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British New Guinea

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THE SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE.

BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

By Sir WILLIAM MACGREGOR, K.C.M.G., M.D., D.Sc., Administrator
of the Possession.

*(Read at Meetings of the Society in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen,
in March 1895.)*

GEOGRAPHY.—Several times within the last hundred years the island of New Guinea, or a part of it, was formally or indirectly claimed on behalf of the British Crown before Commodore Erskine, half a score of years ago, officially proclaimed it a protected territory. On the 4th September 1888 the sovereignty of the Queen was formally declared at Port Moresby, and British New Guinea became a Crown Colony.

Of the whole island of New Guinea, which has an area of nearly 300,000 square miles, nearly a third part belongs to this Empire, and that part, with about 3000 square miles in islands at the east end, forms a colony with an area of some 90,000 square miles—larger, therefore, than Great Britain.

On the west side it begins at the 5th, and on the east side at the 8th degree of south latitude; the most southerly land in it is at $11^{\circ} 39' 25''$ south. It is so broad from east to west that it takes the sun fifty-six minutes to cross it; and when it is already dark in the east end, the sun is still above the horizon in the west end.

Its western part lies opposite to the northern end of the continent of Australia, from which it is distant only four or five score of miles. It is the youngest of all the Australasian family of colonies, but three of the other eight are smaller.

It is a real land of mountain and flood. The mountain masses principally occupy the centre of the mainland portion; but as they advance to the west they become lower, much interrupted, and their southern slopes,

receding towards the north, gradually approach and reach the northern boundary. The central chain is more continuous and even towards the east, where it extends right to the sea. The loftiest part is near the centre, on the great Owen Stanley Range, the highest altitude of which is the mile-long crest of Mount Victoria, which rises to some 13,000 feet above the level of the sea. In the west the mountains are chiefly of sandstone and limestone, in the central part they are of volcanic and schistose formation, and they are of very mixed structure towards the east end. They are all covered by dense forest, and are very rugged and precipitous in character at many places. There is a great rainfall on the central chain, producing many rivers of large size in proportion to the superficial area of country drained. The largest river is the Fly, which opens into the west end of the Gulf of Papua, and by which a journey of little over 600 miles takes one to the British-German boundary, at the very centre of the island. The headwaters of the Fly are collected from Dutch, German, and British territory. The next largest river is the Purari, which opens into the Gulf, forming a delta of some 400 or 500 square miles in area. It has not been followed to the boundary, but it probably passes it and leads into German New Guinea. The rivers next in importance are the Bailala, which opens into the Gulf, and the Tauri and Lakekamu, which enter Freshwater Bay. The Fly is navigable by steam for about 500 miles, the Purari for at least 120, the Bailala for 80, the Tauri for nearly 40, and the Lakekamu for at least 50. The Augabunga River in the central district is an interesting stream as coming from behind the great Mekeo Range, and because its shingle contains plentiful traces of gold. It traverses a rich and populous district, but is navigable by steam only 12 or 15 miles. The next rivers of importance are the Musa, Kumusi, and Mambare on the north-east coast. They seem to be navigable by steam for 40 or 50 miles each. In the far west the Morehead has been ascended by a steam launch for 120 miles; but on that river there is not much good land. There is a considerable quantity of rich alluvial vacant land on the Bailala, Tauri, Lakekamu, Kumusi, and Mambare Rivers. There are also areas of good planting land of some size at many places on smaller streams, and on hill slopes and plateaus. The islands are too small to have any large rivers, but both they and the mainland generally are remarkably well watered. The principal islands are mountainous; but there are a few of them low and of coral formation; all are covered by forest. The great mountains of the islands, the highest of which is 8000 feet, are of schist, but many parts of them are volcanic. The rainfall varies in different districts from 120 inches at the east end to about 50 or 60 in the central district near the coast. There is a cooler season, from June to November, during which the wind is from the south-east; and a warmer season, from December to May, when the wind is from the north-west. There is probably a difference of temperature of some half-dozen degrees Fahrenheit between the cooler and warmer seasons. Most rain falls during the latter period, the greater part of it as thunder-showers. The average temperature for the year at Port Moresby seems to be about 83° Fahrenheit. There is not often near the coast an alternation of temperature exceeding half a score of degrees. But on the high mountains there is crisp frost;

and large icicles were seen on the crest of Mount Victoria among the daisies and heaths growing there. The heat is not very often felt to be oppressive in the shade, but it is too great to let Europeans work steadily in the sun. The only precious metal that has so far been found is gold. This is met with in traces at a great many different places. Two or three score of diggers derive a precarious existence from it. Jade exists in quantity. There are traces of cinnabar; and there is a probability of good coal being found in an accessible position. But the great hope of the country is in agriculture.

NATIVES.—The natives are estimated to number about 350,000. It is not possible to say at present whether, on the whole, they are increasing or diminishing in numbers. In settled districts there are great numbers of young children. As peace is made between contiguous tribes they plant a great deal more food than was formerly possible, and they can attend better to domestic duties all round. Add to these considerations that the number of people formerly murdered was very great, and that this is now being much reduced, and it becomes impossible not to conclude that the population will increase if we do not destroy the people by the introduction of foreign diseases, and do not interfere with the rearing of families by transporting the adult male population to Australia as plantation labourers. Although the birth-rate is now high in many villages, formerly large families were not common. It was so great a social misdemeanour for a woman to have twins that they were formerly in some places killed by exposure. Recently a native official threatened a country-woman of his own with the strange menace, that he would give her some native medicine that would cause her to bear triplets. This dreadful threat produced a profound impression, for no woman could carry home at night three children *plus* food and firewood for the family for twenty-four hours.

The natives are as a rule smaller than Europeans. The hill people are more sturdy than the coast people, but the latter are often the taller and longer-limbed. They are smallest in the Louisiade group and neighbouring small islands; but there they are worst fed, the cultivation of the Yela islanders being the rudest of any known set of tribes that live in the colony by agriculture. At the Kiriwina islands there is great abundance of food, and the people are of good physique. On the Gulf of Papua there is abundance of sago, and, although many of the tribes live almost exclusively on this, still quantity seems to make up for variety, for the men are tall and muscular though loose-limbed.

In colour they vary. They are of a very dark brown, which would popularly be called black, in a coast strip extending from the Mai Kussa to the east end of the Gulf. The others, as well inland as on the coast and on the islands, are, as far as they have been seen, all lighter in colour. The greatest difference is noticed among the women; the darker women are tall, scraggy, stiff, lank-limbed, angular, and generally jaded; the lighter women are better proportioned, with rounded, well-turned limbs, and are decidedly shorter, more graceful, more active, and far more lively. Amongst the lighter tribes on the southern coast and in the islands there will be found sometimes as many as five per cent. of people with straight

or wavy hair. They either do not exist among the darker people of the west or are very rare. As a whole the people are cheerful and full of life and activity; but the darker are more sedate, especially the more western tribes, than the lighter people. This could only be expected of the former, as they live in a great low swampy district, with no high land near them from which they can obtain a whiff of mountain air; and they live, as on the Fly estuary, cooped up together in huge houses without screen partitions, in stalls allotted one to each family. They spend the night in common smoke, darkness, and noise. If a husband and wife quarrel—which is common enough—the whole community, perhaps counting scores or several hundreds, are disturbed; if a child cries, every one is roused; if an old man coughs, the neighbours are all disturbed. Need it, then, be wondered at that the darker west-coast man, living in such conditions, does not possess the intellectual activity, the artistic taste, the musical proclivities, the economic energy of the lighter man, who occupies his own house, lives in a purer atmosphere, has greater variety of diet, and possesses a good sailing canoe? In a large part of the Gulf, both near the coast and inland, the men generally occupy club-houses and live apart from the women and children, practically without the family life that is enjoyed by the eastern tribes, where each man occupies his own house with his wife and children. Amongst these latter, the sanctity of the private house is so fully observed that each man can with perfect propriety call his house his castle. Hundreds of times, when they were not sure of the object of a visit from the Administrator, they have retired each man to his own veranda, apparently regarding it as an asylum. The additional security is sometimes added of going inside a circle of palm-leaves laid on the ground, as at Yela island.

The largest house seen is on the Fly estuary. It measures 520 by 30 feet; the smallest are barely large enough to supply sleeping accommodation for two or three people. But in Kiriwina the principal use of the house is usually as a food store. They are of all shapes as of all sizes. Many are built over swamps, some of them over the sea, others in trees, or on the tops of inaccessible rocks. The last four or five families of a persecuted tribe have been seen living in tree houses. In some parts of the interior the houses are round and conical; in the western interior they consist of a platform and a roof with quite open ends. In the Fly estuary they are barn-shaped; in the Gulf they are like a coal scuttle; in the Louisiades they resemble an inverted whale-boat on trestles; and they can be seen in the D'Entrecasteaux group with a roof shaped like a Turkish saddle.

Even primitive peoples, like the Papuans, learn great principles by experience. Once a Fijian was struck by lightning and severely injured. Two or three old men discussing the subject assured me that had it not happened that the man was at the time wading through a deep creek, he would have been killed on the spot. It must have taken them many generations to arrive at this empiric conclusion. It probably took the Papuan longer to find out the general principle that he will have greater immunity from certain illnesses, especially the fever that is so common in his country, if he sleeps off the ground. He does not raise mounds of

earth and stone and build on the top of these, as do so many Pacific Islanders; but he builds on wooden piles, and has the floor of his house five or ten feet from the ground. Generally, the wind can blow through below. The floor lets all rubbish through it, and the building thus remains fairly clean. He can have a fire below to drive away mosquitoes; and in dry country they sit and work or cook there, as in the Louisiades. But most houses have a veranda for sitting in. There are a few places, but they are quite exceptional, where people live on a ground floor, with the sides of the house covered in down to the ground; but there they often sleep on shelves or even in hammocks. In housebuilding they are as far behind the Tongan as they are ahead of the Australian aboriginal. European settlers follow the Papuan example, and build their houses on piles. This is, of course, easily possible in a country that is free from hurricanes. I understand that the latest book on tropical hygiene advises the white settler to cement the floor of his house. The Papuan plan is better.

Our part of the island of New Guinea was made a British colony for reasons of State—briefly, to prevent any aggressive foreign nation from settling on the north side of Torres Straits, the only waterway communicating between the north-east and north-west of Australia. The natives were not consulted, for the reason that they could not have understood the transaction, and because there was hardly one man there that could speak for another. Each Papuan represents himself politically, and it is seldom that he can or will claim to possess any more extended representative position. There is only one important exception to this, of which the following will serve as an example. A native woman from a village on a distant island is married to a man on another island; a man goes from a third island to the residence of the woman, and when a good opportunity presents itself he kills her, because, when he was a child, her tribe killed the head of his family. In cases like this a victim may be, and is, held to be a representative of the tribe. In social combination the Papuans are probably among the most primitive of the races of mankind, reminding us of the Veddahs of Ceylon. There are heads of families with some influence, and such are distinguished individuals; and there are families that receive greater consideration than others; but with the sole exception of the Kiriwina group, there is no such thing as a chief, in the Fijian, Tongan, or Samoan sense, in the whole Possession, so far as it is known. It was customary among Europeans to think that the late Koapena of Aroma, on the south coast, was a great chief; when the pinch came it was found that he possessed no authority whatever. But some years before that, Mr. Bevan found that Koapena's influence was not sufficient to cause his luggage to be transported from the beach to his house in the village. He was friendly to white men, and he exploited cleverly his connection with them; but, though considered the most influential man on the coast, he could not arrest one of his own tribe or compel him to carry a portmanteau. When we took possession of the country the people were in the stone age; they had no metal of any kind. There are, doubtless, a great many tribes in the interior to whom iron is still quite unknown.

The people live in tribes or communities, held together by ties of

blood or affinity, by language or by mutual convenience; but each householder maintains his own personal independence, and recognises no native master.

There is no such thing as a village, tribal, or district council of elders. Plots, plans, and common action are concerted by "asides," by much whispering, and sometimes by a few public speeches from some one that wishes to distinguish himself at the expense of the neighbours of the community. There is, indeed, in a Papuan village no one that could summon a council, or compel attendance at it, or that could venture to enforce its decisions. Public speaking is not a common practice; perhaps, to some extent, because they generally all wish to speak at once, vivacious volubility being a marked characteristic of the race.

The process of welding together individuals into a social unit, with an effective and recognised head, is one of the most laborious tasks of the Government. When chiefs are not born, or when they are not produced by the superior qualities of the individual, it is a difficult task to create them.

The policy of the Government in this respect is opportunist. In some communities it is possible to put a man into the position of chief, the idea being to make his functions more directory than those of the policeman, who is mainly guided by existing law. In others a suitable man is appointed village policeman, and he performs the duties of constable, and often, to some extent, those of chief. The chief has to be taught the idea, quite new and foreign to him, that he is not to favour his own friends, not to be dishonestly selfish, and that he has really some authority over others, and a responsibility in regard to their conduct. The village policeman is often a time-expired man from the armed constabulary, or he is a man that has committed some high offence in the eye of our law, but generally in accordance with native ethics, and has undergone a considerable term of prison discipline and training, which very probably ended in his being for some time a prison warder. But the chief is, as a rule, also prepared to perform police work; for a man that is fit to be a chief is always capable of being a policeman, although the man suitable as a policeman may not be adapted for a chieftainship. It is easier to produce serviceable village policemen than it is to train useful chiefs. The probabilities are that the best village policemen will eventually become the chiefs of their own communities, in virtue of the authority they derive from their official position.

It is now by no means uncommon for a tribe to ask that a man may be appointed as their policeman. They seem generally to select the best person for the post. Of course he sometimes abuses his office. A tribe visited for the first time almost invariably turns out armed for immediate conflict, if the men do not run away. At first it was always supposed that the Government meant war; but, most fortunately, the idea now connected with it is that of peace. The armed constables are luckily imbued with this belief.

We can notice only briefly some of the customs and manners of the natives.

Marriage.—In some instances children are betrothed to each other

at birth, or before it, or soon after it. At certain places a youth cannot marry a girl of his own village, or of a certain part of his own village, or from his mother's tribe; generally, he cannot marry a cousin. But outside these restrictions he has great liberty of choice, so long as he is able to make the customary presents to his future father-in-law. These are very often given in instalments. The marriage ceremony is elaborate in some places; ushered in by the previous tattooing of the girl; by the admission of the youth to manhood; by many feasts; and by the giving and receiving of numerous marriage presents, the donors of which do not forget their gifts, as they expect to be similarly favoured by-and-by. In some places the essential part of the ceremony is in principle the same as the barest binding form of marriage under the law of Scotland; the young man goes to the house of his bride, and, in the presence of witnesses, calls the young woman "my wife," and they are henceforth one flesh. The most important consideration is the property which the bridegroom has to give to the father, brother, or uncle of the bride. In certain tribes the son-in-law owes an almost life-long modified servitude to the father-in-law. In the west the exchange of sisters between two young men is more common. If this latter arrangement does not take place the young lady frequently exercises her own rights, and sends for the man of her heart to come to her; she then usually elopes with him. This privilege of the initiative in marriage is a right that the less comely, western, darker woman exercises on her own account, and which is all but denied to the sprightlier, lighter, eastern girl. Where the marriage knot is easily tied it is also lightly undone. A childless wife may often be sent away; an unfaithful one may be killed or returned to her parents; and when young couples become tired of each other, they separate without more ado. Ante-nuptial chastity is of no consequence; but a girl is in some tribes ashamed to bear a child to a man that will not marry her, and the illegitimate children are therefore sometimes made away with in those districts. Marriage is very often entered into before the parties to it are full-grown. A man may have as many wives as he can pay for or feed; and on the principle that division of labour lightens it, the first wife seldom objects to the husband taking others. Probably another reason for polygamy is that the husband and wife do not cohabit, or should not do so, while the wife has a child at the breast. The attitude of the Government towards this is, that while deprecating polygamy, it has not, so far, passed any law prohibiting it. There is no trouble about marriage settlements, even through the plurality of wives. A wife enjoys the usufruct of her husband's estate if she remains single; but she does not inherit his property. Polyandry is rare, but not quite unknown. In some tribes the women are the chief landowners, and the children of the marriage belong to the mother and not to the father; but this is not common.

Burials are made in the ground in the west, frequently in a garden. The grave is covered all round by a high fence, and the arms and implements of the deceased are put on the grave. In the Fly estuary stone adzes of a peculiar shape, and sometimes of large size, are put about the grave,—a custom probably arising from the general western habit of put-

ting the bow and arrow, cocoanuts, nets, etc., over the deceased. The custom of putting arms and implements on the graves is seen more or less in most districts. All tribes believe in the after-life existence of the spirit; it goes to a heaven of the same nature as its present abode, only it is always a finer country. But, heaven and earth being of the same nature, the departed one requires the same weapons and implements as here. Farther east, the dead used to be buried in their houses, or in front of them, or the corpse was put on a platform on the end of the house until advanced in decomposition; or it was done up in mats and propped up against the wall of the house, or suspended from a peg. In the west, they bury in the recumbent position; in the east, the bodies are generally put in the ground or litter quite flat, and sometimes with a yam on each side of the head. If the body is not buried in the house, a roof of some kind is, among most tribes, put over the grave until the body is decomposed and the spirit finally takes its departure after the celebration of certain feasts. In many cases the bones are deposited in caves, or they are put into a clay litter supported on posts. Where the body is kept for the soft parts to separate from the bones, the corpse is either buried or kept above ground till it falls to pieces; the dust is in some places deposited in the fork or hollow of a tree. The skull of a member of the family is often retained in the house by the relations until, after certain feasts and ceremonies, it can be finally put away in the charnel-house of the tribe or family, which may be in a cave or in the forest. The suppression of house and village burial has been one of the serious tasks of the Government, but it has been dealt with very successfully over a large area.

Food.—In the western part of the Possession the staff of life is sago. On the Upper Bamu, to one that pretended to be very hungry and unable to eat sago, the great tribes could offer no other food. The trees receive a certain amount of attention by cleaning and weeding at some places. They are all private property near to villages. The men cut the tree and assist in bringing it home. The women chop up the trunk, and wash out the sago from the fibre. But the instincts of all Papuans are so decidedly agricultural, that, wherever it is possible, they cultivate bananas, sugar-cane, sweet potatoes, yams, and taro; and all cultivate flowers or ornamental plants. On the coral islands, and on many of the others, and over large districts on the mainland, the natives have no sago, but live entirely on the produce of their gardens. The introduced food-stuffs they most readily adopt are those that require least labour and attention,—the pumpkin, the cucumber, and the papaya. Maize is coming into use, as in Kiriwina and in Mekeo. Rice they like, but the labour of growing it will make it objectionable. In one or two districts the pine-apple is grown with much success. The native bread-fruit is of little account. The natives eat mushrooms, figs, mangoes, honey, ants' eggs, caterpillars, snakes, crocodiles, all fish and birds, dogs, pigs, flying fox, and almost everything that can be eaten, except oysters and trepang, which are seldom or never consumed by them. They seldom eat man. I have never heard of them tasting the flesh of a European. I have never seen human flesh eaten by a Papuan, nor observed any certain indication that they had really feasted on

human flesh. Undoubtedly pieces of it have been tasted, both raw and cooked. To eat human flesh more or less hallows the eater, and makes him or her an object of fear; consequently, one desirous of becoming a dreaded necromancer occasionally digs up and eats a part of a putrid corpse. At other times, to gratify hatred, to show contempt, to gain fame and glory, a part of an enemy may be cooked and nibbled. Cannibalism, in my experience, does not go beyond that. The Papuans are spare eaters; they like, in some districts, to have something before going out in the morning, lest they should be bitten by a snake, which would, they believe, be inevitably fatal on an empty stomach. But the meal of the day is that taken in the evening. The Papuan as an armed constable, however, soon learns to look for three meals a day, at each of which he relishes a pannikin of tea. He has no fermented beverage whatever. He knows of none himself, and he is rigidly prohibited by law from being supplied with any. A few tribes between the Fly and Mai Kussa drink the *Piper methysticum* at feasts, and on any occasion of importance. These seldom or never eat lime or betel-nut. Those articles are, however, used on the Upper Fly, and everywhere east of that. It is all they possess in the way of an excitant or stimulant. The Papuan is almost always of spare habit; obesity is extremely rare.

Disposition.—In disposition they are by no means quarrelsome as between individuals; but the normal condition of the tribes was to be on the offensive or defensive with their neighbours. They ran regular blood accounts against each other; and if the parties happened to be nearly equally balanced in strength, the credit balance would be sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. The favourite method of carrying on war was not in open, ranged battle, but by stealthily waylaying or surprising stray members of the other tribe, more particularly the women and children. Sexual crimes were rare; the practice was to kill, not to violate, women. In these blood accounts they have excellent memories. The duty of carrying out the vendetta is generally left to the nearest relations, but is often exercised by tribesman as against tribesman. The recollection of defeat, of ill-treatment, or injustice lurks long in the dark mind of the Papuan. The natives of the Bamu, who appear to have brought some punishment on themselves, still speak of the visit of Captain Blackwood's tender, the *Prince George*, made some fifty years ago; and it is on that account difficult to communicate with them. On the Fly estuary we failed to establish full confidence where some of those with the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane in the *Ellangowan* were too free with native property. On the Upper Fly we were surprised by a shower of arrows falling amongst us when peacefully engaged in prospecting a shingle-bank for gold. But the natives of that district should not on that account be called treacherous or savage, if we look at all the facts of the case. They were on bad terms with the great Italian explorer D'Albertis, and one day one of his men shot a native, probably in self-defence. D'Albertis, as a careful observer and a truthful man, merits great respect, and therefore implicit belief may be given to his own account of the affair, as related in his book on New Guinea. According to him, he was greatly distressed at the occurrence, and seems to have

exercised his mind in pious meditation over it; but how far he was really serious it would be difficult to say, for he had the victim's head cut off and put it in spirits, believing himself a fore-ordained agent in the transaction; and that head can be seen in a glass jar in the Anthropological Museum at Florence to this day. D'Albertis was a naturalist, and he did not then think that the natives of that district would, in their turn, a few years later, make an attempt on the head of an Administrator of British New Guinea. Who can blame them?

Do not suppose, however, that all our travellers have acted in this way in respect of native property. There is every reason to believe that, for example, Bevan, Forbes, and Cuthbertson never deprived a native of anything whatever. The moral that is to be drawn from the examples mentioned above—many others could be added—is that, generally, where the native is sulky or hostile, there is, unless he has been taken by surprise, some reason for it. They are cheerful and good-natured, and extremely affectionate in their family relations. In most cases they will tell a falsehood with a face as unblushing as a rubber doll, and then one can generally extract the truth afterwards. As a rule they confess frankly their share in any crime, but occasionally they deny it stoutly for a time. The chief of Rigo was imprisoned for theft; he loudly declared his innocence to the magistrate, but freely confessed his offence to the Administrator shortly after. They will, in the natural state, steal almost always when the opportunity offers; but they will promptly and good-naturedly restore the stolen article when discovered and identified, and sometimes give small compensation with it, and at other times ask for some recompense. They can easily be taught not to steal. When a young man is recruited voluntarily for the constabulary, his parents escort him to the boat, the mother with a mat and a few yams and cocoanuts for him; when the boat puts off the old couple burst into tears, and the mother will sometimes hold on to her son as far as she can wade out into the sea alongside the boat; then she returns, sits down and cries till he is out of sight. If a married man joins, his wife will sometimes go along the beach, opposite the boat, wailing; and he may have to jump overboard, swim ashore, and return home. Relations have come long distances to visit prisoners; brothers have begged to be allowed to go with arrested men; and widows sometimes mutilate or drown themselves, or jump from the top of a high cocoanut tree, from grief for their husbands. Family affection is one of the brightest and most lovable traits in the Papuan character. It is even stronger than avarice, which is saying a great deal. To let off a prisoner the Administrator has been offered arms, pigs, ornaments, and even the best wife of the arrested man. Their strong affections are sometimes extended to Europeans; for two officers of the Government, Mr. Lawes, and Mr. Gleeson, they went into sincere mourning in their own impressive fashion. The other day we landed the village policeman of Paiwa at his home, after an absence of six weeks. First the women cried for joy, then the men cried, and finally he cried himself. They are not naturally cruel, but the constant exercise of the vendetta led them to talk so constantly of killing, that it used to be said that a stranger could

soon identify the verb "to kill" in their language, as being the word most frequently recurring in the course of conversation. For the first two or three years after the declaration of sovereignty, the Administrator was constantly receiving threats that he would be killed if he went to visit certain tribes. That is now quite extinct, and messages have been sent by hostile tribes that they would kill all others, but not the Administrator.

They have quick mental receptiveness, which readily lends itself to tuition. The children are good scholars, but school is, as we all knew long ago, a purely artificial and quite an unnatural institution; and the little Papuan accordingly prefers the sea-beach, the river, or the forest, to school-work. All the missions have raised the question of compulsory attendance; but it has not been felt that the psychological moment for legislative interference has arrived yet. The missions have also raised the question of confining within reasonable bounds the time now given to feasting and dancing. This would not be quite a new idea to the Papuan, for at times the drum, the national musical instrument, is sacred, and cannot be beaten.

The young men easily learn to handle a boat, and to work with edged tools; but they are often very conservative in their feelings, and wish sometimes to cling to certain of the ways of their fathers. At first the natives of Amoamo declared they did not wish to sell any land to the Government, because their fathers did not do so. They are fond of justifying themselves by saying it is "the fashion of the country." They have a keen and well-balanced sense of justice. In judicial matters they are often wonderfully "absolute." Once a chief was being interrogated by the Administrator as to the share his people had in an attack on another tribe. A second chief who was present, whispered to him, "Answer that you don't know; you were not there yourself." In the majority of cases they give their moral approval to the arrest of a murderer, but their hearts rebel against it, and they will wail and beat their breasts when he is taken away. The brothers of a notorious murderer have openly expressed the view that justice required that he should be executed; but their affection for him would have prevented their doing so in his presence. At first they sometimes tied up criminals and left them for the officers of the Government to find; but now they generally deliver them over formally. The Papuan's conscience often drives him to the bush until the visit of a Government officer is past. They soon become accustomed to the idea that they can sell their arms, "because the Government will keep them all quiet." In some places they have even gone too far in this direction, and have paid for it when inland tribes, unknown to the Government even by name, have come down upon them and attacked them at a disadvantage. The mental characteristic of the Papuan on which the Government generally acts is fear. The native has profound respect for a force he cannot control. Hence, in all probability, comes his high, mysterious regard for the snake and the crocodile. A chief once said to me, "All men are afraid to fight; there is great fear in the land, but great peace." Another said, "People are afraid to do wrong." In the most complimentary speeches made to the Administrator, it is always said, "All men fear him." This is candid.

With ourselves we put the abstention from what is wrong too often to the credit of virtue, when it is really due to the fear of the magistrate and to the fear of public opinion. Strangely enough, this feeling of fear does not prevent the native from maintaining his own rights against the Government. Recently, a native owner did not wish to sell a small island, and to prevent the Government from taking possession of it, he went and made a garden and built a house on it.

So far, only one Papuan has been executed for the murder of another Papuan; and in that one case the victim was a constable. It is, however, no hereditary custom to kill white men, and those cases in which a European is murdered are accordingly treated with greater severity.

Language.—Since the advent of the Government, it has given a good deal of attention to the languages of the people. So far as they are known, there would appear to be a continuous thread running through the whole structure. It may be said here at once, that we possess no old ruins, no building, or other remains of an older or different race; and we know of no language in the Possession that can be said to belong to a different family. But we are only in the first stage of this study. Some six-and-twenty dialect vocabularies have been printed in the Annual Reports, twenty-two of which have been prepared by Government officers. The most complete study has been that of the Motu tongue by the Rev. G. W. Lawes. The number in print may not represent more than a half, or even a third, of the whole. Look at the two dialects of Aroma and Kiwai, for example; one would not at first sight detect much, if any, point of relationship or contact; still it seems fairly clear that certain root and generic words are common to both; “rubi” or “arubi,” for example, means “tribe” in the Fly estuary; “rupu” has the same meaning among the tribes behind Aroma, and it is found as far east as Tauwara or Milne Bay as “rabi,” and again as “lipu” in the Mekeo range, and as “numu” in the Sogeri district. It is also “rabi” or “ravi” in the Purari delta. In the same way “maura,” the Kiwai word for “village,” is a generic termination in Cloudy Bay, as “mari” in Isimari, etc. The “Dobu” of the D’Entrecasteaux group is found as far west as Dubumabai on the Aird River: while there is a Sogeri in the interior behind Port Moresby, and a Sogeri, an inland tribe on the Gama River. Sisiamia is the name of a great tribe up the Bamu River, and “sisia” means “dog” at Port Moresby.

The languages of the west coast are connected more closely with those of the east by means of the Maipua dialect; for example, the phrase “I don’t know,” is at Maipua “ipa peu,” composed of the eastern “diba,”—“know,” and the western “puái,”—“not.” Clearly the relationship among the eastern languages *inter se*, and the relationship to each other of the western languages, is, in each division, much closer than between the east and the west contrasted. The affinity of the languages in the far interior appears to be with the eastern rather than with the western languages. This seems to be true of the Maneao tribes, of those on Mount Knutsford and Mount Musgrave, of those in the Mekeo range, and perhaps also on the Upper Purari. Some of the dialectic peculiarities are noteworthy. For example, in the Mekeo tongue we

have well-marked the "ng" of Fiji, and the "f" of Samoa and Tonga, while between it and the coast comes in the Roro language. The "ng" crops up again in the Dabu tongue west of the Fly, in far-distant Sudest and in Yela or Rossel Island. Great personal liberties are allowed in selecting the consonants to suit one's taste, but this latitude of choice is not confined always to the consonants; for at Mobiabi, a name which itself could be written correctly in about a dozen different ways, the name of the chief is equally well written "Kasari" or "Kosoni." But our dialects are seen not only to overlap and interlace with each other in this way, but to have strong connections with the Pacific and Maori languages. There is a Matupi in the Bismarck Archipelago, and one inland of Karama in the Gulf of Papua. The Bailala River in the Gulf, which, it should be mentioned, is called by the same name by the inland Hakeko tribe, would, with the change of one letter, be good Fijian for "empty water." Wailabanua, at the mouth of the Upugan, is nearly equally good Polynesian. We find the "Oropai" on the Upper Bamu; "Taburi" in the hills of "Koiari" and "Taborogolo," at an altitude of 3000 feet, not far from Mount Obree in the interior, all well-known Polynesian words. It is curious how frequently the Polynesian word "tabu" is met with in names in New Guinea, but apparently only as an appellation, without specific or intrinsic signification. Many of the dialects sound pleasantly, and the Papuans are endowed with soft, remarkably musical voices, where they are not destroyed by a cross bar in the septum of the nose, large enough to act as a nasal obturator. They are always very willing to talk; and they take themselves considerable interest in dialectic differences, and in the writing down and comparing of these. In an assemblage of fifty or a hundred people, it has sometimes been thought that at least five-sixths were all talking at the same time. They carry their rudeness towards each other in this respect so far, that it becomes a trial of who can speak loudest; the man that can do so usually has the last word. On the north-east coast no language north of Collingwood Bay is known to us yet.

General.—In the east the natives, except at Rossel Island and the north-east coast, generally possess sailing canoes, and they can travel in this way farther than can the Gulf and Fly tribes that have no sailing craft. Only the probability of getting killed by strange tribes restricted the voyages of the eastern man. Now that this is removed, travelling is being greatly and fast extended, and a common tongue is becoming necessary. In the central districts this is Motu; in the east and west the tendency is clearly towards English; and this language, with missionary assistance, would soon become widely diffused on the coast.

The chief native industries are making sago, pottery, making and painting cloth, and baskets of mat-work, by the women; canoe-building, wood-carving, the making of ornaments, of nets for fishing and hunting, by the men. Generally only one of these will be found much developed at one place. The natives in the settled districts spend much time in travelling, hunting, fishing, dancing, and feasting. There are often certain men that, like the *ξένος* of the Greeks, can go from one tribe to another unmolested to visit a particular friend, who receives and entertains them. Like the ancient heralds, these men are seldom molested.

Much has been said about the superstitions of the Papuans. It is not easy to say whether they fear more the Government or a witch. Precisely as among white people, the most ignorant and ugliest creature is the one to whom a knowledge of the supernatural is ascribed. As old Europe held the Finns and Huns to be the necromancers of the day, as the silliest and most benighted old woman in the district is still the witch of the Scotch glen, so the coast Papuan most dreads the incantation of the more ignorant mountain man. The art is inherited, or may be acquired by purchase. It is thoroughly believed in, and is greatly dreaded. Not long ago a young man killed his own mother because he believed that she by witchcraft was making him sick. There, superstition mastered the extremely strong family affection of the Papuan. One of the latest inter-tribal wars arose from the fact that one tribe blamed another for raising the wind to an inconvenient height. But the imprisonment of the sorcerer has much weakened his influence. All fear the spirits of the dead, at least until they are finally sent away with fitting honour and full stomach. The spirit is likened to the wind, but is always provided with teeth and claws.

Social courtesies are somewhat restricted. There seems to be a dearth of friendly greetings. In the central districts the amicable form of salutation is to rub noses. It is wonderful how well this kind of friendly and personal contact relieves the feelings. On the Morehead River they touch the navel as a token of friendship, perhaps to signify that they are as twin or delphic brothers; at Maisina, on the north-east coast, they touch the nose and the navel. On the Fly, on the north-east coast, and on Duau, they have been seen to warmly clasp each other in the arms. But hand-shaking is coming so fast into fashion that men come and offer their hand sometimes at the first visit to a tribe.

A singular way of receiving the strange white man has been noticed among both the darker western people and the lighter eastern folk. At certain places in the west a man was sent out from a village in a small canoe, profusely decorated with shells, feathers, paint, and flowers. When he came near he danced as well as he could in such a position, and gradually approached, dancing now and then, without any music. On the Mambare, on the north-east coast, as soon as they found that we were not warlike, we were generally received by a man who danced vigorously on the river bank until we left them. What this really means is not yet known, but it plainly indicates something peaceful.

The Papuan's ruling passion is avarice. He is too mean to be hospitable, but keen enough to be an excellent trader. His greatest delight is to smoke or eat at the expense of his white visitor, or to sell him something, then steal it and resell it. But they differ greatly. The Toga tribe is separated from the Dabu by a small river; the former are all thieves, the latter will not steal anything. Under tuition and discipline the Papuan soon becomes an honest, truthful, faithful, trustworthy servant. They become much attached to their masters, but every now and then, seized by a desire for home, they will insist on leaving him for a season. They often show wonderful trust and confidence in the white man. Not long ago, two unarmed boys and an

officer of the Government spent the night in a hostile tribe that were bent on murdering the whole party. The two boys never showed the least fear. One of them said next day, that he thought he would be knocked on the head; but that he knew his master would instantly shoot his assailant, and therefore he was not afraid.

ADMINISTRATION.—A sum of £15,000 is annually provided for the current administrative expenses of the Possession. This sum is paid in equal portions by the three colonies of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. In addition to this they pay half the cost of maintenance of the s.s. *Merrie England*, kept for the use of the British New Guinea Government. These colonies are therefore allowed to have much to say to the general direction of the lines of policy by which the government of the colony is directed.

If you look at the map you will see at a glance that Australia is a great land, and in such a position that it is fitted to be permanently a white man's country—that is, a place where white families can be reared and the race can multiply. You will notice that British New Guinea, though it is larger than Great Britain, is so small relatively as to be only a sort of appendix to Australia, and so near to the equator that it is not fit to be conveniently the fixed abode of white women and children. The countries are only a day or two's steaming apart. In these considerations you will find the rational explanation of the fact that the Government of British New Guinea is as closely connected with Australia as with London. Personally, I feel sure that Australia will before long become a federated dominion of the Empire, and that it has before it the future of a great nation, free from the heavy military burdens of the mighty European nations that have the misfortune to be next-door neighbours and to be as suspicious of each other as so many Papuan tribes. It follows that the destiny of British New Guinea is to be a satellite of Australia, and if it is not mismanaged it will be a great and valuable dependency of that commonwealth. The imperative and direct reason for its incorporation into the Empire was to preserve the Australian colonies from immediate foreign neighbours, which could be prevented only in this one way. The three colonies mentioned above are expending their money on it in the hope that they may turn to some good account the country and people we have been considering.

The Government of the Possession is provided with the ordinary power of passing laws to suit its requirements, subject to the sanction of the three Australian colonies and of the Secretary of State in Downing Street. It has courts possessed of all the ordinary jurisdictions; and it has all the requisite departments necessary for an administration on a small scale. In all serious cases an appeal may be made from the courts of the colony to the Supreme Court of Queensland.

There were two main courses open to the Australian colonies. It would have been easy to carry on a selfish policy; to confiscate native lands; to sell them and all waste lands, regardless of the future; to impose burdensome taxation; to obstruct and resist the wishes and plans of the Administration. The voice of the other two colonies is expressed

through Queensland. The Governor of Queensland, who conveys instructions and advice to the Administrator, has to consult his ministers in the first place. The Premier of Queensland thus becomes a potent directing power in respect of British New Guinea. There have been four Premiers of Queensland since the Possession became a Crown colony—Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, Mr. Morehead, Sir Samuel Griffith, and Mr. Nelson. It should be made well known that with each one of these gentlemen the first point for consideration in every New Guinea question has invariably been the interests of the native race. Without the support of the Premiers, without their hearty co-operation, without their sympathy and encouragement, the Administrator would have found himself almost powerless. The unusual, perhaps unique, arrangements for carrying on the government of the new colony have succeeded in practice remarkably well. They have worked smoothly because, so far, the Colonial Office, the three contributing colonies, and the Government of the Possession have all had the same objects in view—to treat the native race fairly and honourably, to give it every opportunity of rising from its position of barbarism to one of some degree of civilisation, and to prepare the country for the enterprise of Europeans. So far as fair and just treatment of the natives is concerned, it may be said that the best means of securing that was adopted in sending an Administrator, with neither soldier nor policeman, to found and institute a government. Such an administration cannot afford to be unjust, as its basis is moral force. This necessitated carefully considered laws, and required that some local native physical force should be organised. Native lands are preserved to natives by law; the people cannot be supplied with arms, ammunition, or intoxicants; they cannot, with a few exceptions, be removed from the colony except to make voyages as hands to Queensland's northern ports in vessels located in New Guinea. A trustworthy and active force of three to four score armed constables has been established, which practically consists of Papuans. It was begun, after the Government had been at work about two years, round a nucleus of a dozen Solomon Islanders, recruited in Fiji under the kind supervision of Sir John Thurston. These men have now become settlers in the colony. Inter-tribal hostilities, formerly all but universal, have been put an end to over great areas. Vendetta-murder, formerly of daily occurrence, has been stamped out in large regions by the constabulary and by the magistrates.

To repress petty crime, like theft, a system of village or tribal police, who are without arms, is being developed; they already number over fourscore. This is a most useful auxiliary to the constabulary, which has greatly extended native planting operations in many places by putting an end to garden pilfering. Several hundred natives, engaged before the magistrates, are regularly in the service of white employers; and many of them work for short terms so near to their homes that such formal engagement is not necessary. Numbers of them are fishing on pearshell boats in Torres Straits, which is permitted if the boats are located in the Possession. One hundred and two fishing boats are licensed from the western station alone. One hundred and sixty-eight men were engaged before the magistrate in the east end last year. Others are getting

sandal-wood, trepang, and copra for the trader, or washing out gold, or fishing pearls. One of the chief ways in which at this moment the Papuan is laying the foundation of future trade and industry is the planting of cocoanuts. Much fraternal advice has been given to him to plant these trees, as providing a certain and perennial income. But as soon as it was felt to be practicable, a law was passed by which gentle and judicious pressure is brought to bear on the native proprietor in the districts near to the different Government stations. The magistrate for the western division reports that two tribes have put in 10,000 cocoanuts; the Government agent in the Rigo district says the natives have planted 60,000 nuts within a day's ride of the station. It is the cultivation best suited for them, as it requires least care and is well known to them, while the cocoanut is indigenous and flourishes everywhere in the Possession, at least up to an altitude of 3000 feet. But, compared to the whole, a mere fraction of the natives are engaged in these industries. We require capital and skilled European labour to be diverted there, to give employment to the native in his own country, and to show him what can be done by knowledge, skill, and perseverance in industries new to him. Now, why should the European go there with his skill and capital? Because he will there find a fairly healthy tropical country, with good and cheap land, with local labour, and with a climate that is free from hurricanes.

The ordinary diseases of Europe, such as measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid fever, whooping-cough, and venereal diseases, are absent. The contagious and deadly forms of tropical dysentery are unknown. The only common, serious disease is the malarial fever of the country, which with care and judicious management is not malignant. It is very uncertain in most aspects: it occurs in what would seem to be healthily situated districts; it is often totally absent in great swampy, low-lying regions, where one would think it should reign supreme. It is not possible to say beforehand whether a given person will be much subject to fever or enjoy an almost total exemption from it. A person may have an attack every few weeks, or only one in a couple of years. Those that are not exposed to the sun, to wet, and to wind seldom suffer much from it. Natives, and even animals, have no immunity from it. In the great majority of cases, if ten grains of quinine and five grains of antifebrin are taken on the first appearance of the uncomfortable feelings that announce the approach of fever, nothing more is heard of it. It does not kill suddenly, so that there is generally time to get away from it if necessary. It is not usually attended with shiverings, and does not often become remittent. Without it we should have no local disease of any consequence. Of course, in such a country, if one has a headache or a touch of dyspepsia, all is put down to fever. In my own opinion, there is no good reason for being afraid of it. When it was less known it was naturally much more formidable than it is now, for the mental microscope always magnifies the unknown. Before long, people will take much less notice of it than they do at present. Prisoners and constables do not die of it. It is not clear that any one in the employment of the Government has succumbed to it alone. But frequent and prolonged attacks of

it would, and do, undoubtedly affect the internal organs deleteriously, and render the whole system more susceptible to other forms of disease, and less able to resist them. Of the other local diseases, such as elephantiasis and leprosy, which are neither common nor severe in type, the European need have no dread. Skin disease is more liable to touch him, but that, in most cases, only means the expenditure of a few pence on sulphur ointment. Once the fear of the unknown has been removed, the colony will, for its latitude, be regarded as a healthy one rather than otherwise. But there is, of course, great danger of deadly diseases being introduced from abroad among the natives, so far quite unused to them. In this respect we can guard ourselves on the south coast, but we cannot prevent our Dutch and German neighbours from introducing disease, as we can neither institute nor control their quarantine.

Now as to the land. There is a certain amount of waste and vacant land of good quality—that is, land that the natives neither require nor use, nor are likely to need at any time. To put natives off their land, to make room even for a grower of sugar-cane, would only be to commence the worst form of racial hostility. That would be political folly, it would be grossly unjust, and it would also be quite illegal in British New Guinea. People have said to me sometimes, “Oh, but surely you are not going to leave all that fine land in the possession of the natives; that would mean that they are to occupy the best part of the country.” Happily the Administrator is powerless in that matter. He has no more power to take from the native proprietor the patrimony of his fathers than he has to dispose of Peter’s Pence. If the natives occupy the best part of the country, it can only be said that in that case they are the owners of the best part of the country. But there are waste and vacant lands of as good quality as the native-occupied land; and the natives are often able and willing to sell other lands belonging to them. The selling and the leasing of land is not a new idea to Papuans, for they sometimes leased and sold to each other. The Government may buy from natives and may sell to settlers lands so acquired, or lands that are waste or vacant. There is more land already available for settlement by the European than there is any likelihood of being taken up for many years to come.

The policy of the colonies is to sell land to *bonâ fide* cultivators, but not to encourage speculation by selling large areas to exploiting syndicates, or to grant concessions that would be immediately sold for what they might bring. Several pressmen have asked me whether it is true that we wish “to lock up the land.” They have been requested to supply the name of any one single man that ever applied for land for *bonâ fide*, actual use, to whom land has been refused. The truth is, that with a not very numerous home population, as great nations go nowadays, we have an enormous tropical estate which presents much to choose from for settlement, so that it is difficult to get the man that means business to go to British New Guinea. But, if he does come, the Government will certainly do its best to find him what he wants. The State cannot afford to survey and lay off lands and offer them for sale. Any person really wishing to grow, say, sugar-cane, tea, coffee, tobacco,

vanilla, cotton, rice, sisal fibre plant, cocoanuts, or any other tropical product, can find land which will suit him, unless he is very difficult to please. The colony possesses nearly every sort of geological formation and nearly every kind of soil; swamp land, alluvial land, hilly land, at elevations from sea-level to an altitude of 13,000 feet. For the cultivator, the minimum price of land under a Crown-grant perpetual title is 2s. 6d. per acre. In this connection it cannot be too forcibly impressed on you that the colony lies just north of the hurricane zones, so that there is no risk of losing one's crop through that ruinous and destructive agency. The sugar-cane, the cocoanut, and apparently some kinds of cotton, appear to be indigenous; tobacco is probably not so, but must have been cultivated for many generations in the country, so that it is practically a native of the colony. Some of the varieties of sugar-cane seem to be very superior, and several that are being tried in Queensland promise good results. Tea and coffee are already growing in the colony on a small scale; and as healthy seeds and plants of the latter, both of the Liberian and Arabian kinds, are now procurable there, it is forbidden to introduce any more, for fear of importing the coffee-leaf disease. Cotton would probably do remarkably well in the dry central district, which has the least rainfall—probably about 50 or 60 inches. The native tobacco has been reported on as of great value, and there is undoubtedly an excellent opening in that industry. So far as safety to person or property is concerned, it may be said without hesitation that the Government is perfectly well able to maintain peace in all the settled districts, or in any place that may be occupied by settlers. The attitude of the natives towards their European neighbours has invariably been friendly. One of the peculiarities of the early settlement of the colony has been the singular absence of all racial conflict.

So far as local labour is concerned, it may be pointed out that a settler may recruit labourers at any place in the colony without any exception. If they are engaged to work at a greater distance from their homes than twenty-five miles, they are engaged before the magistrate. The obtaining of labour is left entirely to the employer, as the Government cannot recruit for him. There is no doubt that considerable numbers of natives would work voluntarily. The Government is very desirous of seeing them provided with industrial employment in their own country, and would certainly put no difficulties in the way of their being legitimately engaged by the settler. For some kinds of enterprise it might be necessary to introduce a nucleus of permanent skilled labour, of Indians or others. There are objections to the introduction of such people into the Australian colonies, where they would compete with the white labourer, and might establish a coloured race in a white man's country; but these considerations do not apply to British New Guinea, which is hardly suitable as a permanent home for the white races; and I see no reason whatever why Indians or any other race should not be used as labourers in the Possession. There is every reason to believe that such people would be healthy in New Guinea, as there is practically only the fever of the country to contend with, and there is no reason to apprehend any serious inconvenience

from that source. There are in the colony now numbers of coloured foreigners, that are well acquainted with it and are generally related by marriage to the natives, who could act as under-overseers, and give much useful assistance in opening plantations. There are also many natives that have been in the constabulary, or in the employment of the Government or of traders and settlers, whose services could be utilised by the planter, especially until the latter gained experience of the country and people for himself. Payments to natives by Europeans have hitherto generally been made in tobacco, hardware, and drapery. On the former there is a duty of 1s. a pound; on the latter, of 10 per cent. *ad valorem*. But there is a decided tendency arising in various places towards regular money payments, which vary from 10s. a month for new hands to two or three times that amount for men that can take charge of boats and trade for a European employer. It should be mentioned that on imported rice there is a duty of 10s. a ton, and that meat and flour are free, and so also are all kinds of machinery and all ordinary building materials. To secure regular connection with the outside world there is a subsidised service, which calls once in two months at convenient places on the mainland, from Samarai in the east end to Daru in the west end. This service touches at Thursday Island and Cooktown. Besides this line, there are numerous irregular means of communicating with Australia. There are good stores for the sale of general articles of merchandise at Port Moresby and Samarai, with small branches at several other places. During the six months of the south-east monsoon the climate is pleasant to one accustomed to the tropics, owing to the fresh south-east breeze that comes sweeping in from the Southern Ocean, often compelling one to use a blanket at night. All things taken together, life there can be made very tolerable, or even agreeable, to a healthy, active, temperate man.

Finally, it may be said that the country would seem to offer a good opening for the man with some capital and a knowledge of tropical agriculture of some kind; but that it presents little field for the ordinary European workman; while it is fully supplied already with the small trader, for buying what the native at present produces.

BEIRA.

By A. CARNEGIE ROSS, H.B.M. Consul at Beira.

THE little settlement of Beira—it can hardly be called a town—is the capital of the territory of Manica and Sofala, administered under charter from the Portuguese Government by the Mozambique Company. This territory extends from the Zambesi on the north to the 22nd degree of south latitude. The western boundary, Mashonaland, runs more or less parallel to the coast.

The northern portion, especially that part which lies south of the upper reaches of the Zambesi, has long been fairly well known, and