

European Efforts to Colonize New Guinea

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THURSDAY ISLAND, Torres Strait, July 16.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Some of the most interesting colonial experiments of the day are taking place in New Guinea, the great island which lies on the other side of the strait, in which this letter is dated. The island has been divided up among the British, the Dutch and the Germans and each nation is now establishing its settlements upon it and sending out exploring expeditions to investigate its material and scientific resources. Within the past year the North German Lloyd Steamship company has been making New Guinea one of its regular ports of call. A big syndicate, called the German-New Guinea company, has been formed to develop that part of the island and plantations of cotton, tobacco and rubber are being set out. The company has already three steamers and a number of sailing vessels engaged in its trade and it is endeavoring to build up a little Germany away down here in the South Pacific ocean. The Dutch are governing their territory through the sultan and the native chiefs just as they rule the rest of the Dutch East Indies and the British are managing their property on the same lines that they observe in their colonies the world over.

World's Biggest Island.

Before I describe what is being done in British New Guinea I want to tell you something about the whole island. I have learned much concerning it at the capitals of the Australian states and here at the Thursday Island, where there are many New Guinea natives. More especially, however, I am indebted for my information to Rev. H. M. Dauncey, a missionary of the Church of England, who has lived for ten years in New Guinea and who long before this letter is published will be back at his home in the British part of the island. I have been traveling for several weeks with Mr. Dauncey and it is through him that I have secured photographs of New Guinea and its people.

New Guinea is by far the largest island of the globe. It exceeds Borneo by over 16,000 square miles and it is bigger than any country of Europe except Russia. It would make ten states the size of New York and more than thirty-seven as big as Massachusetts. From one end of it to the other it is as long as from Boston to Omaha and at places is as wide as from Boston to Washington.

Look at it as it lies upon the map. It is just north of Australia and right under the equator, extending or ten degrees south of it. Its shape is that of a gigantic bird squatting on Torres strait and the Arafura sea, with its island-feathered tail spread out on the Southern Pacific ocean and its ragged head looking toward the Philippines and Asia.

What an enormous country and how little known! It is wilder than Africa and less explored than any part of South America. Only the smallest part of it has ever been trodden by white men. It has savages of whom we know nothing and plants and animals which are just beginning to be pictured in the scientific journals.

It is a land of high mountains and low unimpressive plains. The tallest peaks between the Himalayas and the Andes are to be found in it. There are mountains in Dutch New Guinea supposed to be over 17,000 feet high. They are covered with snow all the year around and have never been climbed. The height of the Bismarck mountains in the German possessions is estimated at 16,000 feet and in British New Guinea the Owen Stanley range has several peaks of over 13,000 feet. Each colony has one great river, the British having the

Fly, which might be called the Mississippi of the country.

British New Guinea.

Today I write especially of British New Guinea. This is the southeastern portion of the country. The Dutch own the most land. They have the eastern half of the island, including the head and upper part of the body of the squatting bird. The northern section of the remainder belongs to the Germans, the southern, including the tail, to the British.

The British possessions are altogether about three times as large as the state of Indiana and they now have just about as many people as Cincinnati, of whom only 250 are Europeans. The colony consists of missionaries, planters, gold miners, a storekeeper or two and government officials. The seat of government is at the little town of Port Moresby, on the southern coast, just back of an excellent harbor. Here there is a government house, the store of Burns, Philip & Co., a church and about 150 native houses. The church is also used as a school room and is attended by 100 native children on week days.

The government uses native policemen and it has a force of 124 native constables, by whom order is kept.

Will Be a Valuable Colony.

Men who are posted tell me that New Guinea will eventually be a valuable possession. The government is very careful in leasing or selling the lands. Only a short time ago it refused to sell 25,000 acres to the British New Guinea syndicate at 50 cents per acre, notwithstanding the syndicate offered to develop the property. It is now having numerous applications for tracts of 50,000 acres and upward and among others Mr. Burns of Burns, Philip & Co. has offered to invest \$500,000 if he can have 100,000 acres of land for his company. No land is being leased or sold without the proviso that it be developed and without continued development the title does not pass. The government is setting out coconut groves and rubber plantations and there is no doubt that the colony will eventually be self-supporting. At present its expenditures are about \$77,000 a year and its revenues about \$38,000. The revenues are derived entirely from customs duties and the smallness of both expenditures and revenues shows that the colony is still in its infancy.

Gold Mines of New Guinea.

There is no doubt but that there is gold in New Guinea, but the mountainous parts of the country have not been touched nor prospected and the quartz possibilities are unknown. The most of the mining, so far, has been on some of the islands about the coast and especially on Sudest island in the Louisiade archipelago at the tail of the bird, where considerable placer mining is done. Some gold has been found on Woodlark island and quartz deposits exist along the Fly river.

There is considerable pearl fishing about the coast and also sponge fishing. A recent industry is the cultivation of sponges and another, which is quite profitable, is the gathering of trepang or *teche de mer*.

American Tobacco as Money.

Rev. Mr. Dauncey tells me that American tobacco is imported by New Guinea and that it forms the chief currency of the natives. The tobacco is made up in sticks as long as a lead pencil and as big around as your little finger. It is evidently well soaked with licorice or glucose or some other such mixture for it is as black as jet. Such tobacco is accepted in payment for goods at the store in Port Moresby and four sticks of it are the average pay for a day's work. Among the natives themselves tobacco is the most common currency. So many sticks will buy a hatchet or a knife, a set of pottery dishes



NEW GUINEA CLUB HOUSE—THEY ARE OF IMMENSE SIZE AND WOMEN DARE NOT ENTER THEM.

a fishnet or a necklace. The government buys its land of the natives, where it is owned by certain families, by giving them hatchets, handkerchiefs and one-half pound of tobacco for a fixed amount of land, occasionally throwing a shirt and a knife in as an extra.

Natives of New Guinea.

The natives of New Guinea are of their own kind. They are of the Papuan race, which is different from the Malays, from the aborigines of Australia and from the many other races of the Pacific. The Papuans are of many varieties. They are generally of a copper color and they range from that to almost black. Mr. Dauncey found the smallest of the natives in the eastern end of the island and he tells me they increase in size as you go south and west, and at the same time grow darker in color and more boisterous in disposition. They have woolly hair, but not like that of the negro. Their hair stands out from the head. It is often threaded through bamboo tubes or pipes, cut of which it sticks in great tassels. It has a springy nature, so that if you put your hand down on it it will be thrown up, much like when you strike a hair mattress.

Both Women and Men Tattoo.

In the far east the men tattoo their faces and bodies in a hideous fashion. The women also tattoo, especially the upper parts of their bodies. In some places this tattooing is the only dress. In others the women wear petticoats of long leaves, frequently placing one layer upon another, in bunches. These leaf skirts extend from the waist almost to the knees and in connection with a necklace of shells or beads form the entire clothing. Sometimes the skirts are made of the fiber of bark.

The tattooing of the women often covers the whole body and among some tribes this tattooing forms the coming-out suit of the maidens. The getting of such a suit is exceedingly painful, but Mr. Dauncey says that the girls are anxious to be in the fashion and gladly submit to it. The girl to be tattooed lies down on the ground, when the ink is pricked under her skin in

the various patterns. Thorns are used for the pricking, and the thorn, dipped into the ink, is driven under the skin with a little mallet. Such dressmaking is slow, but a suit once made lasts a lifetime.

Married Women Are All Bald.

In some parts of the island it is possible to tell whether a woman is single or married by her hair, or rather the lack of it. The married women are all bald-headed and the sensible man does not attempt to flirt with a bald so female. A maiden

missionary Dauncey tells me, in which the men lace themselves in with rope in order to reduce the size of their waists and stomachs. They bind bark belts from two to ten inches wide tightly about the body, compressing themselves so that the full-grown men acquire waists as small as the most tightly laced of our women. It is said that the chief reason for this custom is that the men wish to persuade the women that they have small stomachs and are therefore small eaters. In New Guinea the women are the chief providers and the young woman who is looking about for a husband is supposed to prize highest the man who will be most easily fed. A boy, on being asked why he laced himself so tightly, said:

"I shall have to get a wife some day and if I have a big stomach no one will have me."

For this reason men seldom eat to the presence of women and they prefer their meals in their club houses. The New Guinea natives do not believe in much fat. It is a disgrace to be fleshy and the men dread extra adipose tissue as much as do our society women. Indeed, the anti-fat quacks could do a thriving business in New Guinea.

As to food, the people are chiefly vegetarians. They live on yams, bananas and sweet potatoes. They are not particular, however, and when they can get them will eat kangaroo, pigs, dogs, snakes and lizards. They are fond of grubs or larvae and the women die these out of the trees and cook them.

New Guinea Club Houses.

In many of the New Guinea tribes the men and women live apart. The men have club houses in which they sleep and eat. The women live in huts off by themselves, a number of wives often being in one hut. They cook their husbands' food in their huts or on the ground outside and bring it to the club house, laying it on the veranda and calling to their husbands to come and eat. Mr. Dauncey says that it would be death to a woman to enter one



PAPUAN GIRLS GO IN FOR TATTOOING.



PROFILE OF A PAPUAN DANDY.

wears her natural wool until the wedding, but after that shaves off every bit of it close to the scalp and keeps it so shaved for the rest of her life. The first shaving and, indeed, all shaving of this kind, is a serious matter. Until the foreigners came the razors were sharp flints, but now the natives use broken glass and there is a steady demand for soda and beer bottles to break up for shaving utensils.

There are many New Guinea tribes, so

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