundrels, and Catholic only in name. All the rest of his family refused energetically.

Ratu Lala had two younger brothers, who were ten or eleven years old, and he was offended by their refusal. One was called Antonio Rabici, and the other Romano Tabatu. The first was his brother from both his father and mother, the second was his brother from his father, but had a different mother. When Sunday arrived Ratu Lala took his two brothers by the hand, and with his whip under his arm he took them to the Wesleyan church, then he left. When Ratu Lala was a bit far away the two boys got up and escaped from the Wesleyan church. When they arrived at the house they received a punishment which scandalized everyone. The following Sunday they were led again to the Wesleyan church, to the cracking of the whip, but they remained there no more than minutes and then they escaped again. On returning to the house they were again cruelly punished. The third Sunday Ratu Lala began again the same treatment, and the boys offered the same resistance. Father Deniau had lodged a complaint with the government, and Ratu Lala was reprimanded. Ashamed, but not wanting to come off second best, Ratu Lala took the two young boys to Bau, where there was then not a single Catholic, and gave orders to some of his companions in this bad business to turn his two small brothers from the Catholic church. Unfortunately, his desires were accomplished. Atonio Rabici became a young
scoundrel. Romano Tabatu after one or two years of going sadly astray, returned to his first fervour, and died in Tonga, where he had the death of a saint, and edified all the Catholics and priests of Tonga.

Another of his relations, aged thirteen and named Alexander Savenaca, who had made first communion like an angel, and who was a model for children in his village, was chained up and led by force to the compound of the Wesleyan minsters, where he had to suffer the greatest violence from his relative the Wesleyan catechist. This young man, I believe from his respect for the priests and his attachment to the Catholic religion, will return one day and will die Catholic.

These were all the conquests that Ratu Lala had with his family. There were about twenty others in Somosomo, but these don’t deserve to be called conquests. Debauched like a son of a Fijian chief, Ratu Lala has need of savage dogs to help him do what he wants to do. He has found about twenty of them, and you think that these savage dogs are only savage dogs, and cannot bring about great destruction.

But, you ask, perhaps he persecutes the Catholic religion a lot in the district of Cakaudrove? He has been trying to since 1881, but he does it in a hidden manner, because he can see that it would be difficult to achieve, in view of the influence of Father Deniau over all the people of Cakaudrove.

Father Deniau, who foresaw these bad actions from the young chief developing, has strengthened his Catholics to be soldiers of Jesus Christ before they were exposed to combat. He has enlisted 46 catechists, true warriors and all men of God. He has placed them in eight sub-prefectures of Cakaudrove where he has Catholics, he has put at the head of village catechists in each sub-prefecture a head catechist in the chief village of each sub-
prefecture. He has furthermore commanded all the village catechists to preach without ceasing to their Catholics that they must have the firm but passive resistance of a rock in a storm in case of attack. “As for yourselves” he said, “you are not only village catechists. If persecution begins, say nothing, do nothing, but warn all, absolutely all catechists in your district, so that four hours after persecution arrives in your village, each catechist in your district knows what is happening. And for myself after 12 hours or more I should know everything that is happening in all your districts. In each district you have a sail boat. If you are late you will be charged with being negligent.”

In all the sub-prefectures of Cakaudrove, only the sub-prefecture of Natewa was zealously Wesleyan. Ratu Lala, not daring to persecute by himself the Catholics of this sub-prefecture, used the sub-prefect. One evening a little before nightfall the Catholic bell had rung for evening prayer, the chapel or house of prayer was full, suddenly two agents of the Fijian police arrived at the door of the chapel, and they waited until the prayer started. The catechist saw them not moving, and started the prayer. The police agents then entered into the chapel, and shouted for the men to go out, that the prefect and the sub-prefect didn’t want any more Catholic prayers in the village. No one budged, and everyone responded to the prayer in a tone that wasn’t very confident. The police agents then turning towards the women and the children, jostled them to left and right, telling them to go out. The women and the children let themselves be jostled, but no one went out, and they continued their prayers. The agents were disconcerted, and went and waited for them at the door, and when the Catholics went out they threatened them. Not one person listened to them or paid any attention to them, and each one went to their house without saying a word.

Eight hours later the news reached Father Deniau, who sent the head catechist of the whole province to take the information and
the necessary proofs, then notified the police agents that they had to prepare for a judgement before the European magistrate. The head catechist of the province remained waiting in the village, and sent the village catechist to Father Deniau. The village catechist left some days later for the place of judgement, and the agents accused by the two catechists were condemned to three months of forced labour. In Fiji you see, as in many other countries, the little ones overcome the foolishness of the great people.

That was the end of the persecution of 1881. Far from harming our religion, it had given root to the faith in people’s hearts. Also at the Christmas feast there were 1250 people for the gathering.

A summary of Catholics at the end of 1881:
Ovalau: 439 baptised, 360 catechumens
Rewa: 720 baptised, 480 catechumens
Verata: 600 baptised, 600 catechumens
Solevu: 620 baptised, 670 catechumens
Wairiki: 700 baptised, 1,700 catechumens
Distant districts: 400 baptised, 700 catechumens.
Total 7,987.

Sisters Arrive to Teach the Girls 1882

The year 1882 began with an attempt by Father Breheret to establish at Levuka a school run by sisters destined to receive young European girls. But hardly had the building been built, and the Irish sister who was to run it installed, when Father Breheret, on account of circumstances that were quite unforeseen, was obliged to abandon the project.

Father Breheret had better luck when he undertook to establish schools for Fijian girls. That year 1882 he had received from France three sisters of the third Order Regular to start schools for Fijian girls:
1. Sister Mary of the Presentation
2. Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart
3. Sister Mary of Jesus.

He had also in Levuka a part-Samoan woman, who had offered herself to him, and who asked to follow the sisters as a postulant. He kept with him in Levuka Sister Mary of the Presentation and the postulant, and sent Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart and Sister Mary of Jesus to Wairiki to start the first school for Fijian girls. He said to himself that if this first school succeeded he would then send Sister Marie of the Presentation and the postulant to establish a second school in another station.

Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart and Sister Mary of Jesus arrived in Wairiki, and were there received with extraordinary enthusiasm, and they met with success beyond anything that had been hoped for.

At this news Father Breheret sent Sister Mary of the Presentation and the postulant to start a second girls’ school at Solevu. This school met with success similar to that of the school of Wairiki, and joy filled the hearts of all the missionaries of Fiji, and the hearts of the Sisters, too. The work had begun well, and showed promise of good results.

During this time, how were the different stations getting on? Above all the church was going forward and made real progress, and it was rooted more and more in the hearts of the Fijians. Everywhere, thanks to the graces and favours of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we were starting to have real Catholics, and everywhere catechumens were beginning to sincerely desire baptism, and everywhere they were preparing for it. Verata however had some defections in certain villages on the coast, but it had made gains in the mountains.
At Wairiki all the nominal and half-hearted Catholics had disappeared, thank God, and those who remained, about 2,500, were good Catholics and good catechumens. The persecution had in no way stopped, but it had changed direction: this time it was all concentrated on Father Deniau, the devil threw up all sorts of difficulties. In spite of this there were many baptisms, and there were 1400 people at the Christmas gathering.

At Levuka Father Breheret had to leave his beloved Fijians and go for a short time to Sydney to improve his English.

**Persecution Again in Cakaudrove: 1883**

1883 was a year of persecution: it was felt a bit everywhere, but above all in Wairiki, Ba and Yasawa.

**Wairiki.** The English government had named a new minster of Fijian Affairs. His name was Blytz. A friend of the Wesleyans, Blytz had nothing in his heart except to serve their cause. Here is the first stone he threw against the Catholic Church: One day he was at Tunuloa with Ratu Lala and some other chiefs of Cakaudrove to do some government business. Blytz spoke to the old Buli Tunuloa (sub-prefect of Tunuloa) and said to him. “I have heard it said, Buli Tunuloa, that you go often to Wairiki, and I ask myself what are you doing. For on arriving in your village I have seen a magnificent house of sacrifice (church) made of wood, and covered in galvanized iron. Is the good Lord not there as in Wairiki, and can’t you find him there, as in Wairiki? (They call a church where Mass is celebrated a house of sacrifice, while all other buildings where people gather for prayer only are called simply a prayer house (chapel).)

Blytz spoke quite badly and interrogated the old Buli Tunuloa because the Buli was not a polished Christian, and furthermore he was a warrior who had never known fear. He replied to Mr. Blytz,
“If a Fijian had spoken to me like this, I would have been astonished. But you, Mr. Blytz, who are a European, you ask me what I do in Wairiki? Alright, if you don’t know, I will tell you. I go to attend Mass, to assist at the sacrifice which Our Lord Jesus Christ offers for me to his Father. I go to confess my failings at the tribunal of penitence, and I go there to receive Holy Communion. Do you not know that?

You tell me now that I have in my village a magnificent house of sacrifice. Perhaps you do not know that this house is only a prayer house, because it is the priest who Celebrates the holy Sacrifice. The catechist who is here, like me is only a Fijian. He says the prayers, but he does not say the Mass.”

“At least,” replied Mr Blytz, “if you insist on going to Wairiki, why do you force your people to go with you?”

“I do not force anyone to go to Wairiki. I have never even said to anyone to go. They all go because they all have the faith, and they always arrive there before me.”

“Buli Tunuloa”, replied Blytz, “You must stop going to Wairiki.”

“Mr. Blytz”, replied Buli Tunuloa, “You have called us together to deal with government business, and now you tell me not to go to Mass, not to go to confession, not to go to communion. On this point is each of us not free?”

Ratu Lala took up the discussion and said, “I will put in prison all those who will go the Easter feast”.

“I don’t fear prison” replied Buli Tunuloa, “so long as I am put in prison in Wairiki. I would fear prison only if it stopped me performing my religious duty.”
Easter was not far off, and behold during Holy Week there was a general epidemic in the district of Cakaudrove, which took about 100 lives. Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart, to whom Father Deniau had told the story of what happened in Tunuloa, was afraid and said that the people would not be able to come to the Easter feast, and that the Wesleyans, Mr. Blytz at their head, would be triumphant. They will not miss the opportunity to attribute that to the effect of their threats.

“Don’t worry”, said Father Deniau, “all those who aren’t too sick will come. Not one will miss.” In fact, on the feast of Easter, in spite of the epidemic, there were 964 Catholics at the gathering at Wairiki. Also, for the different ceremonies of the day the church was much too small.

After the Mass had taken place on Holy Thursday, Father Deniau in his words adapted to the occasion congratulated his Catholics, and said on finishing: “And because the Wesleyans have provoked you to fight, show them that a true Catholic always knows how to carry off the victory. But pay attention, the weapons of a soldier of Christ are not like the weapons of a pagan soldier. The weapons of the pagan soldier are the helmet, the lance. His shield is only a simple piece of wood. The weapons of a soldier of Christ are patience in suffering, calm and prayer in danger, God is his shield. Often you see the rock battling with the storm. What does it do? It remains still, it lets the storm growl, insult it, throw at it its foaming froth. As for the rock, it does not budge. So what happens? With all its insults, hurling its foam the storm falls one hundred times at the foot of the rock, and leaves it to fall away, it finishes by dying. Very well. You be this rock fighting against the storm; your eyes fixed on the cross of your God and your hearts full of beseeching confidence, you remain unmoved. Leave the Wesleyans to thrown their foam; instead of turning you around, they will fall a hundred times at your feet, and by their fall they will end up by dying.
“I do not speak to you of the prison with which you have been threatened if you come to the church gatherings. Fear of prison can make you afraid, but it cannot act on the son of a warrior, and above all on the brother of a God crowned with thorns who died on a cross.”

After these words of Father Deniau, following custom, the highest chief present had to speak to affirm that the words heard were accepted and they were followed. But the Buli Cakaudrove and the Fijian magistrate from Somosomo being absent because of sickness, it was the Buli Tunuloa who spoke. He stood up and made the following speech:

“Chiefs of Cakaudrove, I have never spoken in public before you, for you are greater than I, and I am only chief of one part of your people. But when your chief is absent, then I speak. Taking a suitable position for myself, I shall speak to my children of Tunuloa in your presence.

Once Tunuloa was pagan. You said to us, ‘Become Wesleyans’, and we became Wesleyans to please you. Some time afterwards, the Wesleyans having deceived you, and having brought war in place of religion, you have called to us for help, and we have helped you to drive away your enemies and to gain victory. With the war finished you have said to us “Make yourselves Catholics with us”. We became Catholics with you to please you. Then we knew neither God nor his religion. But once we became Catholic we have been instructed by our priests, the word of God has brought light to our souls. Today we know and affirm our one God and his one religion. And now your chief tells us to abandon the religion of our God. Chiefs of Cakaudrove, know well, the people of Tunuloa are your servants. Your chief will always have our bodies, but he will not have our souls. Like you, Catholics of
Cakaudrove here present, we have given our souls to God. Like you, we shall never take them back.

Your chief threatens us with prison if we come to hear the instructions of our priest, assist at Mass, and go to confession and communion. Tell him that, like you, we have no fear of prison. Tell him that on his word we shall go to prison with the same obedience and the same joy that at another time we had for the word of his father in Wainikeli. On the battlefield for the sake of his father we have saved his life and brought him to the arms of his father when he was three years old. Let him know, and let you know with him, that when our time in prison shall run out, we shall take again the road to Wairiki, and that same evening you will find us at the foot of the confessional, and the next morning you will find us at the holy table on our knees at your sides at the feet of our God and our priest.

Isn’t it true, children of Tunuloa, that this is the resolution of all of us, as it is that of your chief? Have you not proved to us today, to me, to Cakaudrove, and to all the peoples here present, that in spite of the epidemic you have come to assist at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to celebrate Easter? Very good, my children, very good. Show to Cakaudrove that Tunuloa has the faith, that Tunuloa has no fear. If prison awaits you, it awaits me too. What else have you to fear? You will find me there at your side, as you have found me at your side in church.”

One month later Father Deniau received a letter from Father Breheret telling him that the government had withdrawn from the Catholic Mission, on the request of Ratu Lala, permission to plant on Fijian land, permission which it was not able to extend beyond the death of the late Tui Cakau who had given it; but it was giving the Catholic mission at Wairiki three months to pull up the gardens that it had on Fijian land. Father Deniau was very troubled, how was he going in the future to feed the children in the schools, who
by then were more than one hundred. He quickly made enquiries to find out if there was any land nearby for sale belonging to Europeans. He found one property, but the owner wanted 1,200 pounds sterling for it. It is true that this land was more than 300 acres, and it had a coffee plantation on it which brought in one hundred pounds sterling per year. It also had a plantation of coconuts, whose copra brought in 200 pounds sterling a year. He waited for the feast of Pentecost, and up till that time he prayed a lot and got others to pray a lot.

When the feast of Pentecost was over, in the evening after Benediction, he called the head catechist, and told him about the letter which he had received from Father Breheret, about the three months that he was given to pull out all the plantations, and he sent him to inform all the people present for the feast, that as from tomorrow morning they had to go and harvest all the yams, and pull out all the plantations which were on Fijian land. The work took three days. On the evening of the third day Father Deniau called together all the chiefs and all the catechists who were present for the feast, and he said to them,

“I am very troubled how I will be able from now on to feed your children, who are also my children, since you have given them to me. I have no land. It is true that I have found a European who is offering to sell his land, but he is asking for 1,200 pounds sterling for the land, and I have no money”.

“Father”, exclaimed the Buli Tunuloa, you have the Catholic people.”

“And these Catholics have arms”, added Mikaele, the chief catechist.

“And they know how to use them”, said Tevita, the chief catechist from Tunuloa.
“Wait”, replied the Buli Tunuloa, “we are going to go and discuss this with the Fijian people, and in one hour Mikaele will come and tell you their decision.”

Half an hour or an hour later Mikaele knocked on the door of Father Deniau, to inform him of the decision taken, and to ask for his approval.

“What have you decided?” asked Father Deniau.

“Two things, Father. The first is, we are going to work, starting from tomorrow, not for the Europeans but the Fijian parents and friends. We are going to help them pull their yams, which have been mature since Pentecost. We are requesting each one of them to give us for payment ten very big yams for each day of work. All these yams we will bring here, so that you can sell them and get a certain amount of money. Let the children of the boys’ school, starting tomorrow, put up a building to store them.

Our second decision is this: When the planting season comes, we will make in each village a large plantation of yams, which will be brought here at harvest time, so that you can sell them to get what is needed to pay for the land in question. If you will give us your approval, we will look after the rest.”

“If I did not know you”, replied Father Deniau, “I would say that your project can’t be done. But you have taught me to know you, nothing is impossible for you. Go, I accept your proposition, and may God reward you.”

Mikaele went and made known Father Deniau’s response, and at that moment all the mission compound rang out with a shout of joy and approval. The school boys, learning what had happened, sent their two head boys from the school, Semi and Petero, to
offer Father Deniau the yams that they had harvested over the previous days, and which now filled the yam house.

“Father,” the two head boys said to Father Deniau, ‘We have come to ask you to accept all our yams, and to sell them all to buy the land that you want to buy, because you want to buy the land for us.”

“Poor boys,” replied Father Deniau, “but if I were to accept your offer, what would you eat all this year?”

“Don’t worry, Father,” replied Petero, “We will go into the bush, we will find tivoli there, and we shall not die of hunger.”

“Impossible,” replied Father Deniau, “I can’t accept.”

Petero replied, “Do you think that we will only watch all our parents, catechists and chiefs working all these days for us, while we fold our arms and don’t do the least thing to help then? Father, this is not possible. If you don’t accept our yams to sell them like those of the older people, then we assure you that we will not touch them. They can rot in the yam house where they are stored, we won’t eat a single one!”

Emotion got the better of Father Deniau: tears in his eyes, he embrace the two head boys of the school, replying, “Boys, I accept your offer, you are truly children of God. Go, I accept your yams.”

Semi and Petero went to announce the news to the boys. It was not long before shouts of joy could be heard coming from the boys’ school.

Upon hearing these shouts of joy, the girls of Paradise began asking what was going on. They saw Semi’s wife, and signalled for her to go up to Paradise and asked her what it was all about.
Semi’s wife told the whole story. First of all they began to cry, then to shout so loudly that Father Deniau could hear it from his house. He couldn’t think why this should be so, and he wanted to know what this shouting meant. He was already getting ready to go up to Paradise to see what was going on, when he saw coming towards him a deputation of six of the biggest girls, so he waited for them to arrive.

The girls arrived close to Father’s veranda, where they sat on the grass and began to cry.

‘What are you crying about,” asked Father Deniau.

“We are crying, Father”, said the oldest of them, “because you have not spoken to us as you did to the boys about contributing to the purchase of the land. We have come to beg you to accept also our yams. There is no shortage of kawai in the bush, and it won’t be difficult for us to find enough for our food.”

“And who will take you to the bush? asked Father Deniau. “Sometimes there are creeks to cross. Do you want the sisters to cross these creeks?”

“But, Father, we bigger girls shall carry them. The sisters needn’t get their feet wet.”

“And then,” added Father Deniau, “once in the bush, how will the sisters find shelter when it rains, or from the heat of the sun in fine weather?”

“But Father, w will build a little shelter that they can remain in, and be at rest.”

“Well, if you were all big girls, but some of you are so small!”
“But Father, the little girls will sit with the sisters, and we bigger ones will work. Each of us will perform two tasks, her own and also that of a small girl, and so we too will have contributed to the buying of the land.”

“Dear children,” replied Father Deniau, “I want above all to make you happy.” Then, stopping a moment to reflect, he continued, “Without doubt I can’t accept all your yams, as I have accepted those of the boys. If I were to do that it would not be wise. But be happy, I will accept a small part. I will talk with the sisters, to put aside the part that I will accept. Go, and tell your companions, but be careful. Do it for the love of God.”

From that time there was great joy everywhere. And since God was also pleased he showered on Cakaudrove a shower of graces such that Cakaudrove was totally changed.

As for Father Deniau, with God’s help he was able to sell the yams: 60 tons at five pounds a ton, which made 300 pounds sterling. He wrote to Father Breheret and asked him to buy the land in question with an advance of 1,200 pounds, which he undertook to pay back in one year.

Father Breheret bought the land, and one year later Father Deniau sent him 1,200 pounds sterling, plus 3,000 francs for the future purchase of Wairiki (the property next door), for which Father Breheret promised to give 1,200 pounds.

**Solevu** From Solevu Father Lahaye wrote that there had been quite a few small persecutions in the district, but that they were not too violent. He added that the faith continued to take root more and more in the hearts of the baptised. And finally he wrote again that his two schools for boys and girls were going very well.
Culanuku  For a long time already Father Grosselin was alone at Culanuku, where the church was making progress. Because of the sickness of Father Favier, Father Passant had to leave Culanuku and go to Rewa.

Rewa  The mission continued to progress, in spite of a lot of small persecutions in Rewa. Father Favier, who had been very sick, was now completely recovered. Father Passant left Rewa to go to Wairiki and replace Father Jay, who had had a serious accident at Nazareth, where he had gone to rest a while.

Nazareth  The first procession to take place in Fiji took place at Nazareth at the catechists’ school. The priest in charge of the school, Father Bochettaz, set out to celebrate the feast of the Blessed Sacrament with all possible ceremony. A huge crowd took part, and all these people so recently plunged in the darkness of paganism took part with a devotion which brought tears to the three missionaries who were present. The impression that this splendid ceremony made on the hearts of the Fijians was profound. An old man, whom Father Bochettaz asked what he thought of it, replied to him with a “nunc dimittis” expressed in his own words, “You see this one time, and then you can die”.

Some months after the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, Father Bertreux returning from Sydney went again to Levuka and, taking up again his work there, Father Jay fell ill at Nazareth.

A little later Father Bochettaz, who was always sickly, left Nazareth, where he was replaced by Father Marion, and he went to rest at Verata.

Verata  Cakobau has already been dead for several months. His son Ratu Epeli has not yet been named chief to succeed him as was expected. Will Ratu Epeli become a Catholic, as he has expressed such a desire several times? After a conversation which had taken
place the previous month with Father Deniau in Wairiki, one was led to believe that he would not, because he said to Father Deniau: “I would like to be a Catholic, but Thurston has told me: ‘If you become a Catholic you will not be named chief, you will remain a government officer’”.

At Verata a lot of the mountain people who had declared that they wished to become Catholic now abandoned the church. Father Leberre has gone to live at Mata i Kara in the north of his district. Father Bochettaz is now at Verata.

Ovalau (outstations): Ba and Yasawa.

In May 1883 Father Marion wrote “I have made an interesting trip to Ba and Yasawa. I blessed the chapel in Na Cata (Yasawa), among a big crowd of Christians. It was all celebrated with all the joy and high spirits that one could wish for. In Ba I was able to say Mass in a newly built chapel. It all promises well. I brought back to his own people an assistant catechist who is a young chief of this area, who had been taught at Nazareth, and who was capable of doing a lot of good in his own district. I returned very happy to Levuka.”

But soon the Wesleyan horde rose up, seeing that the number of its members was going to go down, and went to see the Prefect of Ba, Ratu Vuki. He, encouraged by the famous minister of Fijian affairs of whom we have told a story of his doings in Tunuloa, the famous Mr. Blytz, declared that he was going to destroy the Catholic religion. He sent 12 men (4 officers and 8 Wesleyan catechists); these forced the people of Natunuku to all apostatize. Equally they forced all those of Qara to apostatize. All the people of Natanuku and Qara all apostatized out of fear, except for three who were mercilessly beaten. The Catholics of Votua and Naqara having refused to apostatize were exiled to Natogo. In the Yasawas, where all the Catholics had refused to apostatize, they
were all exiled, the men in one place and the women in another (contrary to all law, Fijian or English), and they were cruelly whipped. One of the women was pregnant and for a long time refused to apostatize. She was so cruelly beaten that she gave birth in full view of everyone. She then cried out with heroic energy:

“Beat me now as much as you will. I have no other reason or desire that you should stop. You will not make me abandon my religion.”

Father Breheret referred the matter to the government. We are still waiting for any sort of a decision. During this time the iniquitous acts are multiplying.

**Wairiki** For the last year everything had gone marvellously well at Wairiki. In the two schools, boys’ school and girls’ school, the students were so full of life that the priest and sisters were astonished. Father Deniau decided to have a prize-giving at Christmas time.

Sister Marie de Jesus sent this account of the event to Father Couloigner: “This prize-giving took place on Christmas day. After the religious ceremonies and the feasting, at the call of Father Deniau the 1,400 people who had come to the feast day gathered on the lawn. On a stage was a table covered with a magnificent tapa from Wallis, and on the tapa were set 16 crowns of flowers which the sisters had woven, and under the crowns were hanging, in full view, the 16 prizes.

Behind the table, on the stage, were nine chairs, and sitting on these chairs were the following: Father Deniau, Father Passant, the two sisters, the Fijian magistrate of the province, the Buli Tunuloa and three other chiefs.
On the lawn, below the stage, on the right were sitting the 60 boys of the Priests, on the left the 44 girls of the sisters, dressed in their pretty white costumes with blue trimming, a beautiful blue cord around their necks from which hung a medal which was like gold on their chests.

Behind the boys, at a respectful distance, sitting on the grass were the men who had come for the feast day. Behind the girls, at an equally respectful distance, were seated the women and children. Total and respectful silence reigned over the assembly. All eyes were fixed on the crowns and the prizes.

Suddenly Father Deniau stood up, and all eyes were on him, and all ears were open to hear the words that came from Father’s mouth. Father explained what the crowns and the prizes meant, and he finished by saying that the time had come in Fiji to no longer honour only a person’s position by birth, but to also honour wisdom and knowledge, the result of hard work.

After giving a speech, all of which I will not give you, Father Deniau made a sign, and at this sign four boys stood up and recited in Fijian a charming story called “Joseph the schoolboy”. Each of these boys had his role: one told the story, one (the youngest) was Joseph, a third was a beggar, and the fourth played the part of Our Lord himself. ...

After the recital, there was the distribution of prizes, beginning with the boys. Each child was called by Father Superior, he approached, mounted the stage, made a bow, and was crowned by Father Passant, or a sister, the magistrate or one of the other Fijian chiefs, and turning to Father Deniau he said, “Thank you, Father”. Buli Tunuloa was proud that day, for he crowned his son Joseph, and the daughter of his oldest son, a little girl of ten years called Bertha.”
The crowing event of 1883 was the arrival of a new priest in December: Father Chaix.

**Census of Catholics at the End of 1883.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Baptised</th>
<th>Catechumens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ovalau</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewa</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verata</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culanuku</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solevu</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wairiki</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far districts</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>4,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The year 1884 did not offer anything special. There were without doubt a large number of catechumens who gave themselves seriously to the Lord, who demanded and received baptism. Their number will show in the figures of Father Breheret for 1885.

But in 1884 there were no conversions at all from the Wesleyans to the Catholic church, except in the district of Verata, where for political reasons there was a great number of people who turned to the Catholic religion, but since they never remained there is no point in speaking of them.

We will speak here only of Rewa and Wairiki: of Rewa because it was particularly distinguished by its schools, and by its public exams which drew admiration from everyone, and lifted the courage of the Catholics in Rewa.

**Persecution in Cakaudrove again 1884**

**Wairiki** When Ratu Lala heard that the Catholic Mission had bought a beautiful big block of land in Taveuni, he was decidedly disappointed, because he had announced that the Catholic schools
could not possibly survive, and the Wesleyan ministers were rejoicing with him, and this was the subject of all their conversations with their catechists.

Thus disconcerted, Ratu Lala spoke to the famous Blytz of whom we have spoken, and he agreed with him to start again more strongly than ever to pursue the flock by the removal of the pastor.

Blytz took it upon himself to persecute the Catholics who were furthest away from Wairiki, that is to say those in the districts of Naweni, Mabuco, Tunuloa, Navatu, Koroalau, Vaturova etc, and even those in Tawake and Dogotuki on the Macuata coast. He left Ratu Lala to persecute the Catholics of Vuna, Cakaudrove, Wainikeli and Bouma, adding that he reserved for himself also to watch with close attention the children in the schools, to go prudently there because of the missionary, but to not let pass any legal fault which the students might commit.

Blytz went to Vaturova, and there he ordered that all the Catholics of that sub-prefecture were to join with the Wesleyans and work with them for the construction of their Wesleyan church, which they were getting ready to build. He added that all the Catholics who refused to work on the building of the church would be judged by him on his return, and thrown into prison.

Father Deniau, hearing of this the same evening, ordered all the catechists of Vaturova to preach to their Catholics that it was forbidden by the law of God to contribute to heresy, that prison with which they were threatened could only frighten the ordinary man, but could not frighten Catholics who did not ignore that they must obey God rather than men.
At the same time that Blytz gave this order and this threat in Vaturova, Ratu Lala gave the same order, with the same penalty, to the Catholics of Bouma.

What happened, then at either Vaturova or Bouma? The day that works started on the building of the Wesleyan church, whether in Vaturova or in Bouma, not a single Catholic worked on the building. Blytz was furious, and on his return he put three Catholic catechists in prison. Ratu Lala also put one Catholic catechist and the chief of Bouma in prison. These five Catholic men, like the apostles before them, happy to be judged worthy to suffer for Jesus Christ, went to prison with joy, and there were several conversions there. Father Deniau, seeing his catechists in prison, asked that he also be put in prison.

“If my catechists,” said Father Deniau in his letter to Blytz, have deserved prison for having forbidden their Catholics to work on the building of a Wesleyan church, I also deserve to be put in prison more than them, because it is I who ordered them to forbid their Catholics to work on the church building.”

Blytz replied that it was repugnant to him to put a priest in prison.

“There is no need for repugnance”, replied Father Deniau. “You ought to have the force of your convictions. If you are convinced that the catechists have done something bad when they forbade their Catholic people to work on the building of the Wesleyan church, and if you are convinced that you ought to condemn them to prison, then you ought to be equally convinced that in justice you ought to condemn me to prison, for it is I who ordered them to do what they did which has put them now in prison. It is for this reason that I ask that I be sent to prison.”

The famous Blytz replied that if it was necessary he could be expelled from his district.
“I could be expelled” replied Father Deniau, “but with the grace of God no one will be able to make me commit the crime of betraying my God, of obeying men rather than God.”

Blytz and Ratu Lala said to the catechists on their coming out of prison. “You are set free, but know that from now on when I order you to build the Wesleyan church you must do it”.

“Never,” replied the catechists and the Tui Bouma.

“Very well, you will be put in prison again, and this second time it will be for a longer time”.

“Oh, that doesn’t matter”, replied the catechists, “if you put us in prison again we will go again to prison with the same joy that we had the first time, but we will not disobey the law of our God, we will not contribute to heresy”.

When the catechists arrived at Wairiki, Father Deniau, who was waiting for them at the head of 1,200 Catholics, gave them such an ovation as no Fijian chief had ever received.

When Blytz and Ratu Lala found out about this, they became furious, and they not only persecuted more strongly the Catholics of Cakaudrove, but they wasted their time and their energy, because they did not cause a single man, not a single woman or child to abandon the Catholic religion. The Catholics of Cakaudrove became unshakeable in their faith, not afraid of prison, beating or death in order to keep it up and profess it.

Blytz and Ratu Lala then tried to make some of the school children abandon their faith. I take only two cases, wrote Father Deniau, which are sufficient to show how the school children were worthy of all praise.
The son of Buli Tunuloa, named Joseph, who was 11 years old, was at Yanawai at the government school of arts and trades. On Sunday the bell rang, to invite the children to go to the Wesleyan chapel. Joseph said to his fellow Catholic students: “We are Catholics. Don’t go to the Wesleyan chapel”. None of them went. The Englishman who was their head ordered them to go into the chapel. They refused.

“Sir,” said Joseph, “we are Catholics, not Wesleyans; we will not go in. Allow us to go and have our Catholic prayers in some other place.”

“You will all come in here,” said the Englishman, “and you will be the first, or I will beat you.”

“Hit me,” said Joseph, presenting his back to him, “but you will not make me go in.”

The Englishman then gave him a terrible beating, and when he had finished he said to Joseph: “Now go in.”

“You can beat me again, and beat me as often as you wish,” replied Joseph, “but you will not make me go in.” And addressing his companions he said, “On your knees, and let us say our prayers here, while the Wesleyans have theirs in their chapel.” They all went down on their knees, Joseph made the sign of the cross and began the prayers, The Englishman moved away from them and disappeared.

On the following Sunday there was the same threat of a beating from the Englishman, and the same response from Joseph. He presented his back, and received a beating similar to that of the previous Sunday. After beating him for a long time the Englishman stopped, and spoke to him. Joseph, instead of replying to him, said
to his companions: “On your knees.” Immediately making the sign of the cross he started the prayer, as he had done the previous Sunday. The Englishman withdrew.

The next Sunday there was the same threat from the Englishman, the same response from Joseph. He again presented his back, but then the Englishman took his hand and said to the Catholic children: Certainly, you are men, all of you. Go into that building (which he pointed out to them). From now on that will be the building to be used for the prayers of the Catholic students.

The second case is this: One day Ratu Lala had taken from me one of the young people in the school to put in prison, because he had refused to contribute to heresy. Although my student went off to prison with joy, I wept a lot. I shut myself in my room so that I would not be seen, then forgetting that my eyes were still red, I went outside again too soon. All the school children saw that I had been crying, and they knew why. They hid their sorrow, but when I went back to my room, the head teacher called together the boys, the native sister called together the girls, and a moment later all of them went to the church. When I saw this I asked myself, What are they going to do? It is not the time for prayer. I let them go, but when they came out I called the head teacher, and asked him what they went to the church for? The young man looked at me for a moment with tear-filled eyes, then fell on my neck:

“Father,” he cried, “We saw that you had been crying this morning when they took P to prison. We said to ourselves that our Father has far too much sorrow because of us. We are 160 children, let us all go to church and ask the good Lord that if he wills it he shares the sorrow of our Father among the 160 children. He will have 160 times less sorrow, and we shall each have such a small portion each that it will not be difficult for us to put up with it. And that, Father, is why we have been to the church. That is what
we have asked of the good Lord, and we hope that he will hear our prayer.”

Ratu Lala, seeing that he had lost all authority in Cakaudrove by persecuting the Catholics, whereas Father Deniau had completely won by defending them, asked Blytz to resolve the issue by having Father Deniau leave, and for that end to start slowly and hypocritically working on Thurston, the protector of Ratu Lala.

**The Catechists Spread out from Wairiki**

Meanwhile, things went ahead in Wairiki. It was the evening of the Ascension 1884, and Father Breheret was here in Wairiki. For some time now he had decided to extend the work of the catechists, which up till then had only been the work of a particular district. He came to give the direction of it to Father Deniau, he came to ask him to give ten young men to be ten head catechists, whom he would take himself and install in their respective posts.

The retreat of the young apostles had ended that morning, and they went to communion with their wives. Night had started to fall. Suddenly the bell rang for a first time. At that moment 800 Catholics went quickly to the church. Those who got there first got inside, the rest had to stay outside. Ten mats were placed for the catechists before the communion table. Suddenly the verger struck the floor of the church with his stick. The ranks opened and nine young men with deliberate steps crossed the nave of the church, eyes humbly lowered, and knelt on the mats. Behind them were lined up their nine young wives, beautiful in the marriage dresses, but even more beautiful because of their sweetness and their simplicity and devotion.

One of the children in the choir placed on the communion table nine books and nine catechists’ crosses. Then the bell rang for the
second time and Father Deniau left the sacristy, knelt at the foot of the altar, and the religious ceremony began. After the instruction from Father Deniau, he blessed the books and the crosses and distributed them, then he gave each one his mission.

“Mikaele”, he said to the first, “you have been at my side for nineteen years. You are the oldest of the brothers, you will be the head. In Rewa, where I am sending you, you will visit your brothers, you will support them, and your motto shall be “firmness and love””. 

“Theophil”, he said to the second, “you have been with me for seventeen years, your will be at the far end of Fiji: Kadavu will be your district. You will be the head catechist of Kadavu. There you will need strength, patience, resignation. I am counting on you to have all these.” And so Father Deniau continued to each one, giving his last advice and assigning him to his post. 

When Father Deniau had finished speaking, everyone stood up, they sang the departure hymn with great vigour, and the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament, given by Father Breheret crowned this beautiful ceremony. 

But I hear you say that you want to know something about the tenth catechist, who was not present at the ceremony. Very well, listen: Jacob was the name of this young man. Jacob was sick. His sickness did not seem to be serious, because his mat was prepared in the church, but he was so tired that evening that he was not able to go the ceremony. Soon his sickness became more serious, it made rapid progress, and three weeks later he died. Father Deniau gave him the last sacraments, solemnly carried the Holy Viaticum to him, and finally led his body to the cemetery. At the burial were Jacob’s parents, and especially his poor Wesleyan mother (who converted that day), and his young wife Lucine. After them came the Sisters and their 80 girls, the head teacher of the
boys’ school and his 80 boys, and finally about 100 Catholics from round about.

After having blessed the tomb, Father Deniau addressed some words to his assistants. He showed them the joys of death, its advantages, when it crowns a good life. He said that death was not only the lot of old age; in the same way when God chose Fijians to wear a crown of the freshest and most perfumed flowers on their heads, he often took babies, boys and girls, the wisest, the most virtuous, to adorn his Paradise. He spoke of the virtues of Jacob, on the hopes that rested on him, and he added “Today showing him heaven open before him, I would say to him: happy child, you will soon be in glory”.

Note: at Christmas 1884 the school at Wairiki had 100 boys and 100 girls, and 40 young men married to girls from the sisters’ school who were destined to be catechists. Three young Fijian girls began their novitiate to eventually become native sisters, and to help the SMSM sisters. There was one little native brother with the authorisation of Father Breheret, his name is Cyril. His younger brother was Thanan - they had both been with me for 16 years.

**Rewa**  In a letter which Father Chaix wrote to the procurator for the missions, he gives an account of a public exam, which was held in Rewa on religion, history, geography and mathematics in October 1884 which caused a great stir, and left in the mind of the Fijians an indelible impression.

The first part of the exam: after the most magnificent preparation and traditional chants two young Fijians were first called out and had to reply in English to some questions which were given to them in English. Both of them acquitted themselves very well: not only did they not stumble as regards the correctness of the
answers they gave to the questions, but their pronunciation of English was excellent.

After that, five others were questioned in Fijian. That was the end of the first part, and before starting the second part there was a play of the story of King Solomon and the two women who claimed to be mothers of the same child.

Then the second half of the exam began. There were many who were called, and each and every one acquitted themselves perfectly. All distinguished themselves not only by the correctness of the facts which they gave, but also by their aplomb and the tone of their voices. The history and geography of all Europe was examined: France with its flowers and highest mountains; England with its wealth and its many ships, the different religious sects in England; Germany and Lutheranism, etc. Catholic Italy and Spain, Switzerland, Russia, Sweden, Norway were all examined in detail by our clever boys. Other parts of the world were not left out. The crowd present were greatly surprised, because they had never seen up until that time such a display of knowledge.

After this second part of the exam was over, there was singing for half an hour, after which Father Bochettaz ended proceedings with a magnificent lecture. Then all went to the church for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, given by Father Grosselin.

**Report of Father Breheret in 1885**

We will content ourselves by examining the report that Father Breheret sent to Very Reverend Father Martin (the superior general of the Society of Mary) in November 1885.

"1. A new station has been founded in Suva, our capital. Father Chaix is in charge of this station."
2. The college of Nazareth for the formation of catechists has been transferred to Loreto on the island of Ovalau. Father Bertreux is in charge. His assistant is Father Marion.

3. The number of students in our schools has gone up considerably in each of our mission stations.

4. The evangelization of foreign workers, undertaken only this year, has given since it was begun consoling results.

Now some words on each of our stations.

First, Viti Levu. We have four stations: Culanuku, Suva, Rewa, Verata.

**Culanuku** Although it is a recent foundation, this Christian community is already prospering. Father Grosselin has in his care more than 900 Catholics. Eight chapels have been built recently. There are many Catholic children in this district. Send us sisters of the TOM (SMSM) - they will soon see their school filled by a small crowd of students. (By Catholics we mean here those who follow the Catholic religion, whether baptised or not. There are no longer any pagans in Fiji, all are Catholic or Wesleyan.)

**Suva** Suva the new capital of Fiji and the seat of government now possesses a beautiful church. Father Chaix is the pastor. He speaks English well. His congregation is made up of about 100 Europeans and many black workers. Father Chaix has no other house than the sacristy of the church. We hope that we will soon be able to put up a small presbytery for him. Hopefully we will have the means to open new schools for both boys and girls.

**Rewa** The venerable Father Favier, whose age and illnesses do not dampen his zeal, lavishes his care on a population of 1,200
Christians. While taking care of his new church members, he finds also the time to build churches in various villages of his district. He has produced a handbook of prayers in the Fijian language for the use of our new members, he is preparing a church history in the same language, and he is putting together material to write later a history of the mission in Fiji.

**Verata** This station is in mourning at the present time. Father Bochettaz who has been serving there has left for Sydney. He has gone to try and completely restore his health, weakened by more than 25 years in a harsh apostolate. It is a great sadness for me that that I am not able to replace him. For political reasons there were a great number of conversions to Catholicism in his district. Today, alas, we have the sadness of seeing these new converts return again to Wesleyanism.

**Solevu** The new members of this district continue to distinguish themselves by their fervour. The number of communions is always increasing. On seeing the Catholics of Solevu one senses that the faith has put down deep roots in their hearts, that the grace of God is powerful to have transformed into gentle lambs those who were formerly cruel wolves. The two schools at Solevu are flourishing. The students of Father Lahaye, as well as the boarders of the sisters edify by their modesty and piety.

**Wairiki** This station has 2,700 members now who are true Christians. Frequent conversions reward the zeal of fathers Deniau and Passant, who evangelize this district. Helped by 46 excellent catechists whom he has made real apostles, Father Deniau goes from strength to strength, and is ceaselessly setting up new centres. The number of adults baptised this year at the station has gone up to 80, the number of infant baptisms has passed 100. I have the firm hope that the success of Father Deniau will continue, because besides the 46 valiant catechists who are in the villages, there are living in the church compound, besides the 200 students,
nearly 50 young men ready at the first opportunity to walk courageously in the steps of their elders. What is still more reassuring is that it has reached the point that these young men wish to choose their wives only from girls formed at the sisters’ school on the station, and that these girls taught by the sisters on the station don’t want to marry anyone else except the young men from Father’s school. From these excellent families the husband and wife can compete in zeal to help the missionaries and to extend the reign of Our Lord.

**Levuka**  The second town of the colony and the seat of the prefect apostolic (Father Breheret). Among the Europeans there are about 80 Catholics. Several who had abandoned the practice of the sacraments are preparing to receive them again. One work begun this year which gives us a lot of consolations is the evangelisation of foreign workers.

**Loreto**  It is here that we are establishing our new college for the formation of catechists and a boarding school for the Fijian girls. Suffice it to say that today this establishment is already prospering, and there are forty young men and fifty girls. The girls are under the direction of Sister Marie de Jesus. The Christian communities of Kadavu, Ba and Yasawa are attached to the station of Ovalau. Kadavu has 100 people, Ba and Yasawa each have 300, and are visited from time to time, but do not have a resident missionary.

You see, Father, that we have only one sorrow: that of not having enough people for the work. We beg you to send us missionaries, so that we can fly to new conquests and extend the kingdom of God. Send us sisters also, to allow us to open schools for girls in the main Catholic centres. The good that the older sisters are doing is huge.
We thank you very much for having sent us two priests: Fathers Le Petit and Courrech. I have kept the former at Levuka, where I am in charge of the ministry to the Europeans; I have sent the second to Rewa with Father Favier.”
Statistics for the mission at the end of 1885:

Personnel:
• 14 missionaries (priests),
• 1 coadjutor brother,
• 5 religious sisters.

Culanuku
• 900 Catholics (380 baptised)
• 10 catechists
• 10 adult baptisms and 20 in infant baptisms in 1885
• 8 chapels and one church

Rewa
• 1,200 Catholics (920 baptised)
• 400 communicants
• 17 catechists
• 2 churches, 11 chapels

Suva
• this station has begun

Verata
• 1,100 Catholics (600 baptised)

Solevu
• 1,300 Catholics (760 baptised)
• 15 catechists
• 27 adult baptisms in 1885
• 1 church and 12 chapels
• 1 catechists’ school with 20 students
• 1 boarding school for Fijian girls 30 students
Wairiki
- 2,700 Catholics (1,150 baptised)
- 350 communicants
- 46 catechists
- 4 churches and 40 chapels
- 80 adult baptisms and 110 infant baptisms in 1885
- 1 school for catechists 100 students
- 1 girls boarding school 100 students
- 5 district schools
- 45 village schools

Ovalau and dependencies
- 850 Catholics (550 baptised)
- 14 catechists
- 2 churches and chapels
- 20 adult baptisms, and 30 infant baptisms in 1885

Total 8,500 people.

(Note: At Christmas 1885 the 3 girls who had begun their novitiate at Wairiki at Christmas 1884 received the habit of little sisters, and made a simple vow of obedience for one year. 3 others entered the novitiate.)
Report of Father Joly in 1886

Here, to end, is the report of Father Joly, the visitor of the missions of Oceania, on the prefecture apostolic of Fiji in 1886:

There are 8 stations in the prefecture apostolic of Fiji: Levuka, Rewa, Solevu, Wairiki, Verata, Culanuku and finally Suva and Loreto which have begun to be founded very recently.

Ministry in Fiji is difficult and dangerous. It requires not only a truly apostolic zeal, but robust health, and it is not surprising that a good number of our confreres have met a premature death, or they have contracted some sickness which has prevented them working and forced them to abandon the country. In fact out of 28 missionaries sent to this mission, there remain only seven old ones at the beginning of 1886. And today there remains only five because Father Deniau left Fiji on 17 February 1886. ...Since his departure the big and beautiful station of his dear Wairiki is inconsolable.

He was replaced by Father Favre, helped by Father Courrech. Father Favre was a true missionary, a man of faith, of confidence in God, capable of obtaining miracles; but he was exhausted by 26 years of weariness, he had a very painful ulcer on one leg and two other painful illnesses, and he was not able to withstand the physical and moral fatigue which he experienced, both from directing a huge district like that of Cakaudrove, and all the frustrations which Ratu Lala never stopped causing him. He died like the true saint that he was on the 13\textsuperscript{th} September of that same year 1886.

His young assistant Father Courrech, another saint like his superior Father Favre, had only very feeble health, and he died forty days
after Father Favre. Like the death of Father Favre it was the death of a saint, and he gave his soul to God on the 24th October 1886.

There remain in Fiji only five of the old priests: Father Breheret, Father Favier, Father Bochettaz, Father Grosselin and Father Leberre. Father Favier and Father Bochettaz are nearly blind and overcome with sickness. Father Grosselin is exhausted by a sickness which hardly ever leaves him, and Father Leberre can hardly do anything.

Father Breheret, the Prefect Apostolic, is the strongest of them all, but after 44 years of apostolat he devotes himself according to his strength for the good of the archipelago. He feels his health is questionable, and has only moments of relief from the burden of the prefecture. So there remain in Fiji only the young priests.

In Fiji all buildings: churches, schools and residences are built of wood, (it is the only construction material that can be easily bought in Fiji), but they are all suitable and can be favourably compared with European buildings in Fiji. The priests themselves direct the boys’ schools. The girls’ schools are under the direction of the Sisters of the Third Order of Mary, and at the moment there are six of them.

In summary, the Fiji mission, in spite of difficulties, trials and losses, has been the instrument of Providence to prevent a lot of evil, bring about a lot of good, obtain a lot of serious and lasting conversions, and lead a large number of souls to heaven. It has created lasting establishments. It holds a position with the Fijian people and the colonial government which gives reason for hope of more rapid progress in the future if it receives a sufficient number of missionaries to continue the work begun with so much labour and sacrifice.
Notices

1. The whole Society of Mary received with joy the recent news from Rome that Pope Leo 13\textsuperscript{th}, hearing the repeated requests of Father Breheret, has raised the Prefecture Apostolic of Fiji to a Vicariate Apostolic, and has named Monsignor Vidal as Vicar Apostolic of Fiji. (1887)

2. Deaths of the old Fathers who remain in Fiji in 1886:
   i. Father Favier 4 April 1887
   ii. Father Bochettaz 25 October 1888
   iii. Father Grosselin 20 April 1890
   iv. Father Breheret 12 August 1898
   v. Father Leberre is the only one of the old priests remaining.
Statistics of the Catholic Mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Adherents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Arrival of the missionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>508 adherents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>2,346</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>14,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>12,400 (because of losses in Kadavu and Rewa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>9,900 (because of loss of Macuata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>10,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>10,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>7,800 (2,200 Catholics died in the epidemic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>7,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>7,620</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>7,817</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>7,987</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>8,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>8,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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