

The Swing in Melanesia and some other Regions.

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This widely known pastime is also known in Melanesia, although it does not seem to occur so frequently here as in other areas of the world. In quoting the records about Melanesia, we shall proceed from east to west.

LAMBERT¹ records that the swing called *iaouli* is generally known in the whole of the island of New Caledonia, where an archaic Melanesian language is spoken. The swing consists of a rattan cane attached to the branch of a tree or to two coconut trees standing near to each other. The person swinging sets one foot on the rattan cane and, holding the rattan to the right and left with his hands, swings standing upright. In Futuna Island, in the southern New Hebrides, where the language is Polynesian, though physically the people do not differ greatly from the Melanesians of the other islands, the swing is recorded by GUNN². On Pentecost and Maevo, where the language is Melanesian, young men swing on a rattan cane with a loop suspended from a tree. The position is upright³. About the Sakaos of north-eastern Santo who in race and language are typical Melanesians, Mrs. BAKER records that when she went out with the natives to play "they would clear the ground around and would tie me to the end of a great rope or liana hanging some 60 feet from the tops of the trees and one would seize me and climb with me right the way up and, keeping the rope taut, let me go. It was the most wonderful swing"⁴. In Mota in the Banks Islands where the language is Melanesian, the word for swing is *tape-ir*, *tape* meaning to draw up and *ir* to shake⁵. But nothing else is recorded.

In Fiji, where Melanesian languages are spoken, the swing is mentioned by several writers. It consists of a single cord, either a rope or a strong vine, suspended from a tree, and having at its lower end a loop in which to insert one foot, or a knot on which both feet rest. Sometimes the swing is made

¹ 149, fig. 35, quoted also by SARASIN 235.

² 208, quoted also by SPEISER 247.

³ SPEISER 246.

⁴ In BAKER 231.

⁵ CODRINGTON 33, 198.