years to months or days. In Hawaii there was a tradition of one that lasted thirty years, during which men might not trim their beards, &c. A common period was forty days. A taboo was either common or strict. During a common taboo the men were only required to abstain from their ordinary occupations and to attend morning and evening prayers. But during a strict taboo every fire and light on the island or in the district was extinguished ; no canoe was launched ; no person bathed ; no one, except those who had to attend at the temple, was allowed to be seen out of doors ; no dog might bark, no pig grunt, no cock crow. Hence at these seasons they tied up the mouths of dogs and pigs, and put fowls under a calabash or bandaged their eyes. The taboo was imposed either by proclamation or by fixing certain marks (a pole with a bunch of bamboo leaves, a white cloth, &c.) on the places or things tabooed.

The penalty for the violation of a taboo was either religious or civil. The religious penalty inflicted by the offended *atuas or* spirits generally took the form of a disease : the offender swelled up and died, the notion being that the *atua* or his emissary (often an infant spirit) had entered into him and devoured his vitals. Cases are on record in which persons who had unwittingly broken a taboo actually died of terror on discovering their fatal error. Chiefs and priests, however, could in the case of involuntary trans­gressions perform certain mystical ceremonies which prevented this penalty from taking effect. The civil penalty for breaking a taboo varied in severity. In Hawaii there were police officers appointed by the king to see that the taboo was observed, and every breach of it was punished with death, unless the offender had powerful friends in the persons of priests or chiefs. Elsewhere the punishment was milder ; in Fiji (which, however, is Melanesian) death was rarely inflicted, but the delinquent was robbed and his gardens despoiled. In New Zealand this judicial robbery was reduced to a system. No sooner was it known that a man had broken a taboo than all his friends and acquaintances swarmed down on him and carried off whatever they could lay hands on. Under this system (known as *muru*) property circulated with great rapidity. If, *e.g.,* a child fell into the fire, the father was robbed of nearly all he possessed.@@1

Besides the permanent and the artificially created taboos there were others which arose spontaneously as a result of circumstances. Thus all persons dangerously ill were taboo and were removed from their houses to sheds in the bush ; if they remained in the house and died there the house was tabooed and deserted. Mothers after childbirth were taboo, and so were their new-born children. Women before marriage were *noa,* and could have as many lovers as they chose ; but after marriage they were strictly tabooed to their husbands and from every one else. One of the strictest taboos was incurred by all persons who handled the body or bones of a dead person or assisted at his funeral. In Tonga a common person who touched a dead chief was tabooed for ten lunar months ; a chief who touched a dead chief was tabooed for from three to five months according to the rank of the deceased. Burial grounds were taboo ; and in New Zealand a canoe which had carried a corpse was never afterwards used, but was drawn on shore and painted red. Red was the taboo colour in New Zealand ; in Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga, and Samoa it was white. In the Marquesas a man who had slain an enemy was taboo for ten days : he might have no inter­course with his wife and might not meddle with fire ; he had to get some one else to cook for him. A woman engaged in the prepara­tion of cocoa-nut oil was taboo for five days or more, during which she might have no intercourse with men. A tabooed person might not eat his food with his hands, but was fed by another person ; if he could get no one to feed him, he had to go down on his knees and pick up his food with his mouth, holding his hands behind him. A chief who was permanently taboo never ate in his own house but always in the open air, being fed by one of his wives, or taking his food with the help of a fern stalk so as not to touch his head with his hands ; food left by him was kept for him in a sacred place ; any other person eating of it was supposed to die immediately. A man of any standing could not carry provisions on his back ; if he did so they became taboo and were useless to any one but himself. For the taboo was communicated as it were by infection to whatever a tabooed person or thing touched. This rule applied in its fullest force to the king and queen of Tahiti. The ground they trod on became sacred ; if they entered a house, it became taboo to them and had to be abandoned to them by its owner. Hence special houses were

set apart for them on their travels, and, except in their hereditary districts, they were always carried on men’s shoulders to prevent them touching the ground. Elsewhere, as in New Zealand, this rule was not carried out so strictly. But even in New Zealand the spots on which great chiefs rested during a journey became taboo and were surrounded with a fence of basket-work. The head and hair, especially of a chief, were particularly taboo or sacred ; to touch a man’s head was a gross insult. If a chief touched his own head with his fingers he had immediately to apply them to his nose and snuff up the sanctity which they had abstracted from his head. The cutting of a chiefs hair was a solemn ceremony ; the severed locks were collected and buried in a sacred place or hung up on a tree. If a drop of a chief's blood fell upon anything, that thing became taboo to him, *i.e.,* was his property. If he breathed on a fire, it became sacred and could not be used for cooking. In his house no fire could under any circumstances be used for cooking ; no woman could enter his house before a certain service had been gone through. Whatever a new-born child touched became taboo to *(i.e.,* in favour of) the child. The law which separated tabooed persons and things from contact with food was especially strict. Hence a tabooed or sacred person ought not to leave his comb or blanket or anything which had touched his head or back (for the back was also particularly taboo) in a place where food had been cooked ; and in drinking he was careful not to touch the vessel with his hands or lips (otherwise the vessel became taboo and could not be used by any one else), but to have the liquid shot down his throat from a distance by a second person.

There were various ceremonies by which a taboo could be removed. In Tonga a person who had become taboo by touching a chief or anything belonging to him could not feed himself till he had got rid of the taboo by touching the soles of a superior chief's feet with his hands and then rinsing his hands in water, or (if water was scarce) rubbing them with the juice of the plantain or banana. But, if a man found that he had already (unknowingly) eaten with tabooed hands, he sat down before a chief, took up the foot of the latter, and pressed it against his stomach to counteract the effect of the food inside. In New Zealand a taboo,could be taken off by a child or grandchild. The tabooed person touched the child and took drink or food from its hands ; the man was then free, but the child was tabooed for the rest of the day. A Maori chief who be­came taboo by touching the sacred head of his child was disinfected, so to speak, as follows. On the following day (the ceremony could not be performed sooner) he rubbed his hands over with potato or fern root which had been cooked over a sacred fire ; this food was then carried to the head of the family *in the female line,* who ate it, whereupon the hands became *noa.* The taboo was removed from a new-born child in a somewhat similar manner. The father took the child in his arms and touched its head, back, &c., with some fern root which had been roasted over a sacred fire ; next morning a similar ceremony was performed on the child by its eldest relative in the female line ; the child was then *noa, i.e.,* free from taboo. Another mode of removing the taboo was to pass a consecrated piece of wood over the right shoulder, round the loins, and back again over the left shoulder, after which the stick was broken in two and either buried, or burned, or cast into the sea.

Besides the taboos already described there were others which any one could impose. In New Zealand, if a man wished to pre­serve his house, crop, garden, or anything else, he made it taboo ; similarly he could appropriate a forest tree or a piece of drift timber, &c., by tying a mark to it or giving it a chop with his axe. In Samoa for a similar purpose a man would set up a representation of, *e.g.,* a sea pike or a shark, believing that any one who meddled with property thus protected would be killed by a sea pike or shark the next time he bathed. Somewhat similar to this was what may be called the village taboo. In the autumn the *kumera* (sweet potato) fields belonging to the village were taboo till the crop was gathered, so that no stranger could approach them ; and all persons engaged in getting in the crop were taboo, and could therefore for the time engage in no other occupation. Similar taboos were laid on woods during the hunting season and on rivers during the fishing season.

On looking over the various taboos mentioned above we are tempted to divide them into two general classes,— taboos of privilege and taboos of disability. Thus the taboo of chiefs, priests, and temples might be described as a privilege, while the taboo imposed on the sick and on persons who had come in contact with the dead might be regarded as a disability ; and we might say acccordingly that the former rendered persons and things sacred or holy, while the latter rendered them unclean or accursed. But that no such distinction ought to be drawn is clear from the fact that the rules to be observed in the one case and in the other were identical. On the other hand, it is true that the opposition of sacred and accursed, clean and

@@@1 The origin of this custom may perhaps be discerned in a custom of the Dieri tribe, South Australia. Among them, if a child meets with an accident, all its relations immediately get their heads broken with sticks or boomerangs till the blood flows down their faces, this surgical operation being supposed to ease the child’s pain *(Native Tribes of S. Australia,* p. 280).