Finch & Co



A VICTORIAN PRINT ON COTTON HANDKERCHIEF DEPICTING 'THE CIVILISATION OF FIJI'

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CIRCA 1879

SIZE: 59CM SQUARE – 23¼ INS SQUARE

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LITERATURE

THESE COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN PRINTED IN THE MACHINERY DEPARTMENT OF CRYSTAL PALACE IN 1879 ON BEHALF OF A MISSIONARY SOCIETY. THE FOUR SIDES ARE EACH PRINTED WITH THE HEADINGS; 'FIJI BEFORE CIVILISATION', 'DAWN OF CIVILISATION', 'ADVANCE OF CIVILISATION' AND LASTLY 'GLORIOUS RESULT OF CIVILISATION'.

THESE SCENES PORTRAY THE DESIRABLE PROGRESSION THAT THE VICTORIAN COLONIAL MISSIONARY BELIEVED IT WAS NECESSARY FOR A PACIFIC ISLAND TO TAKE TOWARDS 'CIVILISED' WESTERN SOCIETY. TODAY THE LESSON THE ARTIST HAS DRAWN SEEMS RATHER HUMOROUSLY DONE, BUT ESSENTIALLY IT SHOWS THE INTOLERANCE AND IGNORANCE CONTAINED IN COLONIAL CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDA.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE ENGLISH COLLECTION