

SHORT STORY AMERICA

THE FEATHERS OF THE SUN

JACK LONDON

"You have spoken well, Davida," said Queen Sepeli. "This Fulualea has brought a madness with him, and Tui Tulifau is drowned in gin. If he does not grant the big council, I shall give him a beating. He is easy to beat when he is in drink."

She doubled up her fist, and such were her Amazonian proportions and the determination in her face that Grief knew the council would be called. So akin was the Fitu-Ivan tongue to the Samoan that he spoke it like a native.

"And you, Uiliami," he said, "have pointed out that the soldiers have demanded coin and refused the paper Fulualea has offered them. Tell them to take the paper and see that they be paid to-morrow."

"Why trouble?" Uiliami objected. "The king remains happily drunk. There is much money in the treasury. And I am content. In my house are two cases of gin and much goods from Hawkins's store."

"Excellent pig, O my brother!" Sepeli erupted. "Has not Davida spoken? Have you no ears? When the gin and the goods in your house are gone, and no more traders come

with gin and goods, and Feathers of the Sun has run away to Levuka with all the cash money of Fitu-Iva, what then will you do? Cash money is silver and gold, but paper is only paper. I tell you the people are grumbling. There is no fish in the palace. Yams and sweet potatoes seem to have fled from the soil, for they come not. The mountain dwellers have sent no wild goat in a week. Though Feathers of the Sun compels the traders to buy copra at the old price, the people sell not, for they will have none of the paper money. Only to-day have I sent messengers to twenty houses. There are no eggs. Has Feathers of the Sun put a blight upon the hens? I do not know. All I know is that there are no eggs. Well it is that those who drink much eat little, else would there be a palace famine. Tell your soldiers to receive their pay. Let it be in his paper money."

"And remember," Grief warned, "though there be selling in the stores, when the soldiers come with their paper it will be refused. And in three days will be the council, and Feathers of the Sun will be as dead as a dead pig."