

seems to have been generally the case. In New Zealand, alone, the civil authority has been lost, and only the religious dignity retained. In Samoa, a separation has also been effected between the two offices, and a new word formed to designate the sacerdotal class. In all the other groups there is, properly speaking, no priesthood. There are certain individuals to whom the name of *tufunga*, (or *tohunga*, *tahunga*, *tahuna*, *tahua*, &c.,) is given, who take charge of the temples and images, perform religious rites, communicate with the deities, &c. Except when engaged in the exercise of these functions, they are not regarded as persons of peculiar sanctity, and enjoy no consideration whatever beyond that which springs from their personal rank and wealth, or their influence with the chiefs. The word by which they are called signifies an artisan, or one who follows a particular profession; a house or canoe builder, a carver, a tattooer, a director of funeral ceremonies, &c., are all called by this name, as well as a priest. Those of the latter class must, therefore, be considered merely as persons appointed by the real priests,—i. e., the *aliki*, or chiefs,—to go through the drudgeries of their office, with which they are unwilling to be troubled.

But in refusing to exercise the ordinary functions of the priestly station, the chiefs have been careful not to renounce the dignity and immunities connected with it. The extraordinary personal respect evinced towards them cannot be accounted for from their civil rank alone, since it is nearly as profound among those democratic tribes, who, like the Nukuhivans, pay little regard to their authority, as under the despotic governments of Tahiti and Hawaii. It is tabu for a common man to enter without permission the house of a chief, or to wear a garment belonging to him, or to stand in his presence at certain times, or to do other acts savouring of undue familiarity and disrespect. The penalty does, indeed, vary according to the nature of the government. In the Marquesas, the offender would be mulcted of some of his property, by way of expiation; in Tonga, this would be accompanied by severe personal chastisement; while under the iron rule which prevailed in the Sandwich Islands, death was the only atonement.

A strong argument in favour of this view of the origin of the tabu, is found in the fact that on nearly if not quite all the groups, there have been, at a very late period, men who have been regarded by the natives as partaking of the divine nature,—in short, as earthly gods.