

Restoring Peace in Samoa

Judge Osborn Gives The Bee His Account of the Day After the Battle

APIA, Samoa, Sept. 22.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—My last to The Bee, written on May 28 and published on July 14, gave some incidents and some experiences and closed with daylight on the morning of January 3, 1899. Early that morning, as I stood at our gate, a most gruesome and pitiful sight was presented. Two beheaded Mataafa soldiers were carried past, being taken to a proper place for interment, each headless body suspended beneath a pole by straps of bark, each end of the pole resting upon the shoulder of a comrade of the deceased, and in each case the mother of the slaughtered man was marching just behind the corpse, meaning most pitifully.

Really, it was a sickening sight, and I could not but ask myself, What is this all for, anyway? Is this all to gratify the white man's desire for gain, for notoriety and for official promotion? and to save me I could not answer nay.

That day passed with much anxiety and with many disagreeable duties. The looting—which I referred to in my last—continued, and, in addition to taking everything that was movable, a few houses of certain chiefs who had been guilty of "offensive partisanship" were burned or otherwise destroyed.

At 11 o'clock a meeting of the representatives of the treaty powers, together with the naval commanders, was held to consider "the state of the union," but more especially to arrange with the successful party for the safe surrender or delivery to the Mataafa forces of the 900 Malletoaans, then refugees, and floating about the British Porpoise, whither they had gone for protection. When these negotiations were nearly completed, and about 1 o'clock, the most terrific wind and rain storm that I have seen in Samoa set in. The waters of the bay were lashed into a perfect fury and presented a thrilling, if not a beautiful, picture. The British Porpoise and the German Falke, then riding at anchor in the harbor, rolled and tumbled, and at times seemed almost to turn summersaults, and I momentarily expected to see a parting of the cables, or a dragging of anchors, that one or both might drift upon the reef, and that in a small way there might be a repetition of the disaster of 1889. True, both had steam up, but when I remembered the fate of the Trenton, the Vandalla, the Nipsic, the Adler, the Olga, the Eber and the Calliope, I felt by no means certain that those then in the harbor could reach the open sea, should they attempt it.

In this storm the 900 Malletoaan refugees, in their boats about the Porpoise, presented a spectacle which one does not care to witness every day. Their boats were held by ropes to the Porpoise, but were tossed hither and thither and crashed against one another and some were capsized; one moment a large boat filled to its capacity would seem to leap into the air from the crest of a wave and then disappear from sight for so long a time that it seemed certain that boat and men had gone to the bottom. While this condition of things was on, against wind and water, I managed to reach a certain consulate. I called attention to the awful plight of nearly 1,000 human beings; to the fact that they must soon perish if not rescued; also to the fact that a great ship of war, subject to the orders of the consul, was within thirty rods, but offering no assistance, and suggested that every instinct of humanity demanded that something be done at once to save these people. It has since been stated that I used such vigorous English that if printed it would not be approved as Sunday school literature. I then took a position on the wharf at Matafele to watch the course of events. I soon saw a dispatch being signalled to the Falke, and within about an hour all of the men were on board of the two ships. The rain soon ceased and the waves partially subsided.

During this time negotiations for the surrender of these Malletoa people were concluded and by midnight all who had fled to the Porpoise the night before were delivered to the Mataafa party at Mulinuu, with assurances that no physical punishment would be inflicted, which was the best that could be done at that moment. On the night when the Malletoa forces took to their boats and to shelter under the Porpoise for some reason nearly all of their high chiefs remained on shore in the building of the London mission. These were the men most wanted by the victorious party.

During the day I heard enough to convince me that an effort would be made dur-

ing the night to capture those chiefs. During the evening, and as soon as possible, I went to the mission house and found all of these men huddled into a small room, protected only by the guard from the Porpoise. I knew that they could be rushed by thousands of men at any time. I told them that there might be trouble before morning and urged upon the officer in charge the necessity of sending these people on board at the earliest moment possible. This was done about midnight and done so quietly that scarcely anyone was aware of the fact. I then went to our consulate, where I remained alone for the balance of the night, my family being absent under British protection and servants and all the people of our village gone. At daybreak on January 3 many natives were about our premises. They knew that many fine mats and other valuable properties of the defeated party were stowed away under our building, in fact they knew more about it than we did, as much had been quietly secreted under our consulate during the last few nights without our knowledge or consent. If he desires to the Samoan can do things very quietly. Of course, under the rules of Samoan warfare, all of these properties belonged to the victorious party, and perhaps this rule is not entirely peculiar to the Samoans. By some these people have been called heathens, yet with our gates open, badly as they wanted the goods, they had that respect for the flag and for the place that not one entered or attempted to disturb them, though they could have removed all without opposition. Early on the morning of that day I received word that there was trouble in Apia and that I must report at once.

As I passed I called at the British consulate and found the consul with the commander of the Porpoise, both very much excited, especially the latter. He stated that he had arrived in Apia just in time to prevent an attack upon the London mission and that such attack was liable to be made at any time. I thought that he was unduly excited and insisted that no attack would be made, when it was known that the chiefs had been removed and sent on board.

I then went to Apia and found matters reasonably quiet, with no prospect of immediate trouble. A meeting of the representatives and other officials was at once held and after deliberation a committee was sent to confer with the Mataafa chiefs to settle upon what could be done with the young King Tanu and the High Chief Tamasese, both of whom had refused to be surrendered or to go on shore except under strong guaranty that they should not be punished or humiliated. Being humiliated is the worst punishment that can be inflicted upon a high chief. The British naval officer positively refused to send these men ashore, except with their voluntary consent and with a full knowledge of the situation. As there was much feeling against these chiefs it took many weeks to settle upon satisfactory terms.

During the forenoon of that day the chief justice and family abandoned the mission house and took refuge on the Porpoise. I did not then believe that there was any necessity for such action, nor have I since been convinced of that fact, as I am confident that they would not have been molested, and in fact I do not believe that any white person would have been, unless he was the aggressor. About noon I received a note from the chief justice, then on board of the Porpoise, stating that the entire record of proceedings in the kingship case and trial had been left at his residence at Motootua and demanding that I procure the same at once. No hackman or drayman could be induced to drive out in that direction at that time. However, I found a horse and cart to let and in less than two hours the record was safely on board of the Porpoise. Soon after I received another note from the chief justice stating that everything had been left in the house and that his family very much needed a change of clothing and that I must relieve their necessities. Not a soul could be induced to drive out on the Vaillima road that evening and the matter had to be deferred till the next morning, when I procured a dray and, mounted by the side of the driver, went to Motootua and as soon as I could ransack the house from bottom to top brought away about every frill and ruffle and tuck and all the plateware that belonged to the fam-



ONE OF THE NATIVE BEAUTIES OF SAMOA.

ily. I was confident from the first that there would be no interference by the natives and there was none.

When these goods were brought to the United States consulate about 150 of the Mataafa forces who were marching by halted and desired to know whose goods they were and further wanted to know why they were being removed and being brought here. I thought then that perhaps I was inviting trouble, but thought I must take all chances.

I was soon again called to Apia and Matafele. The evening was well spent when I returned, and when I reached the consulate I found upon the veranda a large number of armed Mataafans. For an instant I scarcely knew whether to regard them as enemies or friends, but at once decided to regard them as friends, and advanced boldly, shook hands with them and gave them a hearty talofa, but to myself I said, "Well, now I am surely in the hands of the enemy; my wife and son are absent under British protection, and I am the only white person left in Vaiala." I thought it would not do to let them know that I distrusted them, and I threw open the whole place and turned on all the lights. I then went out to mingle with them and soon learned that they had been sent by the Mataafa chiefs to guard myself and family and the consulate and properties of the United States.

I realized that the situation was somewhat peculiar; that a state of war existed; that I was alone and ostensibly under the guard and protection of the enemy, which enemy I had been told were cruel and heartless savages, but which I did not believe. I thought, however, it would not do to show any white feathers, and, after taking them water, sat down at my table and went to work. There was considerable work during those days.

I have never been accused of being overburdened with an excess of piety, but when about 11 o'clock these men stacked their guns and all knelt and joined in prayer I am quite confident that I felt better, and

said to myself, while I am absolutely in the hands of these people they will do me no harm. At midnight I quit work, and simply closed the safes, leaving all doors and windows open, and retired, and, being just a little wearied, slept soundly till daylight. At 6 o'clock the guard departed. Had I attempted to lock myself in and shown that I was an enemy, or distrusted them, I might not have fared so well.

This guard was continued for several nights and I remained with them alone, but those persons and officials who wanted war, and desired that it should be believed that Mataafa and his followers were wicked savages, objected so strongly to this consulate being under the protection of a Mataafa guard that I finally went to Mulinuu and asked him that the guard be discontinued.

On the morning of January 4 conditions were unchanged. Probably at least 6,000 Mataafa warriors, armed with all sorts of weapons, were in Apia and upon the streets, and their victory having in no way been recognized, were becoming very noisy and somewhat unruly and there was none to oppose them. At 9 o'clock I went to Mulinuu and urged upon the Mataafa people that further depredations cease, and they promised to do all that they could in that behalf. At noon a meeting of the president and consular representatives and naval officers was held to see what could be done to better conditions and insure the safety of person and property. All knew that Apia and all of the people were in the hands of the victorious party and that they could dispose of all the foreigners and their property in short order should they elect so to do. Houses of the Malletoa people were being dismantled and parts thereof were being carried through streets to Mulinuu, and it was evident that something must be done and done quickly.

During the kingship trial the court had appointed thirteen high chiefs to represent

the interests of each contestant, and, of course, at this time, the thirteen Malletoa chiefs were prisoners of war at Mulinuu and the other thirteen Mataafa chiefs were triumphant at Mulinuu and still representing the cause of their chief. The president represented that the thirteen Mataafa chiefs had expressed a desire that there be no further trouble, that they desired peace and had promised that if they could be in some way recognized so as to give them some authority they would at once send most of the people home and do all that they could to restore tranquility, pending a decision by the treaty powers as to the validity of the judicial decision in the kingship controversy, and that should the decision be upheld by the powers they would abide thereby.

A document was presented which seemingly had been substantially agreed upon by the German and British consuls and naval commanders, which in substance provided that the president might go to Mulinuu and confer with the chiefs and co-operate with them in stopping further depredations and restoring peace, pending a review by the treaty powers. This seemed to be the only thing practicable or safe under existing circumstances.

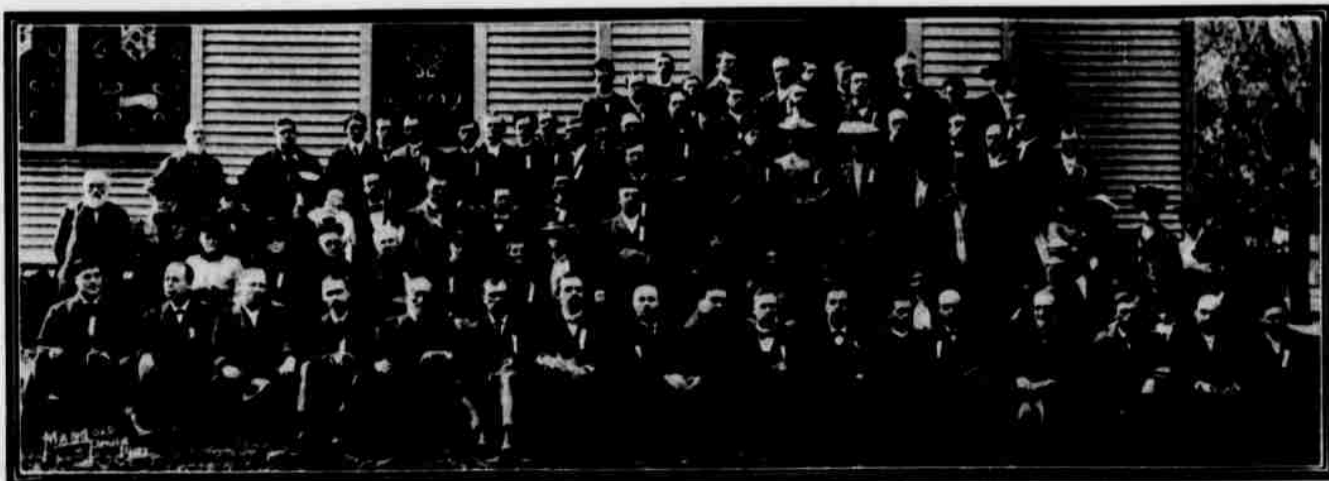
To this, after much discussion, I caused to be added a provision that nothing contained in the agreement should be so construed as to in any manner annul or modify the provisions of the Berlin treaty or affect or abridge the duties or prerogatives of any officer existing thereunder. This provision seemed to meet with considerable opposition, the reason for which I could not understand at that time. This agreement was signed and the meeting adjourned, and that was all there was of the provisional government, about which so many false and foolish things were written.

That evening there were many startling rumors on the beach of Apia, but just before 10 o'clock I returned to this consulate. I soon received a note from the British consul stating that all were about to abandon the consulate and go aboard the Porpoise, and demanding that I also go. I answered, "a charge to keep I have," here is the consulate general, with records of fifty years, and I will stay by them. And I did, all alone, as the other members of the family went on board from the British consulate. Under the protection of the guard from the enemy I slept well for the balance of the night. I saw no occasion for alarm and have not been able to discover any up to this time. I had begun to suspect that there was just a little of the drama about the whole business.

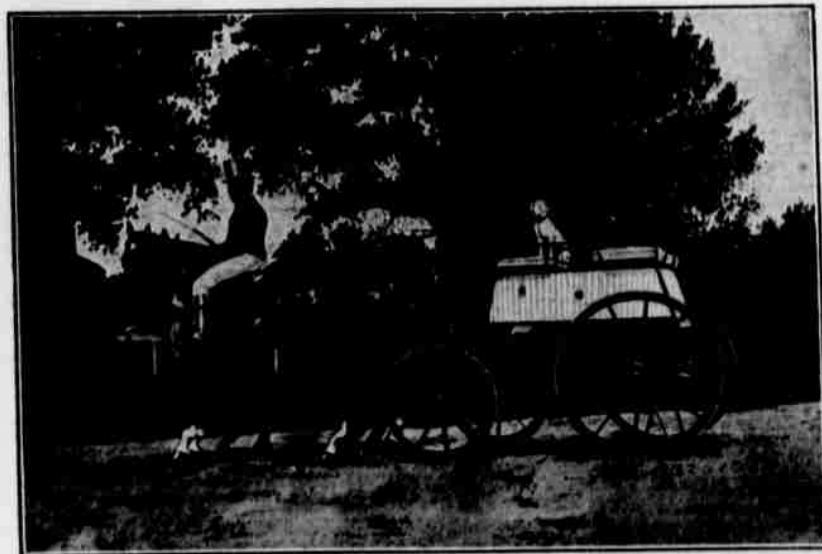
The early morning of January 5 was perfectly lovely, and, about this consulate general, all was quiet. At 8 o'clock the British consul, with a lieutenant, called and stated that they had decided that they would not surrender young Tanu or Tamasese, though they had been demanded by the Mataafa people. They also stated that they had about decided to abandon the British consulate and transfer the consular flag to the Porpoise and asked that I do the same, and stated that we would place our flags side by side on the Porpoise. I thanked them very kindly for the many courtesies that had been shown to myself and family, but frankly stated that I had too many properties in charge to abandon without reasonable cause, and that I did not feel that the necessity for such action had arisen. I further told them that I had no fears that either consulate would be molested and that taking such action would be conceding too much.

At 11 o'clock the secretary of the British consul came and stated that they were withdrawing the guard from the London mission and from the consulate, that all were going on the Porpoise and that he had been sent to again ask me to join them and transfer my flag on board. I told him that while I fully appreciated the kindness I saw no necessity for such action; that while the red, white and black continued to peacefully float over the German consulate general at Matafele, across the bay, the red, white and blue would be seen waving over the United States consulate general at Vaiala, and that until it came down I would be found upon the premises, doing business at the old stand. Upon receipt of this information the determination to abandon seems to have been changed and the guards were not withdrawn or the flag transferred.

L. W. OSBORN.



DELEGATES TO THE BAPTIST CONVENTION WHICH MET RECENTLY AT BLAIR, Neb.—Photo by Mangold.



NEW POSITION BREAK.