

THE CATASTROPHE IN NEW GUINEA.

By "THE VAGABOND."

It is an extraordinary coincidence that a few hours after my article in Saturday's Argus was published, in which I refer to Captain Everill and the Australian Geographical Society's New Guinea expedition, the account of the reported massacre of the whole party should reach me on the racecourse. It spoilt my day's enjoyment. Sadly I thought of my voyage in the Alexandria and the interchange of ideas on Papua and travel geneially with Dr. Bernays, Dr. Haecke, and the gallant leader. Henry Charles Everill was a man instinctively liked. He was a native of Worcester, and a thorough Englishman in disposition. He was 38 years old, but barely looked his ago owing; to his light completion and blue eyes he was tall and athletic, and looked "fit" in every respect. A master mariner, he had obtained the highest certificates by examination from the English authorities. He had commanded merchant ships with honour, and was for a short time a captain in the Siamese navy. Leaving the service of the Lord of White Elephants, he had travelled extensively in Malaysia, and had been a planter in Sumatra until a year or two ago he settled in Sidney as a coach in navigation mid the lecturer on the same subject under the Jcclnucal College in connexion with the behool of vrt-theie He was chosen as lender pf the expedition out of more than 100 applicants lor the post. It will be rcracm beretl that at the conrcrence of the Geographical Society held in Melbourne last year, I had recommended that my friend the Rev. James Chalmers should be secured as leader of the proposed expedition but unfortunately) for Captain Everill. "Tamate" refused the offer made to him.

We left Brisbane on the Alexandra on the 17th of June. On the 19th we anchored in Keppel Bay. During the two days we were companions de voyage. I studied Captain Everill. I had foregone my passage on one of Messrs. Howard Smith's boats, sailing from Brisbane the night before for this purpose. Not only from his scientific attainments, but in every other respect, he was the right man for his place--a man who never touched alcohol, inured to tropical climates, and used to command, quiet and firm, methodical, too, like all sailors. A man quick in ob-taining and sifting information, what little I know of Papua, Captain Everill got from me. We had many an argument as to the desirability of the employment of Malays as against Kanakas in New Guinea. He having been used to working Malays, was prejudiced in their favour I contended that they were not only physically weak, but also cowardly, not to be depended upon in any emergency. For purposes of New Guinea exploration I would prefer Tanna boys, or those from the Loyalty Islands. Forty of Mr. Jones's followers from Mare well armed, would, should occasion arise, clean out any number of

Papuans, and they could always be trusted and depended upon. We amicably disputed this point. Before I left the Alexandra Captain Everill gave me his photograph "If you're killed, old fellow, well put it in 'The Sketcher,'" said I, jokingly. As a souvenir I gave him my silver match box, which I had carried all round the world. "Give my regards to any friends in Melbourne," said Dr. Bernays, as I waved my hand from the deck of the tender. Captain Everill, with a sailor's agility, swung over the ship's side, and gave me a last hand shake. Then the little Dolphin steamed up the Fitzroy, and the Alexandra northwards--to ramble around Queensland, and return safely to friends in Melbourne, they to Thursday Island, Papua, and death! "One shall be taken and the other left." May they all rest in peace.

If they are all massacred, as reported, shall we ever know the truth of the cause? I suggested on Saturday that there might be a danger of complications with the natives if the scientific members of the expedition endeavoured to act closely up to their instructions in obtaining skulls and skeletons. The natives of New Guinea who adorn their temples with the fleshless heads of their ancestors are very jealous of any interference with such. These are tabu sacred. On one occasion a foreign naturalist travelling in the mission steamer Ellangowan, was nearly the cause of the whole crew being massacred through his attempt at skull stealing. The savants attached to the expedition, each anxious to make a name for himself, may have strayed away from the main party--may have offended against some tabu, with dire results. The massacre may have commenced in detail. If the natives once found that any white man proved an easy victim, their awe of the superiority of our race, if they had any, would vanish.

The massacre must have been sudden and treacherous. A party which possessed half a dozen rifles, including three Winchester repeaters, 12 double-barrelled shot guns, and 12 revolvers and carried 12,500 cartridges, ought to have given a good account of itself. But the question arises if these savants would be handy with the revolver and rifle, and if a rush of numbers, like that of the Zulus at Isandula, would not soon overpower them. Given such a rush, and the Malays would prove arrant cowards. If they had been Mare or Tanna boys in such case, armed as I would have them armed, each man with a Snider, the result would have been different. From the instructions given by the society, which I know the captain intended faithfully carrying out, I can see a possibility of the natives becoming bold and insolent, till, losing all fear, they made a sudden deadly attack.

"Avoid all complications and hostilities with the natives" was dinned into Captain Everill's ear. In the long run the better advice might be, "Shoot the first man dead who is insolent. Strike terror into the souls of the natives. Make the

white face respected but if you do fire, stick to your post, do not run away. Retreat will mean ruin to those who come after you."

The expedition laboured under considerable disadvantages in that sailing up the Fly River, although it followed the track of Signor D'Albertis, in his voyage in the little steamer Neva in 1875, 1876, and 1877, new ground was opened as far as much knowledge of the native races was concerned. The missionaries who have been settled at healthy Port Moresby and the south-east cape found the people of the districts of the Maiva, Motu and Kira-puno on the coast, and the inland Koiari and Koitapu comparatively friendly Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers, Mr. Andrew Goldie, the party of Queensland diggers who prospected along the Laloki in 1878, and Captain Armit at the head of The Argus expedition, in 1883, had no trouble with the natives whom they treated well Mr. Forbes, who has made Port Moresby his base, is reaping the result of the favourable knowledge of Europeans acquired by the inland Papuan. But on the banks of the Fly River it is far different. Since 1844, when Captain Blackwood, in H. M. S. Fly, surveyed the Papuan Gulf, and discovered the river named after his vessel, nothing was known until 1875 of this stream. In December of that year the mission steamer Ellangowan, with the Rev. Samuel Macfarlane and Signor D'Al-

bertis on board, and the English and Italian flags floating together, ascended for some distance. But at the very outset of the voyage they were stopped by a fleet of canoes ranged in line of battle in front and on each flank. The Italian naturalist, one of the best shots I have seen in the world, opened the passage for the missionary boat. Aiming at the prow of the nearest canoe, he put two heavy rifle bullets through it at the waterline, which scared the crew, and some gunshots fired overhead completed the rout of the fleet. But several times after this hostile demonstration was made, and on the return voyage an endeavour was made to surround and cut off the vessel. A dynamite cartridge thrown in the water dispersed the fleet, and left the road clear.

When Signor D'Albertis the second time ascended the Fly in 1876, and again in 1877, on both occasions in the Neva, he was several times attacked. In one night battle the intrepid Italian records that he fired 120 shots, whilst "a hailstorm of arrows" flew ground the boat. "The Neva was struck

by 45 arrows, 17 in one square foot. An arrow went through the metal plating, making a hole in it like a pistol shot, and pene-

trating the planks, which were an inch and a quarter thick. One of the Chinese crew of the Neva was wounded on this occasion. In spite of the fleet which

Signor D'Alberlis' shots must have had, he was again and again attacked on his upward and return voyage. He writes "it is not wise to let hostile canoes approach within bowshot, and it is necessary to prevent the natives drawing nigh to avoid bloodshed on both sides. Since Signor D'Albeitis as-cended the Fly River for 300 miles absolutely nothing has been heard of it and its people. I believe Mr. Ingham, afterwards murdered by the natives at Booker Island, was there in 1878, and at the larger island of. Kiwai at the month some native teachers have been

settled, but the missionaries tlumselfs have made no nttempt to explore the stream or use it as a means of penetrating into the heart of' the dark island." Mr. Chalmers himself has never been there. It is, in fact, generally as unknown as if no white man's keel had ploughed its waters. The Aird, to the east, I have heard, may only be one of the mouths of the Fly. The Maikasa or Baxter River, which Mr. Orkney, of St Kilda, with others, explored in 1875, is by some held to be another mouth of the Fly.

This Maikasa stream has been the scene of troubles between the natives and white men,

in which the hitter retreated.

Captain Everiill then had many interesting geographical problems to solve on this river, in following the main channel and the course of its tributaries. But he had to venture amongst a bold daring race of people far different to these further east. D'Albertis says:-- "The people of the Fly are more barbarous and savage than any others inhabiting this great island." Captain Everill was without interpreters, or means of making himself understood, and so a collision might easily ensue. These savages, whose trade is war, who delight in bloodshed, who time after time attacked the Neva, defended by the best shot and firmest nerve in Italy, would easily in a rush wipe out our party.

The moral to me is obvious. Future exploring expeditions must be conducted on a different principle Mr. Chalmers said to me, "I object to a large party. Two or three men are enough. More freighen the natives,

and make them hostile." This is all right in the comparatively peaceful south east. A might follow in the steps of Mungo Park and Livingstone there, and come out as I hope Mr. Forbes will come

out. But even Mr. Chalmers has not tried this in the valley of the Fly. Certainly it is outside his cure of souls. But anyhow I do not think it would be sucesstul.

This river I imagine to be the great highway to the best lands and centres of the largest population in New Guinea. Entrance thereto must be forced, even as D'Albertis forced it, as Stanley forced his way across Africa. There must be a party large enough to overawe the natives. And first the blood of our fellow colonists cries out to us for atonement. The flag of England has been raised over British New Guinea for other purposes than to make it a close borough for three missionaries, a few converts, and some thousands of savages. The latter must be taught that we are great and powerful, and that the person of a white man is sacred. When they have acquired this lesson they will also learn that we are just and merciful, and that they too will receive the protection we give to our own race. Sir Peter Scatchell and the admiral on the Australian station can, as they choose, divide the honours of inculcating his useful lesson to our Papuan fellow subjects of the English Crown.

HISTORY OF THE EXPEDITION.

The exploration of New Guinea was naturally one of the first objects which engaged the attention of the Geographical Society of Australasia, which is still in its infancy. During 1883 and 1884 the subject was frequently mooted, but it was not till towards the close of last year, when public attention was so strongly directed to the island, that the scheme assumed definitive shape. In January of the present year the administrative council of the society appointed a committee which was afterwards called the Exploratory Committee, which was entrusted with the work of organising the proposed expedition. This committee numbered eight members, viz.:--Dr. T. B. Belgrave, Lieut. E. R. Connor, R.N., Captain H. C. Everill, Mr. Lawrence Hargrave, Mr. John F. Mann, Mr. E. Marin La Meslee, hon. secretary, Mr. C. S. Wilkinson, Government geologist, and Mr. Harrie Wood, J. P., under secretary for Mines. The President of the Administrative Council, Sir Edward Strickland, K.C.B., Mr. F. Gerard, treasurer, and Mr. J. H. Maiden, hon. secretary were also members ex officio. Mr. Hargrave had considerable personal knowledge of New Guinea, having accompanied D'Albertis in his expedition up the Fly River in 1876; and Mr. Munn is a well-known explorer, having been Dr. Leichhardt's second in command.

The Rev. W. G. Lawes was in Sydney at the time, and his great experience, of New Guinea proved of great assistance to the committee, to which he was afterwards added. Captain Everill resigned his position as a member of the committee after the ninth meeting, he having then become an active candidate for the position of leader of the expedition.

The question as to what part of New Guinea should be explored was one which required the gravest consideration. The expedition of this year was at first intended to be merely preliminary to more important operations next year, and at a meeting of the committee on February 9 it was resolved to restrict the operations to exploring the Aird or some other river on the south coast. However, more ambitious projects were soon brought forward and it was proposed to explore the rivers in the south of the island, and also some portion of the interior. The proposals were discussed with the Melbourne branch by letter but the progress in this way was too slow, and it was therefore suggested that a telegraphic conference should take place between the councils of the two branches. The telegraph authorities in both Melbourne and Sydney gave their consent to the free use of a wire between the two capitals, and on the evening of March 11 the council of the Victorian branch assembled at the Central telegraph office, Melbourne, and were put in communication with the council of the New South Wales branch at the General Post-office, Sydney. Some members of the council of the Victorian branch (of which Baron von Mueller is the president) were in favour of a land expedition direct from the coast, where it approaches nearest to the high lands. It was urged that the exploration of the Owen Stanley Range so far as it has been already traced, would afford ample work for perhaps a couple of years, independently of the researches now being made by Mr. H. O. Forbes. Port Moresby could then be made a base of operations, and the work of exploration could be pushed steadily westwards and inland, as the party became more familiar with the country, and the real attitude of the natives was better understood. The great cost of a river expedition was also urged as an argument against the suggestions made that the expedition should at once proceed up the Fly River, and strike into the heart of the country, and into a region where, 10 years ago, Signor d'Albertis had to fight for his life and where only a few months ago another party of explorers had just as narrow an escape. The Sydney council urged that it was desirable to at once make a bold effort to get to the centre of New Guinea not only because of the greater probable results but because of the necessity for securing substantial public sympathy in the society's work and the proposal of the exploratory Committee was submitted which was for an expedition up the Aird River, thence inland and that the inland exploration start from the first high land met with up the river, shown on the map as Aird hill.

The mouth of the Aird River is about two degrees above that of the Fly, and it would therefore be a much more advantageous starting place for an expedition whose primary object was to reach the great mountain range which forms the centre of the island. The proposal was considered in Melbourne for about two hours, during which time the telegraph wire was frequently used to ask and

answer questions on many matters of detail. Ultimately the message went from Melbourne, "We fall in with your wishes regarding Aird River Expedition."

No time was lost in selecting and equipping a party of explorers to carry out the resolution of the society. The council had already received promises of pecuniary assistance from several of the colonial governments. New South Wales gave £2,000 Victoria £1,000, and Queensland £1,000 so that a sum of £4,000 was available for the exploration of New Guinea. The selection of a leader required a good deal of deliberation. The Rev. W. G. Lawes was not strong enough to undertake the task. The Rev. J. Chalmers, who had for many years been engaged in mission work in the south-east part of New Guinea, was admirably suited for the post, but could not accept it.

Early in April applications for the position were publicly solicited, and out of a number of candidates, Captain H. C. Everill was finally chosen to take command of the expedition. For the secondary appointments the committee had nearly 200 applications from which to make choice, but it was resolved that no volunteers should be taken, but that salaries should be paid in every case so as to constitute every one employed on the expedition a servant of the Society. The salaries allotted to the principal members of the party were as follow, per month:--Leader, £ 40, zoologist, £35 , surgeon, £30, sub-leader on board, £15 , sub leader on land, £15, assistant zoologist, £15 , general collector, £15 , photographer £15, botanist £15.

In the course of the instructions with which Captain Everill was supplied, the president wrote:--"Very strict rules should be laid down with reference to the use of firearms, and in preparing these rules one cardinal point must always be held clearly in view, i.e., it must be insisted upon that a native must never be fired upon except the life of a member of the party is in danger. Every one belonging to the expedition should be made to feel the necessity of adopting the spirit of this rule, and putting it in practice himself and enforcing its practice upon others, one shot fired with a fatal result would make me feel very despondent as to the success of the expedition, certainly it would immensely increase the difficulties of exploring. No precaution, therefore, should be omitted to avoid any such untoward event.

The plan of operations was clearly defined as follows:--"The council having decided to make if possible, the Aird River the basis of operations of the expedition, requests the leader to proceed thither from Thursday Island. The leader shall proceed up the Aird River until he finds a convenient land-nig place near to a hill marked on the Admiralty chart as Aird-hill. After leaving a party in charge of the steamer sufficient for its safety and protection, the leader

shall proceed with the rest of the party, including the scientific staff, to Aird-hill, and if it be found that that hill forms part of a spur from the main dividing range in the interior of New Guinea he will follow up that spur as closely as he can to that range. In the event of Aird-hill not forming, part of a spur from the main range, the leader should ascend the first spur that he meets with on the same side of the river and follow it up to that range. The leader will make arrangements for keeping open a communication in his rear to the steamer as a depot so that he may be enabled to make his movements known, transmit from time to time the scientific objects collected, and receive any stores required. In the event of the route by the Aird River proving impracticable, the leader will choose the first available estuary to the eastward thereof and from the depot there formed will proceed with his land expedition on a similar basis to that laid down in the case of the Aird-namely, to ascend the first available high land mid work thence to the main dividing range, to attain and explore to the furthest possible limit of that range within the boundary of the

British possession being the principal object of the expedition. On the completion of the exploration of the main dividing range as previously proposed, the expedition shall return to Thursday Island for the purpose of delivering under seal, into safe keeping of the Government Resident there, all specimens and records in their possession. And should time allow of further exploration of New Guinea, the leader, after consultation with the members of the expedition, shall decide upon the course to be adopted."

The steam launch Bonito, 77 tons register, was chartered from the A.S.N Company for six months to convey the party from Thursday Island to New Guinea. The expedition left Sydney on June 10, and Brisbane on the 17th, arriving, at Cooktown on the 23rd, and at Thursday Island on the 25th of the same month. The ascent of the Aird River, as resolved upon by the society, had been found impracticable in consequence of the danger in crossing the Gulf of Papua from Thursday Island during the season when the south-east monsoons prevail, and Captain Everill ultimately resolved to enter the Fly River, and proceed up that stream until the last important branch from the north-eastward was met with. Neboo Island, at the mouth of the Fly River, was reached on the 17th July, and the expedition was there joined by Mr. J. Douglas the Government Resident at Thursday Island, and by the Rev. Mr. M'Farlane, of Murray Island, by whom the party were accompanied for about 30 miles up the river. Here Mr. M'Farlane endeavoured to obtain interpreters for the expedition but without success, and at the village of Kewai the two visitors left Captain Everill and his companions to continue their perilous journey into the "great lone land" of this quarter of the globe

THE PERSONNEL OF THE PARTY.

The following particulars regarding the members of the expedition are gleaned from the special record of the proceedings of the Geographical Society, and from other sources:--

Henry Charles Everill, the leader of the expedition, was 38 years of age, and had an extensive maritime experience,

having been at onetime commander of an East Indiaman. His certificates as master were of the highest class given. He had travelled a great deal, was for three years a tobacco planter in Sumatra, had practical knowledge of exploration in tropical swamps and jungles, and was able to speak the Malay language fluently. He therefore possessed many qualifications for the important position to which he was appointed.

Dr. J. W. Haacke, the chief scientist of the expedition, was 30 years of age. He filled the posts of first assistant at the Zoological Institute of the University of Jena, and first assistant at the Zoological Institute of the University of Kiel, both in Germany. In New Zealand, he worked for Professor Parker at the Otago Museum, Dunedin, and for Dr. Haast, at the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. Dr. Haacke was for some time in charge of the South Australian Museum. He succeeded to the position of curator there on the resignation of Mr. F. Waterhouse in 1852, having previously been engaged in connexion with museums in New Zealand. He remained in his office for a little over two years, but then, owing to a certain disagreement with the board of governors, he was allowed leave of absence on full pay, at the end of which he sent in his resignation. His management of the museum was not an entire success, although he undoubtedly did much towards remodelling the institution when installed in its new buildings, Adelaide, last year. He had gained considerable renown for his studies.

Prior to his appointment as naturalist to the expedition, Dr. Haack had expressed his intention of proceeding to Ceylon and thence to Borneo or Sumatra, where he purposed earning on his investigations. He was married while in South Australia to the daughter of a well-known German resident there.

Sidney A. Bernays, M.D., the surgeon of the expedition, was for some time in practice in Melbourne. His father is professor of chemistry at St. George's Hospital, London, and he was himself looked upon as a competent medical man. He was moreover, a scientist of no mean ability. Botany was his specialty,

and the botanical department of the expedition had been put under his care Dr. Benays was 32 years of age, and unmarried.

Godfrey Hemsworth aged 28 of Brisbane, filled the post of nautical sub-leader, and in the event of death or serious illness of the leader he would take his position, except that he would not lead the party on land. He held a masters certificate, had been navigating officer of some of the finest steamers afloat was a member of the Meteorological Society of London, and was considered qualified to undertake any kind of marine surveying.

R. Gethin Creagh, aged 38, of the Manning River, who filled the post of sub-leader on land, was considered a most competent man for the work of exploration. He was six feet three inches high, with a strong constitution, having, it is said, never known serious personal ill-health, he had had many years' experience of exploring, and in taking up and stocking new country in Queensland, South Australia, and New Zealand. He had had great experience of the aborigines was a good shot with rifle and fowling piece, and knew bush life in all its phases. In the event of the leader's death or illness, he would have taken his position on land.

James H. Shaw, age 27, of Sydney was a most enthusiastic explorer. He was 18 months in New Guinea with the expedition of Mr. Andrew Goldie, and spent a further six months with another party, of which, unfortunately he was the sole survivor. He had great experience of river navigation having sailed between three and four thousand miles in a Rob Roy canoe on Australian rivers. He was able to turn his hand to almost anything either ashore or afloat. The special duties assigned to him were those of a photographer and general assistant to the leader.

Walter W. Froggatt, of Sandhurst, Victoria, filled the post of special zoological collector and assistant to Dr. Haacke. His father is a well known mining investor in Sandhurst. Froggatt was an amateur entomologist and had a good practical, though not scientific knowledge of botany. He was 27 years of age and unmarried.

Wilhelm Bauerlen, aged 40 of Sydney, was the special botanical collector. He had been employed in this capacity by Baron von Mueller, on whose recommendation he was engaged for this expedition. Bauerlen was a native of Wurtemberg and unmarried.

A Hastings W. Senior, aged 28, of Lismore, N.S.W., was a licensed surveyor, employed in the department of surveyor general, and had been some years at

sea. His application was not received till late--owing to his absence inland--and it was declined at the time the main positions being filled. However, the very week the expedition left room was found for him as a supernumary at a trilling salary, the surveyor general kindly consenting to this abrupt suspension of his work.

There was no doubt that Mr. Senior was an acquisition to the expedition and his anxiety to do his utmost to promote its success was attested by the fact that he had taken with him scientific instruments and other articles of his own to the value of nearly £100.

Arthur J. Vogan, age 26, of New Zealand, was allowed to join the expedition at the very last moment. He had many useful accomplishment--was an artist, understood photography, taxidermy building huts and every species of bush work. He not only offered to go as a volunteer but tendered a subscription of £25 to the exploration fund. The subscription was declined but Mr. Vogan was appointed a supernumerary at a nominal salary. Mr. Vogan had provided himself with a first class personal equipment.

William M'Geehan, aged 22 the engineer of the steam launch, specially selected by Captain Everill, had already proved himself a good man. In the bad weather that over-took the Bonito while on the way to Brisbane he kept to his work almost without a rest for three days and nights.

In addition to the above another scientist Mr. Kendall Broadbent, accompanied the expedition as far as Thursday Island, but while there he was attacked by sciatica, and was compelled to return to Sydney. Mr. Broadbent's specialities would have been ornithology and taxidermy. Luckily the expedition was considered strong enough in that direction even without his assistance.

FIRST DESPATCHES FROM THE EXPEDITION.

To give an interesting resume of the information that has reached us regarding the doings of the expedition since its departure from Thursday Island, we cannot do better in the first place than to quote from an interesting paper on New Guinea explorations read tit the last meeting of the Victorian branch of the Geographical Society by Mr. A. C. Macdonald, F.R.G.S. He said:--

"As the Gulf of Papua was prohibited the expedition decided to ascend the Fly River and following the first branch of the stream leading in a N.N.E. direction endeavour thus to gain the interior of New Guinea. Some difficulty was experienced in getting a proper outfit the cartridges provided--filled entirely

with buck and swan allot-being useless for obtaining specimens to be preserved. Amongst the stores taken were large quantities of tobacco ("missionary's twist"), which, according to Captain Everill, is the current coin of the islands met on the route to New Guinea. Of the red beads that have proved so attractive to the black brother in every quarter of the globe there was also a considerable stock. Provisions were found to be very dear at Thursday Island. A sheep that according to Captain Everill, "would make a good masthead light without reflectors," costs 30s.

On the way to Mangrove Island the steamer got inside one of the "horns" of the Warrior reef, which has been imperfectly surveyed In this position it was thought rather an extraordinary thing to find pearl boats at work on either side of the steamer, which was got clear of the reef without even a bump. The party failed completely in their attempt to obtain the services of interpreters to accompany the expedition. Inducements were offered to the natives of Brampton Island, Kewai and Sumaat, but none of them liked leaving home. The landing at Kewai was attended with some little risk as Mr. M'Farlane had not been in communication with the people of that place since his teachers were attacked by them. Kewai is a large village or rather consists of two villages separated by a stream over which the natives live built a couple of bridges. The landing place. Kewai Island Point, is unapproachable owing to its extensive mud flats, and the party had to wade from the boats through nearly a mile of shallow water to reach the shore. The natives were entirely made. One of the head men of the village was, to his satisfaction dressed in a serge suit and presented with tobacco. His

"heart was also rejoiced" by the present of a new cricket belt. The leaders of the party were less satisfied with their diplomacy when on Mr. M'Farlane's arrival they learned that the chief on whom their presents had been lavished was the promoter of the disturbance with the teachers. On the occasion of an unsuccessful pig hunt the old rascal had casually remarked that it was a waste of time to hunt pigs when they had such fat porkers living next door. The mission-house, it may be mentioned, adjoins the chiefs residence. The chief averred that he

cherished the teachers, and had fought on their account--probably Captain Everill thinks, when dividing the spoil.

On the island the members of the expedition went through the sago plantations and

saw some magnificent palms, tobacco was found growing in the sandy soil close to the sea, and considering the situation, it seemed to flourish fairly well, although the leaves were small. Amongst the curiosities of the island were some graves, described as resembling Malay pheasant traps. The only signs of wild life were a few eagles and pigeons but the tracks of wild pigs were numerous. A sand bar stretches across the Fly River some 14 miles above Kewai running from an island on the port side to a bank on the starboard side. In the channel three fathoms of water were found and the lead was a sufficient guide in going through. The natives of Summt on seeing the expedition approaching the village, waved a white cloth by way of welcome, and to proclaim their amicable intentions. A quantity of coal and other stores were left at this island the natives cheerfully assisting in landing them. The chief's house at the village is a building some 300 ft. in length standing on piles about 6ft high and in it about 100 natives live. No stone implements were seen and the party could not even obtain spears the only weapons in possession of the natives being the bow and arrow. In the chief's house the leader of the party saw a number of skulls which were said to be those of Kewai men killed in battle. A few of these were purchased but the natives (general!) did not seem anxious to part with the trophies of war.

THE NEWS OF THE EXPEDITION

The information received respecting the operations of the party during the last few weeks has been very meagre amounting simply to the news that the expedition had proceeded for some distance beyond Kewai.

About a month ago a rumour reached the society that two natives who had deserted the expedition had declared that at some point above Kewai the natives had assembled on both banks of the river, and assumed a threatening attitude.

The local branch of the Geographical Society has received no information concerning the reported disaster and the president Baron von Mueller expresses strong doubt as to the correctness of the information received. He points out that the report is of the vaguest and most uncircumstantial character and suggests that it may be a revival of the rumour which was circulated some weeks ago as to the perilous position of the party. Regarding this report Sir Edward Strickland president of the society writing to Baron von Mueller underdate Oct 16 said:--

"We here are entirely of opinion with Mr. Douglas that no credit is to be given to the vague, senseless reports brought in by two savages who have deserted the party. Heaven knows from what real motives. . . .

As they brought no letters from the explorers we have a reason to suppose that their departure was a secret amongst them and unknown to the explorers. From such men under such circumstances we are not likely to gain any truth at present. We must only wait until time reveals the true state of the case . . .

Meanwhile I see no cause for alarm." Messrs. Douglas and M'Farlane have previously signified their intention of proceeding up the

Fly to meet the expedition during the

present month, and it is from this source that the earliest reliable information is to be expected. Under ordinary circumstances full intelligence will not reach us until some time next month. The charter and insurance of the Bonito expire on the 8th December, so that if all is well Captain Everill should be back in Sydney before that date.

According to the information at present available, it would appear that Captain Everill undertook the journey up the Fly River entirely on his own responsibility. That such a step was never contemplated when the expedition left Sydney is fully evident from the extracts from the instructions already quoted. The fact, however, that the party were accompanied for some distance by two gentlemen so thoroughly versed in a knowledge of the country as were Messrs. Douglas and M'Farlane, seems to show that the step was not taken without due deliberation, and possibly a full knowledge of its perilous character.

Mr. J. W. Lindt, photographer, who accompanied Sir Peter Scratchley in his recent cruise along the southern coast of New Guinea in the s.s. Governor Blackall, had ample opportunity for studying the habits of the natives in the south-east portion of the Island, and he found the natives most peace-able and friendly. He made many excursions for several miles into the interior, and, though armed, he had never the least occasion to place himself in an attitude of defence. At one place (Kalo), where not many years ago ten native teachers and their wives were murdered, Mr. Lindt and his companions felt as safe as though they were in Melbourne. This altered state of things is ascribed mainly to the work of the Revs. Lawes and W. Chalmers who have established mission stations for hundreds of miles along the south coast of the eastern portion of the island, with Port Moreby as their head-quarters. With regard to the natives

of the Fly River, the case is very different. They have the character of being the most treacherous of cannibals, and their total ignorance of the real designs of an exploring steamer, which in itself would be an object of apprehension to many of them, might lead them to many desperate acts. The declaration of a British protectorate and the impressive ceremony

which accompanied it may have exerted an influence over the tribes living near the coast but it is not likely to be of much assistance to Captain Everell in his present position

MR. H. O. FORBES' EXPEDITION

Mr. H. O. Forbes, F.R.G.S., who is well known in scientific circles in London and who has had some experience of exploration in the neighbourhood of New Guinea undertook last year to explore the great Owen Stanley range of mountains lying at the rear of Port Moresby. The undertaking was entirely a private one so far as arrangements and responsibilities were concerned but Mr. Forbes had grants of £500 or £600 in all from the Royal Geographical Society and one or more other English Societies. This, however, left him considerably short of the amount he would have to expend and was subsidised by a further grant of £500 from the Geographical Society of Australasia. Mr. Forbes did not leave London before April last, and arrived at Port Moresby in September. His party consists of three Europeans and 24 Malays, four of the latter being hunters from Amboyna (Java). His Europeans include Mr. Hennessy, surveyor, and Mr. Anderson collector. Mr. Forbes was escorted inland for about 40 miles by the chief of the Koiarl tribe and stopped at the village of Sogeri, where he intends to remain during the wet season. Sogeri is about 40 minutes from Port Moresby and about 2,000 or 3,000ft. above the level of the sea. Immediately the fine weather returns Mr. Forbes will commence the ascent of the Owen Stanley range, which reaches a height of 14,000ft, or about the same as Mount Blanc. No difficulty of any kind is anticipated from the natives and the party will be in constant communication with their base of operations at Port Moresby. The principal object of solicitude in connexion with the expedition is the health of Mr. Forbes himself, who is not so well fortified against the dangers of the climate as might be wished. THE CATASTROPHE IN NEW GUINEA. (1885, November 9). *The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957)*, p. 6. Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6072168>