

**JAMES CHALMERS  
OF  
NEW GUINEA**

**Missionary  
Pioneer  
Martyr**

**Cuthbert Lennox**

**JAMES CHALMERS  
OF NEW GUINEA**

**MISSIONARY**

**PIONEER**

**MARTYR**

**BY**

**CUTHBERT LENNOX**



*[www.victorybaptistpress.com](http://www.victorybaptistpress.com)*

**JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA**  
**Missionary, Pioneer, Martyr**

by Cuthbert Lennox

Second Edition published in 1902

Copyright 2015 by Victory Baptist Press

Current edition published in 2015 by  
Victory Baptist Press  
Milton, Florida — USA





# CONTENTS

Preface .....	7
1. Beginnings .....	11
2. Outward Bound .....	19
3. The South Seas Mission in 1867 and Before .....	25
4. At Rarotonga .....	31
5. At Rarotonga (continued) .....	39
6. New Guinea in 1877 and Before .....	49
7. At South Cape .....	55
8. Exploring from South Cape .....	61
9. Pioneering: Ten Weeks in the Interior .....	69
10. Exploring in the Gulf of Papua .....	79
11. Pioneering in 1880 .....	85
12. The Dawn .....	93
13. Errands of Justice and Mercy .....	103
14. Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883 .....	111
15. Placing Teachers .....	121
16. A Protectorate Proclaimed .....	131
17. With the Special New Guinea Commission .....	139
18. Tamate in England and Scotland .....	147
19. Motumotu .....	155
20. Torres Straits and Rarotonga .....	163
21. With Robert Louis Stevenson .....	169
22. Toward the Fly River .....	175
23. At Saguane .....	185
24. The Angel of Death .....	193



## PREFACE

NOT once, but a dozen times, the writer has been asked—Who was Chalmers of New Guinea? It would seem that, notwithstanding the numerous occasions on which this great man was enthusiastically received at public gatherings during his visits to Great Britain, in 1884–85 and again in 1896–97, there is a very considerable proportion of the British people to whom he is yet unknown.

Moffat and Livingstone, Mackay of Uganda, and Paton of the New Hebrides are universally recognized as pioneer missionaries of the 19th century; and, without attempt at the invidious task of deciding their comparative merits and their individual rights of precedence, we claim a place for James Chalmers in this group of missionary heroes.

When we try to account for the prevailing ignorance in regards to one of the most interesting personalities conceivable, one of the biggest men of the last century, we believe we find some excuse for it in the extreme modesty of the man himself. Chalmers cared nothing for fame, and only visited this country in 1884, after an absence of 20 years, from a compelling sense of the need for more men to exploit and occupy the field, which he had surveyed alone.

The present sketch is designed to furnish the reading public with some idea of the splendid achievements and attractive personality of this remarkable man. There is every reason for supposing that the name and work and personality of “Tamate” are better known to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia; but even from them, as well as from his many friends and admirers in the home-land, a particular and consecutive narrative of his life-story may receive a welcome, if it serves to fill up lacuna in the information they already possess.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

For the somewhat scanty details of the boyhood and student days of Chalmers, the writer would acknowledge help received from a slender biographical sketch written a good many years ago by the late William Robson, and published by Messrs. Partridge, and from an article in the *Sunday at Home*, from the pen of the Rev. Richard Lovett, to whom has been entrusted the preparation of the forthcoming official life of Chalmers.

The earliest record of Tamate's work in New Guinea took the form of extracts from his journals and reports, published in the London Missionary Society's *Chronicle*, and of articles from his pen, contributed to various periodicals and newspapers. In 1885, he placed many of his journals and papers at the disposal of the Religious Tract Society, "in the hope that their publication may increase the general store of knowledge about New Guinea, and may also give true ideas about the natives, the kind of Christian work that is being done in their midst, and the progress in it that is being made."

In that year, the Society published *Work and Adventure in New Guinea*, a compilation in which ample use was made of the journals from which the above-mentioned extracts had been taken (with the addition of several chapters from the pen of Dr. W. Wyatt Gill); and in 1887, the same publishers issued a similar compilation under the title of *Pioneering in New Guinea*.

In the preparation of his narrative of Tamate's earlier years in New Guinea, the writer has sought to unravel "the bewildering record," as Dr. George Robson has called it, contained in the two volumes just mentioned, obtaining from them the main facts of the period from 1878 to 1885. For the rest, he has derived much help from the *Chronicle* of the London Missionary Society, the *Proceedings* of the Royal Geographical Society, and numerous other biographical aids.

Acknowledgment should also be made of assistance received from an article contributed by Mr. G. Seymour Fort to the *Empire Review*, and from an appreciation of Tamate by Dr. H. Bellyse Baildon, which appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser*.

To furnish an intelligible background for the portrait which it is sought to outline, and to indicate the local conditions—missionary and otherwise—when Chalmers entered upon his labors on Rarotonga and, later, in New Guinea, it has been deemed desirable to include in the following pages two short chapters of general description and missionary history.

Within the limits of the present volume, it has only been possible to indicate the main facts and splendid purpose of Tamate's life. The writer has learned with great satisfaction that his hero has left much valuable biographical material in the hands of his representatives, and he believes that the following pages will but whet the appetite of the reader for perusal of the official Autobiography and Letters.

In his verses "In memoriam" of Chalmers, Mr. John Oxenham expresses the confidence that

"His name,  
Shall kindle many a heart to equal flame;  
The fire he kindled shall burn on and on,  
Till all the darkness of the lands be gone,  
And all the kingdoms of the earth be won,  
And one."

The writer will rejoice if this little volume, like a torch, renders humble service in helping to pass on the kindling flame to "many a heart."

CUTHBERT LENNOX  
EDINBURGH, 18th March 1902



## CHAPTER 1

### Beginnings

The story of the early years of the life of James Chalmers is quickly told. He was born at Ardrishaig, Argyllshire, in 1841, and as an infant, or very small boy, resided successively at Lochgilphead, at Tarbert on Loch Fyne, again at Ardrishaig, and finally at Glenaray, within a mile or two of Inveraray, the county town of Argyllshire.

The boy's parents were of humble circumstances, and it is probable that his pedigree could not be traced; but it would be a mistake to overlook the fact that the blood of two very distinct racial stocks ran in his veins. His father was an Aberdonian; and the Aberdonian Scot is heir to the hardy Norseman who traversed the trackless wastes of the North Sea in days gone by, and, finding a kindlier clime on the east coast of Scotland, took forcible possession, founding there a race of navigators and traders, daring in their intercourse with nature, shrewd in their dealings with men. On the other hand, the boy's mother was a Celt, and inherited from her Highland ancestors the warm-hearted temperament, the fertile imagination, the fine eyes, striking features, and fiery energy and grace, which she transmitted to her son.

The Scottish parish school has played no inconspicuous part in the equipment of Scotland's sons for the prominent place they have taken in the work of the world, and Mr. McArthur, the schoolmaster of Glenaray, was as successful as any of his class in turning out boys who were to make a name and position for themselves in the ends of the earth. Latin and mathematics were prominent in the curriculum, and upon this strong mental fare, young Chalmers laid the foundations of his education. Although his tastes and instincts were more bent toward the life of action than that of

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

study, as a diligent scholar, he gave satisfaction to his teacher, and even took a place in the annual prize lists.

But perhaps it was in the frolic and adventure of the hours when he was beyond the dominion's jurisdiction that James Chalmers gave promise of the talents that were to win him an honorable position among the world's heroes. He led in all the school sports, and no deed of mischief or daring ever daunted him. As originator and leader of a Robin Hood band, he carried through a variety of boyish exploits adventure. Twice he was taken home to all appearances drowned. Four times before he left his native shores, he rescued others from drowning. "The wind and the sea were his playmates; he was as much at home in water as on land; fishing, sailing, climbing over rocks, and wandering among the hills—he spent a healthy and happy boyhood, all unconsciously fitting himself for the arduous and adventurous life to which he was being called."

Chalmers has given us one instance of boyish escapade: "I was a great favorite with many of the fishermen, and was often allowed to spend some time on board of their boats . . . Four of us thought we could build a boat for ourselves, and even attempted it, but soon took to the caulking and tarring of a herring-box, which we finished quickly, and, as I was captain, I must have the first sail. We got a long line, and I, sitting in the herring-box, was dragged along the beach until the line broke, and I was carried out to sea. There was a difficulty in saving me, because of the strong current."

The lad's parents would seem to have been God-fearing people, and at a suitable age, he was encouraged to become a scholar in the Sunday school conducted in connection with the United Presbyterian congregation at Inveraray. One Sunday, when he was about 15 years of age, the school was addressed by the minister, the Rev. Gilbert Meikle, on the interesting topic of mission work accomplished in the Fiji Islands. Mr. Meikle, in closing, said, "I wonder if there is any lad here who will yet become a missionary. Is there one who will go to the heathen and to savages and tell them of God and His love?" The boy registered an inward resolve to consecrate his life to this object, and, on his way home, went behind a wall, knelt down, and

## Beginnings

vowed to serve Christ. Although this resolution was never forgotten, his heart shortly became disaffected toward the claims of Jesus Christ.

By this time, Chalmers had entered the employment of a local solicitor as clerk, but his restless spirit rebelled against the drudgery of routine, which is the lot of the office boy, and at the age of 16 he, with two other lads, made arrangements for running away to sea. At the last moment, however, the thought of his mother's certain distress deterred him from taking this rash step. He remained at his desk, but his religious aspirations continued to ebb, and he gave up observance of the forms of Christian worship.

Two years later, the great revival of 1859–60 stirred the whole of Scotland, and the movement penetrated to Inveraray, then one of the most remote towns in the country. In November 1859, two evangelists from the north of Ireland visited this neighborhood for the purpose of holding a series of meetings. Chalmers has put it upon record that he, in collusion with several other young fellows, decided to do all in his power to interfere with the meetings, and prevent what were called “conversions.” He was constrained, however, by the urgent appeal of a friend, to attend one of the first meetings.

“It was raining hard, but I started; and on arriving at the bottom of the stairs, . . . they were singing ‘All people that on earth do dwell’ to Old Hundred, and I thought I had never heard such singing before—so solemn, yet so joyful. I ascended the steps and entered. There was a large congregation, and all intensely in earnest. The younger of the evangelists was the first to speak, and he gave as his text Rev. 22:17, and spoke directly to me. I felt it much, but at the close hurried away back to town, returned the Bible to MacNicoll, but was too upset to speak much to him.”

On the following Sunday night, he was “pierced through and through, and felt lost beyond all hope of salvation.” But on Monday, his old friend and pastor, Mr. Meikie, came to his aid, leading him to kindly promises, and to light. The text “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” brought the conviction that deliverance was possible, and “some

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

gladness came.” After some time, he felt that God was speaking to him in His Word, and he “believed unto salvation.”

Chalmers lost no time in making public profession of his Christian faith and hope, joining the United Presbyterian Church in 1860, becoming a teacher in its Sunday school, and devoting his spare hours to evangelistic work. His service was approved in the awakening of many of the people to whom he spoke, and in his new-found zeal for the cause of Christ, he subjected himself to a strain of work, which threatened to break down his health.

This experience in Christian work led Chalmers to offer his services to the Glasgow City Mission, and on November 14, 1861, he was appointed, as their agent, to conduct evangelistic efforts in connection with Greyfriars’ United Presbyterian Church, a congregation then ministered to by the Rev. Henry Calderwood, afterwards professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University. From Mr. Calderwood he received sympathetic encouragement, and in the slums of Glasgow—his district comprising the west side of the High Street—he came into personal touch with phases of social degradation and heathenism well calculated to depress the most buoyant confidence in the great evangel. In after years he told stories of scenes almost unbelievable in their awfulness, “scenes that most people think are only to be witnessed in Continental cities.”

But these home mission experiences were of short duration. In Glasgow, Chalmers had the fortune to meet with the Rev. Dr. Turner of Samoa, who gave him information regarding the operations of the London Missionary Society, and revived in him the aspiration of his boyhood to carry the gospel to the heathen in foreign lands. Under Dr. Turner’s guidance, he made application to the London Missionary Society, and after due examination was accepted, and sent to Cheshunt College for training in September 1862, having obtained release from his engagement with the Glasgow City Mission on June 30th that year.

The term of study at Cheshunt lasted for two years. In Dr. Reynolds, principal of the college, Chalmers found a teacher fitted to inspire him with a high ideal of the dignity of his calling and to draw out his best energies as

## Beginnings

a student. The admiration and affectionate regard became reciprocal, and Dr. Reynolds wrote of the young Scotsman: "He gave me the idea of lofty consecration to the divine work of saving those for whom Christ died. His faith was simple, unswerving, and enthusiastic, and while he could throw a giant's strength into all kinds of work, he was gentle as a child and submissive as a soldier. He used to pray for help as if he were at his mother's knee, and to preach as though he were sure of the message he had then to deliver."

For a man of Chalmers' active temperament, theology had little attraction, and his theoretical studies did not bear heavily upon him. But part of his training was of a practical order. He cheerfully accepted charge of the mission station farthest from the college, undertaking a walk of 14 miles thither and back every Sunday. His sermons were instinct with humanity, sincerity, and conviction, and the common people heard him gladly.

"He was at home in some Hebrew story, and especially fond of the two texts Dan. 3:21 and 1 Sam. 18:4: 'their coats, their hosen, and their hats,' and 'to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.'—the one relating to perhaps the most courageous act in the Old Testament, the other to the most generous."

In addition to the ordinary duties of his station, he undertook open-air preaching—on one occasion courageously addressing a crowd of gin-drinking holiday-makers at the famous Rye House—as well as visitation of the sick and the poor. In all his labors, he displayed thorough goodness and kindness of heart, and gave generously from his slender purse in aid of the temporal necessities of his people.

Withal, Chalmers retained his love of frolic and his daring courage in the face of physical peril. If he did not shine in the classroom, on the river, no one could steer a raft like him, none could take a ducking so coolly. "The river more than the college prepared him for his great life-work. For anything that needed strength or pluck or endurance, Chalmers was the man chosen," says Mr. W. Garrett Horder, one of his fellow students. To quote the same authority, "Those who knew him only in later days—when he had become a veritable son of Anak—will scarcely believe that when he

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

entered Cheshunt he was one of the slightest and thinnest among the men, but wiry and sinewy to the last degree.”

Withdrawn from Cheshunt in the summer of 1864, Chalmers was sent to the London Missionary Society’s Institution at Highgate, for special training under the Rev. Dr. J.S. Wardlaw. A few days after his arrival at Highgate, “the house trembled, and Mrs. Wardlaw in dismay searched about for the cause of the unusual commotion. Upon entering a room around which the students were seated, she found that it was only the lively Chalmers entertaining them with a Highland fling.”

At the time that this training was nearing its close, Dr. Livingstone was thrilling the hearts of his countrymen with the narrative of his pioneer work in South Africa, and there was born in the young Scot a desire to give his life to similar work on the Dark Continent. But the directors of the London Missionary Society chose to appoint him to Rarotonga in the South Sea Islands instead. Accepting this decision as a matter of divine guidance, Chalmers made no demur, and threw himself at once into the study of the Rarotongan language, and the acquisition of a working acquaintance with medicine and photography.

We may close this chapter of “beginnings” by recording the fact of the marriage of James Chalmers to Miss Jane Hercus, daughter of a merchant in Greenock who had immigrated to New Zealand a short time before. The ceremony took place on October 17, 1865, a few short weeks before the young couple set sail for their distant sphere of work.





## CHAPTER 2

### Outward Bound

The first ship to bear the honored name of John Williams had been wrecked at Pukapuka in May 1864, after 20 years of valuable service in keeping up the lines of communication between the London Missionary Society's agents at their numerous isolated stations in the South Sea Islands. Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers were now only awaiting the completion of her successor, the *John Williams II*, as she would now be called, to enable them to proceed to Polynesia, in company with a further reinforcement of the South Seas Mission staff.

The new missionary vessel was launched at Aberdeen on October 5, 1865, and, on the 19th day of the month, Chalmers was ordained as a missionary to the South Seas. The ceremony took place in Finchley (East End) Chapel, London. The Rev. William Gill of Woolwich, who had spent many years as an agent of the Society upon the very island of Rarotonga for which Chalmers was about to set out, described the field of labor; the Rev. John Corbin of Hornsey asked the questions and offered the ordination prayer; and the Rev. J.S. Ward-law, president of Highgate Mission College, delivered the charge.

The missionary band received the good wishes and benedictions of their friends at valedictory services held in the Poultry Chapel and the Mission House on January 2, 1866, and after a brief farewell service on board, concluded in the singing of "Auld Lang Syne." The *John Williams II* weighed anchor on the 4th of January and set out upon her long voyage. That voyage gave early promise of being a perilous one. While still in the English Channel, the vessel encountered a terrific storm, memorable as being that in which the *London* was lost. The passengers were thrown out of their bunks, the pilot was knocked insensible, the compass binnacle

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

was damaged, the whale boat was carried away, and the seamen were constrained to ask the missionaries to pray for a change of wind. With difficulty, the *John Williams II* made the Portland Roads, and escaped the fate of some 21 vessels, which foundered in the storm.

At Weymouth, the missionaries were able to communicate with their friends, and assure them of their safety and their undaunted determination to face the perils of the sea in carrying out their commission. Mrs. Chalmers wrote: "Hope has not fled from our hearts but we shall yet see the South Seas. We do not feel frightened to go on our way."

After completing all necessary repairs, the missionary ship took final leave of Old England, sailing from Portland Roads on the 29th of January. She experienced a second storm in crossing the Bay of Biscay, and a third off the Cape of Good Hope, but proved her seaworthy character by reaching Adelaide in safety on the 3rd of May. The passage had been accomplished in 94 days, the quickest that, with one exception, had ever been made, the time usually allowed for the voyage being from 130 to 140 days. Melbourne and Hobart Town were successively visited, and eventually Sydney was reached.

Throughout the long voyage, Chalmers had not been by any means idle. On deck in all weather, he early made the intimate acquaintance of the sailors on board, and by means of personal conversation and a Bible class and prayer meeting in the fore-castle, he won several of the crew for the service of his Master. With his Rarotongan Bible and dictionary, he spent many hours in acquiring a familiarity with the language common to many of the South Sea Islanders.

Mrs. Chalmers was met at Adelaide by her father, and from Melbourne she crossed with him to New Zealand, on a short visit to her home circle. This was made possible by the lapse of time required for fitting out the *John Williams II* for her first regular trip round the islands. Ashore, Chalmers himself was kept busy in addressing meetings and conferring with missionary brethren then resident in Sydney.

## Outward Bound

The missionary ship left Sydney for the Islands on August 21. Owing to treacherous currents, and incomplete and sometimes inaccurate information in the navigation charts, this was undoubtedly the more dangerous part of the voyage undertaken by Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, as they were soon to prove. On September 5th, the vessel was beating up the harbor of Anelgauhat for Aneityum, in squally weather and under dark skies, when, in putting about, she struck on a large patch of coral and held fast. The missionaries and the upper portion of her cargo were landed, as there was considerable fear lest at low water she should slip off the reef and sink altogether. On the third day, she was got off.

“Her fore-foot was smashed, and a great piece of her false keel carried away.” She was in a very leaky state; but, patched up by the help of divers, she set sail for Sydney, under convoy of then Presbyterian mission ship *Day Spring*. Twenty-two Christian natives were put on board to assist in pumping, and during a long voyage of nearly three weeks, these men kept the pumps going night and day, in the end refusing all pay for their services.

Arriving in Sydney on the 8th of October, the ship was docked and repaired, and on the November 15th again set sail. Chalmers had remained aboard during this perilous interlude. Returning to Anelgauhat, the vessel embarked cargo and passengers and steered for Savage Island, better known now by its native name, Niué. This place of call was reached on January 3, 1867. Stores for the missionaries at the station were landed, and the passengers went ashore. For several days, rough weather prevented all communication with the ship, but on the 8th the wind fell, and, Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers having gone aboard in prospect of the continuation of their voyage on the morrow, the vessel stood out to sea for the night. A few miles from the shore, the wind failed, and the current began to drift the craft toward the land again. The boats were ordered out, and endeavoured to tow her away; but the current was too strong, and every hour brought her nearer to the lofty coral wall, which formed the sea face of the island. About ten o'clock the gig was launched and the ladies were dropped in, and near midnight all took to the boats and abandoned the vessel to her fate. There was a fearful sea breaking over the reef, and the shipwrecked party had difficulty in making a landing. The surf was so high that there was

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

no chance of getting a boat in, and at 3 a.m. natives from the island came out in canoes, took the party in them to the rocks. They were dragged through the surf, and carried on the backs of the natives up a long extent of steep rocks over which the surf was constantly washing. By half-past four all were safely landed. The vessel was thrown on a part of the reef off the northeast part of the island, and became a total wreck.

Thus, landed on a remote island, Chalmers and his wife were called upon, once again, to exercise their patience, and the trial was the more severe in face of the fact that all their possessions, beyond the clothes in which they were dressed, and "a few silver things I had in my cabin," had gone down in the *John Williams II*. A month later, the *Alfred*, a German schooner, arrived at Niué, and sailed for Samoa on February 11th with Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers and a few others of the missionary band. The same day, the brig *Rona*, commanded by the notorious buccaneer and pirate "Bully" Hayes, arrived at Niué, in the employ of a trader, and was chartered to carry the rest of the shipwrecked people to Samoa. When all had arrived there safely, the *Rona* was chartered again to carry Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers and others to their destinations. When she arrived in Tahiti on April 23rd, the Rev. G. Morris reported that "our dear brethren and their devoted wives do not appear to have had their ardor either damped or diminished by the numerous untoward circumstances which have checkered their path, but, full of zeal, devotion, and love, they have gone on to their difficult and arduous duties. They are men and women of the right stamp."

Instant in season and out of season, Chalmers made good use of his long voyage on the *Rona* to win the friendly respect of "Bully" Hayes. Before going on board he had said to him, "Captain Hayes, I hope you will have no objection to our having morning and evening service on board, and twice on Sabbaths?" "Certainly not," was the reply. "My ship is a missionary ship now, and I hope you will feel it so. All on board will attend these services." To this Chalmers replied, "Only if they are inclined." Although Hayes several times lost his temper, and "did very queer things, acting now and then more like a madman than a sane man," and although the *Rona* had fearful weather nearly all the time, the missionaries were well treated on board, Hayes behaving as "a perfect host and a thorough gentleman."

## Outward Bound

Thus, early on did Chalmers exercise his gift for seeing the finest points in the most depraved character and making the most of them.

After calls at Huahine, Mangaia, and Aitutaki had incidentally afforded Chalmers an opportunity of visiting all the principal islands on which the London Missionary Society's South Seas Mission had then established stations, Rarotonga was reached in safety on May 20, 1867. The voyage from Great Britain had extended over a period of no less than 17 months.

Curiously enough, in the very act of landing at Avarua, Rarotonga, Chalmers received the name by which he was ever afterwards known among the South Sea and New Guinean natives. "I was the first to land, and in being carried ashore from the boat by a native, he asked, 'What fellow name belong you?' so that he might call it out to the shore. I answered, 'Chalmers,' and he roared out 'Tamate.'"



## CHAPTER 3

### The South Seas Mission in 1867 and Before

The London Missionary Society—"The Missionary Society," as it was originally called—was founded in September 1795, and the South Seas Mission, to which James Chalmers was first appointed, was its earliest venture.

Some years before the founding of the Society, the publication of the narratives of Captain James Cook's voyages around the world, and of that specially devoted by this intrepid explorer to the Pacific Ocean, had greatly widened the geographical horizon. "By the important discoveries made in these successive voyages," John Williams afterwards wrote, "a new world was opened to the view of all Europe; for, besides New Holland and New Guinea, almost innumerable islands were found to exist, bestudding the bosom of the vast Pacific with their beauties." Public interest in the primitive peoples inhabiting these distant shores had been aroused; and the accounts of their savage and unillumined condition had awakened in the hearts of Christian men and women at home a desire to send the gospel of peace to them.

So as early as 1787, the great William Carey had declared that "if he had the means, he would go to the South Seas and commence a mission at Otaheiti." But he found a sphere in India, and it was left to "The Missionary Society" to undertake the evangelization of the South Seas. The first band of missionaries landed in Tahiti—Captain Cook's Otaheiti—in March 1796.

For 12 years, these brave pioneers, and comrades who joined them from time to time, sacrificed energy and health, and, in some cases, life itself, without seeing any direct fruit of their work. Efforts to carry the evangel to other islands were even less successful. In Tahiti, the missionaries contrived to retain a bare foothold, but of progress, there was at first no sign.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

After the lapse of these 12 years, however, it began to be evident that the savage islanders were becoming convinced of the disinterested intentions of the missionaries, and of the social advantages of the Christian rule of life; and in June 1813, it was discovered that at least one Tahitian had embraced the Christian religion. The cloud whose showers had brought quickening to the seed so laboriously sown was at first “no bigger than a man’s hand,” but in an incredibly short time, it overspread Tahiti and the adjacent islands. The national idols and temples were destroyed, Christian laws were promulgated by the King of Tahiti, and the good news spread to the Leeward Islands, the Society Islands, and the Low Islands. In May 1818, the Tahitian Missionary Society was formed, and those who had but recently been heathen idolaters gave of their goods to assist in carrying the gospel to their less fortunate neighbors. Numbers, too, consecrated themselves to the work of missionary teachers, settling on the different islands visited by the pioneer missionaries, and giving themselves to the life-work of teaching, by word and example, the simple truths they had themselves learned concerning the true God and the Christian gospel.

For the South Seas Mission, the year 1817 derived especial importance from the arrival of John Williams as an addition to the missionary staff. Williams had the instincts of the true pioneer. “A missionary,” he wrote, “was never designed by Jesus Christ to gather a congregation of a hundred or two natives, and sit down at his ease, as contented as if every sinner was converted, while thousands around him, and but a few miles off, are eating each other’s flesh and drinking each other’s blood, living and dying without the gospel.

“For my own part, I cannot content myself within the narrow limits of a single reef; and if means are not afforded, a continent would to me be infinitely preferable; for there, if you cannot ride, you can walk; but to these isolated islands a ship must carry you.” By the enterprise of John Williams, fresh fields of labor were opened up in one island after another. In time, he overtook the New Hebrides group—believing this to be the key to New Guinea and the islands inhabited by the Papuan races—and suffered martyrdom in the year 1839 in an attempt to obtain a footing upon the island of Erromanga, one of this group.

## The South Seas Mission in 1867 and Before

The islands of the South Pacific owe everything to Christian missions. In the one-third of the globe covered by the Pacific Ocean, between Asia and the Americas, there are 17 groups of islands. Within a period of 50 years, nine of these became entirely Christianized, while Christian influence effected a considerable improvement in others. So recent an observer as Robert Louis Stevenson has declared that "with all their gross blots, with all their deficiency of candor, humor, and of common sense, the missionaries are the best and the most useful whites in the Pacific."

One of the earliest points of advance secured by Williams was the discovery of Rarotonga, in the Hervey Islands group, an island that had "escaped the untiring researches of Captain Cook." Stationed on the island of Raiatea, the largest and most central of the Society Islands, Williams, in his intercourse with the Polynesians, learned of the existence of this island, and even spoke with one or two who had come from Rarotonga. After several ineffectual attempts, he made his important discovery in 1823, and "dear Rarotonga" became the object of his deepest solicitude, and a centre from which he went forth upon his many missionary cruises.

The island contains an area of 31 square miles and consists of "a mass of high mountains which present a remarkably romantic appearance." It is surrounded by a reef, and possesses several good boat harbors, while ships may effect a landing at one point at least. Williams estimated the population at from 6,000 to 7,000.

A year after its discovery, the whole population of Rarotonga had renounced idolatry, and was engaged in erecting a place of worship 600 feet in length. It was here that Williams built with his own hands the *Messenger of Peace*, a craft in which he sought to evangelize the South Pacific. Here occurred the well-known incident in which a written message upon a chip of wood excited the wonder of his native messenger, who declared that it must have spoken. For the native chiefs, Williams drew up a code of Christian laws as the basis of the administration of justice in their island.

At the outset, the evangelization of the island was mainly carried on by Polynesian teachers. In 1827, Mr. Charles Pitman was stationed there

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

as the first resident English missionary, and in 1828, he was joined by Mr. Aaron Buzacott. Six years later, Williams was able to write of the island: "I cannot forbear drawing a contrast between the state of the inhabitants when I first visited them in 1823, and that in which I left them in 1834. In 1823, I found them all heathens; in 1834, they were all professing Christians. At the former period I found them with idols and maraes; these, in 1834, were destroyed, and in their stead, there were three spacious and substantial places of Christian worship, in which congregations amounting to 6,000 persons assembled every Sabbath day. I found them without a written language, and left them reading in their own tongue the 'wonderful works of God.' I found them without knowledge of the Sabbath, and when I left them, no manner of work was done during that sacred day. When I found them in 1823, they were ignorant of the nature of Christian worship; and when I left them in 1834, I am not aware that there was a house in the island where family worship was not observed every morning and every evening. I speak not this boastingly; for our satisfaction arises not from receiving such honors, but in casting them at the Savior's feet; for 'His arm hath gotten Him the victory,' and 'He shall bear the glory.'"

Elsewhere he wrote: "In reference to the island generally, it may be observed that the blessings conveyed to them by Christianity have not been simply of a spiritual character, but that civilization and commerce have invariably followed in her train."

In 1839, before starting on the voyage in the *Camden*, which was to prove his last, Williams spent a considerable time "in meeting with the brethren and the natives, and in making arrangements for the establishment of a college to educate pious and intelligent young men for missionary work, in which, besides theological truth, they were to be taught the English language and mechanical arts. Over this important institution Mr. Buzacott consented to preside."

Between 1839 and 1867, when Chalmers entered upon his duties, the work had been faithfully carried on by Messrs. Pitman and Buzacott, the Rev. William Gill, and the Rev. E.R.W. Krause, in succession, and the establishment included the Training Institution founded by Williams, and five

## **The South Seas Mission in 1867 and Before**

villages or settlements, each under the immediate charge of a native pastor. The efficient oversight of all this work promised to be no light task for the young missionary and his wife.



## CHAPTER 4

### At Rarotonga

When Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers landed in Rarotonga on May 20, 1867, the island was not looking quite at its best. Two successive hurricanes, of phenomenal violence, had swept it from shore to shore in March 1866 and again in March 1867, wrecking houses, and uprooting trees and plantations. But when allowance had been made for the devastation, they found that their future sphere of work was indeed one of the finest of the many coral islands of the Pacific. Vegetation of all descriptions grew everywhere with tropical profusion; while the hill country which formed the interior of the island afforded a picturesque background to the belt of fertile land upon the foreshore, and sheltered numerous valleys, idyllic in their sweet seclusion, and gently reminiscent of the glens of their native country.

Although, as we have seen, the Rarotongans had been a professedly Christian people for half a century, there was still abundant scope for the activities of the missionary. Civilization had advanced to a certain point, but social evils cried for the guiding hand of a wise reformer. The men of the younger generation had no personal acquaintance with the horrors of the old heathen days; the blood of savages coursed in their veins, and hereditary instincts had led many of them to resent the restraints imposed upon them, and to choose by preference a vagrom life in the bush. The code of laws instituted by John Williams still existed, but the chiefs were disposed to disregard its limitations, and the law was fast threatening to become a dead letter. The following incident will serve as an illustration.

A native had been killed by a blow delivered by one of his companions in a drunken orgy. "On the afternoon of the day of the death," Chalmers wrote, "I received a note from the chief of the settlement to which the prisoner belonged, and where he was confined, to the following effect: 'My

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

missionary, on Monday come to the meeting of the whole land. Maroiva (the prisoner) will be hanged.' On receiving such a note, I lost no time in having my horse saddled, and away at a quick trot to see the chief. I insisted on the man being publicly charged with intent to murder, and having a fair trial, and charged those who were indifferent to the administration of the laws against drunkenness as being partly to blame for the man's death . . . I went to the trial. Witnesses were examined, and I must say I think the man had a fair trial. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, which was afterwards changed to transportation."

In addition to the social evils referred to, drunkenness was a conspicuously prevalent vice; and, as we shall have occasion to notice farther on, a bad system of extended financial credit kept a large proportion of the population in a constant state of debt.

The prevailing condition of laxity in the moral life of the people could not but have its reflex influence upon the spirituality of the church members. Here, again, the younger generation showed the greater indifference; enjoying the advantages which Christianity had brought in its train, without having any very definite conception of the evil natures they had inherited, and of the struggle that is the life-portion of those who would overcome temptation and abstain from sin. Impurity and strong drink claimed their victims, and applicants for admission to church membership were few and far between.

Owing to the loss of all their worldly goods and their whole equipment in the wreck of the *John Williams II*, the young missionaries were glad to compound with Mr. Krause for the purchase of his furniture, and they settled down without delay in the mission house, which had fortunately been able to withstand the violence of the hurricane. "Oh, how glad we feel to be at last in our home and at our work," Mrs. Chalmers wrote. "The weariness, tedious delays, and accidents of the journey are all as a dream of the past in the home bliss."

Before Mr. Krause left for home he was able to take part in a most important "committee meeting" of all the missionaries in the Hervey Islands.

## At Rarotonga

Many matters of the deepest interest to the churches and about the work of the mission were discussed; and doubtless Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers benefited by this opportunity to acquaint themselves with the general position, as well as to avail themselves of the experience of those who had been much longer in the field.

At first, they felt their isolation keenly. From the date at which they bade farewell to Mr. Krause and their missionary colleagues, they saw but one Christian of their own race until, nearly two years later, the *John Williams III*, made her first call on June 17, 1869. Thereafter, they were at least kept in closer touch with their colleagues stationed upon the adjoining islands of the Hervey Group. They missed in their first years, too, the little library, which they had brought with them from home and had lost with their other effects when the *John Williams II* went down. But they ultimately found ample solace in their work.

It is impossible to attempt here anything like a chronological account of the schemes and operations, successes and failures, which make up the story of the 10 years spent by Tamate at Rarotonga; but some account of his experiences is necessary to our appreciation of the development of talents and resources called forth during this first epoch of his life as a foreign missionary.

The chief burden of work laid upon Chalmers was that in connection with the Institution for the training of native teachers, established by John Williams in 1839. At the outset, he had to face the task of converting the fiscal arrangements of the Institution from an aided basis to a self-supporting one. The Mission College in Samoa had already accomplished this, and the directors of the Society had commissioned Chalmers to endeavour to effect the change at Rarotonga. The students were now to be fed and clothed at their own expense. Land was cleared and planted, and crops raised. These supplied the necessary food and the wherewithal to purchase clothing and other necessaries of life. In a year or two the revolution was accomplished, but not without a severe and self-denying struggle on the part of the missionary and his wife.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

In 1870, Chalmers was able to report of his students as follows: “They are making progress in their studies, and I believe those at present in the Institution know more than any former students, arising from their having time for preparation. They are required to prepare for all the classes. They are good, earnest men and women; not, I hope, mere moral characters, but men and women who know what faith in Christ the Crucified One means. Men and women who, having tasted of the water of life—who, experiencing the joy of believing, and the salvation of the soul—are anxious that others, especially those shrouded in heathen darkness, should be partakers of like blessings. They are anxious to carry the light of truth to dark lands. And although we may tremble to think that real and new advances on the kingdom of darkness are always attended with suffering, they, knowing it, are anxious to go. The Father will baptize them for the hour of suffering.”

From a report made to the directors of the London Missionary Society in December 1874, we get a further glimpse of the Institution at Rarotonga, this time seeing the students in the routine of training.

“The students plant their own food on the land belonging to the Society; and having also the use of one or two valleys of plantains from Makea, the head chief, they are well off for food.

“In class we teach arithmetic, geography, and grammar. We have Bible instruction daily; we also go over part of a theological lecture of Dr. Bogue’s. Dr. Bogue’s lectures were translated into Rarotongan by Mr. Buzacott. We have sermon-class twice a week, Tuesday and Friday. The students preach in turn on these days, and are criticized by the others. They also give me two sketches of sermons in the week, on texts given them. We have finished a commentary on the Prophets, from Jeremiah to Malachi, and another on the Epistles, from Galatians to the third chapter of the Apocalypse. We have also written a commentary on the Psalms, to the ninety-third. We have read in class, with explanations, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Leviticus was taken in connection with the Epistle to the Hebrews. We are now busy with our annual written examinations—four hours, three days a week. In the beginning of 1875, we hope to go on with Ancient and Church History in addition to other classes. The senior students preach in turn on

## At Rarotonga

Wednesday mornings and Sabbath afternoons. The sketches of these sermons are first submitted to me, when suggestions are made to help, or the sketch may be set aside.

“We have no classes on Wednesdays. The students attend to their lands on that day, and I go to the mountains, or to one of the other settlements. A prayer meeting on the mountain-top is refreshing. Soul and body get good on this day.

“The students are from this island, as well as the other islands of the Hervey Group and our out-stations. We all live in a brotherly manner, helping each other as best we can.”

In July 1875, Chalmers was able to send the gratifying intelligence that the Institution had attained its complement—31 students. Of these, 28 were married men. In a later chapter, we shall have to take further notice of these native teachers and their wives. But it may be noted here that these wives have often been as devoted missionaries as have their husbands. They, too, had their training, for Mrs. Chalmers employed three hours daily in conducting classes for their education in elementary knowledge and housewifely arts and crafts.

If Chalmers had not been an exact student in his own college days, he had certainly imbibed a profound respect for education, and had familiarized himself with the organization of an educational institution. Conceiving the idea of what may be called a secondary education for native boys, he formed a high school, to which were drafted the more promising pupils in the village schools. In 1874, he was able to report an attendance of 22 boys, all making good progress. “They are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar. Twice a week they write out on their slates answers to questions on two chapters of the Bible. We have adopted the system of prizes with the boys, and we find it works well. The boy most frequently at the head of the class gets a prize of a shirt or pair of trousers.” In 1875, there were 28 boys in the school, and in 1876, there were 59. Of the 59, 49 were resident on the mission premises, and their oversight and

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

daily wants must have added considerably to the burden already borne by Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers.

To complete the tale of educational work, we may record that Chalmers kept an eye upon the teaching in the village schools, and on the competitive examinations by which the results of that teaching were tested.

The mission possessed a valuable agency in its printing-press, and it was another of Chalmers' duties to superintend its operations. An estimate of its output may be formed from his report for the year 1874. "During the year we have printed a reading-book and another edition of the geography; also a few small books, including a primer."

To give an idea of the varied routine of work that constituted the daily opportunity and the daily discipline during the years on Rarotonga, we may quote the following passage from Mr. Robson's early biographical sketch of the missionary: "Mr. Chalmers attended the morning prayer meeting in the church at daybreak—i.e. from half-past five to six o'clock. Then breakfast between half-past six and seven, according to season. Immediately after, prayers were said in English, and then medicine was dispensed until eight o'clock. From 8 to 10 a.m., Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers had students and their wives in classes. Then Mrs. Chalmers was busy with household matters, and the missionary with his students, teaching them to build houses and make furniture, or in his study, until noon, when dinner was served. After that a rest or little recreation until 2 p.m., when they bathed and put on clean clothes. Mr. Chalmers went to superintend the printing-office until four o'clock tea. Then they went out to visit the sick, look up church members and others, and also to inspect the students' houses and see to any outdoor matters. At 6 p.m., the lamps were lit, and there were prayers with servants in Rarotongan, after which prayers in English, then they would go to the study and prepare for further work until nine o'clock. By 10 p.m., all had retired to rest."





## CHAPTER 5

### At Rarotonga (continued)

“Where are the young men?” was one of the first questions put by Chalmers when he landed in Rarotonga. Of elderly men and women, of young women, and of children he noticed that there was a proportionate population, but of young men, there were few or none to be seen. On learning that these had taken to a lawless life in the bush, he lost no time in making extended excursions into the less frequented parts of the island, tracked them down to their lairs, and by his frankness and cordiality won over many of them to friendship and confidence. He found that one of their principal occupations was the manufacture and consumption of intoxicating beverages, made from oranges, bananas, pineapples, and other fruits. Without thought of the risk of bodily harm to himself, he penetrated to the secluded spots at which drunken orgies were wont to be held; sometimes arriving in time to broach the casks and pour the liquor on the ground; at other times coming on the scene when the deadly poison had done its work, and murderous brawling and strife had converted a carousal into a free fight. “Our greatest enemy at present,” he wrote in 1870, “is strong drink, foreign and native. Auckland traders supply us with the former, and the oranges with the latter. Sometimes a church member is enticed away with it, and falls. Occasionally, one or two are led to see the evils of it; they leave it off, and seek to live better for the future.”

In 1873, Chalmers began to agitate for a Rechabite Society. The chiefs urged the claims of what they called “the new society” on the people, and they joined it. After 18 months, he was able to report that “great good has been accomplished through it. It is entirely in the hands of the natives; they elect their own staff of officers. Makea (chieftainess) and her husband have given it all their influence. They have both insisted also on the law for the suppression of drunkenness being fully carried out.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Concerning the system of debt, to which reference has already been made, we are able to quote again from Chalmers in his own words: "Another great evil we are fighting here is the system of debt. The traders do what they can to get the natives into their debt, and to keep them in it, hoping thus to secure their entire produce. I have been much struck with a passage by Wallace, in his *Malay Archipelago*, on this subject. He says, 'Another temptation he cannot resist is goods on credit. The trader offers him gay cloths, knives, gongs, guns, and gunpowder, to be paid for by some crop perhaps not yet planted, or some product yet in the forest . . . preventing permanent increase in the wealth of the country.' It is just what we have to fight against on Rarotonga, and now we see light breaking. For some months past, the people have been making extra efforts to pay off all their debts, and will likely be entirely free by the end of the year."

In 1874, the different chiefs attempted to form a united government for the whole island, and enact laws equally binding upon each individual of the entire population. In hearty sympathy with this proposal—and more than likely the originator of the idea—Chalmers prepared a draft constitution and submitted it to the chiefs. "They must act for themselves," he wrote. "Unless the natives are taught to look after their own island and prepare for the future, they will not be able to resist the pressure of the white faces."

Nothing that affected the welfare of the Rarotongan was too trifling or too secular to claim Tamate's interest and attention, but he never lost sight of the supreme end of his mission—the spiritual emancipation of these babes of civilization. There was often ground for much anxiety, but he steadfastly maintained a cheerful and hopeful outlook; and, as the years rolled by, he could not but recognize tokens of a distinct development of spirituality. By the exercise of a wise and firm discipline, he purged the church of evils, which he found prevalent among the people at his coming to the island; and, relieved of the dead weight with which tolerated wickedness inevitably cramps the religious consciousness, the church began to seek a higher level, and to recover its zeal for the salvation of others. "We have no great numbers coming seeking admission to the church; still, a few are attending the classes," he wrote in 1870. "Much prayer is being presented at the throne of God's grace for the revival of religion among us."

## At Rarotonga (continued)

All our services are well attended, and we hope that soon we will hear the sound of rain, and be blessed with God's great blessing, the Holy Spirit." In that very year the church experienced a season of refreshing.

In 1872, visitors to the island found that the church services were attended by devout gatherings of worshippers; native prayer meetings were held every evening, except Saturday; class meetings were being conducted in the deacons' houses; and there was an excellent Sunday school. "In his exposition of 1 Chron. 17, Mr. Chalmers urged the people to repair the walls of the church and churchyard. When I called at the island two months later, the call had been responded to and the work done." The same witness, comparing the conduct of the Christian natives on board his vessel with that of many of his fellow countrymen, confessed that he, "in all fairness, must yield the palm to Mr. Chalmers' 'children.'"

Writing on August 29, 1873, Chalmers informed a correspondent that all the services were well attended; that many were present at the weekday prayer meetings; that he anticipated a full attendance at a Monday morning meeting for prayer; that blessing might follow efforts then being put forth for the suppression of drunkenness; and that there were 13 in attendance at the inquirers' class. Writing again in November 1875, he says: "Ten of our lads, after a sincere profession of faith in Christ, were received into church fellowship. They live with us, and their lives testify to a change. God grant that they may be kept in His love. In each of the settlements there is visibly a greater interest in things belonging to the eternal good of man."

In addition to the work proper to the sphere, which we have attempted to sketch, Chalmers had an outer circle of duty. There were, first, the village settlements in other parts of Rarotonga. These he visited alternately, preaching at each once a month. During the week, and especially on Wednesdays, he sometimes rode out to one or other of the settlements, saw teachers and deacons, conversed with them, and attended to any matters of business. Once every three months he met his teachers, and they discussed with him the state of the churches, all joining in prayer for God's benediction upon the work. "These meetings are fountains of blessing for the whole island."

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Then there were the out-stations upon other islands of the Hervey Group, at which native teachers were located. These were visited annually by Chalmers and his colleagues, in turn. In June 1870, for instance, he visited the Penrhyns, a group of coral islands 600 miles north of Rarotonga. There had been quarrelling. Two hundred and forty of the adherents had forsaken the settlement, leaving the teacher with a diminished flock of about 60. Of the band of teachers originally settled on the islands, all but one had died, or gone away, or been stolen by the Peruvian slavers, and never more heard of. Of the remaining teacher, Chalmers wrote: "He is a slow-going mortal, yet careful of the many things needful here below. We found it necessary to remove him, insisting upon his return to Rarotonga, and after a hard and well-fought battle, we succeeded in getting him on board ship . . . We left Vaka, a steady, upright, earnest man." In the course of the same cruise, Chalmers visited Manihiki, Rakaanga, Pukapuka—the scene of the wreck of the *John Williams I*—Mauké, and Atiu.

In November 1871, he visited the island of Mangaia, on a fraternal visit to the Rev. W. Wyatt Gill, about to go home on furlough.

"We climbed hills, ran down into valleys, and groped about, with candle-nuts lighted, in deep caves. When far in the bowels of the earth, and surrounded by stalactites and stalagmites innumerable, we would sit down in one of these chapels and praise Him who made all things, and gave us abilities to enjoy the workmanship of His hands."

We have seen that Chalmers advocated for the natives of Rarotonga a civil policy, which would tend to foster a spirit of self-reliance, and render them independent of extraneous aid. For their religious institutions, he sought the same consummation of the work of the missionary. In 1874 he wrote:

"We have changed the system of paying the pastors and teachers in this island, and I hope will soon do so at the out-stations. The churches are now to pay their own pastors, and collect their own subscriptions for the Society. If, after 50 years' instruction, they are unable to mind their own affairs, I fear the instruction must have been defective. We shall see . . . I

## At Rarotonga (continued)

think it is time these churches were left to their own resources, under the superintendence of one foreign missionary, who could take charge of the Institution. So long as the native churches have foreign pastors, so long will they remain weak and dependent. Why should not one white missionary do for the Hervey Group?"

The counsel he offered to his directors found its counterpart in his policy in dealing with the churches. In every manner possible, he put responsibilities upon the shoulders of native pastors, teachers, and deacons, and foreshadowed to them the withdrawal of the aid of the white missionary.

In fostering a spirit of missionary interest among the people, he did much to induce a sympathetic conviction of the sufferings of the heathen peoples in the South Pacific, yet living in darkness, and in hourly need of the evangel of peace. Unselfish and missionary instincts were further stirred by the growing intercourse between the Hervey Islands and New Guinea. In 1872, five students and their wives went from the Institution to aid the first pioneers of the mission to southeastern New Guinea; and as death, or ill health, or the opening up of new stations, created opportunity, fresh drafts were made upon the student-teachers in the institution.

"The churches on Rarotonga have had special meetings for prayer, that God might open the door so that His word should be known on New Guinea. Every Sabbath service, and at every meeting during the week, Papua is mentioned in prayer." This was in 1872. In 1875, he wrote: "We have just appointed six men with their wives to be ready for Papua by next visit of ship. They go willingly, yea more, they greatly desire it. Quite a number of those who have gone are dead, yet the desire decreases not in those who are now with us."

The missionary enthusiasm manifested by the Rarotongans was but the reflection of that which animated Tamate himself. As early as 1869, he offered to go to New Guinea for pioneer service. In 1870, writing to the directors about the missionary future for which his students were preparing, he said, "Allow me to say, *we* also would willingly go, and do the holy, sacred work, lifting up Christ before a heathen people, consecrate

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

ourselves, our all. Another who has long labored, and by experience been truly fitted for work like the present in Rarotonga, might do better than we do; and we who are yet young and in good health, enjoying tropical life thoroughly, might, with a few of these students, go down to the West, and in the northern New Hebrides establish a mission—lift up Christ, the dispeller of all darkness.”

In 1872, it seemed as if his desire was to be granted, for Dr. Mullens wrote asking him to go to New Guinea. But his colleagues upon the Hervey Group were agreed that Rarotonga could not do without him, and he had to decline the offered honor with reluctance.

Later, in 1874, Chalmers again stated his views to the directors. “We have been nearly eight years on Rarotonga. During that time, I have visited all the islands of this mission at various times, and am compelled to admit that the out-stations under the charge of the native pastors contrast very favorably with our stations . . . Surely the Society should stretch forth into new and larger fields . . . The many islands yet in heathen darkness who have not heard of our Glorious Redeemer should soon hear of Him. Why not try to reduce the staff of missionaries on old fields; leave the churches there to bud forth, and think and act for themselves; and let new fields be taken up?” But his time was not yet.

In giving his old pastor, Mr. Meikle, some account of the preparation of the band of teachers that left for New Guinea in 1876, Chalmers exclaimed, “How I should rejoice to accompany them, and stand in the centre of Papua and tell of infinite love. The nearer I get to Christ and His Cross, the more do I long for contact with the heathen. The one wish is to be entirely spent for Christ, working consumed in His love.”

At last the call came. Chalmers was instructed to hold himself in readiness to proceed to New Guinea, and in May 1877, just 10 years from the date of their arrival at Rarotonga, he and his wife bade an affectionate farewell to their people and sailed for the West.

## At Rarotonga (continued)

For James Chalmers, as he stood on the deck of the John Williams III and saw the topmost peak of Rarotonga dip below the horizon, the pleasures of memory and those of hope must have been curiously mingled. He had begun work on that island as a young man of 26 years of age; at the age of 36, he had now reached manhood's prime. During those 10 years, he was privileged to see his work prosper in his hands, and develop as he had willed that it should. He had preached and prayed and visited; and genuine fruitage had been vouchsafed. But, whether he recognized it or not, the greatest work had been accomplished in himself. His had been the discipline and the experience. No student, it had been his duty— a duty faithfully performed—to direct the studies of a college, to reorganize its curriculum, and to place it on a self-supporting financial basis; preparing textbooks, a "Bible Index," and a "Bible Atlas and Gazetteer" for his students, revising their exercises and expounding the scriptures to them, from Genesis to Revelation, he had acquired an intimate familiarity with the Rarotongan tongue, a familiarity that was to prove of infinite service in the study of the languages and dialects of the Papuan race. In diplomatic control of chiefs and pastors and teachers, he had learned to understand the Polynesian character, and to suit himself to its moods and deficiencies. In a fine tropical climate, and in subjection to the routine of a busy and well-regulated life, he had built up a splendid physique, far excelling that with which he had left his native shores, and one that was wonderfully fitted for the toil and strain of the pioneer life he was now to taste. In the triumph of the gospel of Christ over the sins and superstitions of heathenism, he had laid the foundation of a reckless confidence in his mission and his message of peace, a confidence that was to carry him through many an adventurous episode, where a faint heart would have failed and perhaps have lost his life.

By way of footnote to the foregoing chapter, it may be mentioned that Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers availed themselves of an opportunity to break their journey by calling at New Zealand on their way to New Guinea. They arrived in Auckland on 13th June, and visited relatives and others in various towns. "We found all our friends well," he wrote. "Fifteen years had gone since I saw them, and some from whom we then parted are now resting and waiting. We were all changed. They were expecting to see a thin, pale-faced,

## **JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA**

black-dressed missionary, and were surprised to meet a stout, bronzed, unclerical-looking being.” From New Zealand, the travelers crossed to Sydney, in order to take passage for New Guinea in September.





## CHAPTER 6

### New Guinea in 1877 and Before

If Australia were classified as a continent, New Guinea, or Papua, is the largest island in the world. In rough figures, it extends for 1,400 miles from east to west, and at its broadest, for 490 miles from north to south. Its northern coastline almost reaches the equator, and at its southeastern extremity, it lies between the tenth and eleventh parallels of south latitude.

When Chalmers first landed on its shores, comparatively little was known of the tribes that peopled it; the leading geographical features of the interior had been barely ascertained; and even its coastline, at various points, had never been surveyed.

The first European to record the existence of the island was D'Abreu, who sighted it in 1526; a Portuguese explorer, Don Jorge de Meneses, spent a month on its shores. Two years later, Alvarez de Saavedra, a fellow-countryman of Don Jorge, also visited the island, which he named Isla del Oro, having formed an idea that gold was to be found in its soil. Again, in 1545, Ynigo Ortiz de Rez, a Spaniard, coasted along its northern shores for 250 miles, and gave it the name of Nueva Guinea, fancying that he saw some resemblance between it and Guinea on the west coast of Africa. It was visited in 1616 by Schouten, and in 1699 by Dampier, who first circumnavigated it. In 1768, M. de Bouganville sailed along its southern and eastern coasts, and in 1770, Captain James Cook visited its southwest coast.

Other explorers followed, but little was added to the knowledge of the country until Captain Blackwood, of H.M.S. *Fly*, discovered the Fly River in 1845; Lieutenant Yule, in 1846, took observations on the south coast as far east as the island which bears his name; and in 1848, Captain Owen Stanley, of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, made a rough survey of the southeast

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

coast, in view of its strategic position in proximity to the northern shores of Australia. But the first survey of any importance was that of Captain Moresby, in command of H.M.S. *Basilisk*. In 1871, and again in 1876, he conducted a series of exact observations, which resulted in the mapping out of the greater part of the southeastern coastline, and the discovery of the China Straits and of the now well-known harbor of Port Moresby.

The island was found to be separated from Australia by a belt of very shallow water, suggesting to the physiographer that it had once formed a part of that continent. From the deck of the passing ship, it could be seen that there were magnificent mountain ranges in the interior, vast stretches of the finest scenery, hundreds of miles of fertile land under cultivation by the natives, and great rivers, which must have their sources many miles from the coast.

Of the people, little was known until the settlement of the London Missionary Society's agents upon the island. It was ascertained, however, that they were called Papuans, or "frizzy-haired," that they spoke in places a language which had some similarity to the languages spoken on the islands of eastern and western Polynesia, and that they were addicted to the practice of cannibalism.

When the French took possession of the Loyalty Islands in 1864, the Samoan and Rarotongan teachers were ejected, and the idea of New Guinea as a field for these workers was broached. In 1867, the directors began to mature plans, and in 1871, Dr. Samuel McFarlane, accompanied by Mr. A.W. Murray, made a prospecting visit. Navigation in Torres Straits was found to be the most intricate and difficult in the world. At that time, the coast had not been surveyed, and the captain of the vessel chartered by the missionaries would not go within 20 miles of the coast— if he had lost ship he would have lost his insurance—and Messrs. McFarlane and Murray had to make their first acquaintance with the shores of New Guinea by means of navigation in an open boat. They found that a sickly climate prevailed at points on the coast touched by them,—” to remain for a single night meant three months' fever and ague,”—and that the natives were not much more hospitable. They ascertained that they had to deal with “a savage

## New Guinea in 1877 and Before

and bloodthirsty people, who have made cannibal feasts of many a shipwrecked crew; who pent up the 360 Chinese passengers of the *Saint Paul*, lost on their shores, clubbing and cooking three or four every morning, until only four remained.” The coastline was found to abound in sunken rocks and reefs, sand and mud banks, currents and calms, and these missionary pioneers reported that the directors might calculate upon losing a vessel in Torres Straits every three or four years.

Here is Dr. McFarlane’s description of New Guinea: “A country of bona fide cannibals and genuine savages, where the pioneer missionary and explorer truly carries his life in his hand. A land of gold, yet a land where a string of beads will buy more than a nugget of the precious metal. A land of promise, capable of sustaining millions of people, in which, however, the natives live on yams, bananas, and coconuts. A land of mighty cedars and giant trees, where, notwithstanding, the native huts are made of sticks and roofed with palm leaves. A land consisting of millions of acres of glorious grass, capable of fattening multitudes of cattle, where, however, neither flocks nor herds are known. A land of splendid mountains, magnificent forests, and mighty rivers, but to us a land of heathen darkness, cruelty, cannibalism, and death. We were going to plant the gospel standard on this, the largest island in the world, and win it for Christ; and as the gospel had worked such marvels in other parts of the world, we felt sure that it could not fail in this home of the Papuan and cannibal tribes.”

On July 1, 1871, Messrs. McFarlane and Murray, accompanied by eight Polynesian teachers, landed on Darnley Island in Torres Straits. Conceiving the idea that this island, in close proximity to the mainland, and separated from it by several miles of open sea, might afford a safer and healthier centre than any point of the known coast of New Guinea, two teachers were settled among the natives, who made great profession of friendliness; and the pioneers made for Dauan, a small island two or three miles from the shores of New Guinea itself. There, they again located teachers. At Saibal Island they placed the remaining two, and returned to the Loyalty Islands after touching at Cape York, where the most northerly of the representatives of the Queensland Government was stationed, and at Yule Island and Redscar Bay on the mainland of New Guinea.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Dr. McFarlane thereafter left for Britain, to consult with the directors of the Society, and in October 1872, Mr. Murray returned to Torres Straits, accompanied this time by the Rev. W.W. Gill, and 13 additional Polynesian teachers. Landing at Somerset, Cape York, they established the headquarters of the London Missionary Society's New Guinea Mission. By them, a new station was founded at Manumanu, on Redscar Bay; but Manumanu proved very unhealthy, and, after several of the teachers had died, the survivors were taken back to Somerset—not before they had made good friends with several sections of the Motu tribe.

In November 1873, Mr. Murray returned to the mainland, and placed the teachers at Port Moresby, discovered by Captain Moresby in the interval. A few months later, on July 29, 1874, Dr. McFarlane arrived at Cape York, on his return from home, accompanied by the Rev. W.G. Lawes until this time one of the Society's agents at Niué. Mr. Lawes, with his wife and child, settled at Port Moresby in December 1874, the only white people on the whole of New Guinea. Dr. McFarlane removed the headquarters of the Gulf Mission from Somerset to Murray Island, and thereafter devoted himself to missionary work near the Fly River and at Kwato in the neighborhood of East Cape. These enterprises were carried on independently of the branches of the mission to which Chalmers was appointed, and Dr. McFarlane's name soon disappears from the further record of the work on the southeast coast.

Until October 1877, a period of nearly three years, Mr. and Mrs. Lawes labored alone at Port Moresby. Chalmers has styled Mr. Lawes "the Father of New Guinea travel." "Before him little had been done in penetrating into the interior of the island, and no name has been more used by after travelers as a password to known and unknown tribes than that of 'Misi Lao,' the well-known missionary. My first travel began with his influence and the frequent use of his name; and through him my first tramp was made easy by the confidence natives had in him. Under this influence they accompanied us as far as white men had then got." At the date last mentioned, Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers arrived at Port Moresby, and commenced work in their new sphere.





## CHAPTER 7

### At South Cape

Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers left Sydney on September 20, 1877, and arrived at Somerset on the 30th. On October 2nd they left Somerset on board the *Bertha*, and, after visiting Darnley Island and Murray Island, reached Yule Island on the 19th, and on the 21st, landed on the mainland of New Guinea at Boera, for Port Moresby, then the most westerly of the stations on New Guinea proper. There they received the hospitable welcome of Mr. and Mrs. Lawes, whose acquaintance they had made 10 years before, Mr. Lawes having been stationed at Niué at the time of the wreck of the *John Williams II*.

Chalmers lost no time in getting into harness. Although Port Moresby was not his ultimate destination—he having been commissioned by the directors of the Society to found a new branch of the mission farther east—he set out at once with Mr. McFarlane upon a short inland trip of 25 or 30 miles into the hinterland of Port Moresby, with a view to ascertaining whether a healthy situation could be found for a station that would minister more directly to the needs of the inland tribes. This excursion did not extend beyond three or four days, but it afforded an opportunity to come into direct touch with naked savages to whom a white man was more of an apparition than a fellow-creature. The object of this tramp was not considered practicable. “The very mountainous character of the country, and the sparse population scattered on the tops of hills and mountains, many of the houses being built in the forks of trees, convinced us that on the peninsula, as in the Papuan Gulf, the population is mostly on the coast, where the large and numerous villages have the stronger claims.”

A few days later, accompanied by Mr. Lawes and Mr. McFarlane, Chalmers set out upon a coasting trip toward the east, with a view to visiting the existing stations, and prospecting for a suitable locality for the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

new central station of which he was to make a working base. Along the coast, as far at least as Kerepunu, the name of "Misi Lao" was known to the natives, but when Tamate took a walk of nine miles inland from Kaili, he and his friends were the first white men ever seen by the inhabitants of the village visited by them. Mr. Lawes was left at Kerepunu, and the rest of the party sailed for Teste Island. This was found to be about 20 miles from the mainland, and the idea of establishing the projected station upon it was abandoned, Chalmers desiring "a position more accessible to New Guinea."

The characteristics that differentiate the explorer from the ordinary missionary were most marked in Tamate. He was not content merely to proclaim his message to those who would listen. Each new step supplied him with data from which he, and those who should follow him, might arrive at an accurate and intimate knowledge of native life; and no detail of the habits of the peoples he visited, of their social customs, or of their physical environment, was considered unimportant. In consequence, his journals teem with firsthand observations that have contributed greatly to the sum of useful information about the geography, ethnography, and anthropology of the great dark land of New Guinea. Here is one of his earliest memoranda of this nature: "I think women are more respected here than they are in some other heathen lands. They seem to keep fast hold of their own possessions. A man stole an ornament belonging to his wife, and sold it for hoop-iron on board the *Bertha*. When he went ashore, he was met on the beach by his spouse, who had in the meantime missed her trinket; she assailed him with tongue, stick, and stone, and demanded the hoop-iron." This incident occurred at Teste Island.

Moresby Island was next visited, but it, in turn, was rejected as unsuitable for a central station. East Cape and Killerton Island marked the eastern limit of this prospecting cruise. A return was made to Moresby Island, and thence the *Bertha* carried the party to South Cape. A landing was made on Suau or Stacey Island, off the Cape.

"About nine we went ashore near the anchorage. I crossed the island to the village, but did not feel satisfied as to the position. One of our guides to the village wore, as an armet, the jawbone of a man from the mainland

## At South Cape

he had killed and eaten; others strutted about with human bones dangling from their hair and about their necks. It is only the village Tepauri on the mainland with which they are unfriendly. We returned to the boat and sailed along the coast. On turning a cape, we came to a pretty village on a well-wooded point. The people were friendly, and led us to see the water, of which there is a good supply. This is the spot for which we have been in search as a station for beginning work. We can go anywhere from here, and are surrounded by villages. The mainland is not more than a gunshot across. God has led us.”

Besides its central and otherwise desirable position, Suau possessed the additional attraction of being a place at which the language of the people most nearly approximated that of the Teste Islanders. A sailor had gathered a vocabulary of 400 words of the Teste Island language, and this was in the hands of the missionaries. It was tried at East Cape without success, and to the natives there the vocabularies of the Port Moresby natives and the Murray Islanders were equally unintelligible. But, as we have said, at Suau, the Teste Island vocabulary proved a useful basis for intercourse.

The Rarotongan teachers who accompanied Tamate, their wives, and their goods, were at once landed. A spot for the mission house was selected, and missionaries, teachers, and sailors from the two mission vessels—the *Bertha* and the *Mayri*—set to work on its erection. On December 5, 1877, the missionaries went ashore to reside, and the *Bertha* left—the *Mayri* remaining at their disposal.

Chalmers never tired of praising the devotion, zeal, and other missionary qualities of his Polynesian teachers; but he had occasionally to run serious risks when they had failed to act with all the patience and tact that their perilous position rendered imperative. An instance of this occurred during the first days at Suau. An axe belonging to one of the teachers had been stolen, and during the search, the owner of it “ran off for his gun, and came rushing over with it. I ordered him to take it back, and in the evening told them it was only in New Guinea that guns were used by missionaries. It was not so in any other mission I knew of; and if we could not live among the natives without arms, we had better remain at home; and if I saw arms

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

used again by them for anything except birds, or the like, I should have the whole of them thrown into the sea." Tamate himself never relied on anything more formidable than a stout, hazel, walking-stick, throughout the whole of his—humanly making—dangerous expeditions; and the stick was only used as an aid in walking, and in balancing himself while crossing swamps and other places where the foothold was insecure.

All this notwithstanding, an incident in which the abuse of firearms played an important part came near to terminating the Suau station, and perhaps the lives of the little missionary band. Some natives had boarded the *Mayri*, and a misunderstanding with the captain had arisen. This culminated in a murderous assault upon the captain, who in self-defense shot his assailant dead. Tamate required all the tact of which he was master. The natives rose in arms and crowded into the village, and one who was friendly advised flight. "Mrs. Chalmers decidedly opposed our leaving. God would protect us. The vessel was too small, and not provisioned, and to leave would be losing our position as well as endangering Teste and East Cape. We came here for Christ's work, and He would protect us." Therefore, they stayed, and even dispatched the *Mayri* to Murray Island with its wounded captain, leaving themselves without means of escape even if they had occasion to change their minds.

By dint of friendly diplomacy and courageous indifference, this storm was weathered, and the good graces of the natives regained. "I had an invitation to attend a cannibal feast at one of the settlements. Some said it would consist of two men and a child, others of five and a child.

The cannibal feast was held. Some of our friends appeared with pieces of human flesh dangling from their necks and arms. The child was spared for a future time, it being considered too small. Amidst all the troubles, Mrs. Chalmers was the only one who kept calm and well."





## CHAPTER 8

### Exploring from South Cape

The earlier months of 1878 were sufficiently occupied in the work of completing the establishment at Suau; but, in May, Tamate and Tamate Vaine (Mrs. Chalmers) made an extended cruise along the south coast in the mission ship *Ellangowan*. Chalmers has summarized the work accomplished:

“Communication was held with some 200 villages, 105 were personally visited, and 90 for the first time by a white man. Several bays, harbors, rivers, and islands were discovered and named; the country between Meikle and Orangene Bays, together with that lying at the back of Kerepunu, was explored, and the entire coastline from Keppel Point to McFarlane Harbor traversed on foot.”

From point to point, Chalmers explored the coastline from China Straits to Hall Sound, landing wherever he saw any appearance of population; and, if his vocabulary failed him, making friends on all hands with chiefs and the people by means of presents and kindly and peace-speaking signs. The stock methods of the New Guinea pioneer have been well described by Dr. McFarlane: “I have often been amused at the pictures of Moffat, Williams, and the rest, compared with my own experiences. Instead of standing on the beach in a suit of broadcloth, with Bible in hand, the pioneer missionary in New Guinea might be seen on the beach in very little and very light clothing, with an umbrella in one hand and a small bag in the other, containing (not Bibles and tracts, but) beads, Jews’ harps, small looking-glasses, and matches; not pointing to heaven, giving the impression that he is a rain-maker, but sitting on a stone with his shoe and stocking off, surrounded by an admiring crowd who are examining his white foot, and rolling up his wet trousers (he having waded ashore from the boat) to see if he has a white leg, and then motioning for him to bare

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

his breast that they may see if that also is white. The opening and shutting of an umbrella for protection from the sun, the striking of a match, the ticking and movement of a watch—these things cause great surprise and delight, and loud exclamations.”

As we shall have occasion to see, Tamate added to this repertory of introductory accomplishments those of smoking and singing.

A graphic narrative of this voyage of discovery will be found in a chapter in *Work and Adventure in New Guinea*, entitled “A Few Trip Incidents,” and we content ourselves here with a rough sketch of the work accomplished on this beginning of Tamate’s “journeys on New Guinea, in parts hitherto unknown, and among tribes supposed to be hostile.”

Exploration began at China Straits, at the most easterly point of the southern coast of New Guinea. For a few miles, the traveler was within the sphere of influence of the mission station at East Cape, but he soon came upon “little known seas and country,” where he had to make his landmarks for himself upon the very incomplete charts in his possession. The Scot abroad ever retains an indelible and deeply cherished memory of his native place, and Tamate named his first discovery “Inveraray Bay.”

If he did not know the country and the people, however, Tamate was not unknown to the coast natives within a radius of 50 miles from Suau. These had heard of the fate of the men who had been shot by the captain of the *Mayri*. They did not receive the missionary at all heartily, and were rather “inclined to be impudent.” Brave to a fault, Tamate was always discreet, and on this first visit contented himself with giving a few presents, and then getting quietly to his boat, and away.

In Farm Bay the explorer was more cordially received, and made his first advances by submitting to the inspection of an admiring crowd. On the following morning, a number of canoes came off. The natives evidently wanted to make a show of confidence in their visitor, but the snorting of the engines— steam being up — disconcerted them. When the anchor was up, the canoes were warned to keep clear. They could not quite see why: the

## Exploring from South Cape

sails were not set. But a turn or two of the screw was sufficient demonstration for most of them. "One canoe hanging on is pulled under, a wild shout, a moment's silence, and then there is a loud roar of laughter, when they see canoe and paddlers appear astern at some distance."

With the object of getting into friendly touch with the natives, the same devices had to be resorted to over and over again. A piece of red cloth would be attached to a stick and floated astern. Then hoop-iron would be offered, and once that was accepted the canoes came alongside, and fraternizing became an easy matter. All seemed to understand the process of trade and barter, and valuable time was gained. For, while the captain carried on intercourse with the canoes, Tamate would take the boat, effect a landing, and accomplish a visit to the local chief. "As long as trading canoes remain alongside, the parties landing are perfectly safe; care should be taken to get away as soon as possible after the canoes leave the vessel."

Tamate landed at Fyfe Bay in spite of a crowd of armed natives who warned him to remain in the boat. He insisted on seeing the chief and sprang ashore, followed by the mate of the *Ellangowan*. But presents and blandishment were alike unavailing with "the stern old chieftain," and gifts to the people were indignantly returned. Judging discretion the better part of valor, Tamate retired upon his boat, in as dignified a manner as possible, followed by a suspicious crowd, and closely attended by a man with a large round club.

At Meikle Bay—named after his old friend, the Rev. Gilbert Meikle—Tamate had a more cordial reception, and persuaded the chief to accompany him on a short inland expedition. This resulted in the discovery of what was afterwards charted as Mullens Harbor and Poroai Lagoon. The charts gave no indication of the existence of this large sheet of water, but the explorer felt sure, from the formation of the land and the manner of clouds hanging over it, that there must be a lake or an arm of the sea, and that there must be considerable streams carrying off the water of the Lorne Range and Cloudy Mountains.

There was a "slight scuffle" at *Ellangowan Bay*, and Tamate had to simulate a towering passion to keep a noisy crowd from pressing on him.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

At Orangerie Bay, the mission vessel was surrounded by over 100 canoes, containing quite 400 men, and resort to the steam whistle was found to be the only means of keeping them at a respectful distance. At another place, Tamate had to make his escape in a native canoe, pressing the unwilling rowers into his service by sheer dint of his overpowering will.

In conversation with natives at Port Moresby, Tamate had heard of a settlement of Amazons, and had been informed that the members of the community were excellent tillers of the soil, splendid canoeists in sailing or paddling, and quite able to hold their own against attacks by warriors of the other sex, who sometimes attempted to invade their province. He could quite credit the existence of this settlement, for he had found that the instigators of nearly all the native quarrels were the women, who were never lacking in physical courage, and would even chastise their lords, not only with tongue, but also with fist and stone. One of the most picturesque incidents of the trip was its discovery.

However they might treat native men, the Amazons were evidently afraid of Tamate. He landed alone, and shortly descried hundreds of women standing under the houses—which are, in New Guinea, always constructed so that the floor shall be some feet from the ground. He could only see grass petticoats and feet. Each attempt to come within speaking distance was baffled by a wild discordant scream that would have tried the strongest nerves. Determined not to be baulked, he tried to lure the Amazons from their ambush.

“I threw on the beach a piece of red cloth and a few beads; walking away quite carelessly, and apparently not noticing what was taking place. A girl steals out from the crowd, stops, turns, eyes fixed on me; advances, stops, crosses her hands, pressing her breast. Poor thing, not courageous enough; so, lightning speed, back. It is evident the old ladies object to the younger ones attempting, and they are themselves too frightened. Another young damsel about nine or ten years old comes out, runs, halts, walks cat-like lest the touch of her feet on the sand should waken me from my reverie; another halt, holds her chest, lest the spirit should take its flight or the pattering heart jump right out. I fear it was beyond the slight patter then, and

## Exploring from South Cape

had reached the stentorian thump of serious times. On; a rush; well done! She picks cloth and beads up.”

Tamate’s point was gained, and he was soon besieged by the noisiest crowd he had ever met. He was glad to escape on board his boat. When he landed a second time, he was met by a clamoring crowd; to whom he gave presents indiscriminately. “Soon there was a quarrel between the old ladies and young ones. The latter were ordered off, and because they would not go.” The “old ladies” insisted upon his getting into his boat and retiring. Throughout the records of his further pioneering journeys, there is no trace of Tamate’s ever having braved the Amazons again.

After prospecting on Dufaure Island, Orangerie Bay, for a site for a mission station, and then continuing his investigation of the coastline westwards, Tamate came to the Keakaro and Aroma districts. In Aroma, he was traversing the coastline between McFarlane Harbor and Keppel Point on foot—his boat accompanying him on the outside of the reef—when he recognized that the natives by whom he was surrounded were all armed, and that others were lurking at a distance. Believing that his safety lay in keeping on the move, he told the native teacher and Loyalty Islander who were with him to keep a good lookout, and pushed on, hoping to reach the next village. The little party were jostled and hustled in a menacing fashion. Efforts were made to trip them up, and to wrest their satchels and fowling-piece from them. This time, the women were on the side of peace. Two women carried off clubs that were in the hands of men pressing most close upon Tamate, and an old woman distracted the attention of the two armed men between whom Tamate was walking. To cut a long story short, the village was reached before the murderous intention of the crowd was fulfilled, the chiefs intervened, and the little party made their escape in their boat, which had now been able to get through the reef and come inshore.

Tamate was wont to look back upon this experience as one of the most dangerous he ever had to face; and yet the ice had been broken. Only eight years later, the Hon. John Douglas was able to write: “We found ourselves fronting a palm-fringed shore, with a background of bright grass-covered hills . . . This is the district of Aroma—a rich and populous one; and there

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

was no lack of life to give it interest, for we soon had plenty of canoes about us, and all along the beach for several miles the people were moving about.

Within a space of not more than three miles we visited four villages, and at each of them, a mission teacher was stationed, all of them being comfortably housed . . . They live surrounded by gardens, and in groves of coconut palm, with abundance of sweet potatoes, taro, and arrowroot . . . The people as a whole struck me as a much nicer lot than the South Cape tribes—cleaner, healthier, and apparently more industrious. Nothing can be more charming than the palm groves, and the children seemed as happy as they could be. There was a perfect swarm of them.”

What Chalmers has called his “first real inland trip” was undertaken in August 1878, when he crossed the New Guinea peninsula in the extreme east—from Catamaran Bay to Discovery Bay, in Milne Bay. On this occasion, he was accompanied by Mr. Chester, the magistrate of Thursday Island. Mr. Lawes has recorded that in the course of this expedition, much previously unexplored country was traversed, and our knowledge of the much-indented coastline greatly increased. Eighteen populous villages were discovered. Besides seven rivers and numerous rivulets, three mountains, and extensive bays and lakes were seen.” Although this was “the first walk ever taken by a white man across eastern New Guinea,” Tamate’s name and fame had gone before him, and it stands on record as one of the most pleasant and least dangerous of all his longer expeditions.

However well-fitted Suau may have been as a centre for missionary operations and Christian influence, it proved itself even unhealthier than Port Moresby. Teacher after teacher sickened, and despite the tender solicitude of Mrs. Chalmers, and unwearied nursing by her, four of them died. Then she herself began to show signs of failing health, and it was deemed desirable that she should proceed to the Colonies. She arrived in Sydney in November 1878, but it was soon evident that the sufferer was becoming weaker, and on February 20th, her gentle and heroic spirit passed away. To the last, her mind was bright and vigorous; she delighted to talk of missionary work, and especially of the scenes and events through which she had passed while in New Guinea. At this time, Chalmers wrote home: “The

## Exploring from South Cape

natives learned to love her, and would have done anything possible for her. When they heard of her death they showed much sorrow, and said she ought to have remained with them, and if death came let her lie near to them. I left her once for six weeks, and during all that time they treated her well, many coming daily to see her, some with vegetables, some with fish; putting them down and going away, not waiting for payment, only saying, 'You must eat plenty, and when Tamate returns be strong and fat.'"

Suau was reduced to the status of a native preacher's settlement, and Chalmers joined Mr. Lawes at Port Moresby.



## CHAPTER 9

### Pioneering: Ten Weeks in the Interior

Port Moresby, or Hanua bada, a village of about 1,000 inhabitants, now became Tamate's headquarters. There, Mr. and Mrs. Lawes were in charge of the station, which, as we have seen, the Rev. A. W. Murray, "the Father of the New Guinea Mission," established in 1873. Besides taking charge of the native church of the district, and supervising the work of the Polynesian teachers at different out-stations, Mr. Lawes—"an able, plodding, cautious, conscientious, kind, and gentlemanly man"—did useful work in the study of the various languages spoken by natives of the surrounding country; reducing these to writing, and translating portions of the Bible—the New Testament and the Psalms—and other books of a useful kind: founding the literature of New Guinea, so to speak. At a later date than that at which Tamate joined him, Mr. Lawes also organized a training institute for the instruction of Christian New Guineans, with the object of preparing a native ministry.

Tamate devoted himself almost exclusively to pioneering work. With a view to the creation of a friendly *entente* between the missionaries and the people of hundreds of village communities, and the spread of the gospel through his preaching and that of native pastors (settled wherever he could obtain a peaceable reception for them) he traversed the country in all directions. After a very short space of time, his record overtopped that of any other traveler who had explored in New Guinea, and his researches proved of untold value to the natives, in opening up for them the possibility of friendly intercourse with the civilized world.

Tamate's first prolonged trip from Port Moresby occupied a period of 10 weeks. Between the start on July 15th and the finish on September 26th, he "visited many native villages, and explored the mountainous country

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

along the course of, and between, the Goldie and Laroki rivers." In this excursion, he was accompanied by Ruatoka, the Rarotongan teacher who had been stationed at Port Moresby for some years, had acquired some knowledge of the current language of the Motu tribes, and had made the personal acquaintance of numbers of natives from the interior who had visited the coast at one time or another.

It would little serve our purpose were we to reproduce here an exact itinerary of this expedition, or indeed of any other of the great number which Tamate was able to accomplish; but we may note, in as concise a manner as is possible, the data which added to his ever-growing intimacy with his "friends," the savages of New Guinea. We shall attempt to record, as well, such facts as will serve to demonstrate the slow but sure growth of a better understanding between Papuans and white men, resulting in large measure from the frankness, cordiality, fearlessness, bravery, and Christian teaching of Tamate himself.

In the equipment of an explorer's expedition, carriers are almost a prime requisite: in the absence of a money currency, barter goods must be carried, and these are usually of considerable weight and bulk; medicine and certain articles of European diet, as well as cooking utensils and other camping necessities, must be carried; a store of useful and useless articles, which, as presents to chiefs and others, are the "open sesame" of most uncivilized lands, must be carried. But, Tamate found that portage was one of the most difficult matters to negotiate. Although he set out with 18 carriers, he had not gone many miles before these laid down their burdens and returned to the coast. Fresh assistance was procured, and another short stage accomplished, when his second gang declined to go a mile farther, and went back to their village. Here and there, carriers were not to be had at all, and the exploring party had to store the bulk of their goods with a friendly chief, and carry the remainder of the "swag" themselves.

With inconvenient emphasis, this experience demonstrated the fact that the people of New Guinea had not even reached the tribal stage of development, where a powerful chief exercises autocratic sway over a wide extent of country, and may be propitiated by the passing traveler. The village

## Pioneering: Ten Weeks in the Interior

community is the greatest social aggregate in New Guinea. Chalmers found that no native felt any security in crossing the narrow boundaries of the land in the immediate neighborhood of his home; as soon as he came within the sphere of the next village, the Papuan was in imminent risk of losing his life. For the same reason, the quarrelling and bickering between the different villages were innumerable. If a person from a neighboring community had been wounded or killed, the natives of the guilty village lived in hourly fear of reprisals.

Tamate had not gone a day's march from Port Moresby before he found houses where "on the door hangs a bunch of nutshells, so that when the door is shut or opened they make a noise. Should the occupants of the house be asleep, and their foes come, they would, on the door being opened, be woken up. Spears and clubs are all handy. The state of fear of one another in which the savage lives is truly pitiful; to him, every stranger seeks his life, and so does every other savage. The falling of a dry leaf at night, the tread of a pig, or the passage of a bird, all arouses him, and he trembles with fear." Elsewhere Chalmers has written: "It is often said, 'Why not leave the savages alone in their virgin glory? Only then are they truly happy.' How little those who so speak and write know what savage life is! A savage seldom sleeps well at night. He fears ghosts and hobgoblins; these midnight wanderers cause him much alarm, as they are heard in falling leaves, chirping lizards, or disturbed birds singing; but, besides these, there are embodied spirits that he has good cause to fear, and especially at that uncanny hour between the morning star and glimmering light of the approaching lord of day, the hour of yawning and arm stretching, when the awakening pipe is lighted and the first smoke of the day is enjoyed. . . . Savage life is not the joyous hilarity that many writers would lead us to understand. It is not all the happy laugh, the feast, and the dance. There are often seasons when communities are scattered, biding in large trees, in caves under rocks, in other villages, and far away from their own."

Although we may be anticipating, to some extent, it may be recorded here that one of the earliest benefits derived by the Papuans from the pioneer work of Tamate and other missionaries was the dissipation of that element of dread in the social life of the people. To quote from a traveler,

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

who visited New Guinea in the '80s for other purposes than those of the missionaries: "Every native of New Guinea goes to bed with his war implements handy, and sleeps warily. These missionaries have taught him that if he 'shows mercy to his enemy he will make his enemy do likewise;' so, eventually, he flings down his arms, and sleeps soundly, without dread, and commonsense brings him over in no time."

Chalmers himself has recorded that, a very short time after the trip of which we are at present giving some account, Lohia of Taburi, an inland native "who had never been to port before, came with a large party and remained some days, greatly delighted that the way was open for them to come and go as they liked. When the Sogerians heard that Lohia had been to the coast, they, too, soon followed. . . . One of our New Year meetings brought large crowds from inland. . . . There were addresses, one of which was delivered by Lohia. He was excited and astonished. He said it was difficult to believe that now, when he was grown old, the way was open from the sea to the far-back mountains, and he hoped it would continue so."

Tamate entered every strange village with shouts of "Peace, peace, peace." In a short time, it became known that he tried everywhere to make peace, and many a feud was terminated through his mediation. In this connection, we may quote the testimony of Dr. Doyle Glanville, who visited New Guinea in 1885 as a member of a special commission appointed by the British Government. "Whatever might be its origin, 'Tamate' meant a great deal. If I went to the natives and said, 'Who is the king?' 'Tamate,' was the reply. If I said to them, 'Who is like a father unto you?' they would say 'Tamate.' If I said 'What is "*maino*"?' — '*maino*' meaning peace, remember—they would say, 'Tamate,' because Tamate settled their little quarrels, soothed their strife. Was it not Tamate who turned their quarrels into peace? Had not Tamate been known, when two opposing tribes were approaching, to go and take the two hostile chiefs, like two turbulent children, and insist upon their being friends, and not fighting?"

One immediate consequence of the scarcity of carriers was that "light swags" became absolutely necessary, and supplies of food reliance had to be placed upon the varied faring of the native larder. "Feeling sure we should

## Pioneering: Ten Weeks in the Interior

get carriers here, we took no supplies with us, so are now eating the best we can get, doing Banting to perfection.” There are no sheep or cattle on New Guinea, and the pig is the staple source of flesh food. Pig was not always forthcoming, however, and we read of “a good supper of taro and cockatoo, the latter rather tough,” of a meal of “sugarcane, taro, and okan-nut” (a large kind of almond), and of a present of cooked food and “smoked wallaby” (kangaroo). Sometimes the native diet did not tempt. “The natives who accompanied us, having caught a large rat and frog, turned them on the fire and ate them.” “The natives have been having a feast. They began with boiled bananas, and finished with a large snake cooked in pots. It was cut up and divided out among all—16 eggs were found in her, a little larger than a good-sized fowl’s egg. They seemed to relish it much, and the gravy was much thought of. They say pig is nothing to compare with snake. Ah, well, tastes differ.” “A woman came in with several bamboos of grubs, which were cooked in the bamboos, then spread on leaves; some salt was dissolved in the mouth and squirted over all.” When Tamate adds, “It was amusing to see the gusto with which men, women, and children partook,” we get a glimpse of the large and kindly tolerance with which he could appreciate the human side of savage native life, without being repelled by practices and customs in which, to say the least, he could not share.

Not only is the pig the most valued quadruped in New Guinea, for the sake of its carcass, but it occupies the position of the domestic pet. “Under the first house in the village sat a man with a large pig standing by him, which he was clapping and scratching as if to keep it quiet”—a precaution which was not unnecessary, for at another village “the family pig . . . danced, grunted, advanced, retired, and finally made at me.” Besides domesticated pigs, there were wild pigs—“A wild boar from the bush took possession of the village. Often when the natives are in the bush they have to seek refuge in climbing trees from the savage tuskers, especially if they have been speared and are determined to fight.”

Native cooking was found to be of a primitive and incomplete character. “A pig is put on the fire until the hair is well singed off; then division is made, then re-divided, and eaten. They take a piece between the teeth, hold

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

with one hand, and with a bamboo knife cut close to the mouth. A bird is turned on the fire a few times, then cut up and eaten.”

The principal articles of barter were tobacco and salt. “How they relish salt! The smallest grain is picked carefully up. Fortunately, we have a good deal of this commodity. Never have I seen salt-eating like this; only children eating sugar corresponds to it.” “The demand for salt is very great; grains are picked up, and friends are supplied with a few grains from what they have got for taro.” “Maka was buying taro with salt, and, having finished, some natives noticed damp salt adhering to his hand; they seized the hand, and in turn licked it until quite clean.” Sugar, curiously enough, did not appeal to the native palate. “A man sitting by us when having morning tea, asked for some of the salt we were using. We told him it was not salt, but sugar. He insisted it was salt, and we gave him some on his taro. He began eating, and the look of disgust on his face was worth seeing; he rose up, went out, spat out what he had in his mouth, and threw the remainder away.”

Of this trip of 10 weeks, Mr. Lawes wrote: “Traveling northeast, past Moumili on the west bank of the Goldie River, he (Tamate) came to Munikahila on the high land, and formed a permanent camp at Kenenumu, on one of the ridges. From this starting point, he made an excursion east-northeast across the Munikahila Creek, which flows west, and falls into the Goldie. . . . In the hope of reaching the opposite coast of New Guinea, Mr. Chalmers went along Mount Bellamy until he found it ended abruptly, and was distinct from the Owen Stanley Range. He was unable to cross the main range owing to the height and inaccessibility of the mountains, the thick bush and huge boulders. . . . Starting again from Kenenumu, Mr. Chalmers visited Sogeri, a large district lying between the spurs, and a mountain which he called Mount Nisbet, and running round the latter, east and west. . . . He visited two districts at the back of Mount Astrolabe, and from the summit obtained a splendid view of a country which, he says, he has not seen equaled in New Guinea.”

The rough traveling to which Mr. Lawes refers may be illustrated from Tamate’s own account. “Of my traveling in this land, today beats all; it was along mere goat tracks on the edge of frightful precipices, down precipitous

## Pioneering: Ten Weeks in the Interior

mountainsides and up steep ridges, on hands and knees at times, hanging on to roots and vines, and glad when a tree offered a little rest and support. I gave it up at last, hungry and weary. We lost our way, and after some hours' traveling, found ourselves in a thick bush and surrounded by precipices. It has been up hill and down dale with a vengeance, trying hard to get to the southwest. At last, wet through and thoroughly tired, we camped to have breakfast, dinner, and supper in one. We were 10 hours on the tramp, and carrying our bags, felt ready for a night's rest. We see where we are; but how to get out is the problem to be solved." Again—"At the Laroki we had to strip, and just above small rapids, holding on by a long line fastened to poles on each side, we crossed over."

But, with Tamate, the missionary was never merged in the explorer. The tramp had been undertaken with the definite object of discovering suitable stations for native teachers, and this was kept steadily in view. Nor did the traveler fail to avail himself of every opportunity to proclaim the evangel. "We have just had a service, and through Kena, we have told the natives the object of our coming and staying, that they might know of the true God, and of Jesus Christ the Savior. It was interesting to mark the different expressions on the faces as they heard for the first time of God—the God of love—and that as His servants we were here. When told of the resurrection, they looked at one another; some laughed, others seemed serious. They were very particular in their inquiries as to the name of the Great Spirit, and of His Son—forgetting, and returning to hear it again." At another village "a large number of natives attended our service, and were truly orderly—not a whisper, and during prayer every head bent. On the Astrolabe, the other day, Lohiamalaka said he felt anxious for us in entering Janara. Rua, through Kena, told him not to fear anything on our account, as the Great Spirit was with us, and no harm could come near us. Last evening he was telling the people here of his fears, and what Rua said, 'and how true it was the Great Spirit or something is with them.' At all the villages, Lohiamalaka repeated all he could remember of what he had been told, and of our singing and praying. Every evening he would sit at the tent door and get us to sing for the benefit of a crowd of natives outside, who, having heard from himself of our musical powers, refused to go to their homes at sunset, and insisted on remaining until after *noko* (singing)."

## **JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA**

On his return to Port Moresby on September 26th, Tamate's first thoughts were of the progress of the work. "Good news from all the stations. The services have gone on here in Rua's absence with great success. On two Sundays, Chief Poi conducted the services, addressing those present and telling them he thought that now it was time for them all to receive the gospel which had been so faithfully taught them during these years; in prayer he remembered us who were inland, and asked our Father in heaven to watch over us, and bring us back safely, and to enlighten all of those at the seaside."





## CHAPTER 10

### Exploring in the Gulf of Papua

Tamate's second important excursion from Port Moresby extended over a period of nearly two months, the start being made on November 22, 1879. This time, he was accompanied by Mr. Beswick and Piri, the native teacher at Boera; and, as this was to be a coasting trip, two Port Moresby natives were shipped as pilots. Three natives from Silo also were afforded the privilege of returning to their homes in the white man's canoe.

Every mile of the coastline from Port Moresby to Bald Head was carefully examined, either on the westward trip or on the return journey, and Thursday Island was visited when the western limit of exploration was reached. It was known that the eastern shores of the Gulf of Papua had been touched, at points, by Mr. McFarlane in 1875, and then in 1878, Mr. Ingham had come along the whole coast in his small steamer; but as neither of these gentlemen had left any record of his observations. And as neither was thorough in his quest of exact information, it may be taken that Tamate was again adding to the sum of our slender knowledge of that part of New Guinea, as well as acquiring a preliminary acquaintance with the peoples to whom, for some years to come, he was to devote a large part of his time.

Some idea of the geographical value of the cruise may be derived from the mere enumeration of physical features that were located and named for the first time. These were the Coombes River, Macey Lagoon, the Ingham Hills, the Annie River, Treachery Point, Orokelo Bay, the Sir Arthur Gordon Range, Mount Chester, Mount Gill, Mount Alexander, and Mount Charlton. Valuable observations as to reefs, rivers, and harbors were added, besides, to the scanty details of the navigation charts.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Visits were paid to the fertile district of Maiva; to that of Oiapu, where the missionary party were “the first foreigners to land;” to the pretty and clean village of Jokea, afterwards to become more closely associated with the work of the mission; to Motumotu, “a very fine, large village,” at which Tamate took up his quarters some years later; to the friendly people of Silo; to the village of Pesi; to the Kerema district; to that of Orokolo; and to that around Bald Head, the farthest point known to the Port Moresby pilots who accompanied the expedition. As we have indicated, a number of the places mentioned were scenes of further missionary work by Tamate, and we, therefore, deem it right, thus shortly, to mark the date of his first intercourse with the natives at these points. We have by no means exhausted the list of his landings on that occasion, nor did he claim to have “visited” a people until he had landed unarmed, and remained some time among them.

Broadly classed, the natives were friendly or unfriendly. At Motumotu, for instance, Tamate and his party had a cordial reception. Most of these coast villages had trade relations with the natives of Motu, the Port Moresby district, the staple commerce being in sago, extracted by the Gulf natives from the sago palm, and bartered for uros—earthenware cooking and water pots manufactured by the Motuans. It was found, therefore, that Piri, the native teacher, was known at Motumotu, and indeed all along the coast. The visitors were escorted by the entire population of the village, and accommodated upon the platform of a large temple sacred to Semese. Presents were exchanged, and with his characteristic tolerance of the superstitions of the unenlightened heathen, Tamate even left a present “for the temple.”

At Silo, the natives who had taken passage from Port Moresby on the mission steamer secured a royal welcome for the party. “We were received as real friends, and the natives we returned to their homes made us out to be great chiefs of peace, great, ‘like the sun in its meridian splendor, and the moon at the full when it travels in the zenith.’ We were led to the temple, then through the village, so that all might have a good look at the great personages who brought their friends home ‘in a ship that can go without wind, and straight ahead, though blowing a strong head breeze.’ On our return visit we received large presents of sago, and the people helped in wooding the vessel.”

## Exploring in the Gulf of Papua

At Pier Point, the natives of Pesi came alongside “shouting for Piri,” and there, as well as at other places west of Motumotu, the welcome was sometimes embarrassing, for, “as in Polynesia, they rub noses when meeting, and to us it was not at all pleasant when an affectionate chief met us, his face got up for the occasion, the paint still wet, or perhaps in mourning, and that only recently put on, and insisted on rubbing noses.”

The reference to mourning may best be explained by quoting Tamate’s description of the toilettes affected by the natives beyond Maiva. “The married men and women have very little dress; the young men and girls have a little more than their parents. Shells are much used in making head-dresses. . . . They have shell necklaces, and wonderfully wrought earrings made from tortoiseshell. Their nose-jewels, also made from shell, are very large, and some three-quarters of an inch in diameter. On their arms they wear large shell armlets, and around their waists broad, fancy-cut bark belts; some of the younger swells wearing tight bands of native cloths, nicely colored, made from the bark of the native mulberry, and if compared with the tight-lacing of civilization, they would undoubtedly carry off the palm. They paint the face in stripes of black, white, red, and yellow. When in mourning, they paint themselves all over black, and wear finely-wrought net collars. When in very deep mourning, they envelop themselves with a very tight kind of wicker-work dress, extending from the neck to the knees in such a way that they are not able to walk well.”

But Tamate’s journey was not, by any means, a triumphal progress. Over and over again, the suspicious or hostile conduct of the natives prevented a landing, or made it so dangerous that prudence dictated a retreat until a more convenient opportunity. Of the district of Karama, he writes: “Our natives gave the inhabitants a very bad name; and on our nearing the large canoes that came off to meet us, they went below and got into the sailors’ bunks, begging the mate to shut up the forward hatch. On our seeing all the canoes armed with clubs and bows and arrows, and all the bows ready for action, and natives standing up with guards on their arms, we thought it best to have little to do with them, and, after giving a few presents, we steamed along to Namai and Silo.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Of the district of Keuru, he writes: "The inhabitants are said to be bad and treacherous, and we were strongly advised to have nothing whatsoever to do with them; but on our return voyage, being short of wood, we anchored off some distance for the night, intending to go ashore in the morning and get two boatloads. About half-past two in the morning, the shells were blowing, and lights were seen all along the coast, that we thought it better to heave up anchor, run on to our friends at Silo, and there get wood."

Again, at Orokolo Bay: "On entering the bay, and getting close up to the villages, we were soon surrounded by a number of well-manned and well-armed large double canoes. Things not looking particularly pleasant, bows being handled, and men taking stations on the platforms that join the canoes, we thought it well to give a few presents and get away. 'Full speed ahead,' and away we went with two double canoes keeping well up for a considerable distance. On our return, we again visited the bay, and, a few small, unarmed canoes coming alongside, we allowed the natives on board, and were fraternizing all right with them until we observed two large, double canoes; one working up to port, and the other to starboard, and our natives noticed signs being given that led them to tell us 'to look out, get rid of these lying fellows.' We told them to get over the side, as we were going to leave; but they lingered on until sometime after we were underway."

Of the different peoples visited, some were found to be cannibals, while others were not. Most of the cannibals were found in the neighborhood of Bald Head, on the delta of what is now known as the Jubilee River. Tamate records that the natives of the village of Maipua "are black, with woolly hair, and all cannibals, eating human flesh, cooked or uncooked, and pronounce it better food than anything known." "All cannibals" is also his description of the inhabitants of the districts of Kailu and Ukerave. Of Tamate's "cannibal friends," it may be said at once that he did not find that they were in any sense the most ferocious or inaccessible of the Papuans. Indeed, he once said, "If the accounts we heard of Fiji cannibalism are correct, then nowhere in New Guinea are these cannibals to be compared with the Fijians. . . . I have lived among cannibals, and have found them not at all a bad lot."

## Exploring in the Gulf of Papua

Although it is not within the scope of the present sketch to undertake anything like a detailed account of Tamate's discoveries, or of the work of the New Guinea Mission as a whole, perhaps we should give some idea of the religious prepossessions of the people among whom it was his chief endeavour and ultimate object to sow the good seed of the Christian gospel. Here, we may quote his description of the three principal deities of the Gulf native. "Kaevakuku is represented by a large frame of wicker-work; her hat is large, and is something like a penguin in shape, and when she is consulted in difficult affairs, she gives her answers by shaking her head or remaining still. A party wishing to fight would at once go to the temple with an offering, and inquire as to whether they should fight or not, and if she would assist them. If she were agreeable, her head would shake; if otherwise, she remained still. Semese and Tauparau are made from blocks of wood, and stand outside of some temples, and against all the posts running down the centre. At Port Moresby, the natives say that the spirit as soon as it leaves the body proceeds to Elema, where it forever dwells in the midst of food and betel-nuts, and spends the days and nights in endless enjoyment—eating, chewing betel-nuts, and dancing." Even this crude eschatology contemplates a retributive judgment upon those who have misspent their lives. "Most worthless fellows are sent back to Poava and Idia, small islands near Boera, there to remain until the goddess sees fit to send for them."

Of the Port Moresby district itself, Mr. Lawes has written: "No religious system has been found in this part of New Guinea. There are no idols, and the people are not idol-worshippers at all. They seem to have no idea of a god as a supreme being or a good spirit. The only religious ideas consist in a belief in evil spirits. They live a life of slavish fear to these, but seem to have no idea of propitiating them by sacrifice or prayer. They believe, too, in the deathlessness of the soul, but their ideas as to its abode or condition are only vague and indefinite."



## CHAPTER 11

### Pioneering in 1880

Although Chalmers had transferred his headquarters to Port Moresby, he had left teachers at Suau and several other stations at the extreme east end of the peninsula. Almost immediately after his return from the cruise in the Papuan Gulf, he set out on January 15, 1880, upon a round of visitation to the teachers and others in the south and east. After visiting East Cape and Teste Island, he met the five teachers located at stations in the China Straits, and held a conference with them at Dinner Island. This was “for the purpose of stimulating them as well as ourselves to increased earnestness, effort, and fidelity in the work which lies before us.” He considered that such meetings were not unneeded, for white traders were already beginning to follow in the wake of the missionary, and these, by precept as well as by example, were urging the natives to prevent missionaries and teachers from settling among them, alleging that they were “no good,” and would but rob them of their lands and their food.

In June, he set off upon a second inland trip of six weeks’ duration. The route chosen was, for some distance, that traversed on the previous occasion; thereafter it followed a northeasterly course across the Owen Stanley Range, passing through the districts of Moroka, Sogeri, and Favere, striking there the head-waters of the Kemp-Welch River, and following that river to its mouth in Hood Bay. “Many wiseacres shook their heads when they heard of our determination, and a few New Guinea would-be travelers said it was madness, and could not be done.” “But,” adds Chalmers, “I never once felt the slightest misgiving as to the result.”

The object of the tramp was, as usual, a missionary one: a search for suitable stations for missionary teachers.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

The party consisted of Tamate, Mr. Beswick, Mr. Neville Chester, Ruatoka, native teacher at Port Moresby, and "Granny," a "true, brave old Motu woman," who had been one of the first to welcome the missionaries to New Guinea, had become in her widowhood Mrs. Lawes' servant, and had proved herself an invaluable cook and interpreter in expeditions inland or along the coast. "Mile after mile," Mrs. Hunt has told us, "she would trudge unwearingly, carrying her heavy 'swag' containing the pots and pans, always in a good humor, fearless in the extreme, and generally showing herself to be the best traveler of the party."

The old difficulty as to portage occurred again. "We used to envy the holiday travelers in Africa with 200 or 300 carriers. We should have explored New Guinea long ago but for the difficulty of carrying." When the mountains were reached, the party had to face "difficult and, in some places, dangerous traveling. Going round the sides of rocks, with steep descents below, was anything but pleasant." They were "traveling through a terrible country, for hours at a time in streams, or ascending and descending mountain torrents."

When the valley of the Kemp-Welch was reached, trouble was not at an end. "On the right bank, more than 50 miles from the mouth, we made a rough raft, with a platform in the centre, and lashed our swags on the top so as to keep them dry. We were not long on board before we struck a snag, which did not seem to do much harm, and on we went a few more miles, when we found it impossible to guide or steer our unwieldy craft and keep her off snags in a part where the river was swift and deep. At one time, it seemed like abandoning everything; but after some desperate efforts we got her away, and were sailing down with the current beautifully, and hoping to be in Kalo the next day. I was standing aft on one of the logs, enjoying the scenery in an afternoon's sun, when lo! I was under water. Getting to the surface, I saw the raft dismantled a little way down, and its occupants still clinging to it. Those who could swim got round the broken raft and swam her ashore." From another pen, we learn that, while Tamate and Mr. Chester soon reached the shore, "Granny—although an excellent swimmer—made a very slow progress. When she finally reached the shore, it was found that her progress had been impeded by the pots and pans,

## Pioneering in 1880

which she refused to let go, and which she brought in triumph to the shore. It was a miserable plight," Tamate continues, "yet laughable. We landed everything, made large fires, and by midnight, we went to sleep on the beach rolled in our blankets."

In May 1887, this trip remained a record one—in respect of its length, at least. Tamate and his friends had attained the farthest inland point that had then been reached by any explorer; more than 500 miles had been traversed, and more than 40,000 feet had been climbed.

On July 31st, news reached Port Moresby that seven of the crew of a Chinese junk had been massacred at Aroma, and Chalmers went off at once to make sure that his teachers in the district had not shared the fate of the victims of this anti-foreign rising.

This satisfactorily accomplished, he proceeded in a rowboat to Manumanu on Redscar Bay, where the first party of native teachers for the mainland of New Guinea had been stationed near. It will be remembered that these were withdrawn because of prevailing sickness and the death of several of the party. The old chief pled for the return of the teachers, but Tamate had to point out that the district was much too unhealthy for the foreigner, although the native seemed to be comparatively immune.

From Manumanu, the Aroa was ascended until the semi-civilized and fertile district of Kabadi was reached, a district comprising 12 villages. The principal chief was found to be "a fine, kindhearted, fatherly fellow." In the course of all his travels in New Guinea, Tamate never experienced so much kindness from natives as he did at Keveo, the head village of Kabadi. He was accommodated in the council-house, a fine, large building, strongly built, and beautifully finished. The chief's wife, "a clean, tidy body, with a terrible temper," superintended the cooking of the travelers' meals, and proved an adept in the making of savory dishes, "one, in particular, a pudding fit for any table." Cleanliness would seem to have been a characteristic of the Keveans, for the villages were swept every morning, and the houses were kept in good order. Tamate's traveling bag—with pins, needles, thread, and scissors—was examined with great interest; but the natives would not

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

look at the case containing barometer, thermometer, and compass; when some attempt was made to explain the uses of these instruments—"Shut it, shut it; put it away, now put it away; we shall all be sick!" they cried. A dog accompanying the party was greatly honored. Getting to know that she was called Jess, the natives would shout, "Jess! Jess! *maino!* *maino!* *maino!*" Tamate was often asked to tell Jess that all Kabadi was *maino* (peace), and that she must frighten no one. From Keveo, Tamate made an extended inland journey on foot, with one of the chiefs for a guide. Much interesting country was explored; and thick scrub, long deep bogs, and perilous river crossings gave almost unpleasant variety to the routine of travel.

Altogether, Tamate found much in this district to suggest the advisability of an early return with teachers who should instruct the people in the way of truth.

Some weeks later, Tamate returned to Manumanu with the intention of ascending the Edith River and visiting the district of Doura, and thence advancing to the spurs on the western side of Mount Owen Stanley. But his friend, the chief of Manumanu, told him it would be madness to proceed, as the Koitabuans of Lokurukuna, a district on Redscar Bay, had gone up the day before with the object of exacting bloody revenge for the slaughter of several of their people by the Dourans, years before. That very morning, several dead bodies of Dourans had floated past on the river, and Tamate judged it wise to defer his visit to Doura until a later date.

In the same year, 1880, starting from Kerepunu in a small rowboat, and accompanied by two native teachers and a Kerepunuan, Tamate pulled up to Hood Lagoon and a creek at the head of it, and then pushed on over the swamps toward the Macgillivray Range. After a climb of a thousand feet, he came upon the people of the Animarupu district, and found them in a miserable, famine-stricken condition, consequent upon a long dry season. The little children were scarcely able to crawl; men and women like skeletons lay about, unable to work; a few of the stronger women were employed in the gullies round about, digging for any kind of roots that they might be fortunate enough to find; many were stretched out in the houses, ill and unable to come out. To make matters worse, the Animarupians

## Pioneering in 1880

were at enmity with the natives of Aroma, and were unable to venture into the plains in search of food; while those of the adjacent district of Quaipo lost no opportunity of harassing and slaughtering them. Too far from his base, Tamate could not give or promise the supplies of food that he might otherwise have procured for this starving people, but he was able to use his influence with the natives of Quaipo, and a peace was shortly concluded. Soon after his visit, rain fell in abundance, the sugarcane shot up, and the famine was stayed. The Animarupians had good cause to remember Tamate's visit, for not only did he initiate negotiations for peace with Quaipo, but afterwards, when he became friendly with Koapena, chief of Aroma, he begged that his Animarupu friends might be let alone, and amicable intercourse between the two communities followed upon that.

Tamate, by personal investigation, had now familiarized himself with the whole coastline of Southeastern New Guinea, from East Cape to Bald Head; by the several inland tramps, of which we have given some account, he had made himself known to a goodly number of the inland natives; and doubtless, his name and fame were known to many who had never seen his face. While he never made a subsequent journey without adding to his friends and to his fund of exact information concerning the Papuans, we may take it that in these first trips he had overcome what was probably the most dangerous and, therefore, the bravest work he was to undertake within that sphere of influence, and we may be permitted, henceforth, to pay less attention to details in describing the further excursions undertaken by him in prosecution of his arduous work of evangelizing this extensive reach of country.

At this point in our narrative, therefore, we would adduce the testimony of a government official to the inestimable value of these earlier expeditions, in preparing the natives for the friendly reception of the blessings of civilization as well as Christianity. "It is impossible," says this witness, "to exaggerate the difficulty of this pioneer work. Some of the communities were Papuan, others degenerate types of Malay and Polynesian origin; all lived in a perpetual state of inter-village warfare, and under a tyranny of superstition. The lack of any definite tribal organization, and the manner in which the communities were scattered, rendered intercourse with them

## **JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA**

infinitely difficult. Moreover, in many places the abuses of the labor traffic, and the crimes of lawless traders, had taught the natives to fear the white man as they would the devil. Had Chalmers in his early expeditions shown fear, or engendered mistrust, the whole territory probably would have been closed to any but an armed force. Nor was his work ever really finished, for over and over again the wrongful act of some trader, or the foolish panic of some native teacher, would convert peaceful villages into centers of hostility, and the whole work of restoring confidence would have to be taken in hand again.”





## CHAPTER 12

### The Dawn

In this chapter, we open up the record of 1881 and following years. Up to this time, Chalmers and his colleague had spent their best energies in breaking the ground over a wide area of country, and along a coastline exceeding 500 miles in length, delegating the greater part of the actual teaching and preaching to the wide-scattered staff of Polynesian teachers. Men of large minds and splendid imagination, they worked for big results, and were content to leave these to time and the assured vitality of that gospel of peace and love of which they were the heralds.

But this year began with much promise. On January 5th, a new church was opened at Port Moresby, and the first three New Guinea converts were baptized. Two months later, on March 6th, there were baptized the first two women of New Guinea converted to Christianity. It may be mentioned here, perhaps, that the first two converts, a man and a woman, were still living steadfastly in the faith at the date of Chalmers' death in 1901.

Besides this directly spiritual fruitage, the missionaries had for their cheer, in the beginning of 1881, an evidence of the powerful influence that Tamate had acquired over the native mind. News came that the natives of Motumotu and Lese, in the district of Elema, were making great preparations for a descent on Port Moresby, and boasting that they would kill Tamate and Ruatoka, and then harry the coast right and left. The tidings only made Tamate determine "to visit Motumotu and beard the lion in his den."

"I did not believe they would touch me," he continues, "but I feared they meant mischief to Kabadi and the coast villages. No time could be lost, as we were in a bad month for rain and storms, and the coastline is long and bad. The natives said it was too late, yet I resolved to try it."

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Piri and his wife were ordered to make ready to accompany the expedition in the whaleboat, Tamate also manning an open boat, and a start was made on 10th of January. The principal man of the boat's crew ran off, but his place was promptly taken by one of the three converts who had been baptized on the 5th of January.

“Our boat's crew was considered fools, rushing into the arms of death. Wives, children, and friends were gathered round weeping. The men said, ‘Cannot you see that if Tamate lives we shall live; and if he is murdered we shall be murdered; it is all right; we are going with him, and you will see us back all right with sago and betel-nuts.’” The convert who had volunteered for service told Tamate that all means imaginable, short of physical force, were used to prevent the crew from accompanying him, and added, “We know it is all right; the Spirit that has watched over you in the past (naming the various journeys) will do so now; and if we return safe, won't the people be ashamed?”

At Manumanu, the two boats' crews would fain have turned back, terrified by the dismal pictures drawn by their friends at the village. They urged upon Tamate that the bad weather had set in, but to this he only replied, “Think, my children, of the disgrace. We started to go to Motumotu, and at the first breath of contrary wind, we put back. It must not be. Let us try it a little longer, and if the wind increases we can put back and not feel so ashamed.”

At Delena, the voyagers had a right hearty welcome. The natives there had a good deal to fear from a predatory attack by the Motumotuan, but they expressed the confidence that Tamate would be well received. This somewhat heartened the boats' crews, and these sent word, “When you wish to start, call out; you will see us gladly spring into the water.” At Oiapu, and again at Jokea, the natives made friendly demonstrations, and invited the missionary to land. The proffered feasts were declined with thanks, and Lese was duly reached. Here, presents were exchanged, and a feast of pig was spread for the travelers. When Tamate set out for Motumotu the next morning, he had the promise of the people of Lese that they would not

## The Dawn

molest Kabadi again, and their affirmation that they “considered our visit as peace with all the coast villages.”

Tamate was going to Motumotu with a certain degree of confidence. He had friendly dealings with a good many men of this district, and, only a few weeks before, one of them had said to Mr. Lawes and himself—“Listen. You think we Motumotuan are not attending to your words; but you are mistaken. Before you came here, we were always fighting, and were a terror to all, east and west, but now it is different. We are at peace all around; we go about unarmed, and sleep well at night. Soon our fathers’ ancient customs will all be given up, and you will see us, old and young, coming to be taught the word of the great and good spirits.”

Here is a bit of graphic description from Tamate’s journals. The boats had been anchored within two miles of Motumotu, and all were sleeping, when “I was aroused at 2 a.m. by shouting, and, looking over the gunwale, saw a large, double fighting-canoe alongside of Piri’s boat, in which all were sound asleep. On awaking, they were startled by the appearance. They were asked by those on the bridge—‘Who are you?’ ‘Tamate and Piri going to Motumotu.’ Soon all were friends, chewing betel-nut and smoking tobacco. On each canoe with paddles were over 30 men, and on the bridge adjoining the canoes were armed men and a large supply of sago and betel-nuts. They were going to Lese to purchase uros. They came alongside of our boat, received and gave presents, then an order was given by one from the bridge, and away they went at full speed. It was a pretty sight in the moonlight to see the canoe move swiftly on, when nearly 80 paddles, as one, touched the water. We rolled ourselves up again for another hour or two’s sleep.”

Arrived at Motumotu, Tamate found “there was a great crowd on the beach; but it was all right, as boys and girls were to be seen there, as noisy as the grown-up folks. A chief rushed into the water, and called on us to come. ‘Come, with peace from afar; come, friends, and you will meet us as friends.’” A formal conference revealed the fact that the recent warlike spirit had been roused by false rumors, sedulously circulated by the Lealea natives, who had selfish objects in view. Peace with Kabadi, peace with the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

coast villages, peace with Motu; all this was secured from the powerful Motumotuan by Tamate, the peacemaker.

Peace concluded, and the usual interchange of courtesies followed. Tamate was accommodated with quarters in the village temple, and next morning made opportunity for two services. "One service in the morning was very noisy—everybody anxious for quiet must needs tell his neighbor to be quiet. Our old Port Moresby chief prayed in the Motumotu dialect. . . . In the afternoon, we held service in the main street. The singing attracted a very large and noisy crowd; but when our old friend began to pray, it was as if a bombshell had exploded—men, women, and children running as if for dear life to their home. Another hymn brought them back, armed and unarmed."

On the return journey, Tamate, in his open boat, had to weather a terrific gale, and a thunderstorm accompanied by a deluge of rain, but Port Moresby was safely reached on the 20th of January.

The earlier months of 1881 were occupied in work at headquarters, and in short expeditions to Doura and to Hula and Kerepunu. In the former of these expeditions, Tamate succeeded in reaching the Dourans, by going inland from Caution Bay; but he found the country in a very unsettled state in consequence of tribal wars. His services as peacemaker were again in request; but, in this instance, he failed to arrive at any satisfactory settlement with the aggressors, the Koitabuans, who were smarting under an outrage for which they had determined to make the Dourans suffer.

In May, however, Tamate made a westward voyage that would seem to have been the first step in a new forward movement. Landing at Delena, he chose and received the gift of a suitable site for a mission station, and at once commenced the erection of a wooden house, with the intention, evidently, of making Delena a base of operations. Gratified at finding a growing perception of the true object of the missionary, and a willingness to listen to his message, he was yet perfectly well aware of the slender foothold attained. "What nonsense one could write of the reception here—such as 'Everybody at service this morning listened attentively; commented on address or conversation; children all come to school, so intelligent, and

## The Dawn

seemingly anxious to learn; and, altogether, prospects are bright.' At home, they would say, 'Why, they are being converted; see the speedy triumph!' Alas! They are but savages, pure and simple, rejoicing in the prospect of an unlimited supply of tobacco, beads, and tomahawks."

During this stay at Delena, there took place one of those warlike incursions by hostile tribes so common in New Guinea. Tamate's presence and influence were successfully used in bringing about an early and satisfactory settlement of the dispute, but not before he had risked his life in the adventure. Upon this occasion, he seems to have been prepared to defend his encampment by means of firearms, if necessary. When his devoted servant, Bob Samoa, inquired, "Suppose Lolo natives come to us, what we do?" he replied, "Of course they will not come near to us unless they mean to attack, and then we must defend ourselves. The guns are ready," his journal goes on. "It is not pleasant; but I fancy they will not molest us, so hope to sleep well, knowing we are well cared for by Him who is never far off. Through much trouble we get to be known, and the purpose for which we come is understood."

When the fight began in earnest in the village, Tamate left his encampment, all unarmed, mingled with the combatants, and by dint of shouting "*maino*" secured "a hush in the terrible storm." Having walked through the village and disarmed one or two, he got hold of one of the leaders in the fray. "I take his weapon from him, link him on to me, and walk him up the hill. I speak kindly to him, show the flag, and tell him we are *maino*, and warn him that his people must on no account ascend the hill." But he had scarcely been seated before a messenger arrived in hot haste to say that his friend Kone was in danger of being killed. Down he went again, this time without his hat. "More canoes have arrived. What a crowd of painted fiends! I get surrounded, and have no way of escape. Sticks and spears rattle round. I get a knock on the head, and a piece of stick falls on my hand. My old Lavao friend gets hold of me and walks me to the outskirt."

The blow Tamate had received was the cause of considerable pain in his head, but he had his reward in the gratitude of the Delena natives, who said,

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“Well, Tamate, had you not been here, many of us would have been killed, and the remainder gone to Naara, never to return.”

From Delena, Tamate pushed on to Maiva, visiting several of the villages in that district in the hope of discovering healthy sites for mission stations. He gives us an example of the dry humor with which he admonished his New Guinean friends. He had discovered a large and well-kept village, located in the center of a swamp, where fever walked unchallenged. “I asked them if they had no *vatavata* (spirits) knocking around in their district, and did they not much trouble about them. ‘Oh, trouble us much, very much.’ I told them I thought so, and the sooner they removed from that place the better—that they were right in the center of sickness and death. They said—‘And what is to become of the place of our forefathers, and the coconuts they planted?’ ‘Better leave them, or in a short time there will be none left to remember their forefathers, or eat their coconuts.’”

In October 1881, Tamate again set out for the west. Returning to Delena for his whaleboat, he found his wooden house standing intact, and everything exactly as he had left it. But he was distressed to learn that Kone, to whom he was indebted for the friendly and faithful care of his belongings, had been killed; killed, too, in the act of saving another man from the spear of an enemy. Kone was known and liked all along the Gulf coast, as far as Bald Head.

Of his dead friend, Tamate wrote: “My poor Kone! The kindest savage I have ever met; how I shall miss you here! I had hoped that you would yet become a great help in introducing the gospel into, the Gulf, and now had called to take you with me. How anxious he was to be taught, and to know how to pray! I taught him to say ‘God of love, give me light; Lead me to Christ.’ Who will deny that my wind and rain making friend has passed from this darkness into the light that he prayed for?”

This trip was made to Elema at the season at which the natives of the Port Moresby district were in the west on one of their trading excursions. Thus, on the arrival of the mission ship off Vailala, on the Annie River, Motu friends were able to point the course to a safe anchorage. Visiting

## The Dawn

their *lakaioi*, or trading canoe, Tamate was cheered to find that, so far from home and surrounded by a pagan environment, these simple New Guineans were holding fast the elementary truths they had learned from the missionaries. "Arua tells me that they have had morning and evening services, and on Sabbaths an extra one. Paeau has a small bullock bell that he rings to call all together, when a large number of Gulf natives join them. They both visit the temples, where there are always numbers of men, and when sitting eating with them they tell all they can remember of the teachings of the past few years. Could I help giving God thanks? The friends at Port Moresby feel that the sorrows and trials, the heartaches, and tears of the past, are far more than rewarded."

In another passage, he speaks of the wonderful influence of that Motu tribe. "They must have been a terrible lot in the past. I have heard much from themselves of piracy, murder, and robbery; all along here they tell terrible tales." By the time of which we write, Tamate had begun to look for a supply of pioneers from the ranks of the Motuans. For work among the Gulf natives, he found that the Motuans were well equipped in a knowledge of the language, as it had been their habit from early childhood to visit the wild west for months at a time, in company with their parents.

Owing to the dangerous nature of the coast, much of the visitation had to be accomplished in an open sailboat, and in this rough and dangerous navigation, Tamate must often have had cause to be thankful for his adventurous experiences on the shores of Loch Fyne in his boyhood. Here is his description of an exciting incident on the Elema coast: "We had a very heavy southerly swell in the bay, and on our getting up to the Alele, where we hoped to enter, the sea was breaking frightfully across, and the further west we went the worse it got. Not caring to lose the boat, nor life, I decided to return.

"After several tacks, the wind increasing, and a nasty sea running, and we being on a lee-shore with no hope of getting up to Vailala before midnight, we decided that if we could see a place a little more suitable than those passed, we would risk running in. We reached a suitable place, and took the chance of a grand turnover and loss of everything. It was better to

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

try it in the light than in the dark. The mast was taken down, the four oars put out, the order given, 'Give way, pull hard; look at nothing, only pull.' The boat went at lightning speed, flying on the tops of the seas. She was nearly in, when a tremendous roller lifted the rudder out of the water and she swung on the sea.

"The boys became frightened, and sprang to their feet. We must surely go over. 'Down, boys, down!' and again. 'Pull seaward, oars, pull hard!' She righted, and again we rushed madly onward upon the shore, taking very little water in. White surf raged all around us, and we were seized by strong natives, and soon our boat was beyond high-water mark."

Tamate was satisfied with the results of his Elema trip. He had improved his acquaintance with old friends, he had visited numbers of villages for the first time, and he had seen beginnings of the evangelization of New Guinea by the New Guinean. The dangers and hardships experienced, and the toil of travel, had secured promise of the results for which he was willing to give his life.





## CHAPTER 13

### Errands of Justice and Mercy

While Tamate and his colleagues had much to encourage them in their persistent efforts to establish the gospel of peace in heathen New Guinea, they never lost sight of the fact that they were dealing with a treacherous people in whom the instincts of the savage were, at the best, only latent. In the preceding chapter, we have indicated a number of the tokens of progress with which they were cheered in the year 1881, but in the spring of that same year, they had sustained one of the most serious reverses yet experienced. On the March 7th, the natives of Kalo, a village at the head of Hood Bay, near the mouth of the Kemp-Welch River, massacred four Polynesian teachers, with the wives and children of two of them, and two Hula boys—in all, 12 persons.

The teachers at Hula and Kerepunu, villages in the immediate neighborhood of Kalo, were at once withdrawn, from a fear that the anti-foreign rising might spread through the district; but when Tamate hastened to the spot, within six weeks of the massacre, he was satisfied that the trouble was a purely local one, and might be traced to the animosity of one man, Quaibo, the chief of the village community of Kalo.

Tamate did not visit Kalo itself, fearing to compromise the mission, and anticipating the intervention of the government of Queensland, which, at the time, considered the British subjects on New Guinea to be within the sphere of its protection. He was, however, able to form some estimate of the cause of the outrage.

“I fear we are not altogether free from blame,” he reported to his directors. “The teachers are often very indiscreet in their dealings with the natives, and not over-careful in what they say; there has also, perhaps,

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

sometimes been a niggard regard to expense on our part. A very few pounds spent at a station like Kalo in the first years would, I believe, prevent much trouble, and probably murder. The Kalo natives felt that Hula and Kerepunu got the most tobacco and tomahawks, and that their share was small indeed. Instead of our buying all the thatch required for the other stations—only obtainable at Kalo—we got the teachers, with their boys, to get it. We meant it well, to save expense. My experience teaches me to throw all I can in the way of natives not connected with our head-station. At this station—Port Moresby—for the next few years the expenses will be considerable in buildings, laying out the land, and in presents to the constant stream of visitors; but it will have a Christianizing and a civilizing effect upon a large extent of country.”

Tamate’s anticipation proved to be correct. As soon as the magistrate on Thursday Island had an opportunity of communicating with his superiors, a man-of-war arrived at Port Moresby to inquire into the massacre, with a view to reporting to the commodore of the Australian fleet. The missionaries declined to make a report, being opposed to the infliction of any punishment on the Kalo natives.

However, some months later, the war vessel returned, with the information that the Commodore had decided to make an example of Kalo, in the hope of putting a stop to these coast murders. Tamate was sent for, and arrived at the Port on the same day as H.M.S. *Wolverene*. Commodore Wilson landed, and asked Tamate to accompany him to Kalo, as he had determined to make war upon the village, secure Quaibo, and hang him. Tamate objected, but the commodore pressed his invitation, upon the plea that the missionary’s presence would make it evident that the expedition was one of peace. He further explained that he should be sorry if a single shot were fired. It was quite evident that the chief persisted in his disaffection; for, some weeks previously, he had sent a message to Tamate, to the effect that he was watching everywhere, and would not be satisfied until he had the missionary’s head on his sacred place: a message to which Tamate had replied that he would visit Kalo, and would leave it with his head on his shoulders.

## Errands of Justice and Mercy

Consistently with his promise, Commodore Wilson gave the following instructions to his officers and men: "I do hope there will be no firing. Remember, there is neither honor nor glory attached to this business. You can shoot these savages down hundreds of yards away, and they must be close on you before they can do you any harm. Try to get the chief, make him a prisoner, and bring him off."

To cut a long story short, the village was surprised and surrounded. The natives showed fight, and after three blue-jackets had been severely wounded, the lieutenant in charge of the landing party gave the order to fire. At the first volley, four natives were shot dead and several were wounded. The chief himself was the first to fall. Two natives were taken prisoner, and the rest of the combatants fled into the bush. "There was no looting, not a coconut touched, not a pig shot, and not a woman or child molested." The chief's largest house was destroyed.

The people now manifested a strong desire for peace; presents were brought to the commodore, and presents were given by him in return. Tamate had to confess that this punitive expedition had "a wonderful effect." "All the natives say that only a very powerful chief and people could ever act so; mingle thus mercy, with justice, show so much mercy when all power was theirs."

In this connection, Tamate has given us his valuable opinion upon the general question of punitive expeditions.

"Indiscriminate shooting down of innocent natives, burning villages, and cutting down coconut trees, I think mere barbarism. It ought never to be done by our navy. Every shot fired and every deed done by our blue-jackets and marines are acts of war; and is it right that a great nation should do such things to savages? Better far that we should suffer than that we should do wrong; and I altogether object to our navy being used in such mean service, especially when, in many instances, some of our countrymen have suffered for their own or others' misdeeds.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“Crimes have been committed by white men in the east end of New Guinea and the Louisiade Archipelago that I fear many will suffer for in the future. Already payment is being made, and the innocent are suffering for the guilty.”

Before leaving New Guinean waters, Commodore Wilson proceeded to Aroma, with intention to inflict some form of punishment for the murder of seven Chinamen, which, as already mentioned, had taken place there in July of the previous year. But when Koapena, the chief of Aroma, explained in dumb show the brutal conduct of the murdered men, the commodore agreed with Tamate that the natives had been quite justified in their action, “and that we should do the same if foreigners treated our daughters, wives, sisters, and sweethearts as those men did the native women.”

Tamate thoroughly enjoyed his fortnight’s cruise on the *Wolverene*, and was almost tempted to accompany the commodore on a visit to Australia, but, remembering unaccomplished work, he remained in New Guinea, and returned to Port Moresby and the Gulf.

Toward the close of 1881, it was rumored that the Manu manuanans were at war with Kabadi, and that the natives of the latter district were fitting out a large fleet of fighting-canoes with the intention of making an early descent upon Manumanu and other villages occupied by Motuans. Tamate determined to visit his “Kabadi friends,” and, after considerable difficulty in securing a boat’s crew, set out upon February 6, 1882. Once more, the Port Moresby natives did all in their power to intimidate the crew. Heni, one of the Motu chiefs, had consented to accompany Tamate, and it was probably due to his courageous action that the five rowers took their places when the start was made. To his weeping relatives, Heni said, “Do not weep for me. If he lives, I live; if he is killed, I too shall be killed; but it will be peace and sure friendship.”

At every stage in the outward voyage, his terrified crew sought to persuade Tamate to abandon his project. The Manumanuanans were equally assured that he was going to certain death, and beset his boat, praying him to return. “On no account go to Kabadi,” they said. “Not one of you will

## Errands of Justice and Mercy

ever be seen again. Have they not spoken evil of you, Tamate?" One old woman, however, waded out to him, as he sat in the stern of the boat, and whispered to him, "Go, Tamate, go; the Kabadi will treat you all kindly, and not injure one of you—they are only too anxious to see you."

The old woman proved to be right. At every village, Tamate had a royal welcome. "All were friendly, and glad indeed to see us, and wondered why we had not come sooner." At one chief's village, he found a Bochim indeed. The old man had lost by death his son, his daughter, and his brother. "Alas, alas, Tamate!" he cried. "Had you only come sooner, before my darling son died, he might have lived; but you come long after, to weep only at his grave. Oh, my son, my son! I shall never again see you. Why did you die? Why leave me so?"

The Kabadi repudiated the rumors, which had been the cause of Tamate's visit, and explained that they had been waiting long, and with fear, to know what action the Motu tribe was to take. They accepted his appearance in their midst as a token of peace, and begged for the renewal of the trade intercourse, whereby they were able to purchase *uros*, or earthenware pots, in exchange for the food-stuffs cultivated by them.

At Manumanu, the natives came in for a good share of abuse from the boat's crew. Old Heni warned them all to be careful in future, and never again to "cut asunder" the peace. "But for the missionaries," he said, "we should have taken everything from you long ago, and burned every house in your village." To Tamate, old Heni said, as they came in sight of home, "As the sun shines so do you. Such a thing as has now been done has never before been done on this coast, and it is only by the gospel of peace it could be done." And the crew all joined in chorus, "True, true; very true."

In August, Tamate was back at Manumanu, and this time ascended the river to the district in which he had formerly visited the Dourans. But, although he scoured the country in different directions, he found nothing but deserted villages, and no sign of human life anywhere. In the previous year, the Koitabuans had made serious reprisals, in revenge of earlier onslaught by the Dourans, and had almost exterminated the tribe, the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

remnant fleeing to the hills. Where, three years previously, Tamate had seen "much life and heartiness," and had been well received by the people, he now found desolation, decayed habitations, and deserted plantations. Doura's prowess had been completely broken; all her best warriors had been slain; in repeated raids, the Koitabuans had killed men, women, and children—entirely wiping out some families. In the absence of sufficient food supplies and of native guides, Tamate found it necessary to abandon any attempt to ascend one of the spurs of Mount Owen Stanley, and he returned in disappointment to the coast.

Tamate's last excursion for the year was made, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Lawes, to the districts of Sogeri and Tabure. The ground covered had, in great part, been explored on earlier occasions, and there is little record of the work accomplished.

Upon a date in 1882 that we have not been able to trace, Tamate made a short visit to South Cape, the scene of his early New Guinean labors. Only five years had passed, but there was much to hearten him in the visible improvement wrought in the condition of the people by the operations of the teachers at the station, following upon his own pioneer efforts. The cannibal ovens were gone; skulls were no longer sought as trophies of savage prowess. "Tribes that could not formerly meet but to fight, now meet as friends, and sit side by side in the same house worshipping the true God. Men and women who, on the arrival of the mission, sought the missionaries' lives, are only anxious now to do what they can to assist them, even to the washing of their feet. How the change came about is simply by the use of the same means as those acted upon in many islands of the Pacific. The first missionaries landed not only to preach the gospel of Divine love, but also to live it, and to show to the savage a more excellent way than theirs; learning the language, mixing freely with them, showing kindnesses, receiving the same, traveling with them, differing from them, making friends, assisting them in their trading, and in every way making them feel that their good only was sought."

## Errands of Justice and Mercy

The reference above to travel with the natives reminds us of the fearless manner in which Tamate was wont to entrust himself to boats' crews who were scarcely one degree removed from the pure savage.

"I remember once in a boat, in the Gulf of Papua," he told the Royal Geographical Society, "two of my crew began to quarrel; they both belonged to the east end, and when I woke up they were nearly coming to blows, and the one was saying to the other, 'I did eat a little bit of your father,' but this the other denied."

Great as was the advance that had been made by the aid of the Polynesian teachers, Tamate's earliest pioneering had enabled him to realize that the native of New Guinea could preserve a certain measure of health in many a district in which the climate and general environment were dangerous for the Polynesian or the white missionary. This conviction gave birth to the determination to endeavour to raise up a native ministry at the earliest opportunity. From among the first converts at Port Moresby, volunteers were found, and in the beginning of 1883, Tamate and his colleague founded at Port Moresby the New Guinea Institution for Training Evangelists. Within three months, 12 students and their wives were under instruction, and the hope was engendered that before many years had gone the mission might be able to dispense with the aid of the Polynesian teachers—aid rendered at great cost of health and life. In this new venture, the valuable experience gained in the conduct of the Institution at Rarotonga must have stood Tamate in good stead.



## CHAPTER 14

### Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883

In October 1883, Tamate undertook an adventurous expedition to his “cannibal friends” in the west, and his graphic description of his experiences forms one of the most interesting sections of the published records of his work.

The reader will remember that the natives of Port Moresby belonged to the Motu tribe. These Motuans are the traders of Eastern New Guinea. The staple manufacture of the district is pottery, and the earthenware vessels made by the Motu tribe are used for cooking and other purposes throughout the land. The generic name for articles of this ware is *uros*; but *uro* is really the cooking vessel, while water vessels, dishes for serving food, large and small cups, small pots, large and small basins, pots with rims, and large vessels for holding sago are varied forms of domestic utensils manufactured by the Motuans, and each has its particular name. The distribution of *uros* is secured by barter. Food-stuffs are brought into Port Moresby and exchanged for *uros*, or the trading Motuan voyages along the coast and barter his *uros* for other commodities. Once a year, the Motuans make a trip of 200 miles to the westwards, faring forth with boatloads of pottery and—in more recent years—of knives, beads, looking-glasses, red cloth, and tobacco; purchase in exchange large quantities of sago; and sell that again to the coast natives nearer home, receiving payment this time in arm-shells and other articles that represent the native currency.

This great westward trip is made by a fleet of *lakatois*, vessels made up by the combination of several large canoes, and capable of carrying a considerable crew and a large cargo. Here is Tamate’s description of these strange craft: “Four large canoes are lashed together. Their bulwarks are made from the leaves of the Nipa palm sewn together, well fastened with

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

long, strong, mangrove poles, and caulked with dried banana leaves. A stage is made all around, so that the sailors can work her without getting inside of the bulwarks. Masts of mangrove, with the roots, are stepped on to the center, and large sails, made of mats all sewn together and shaped like crab toes, are fixed for working, with ropes made from the bark of the large, yellow hibiscus. The anchor is a large stone made fast with long canes, sometimes 100 fathoms in length. Fore and aft are small, covered-in houses, strong enough to withstand a very heavy sea, where the captain, mates, and boatswains sleep and smoke. There are strong divisions of wicker work in each canoe, into which pottery is put, each division having an owner. The pottery is well packed with dried banana leaves, and only when thrown ashore in a gale do they have much breakage.”

On this occasion, Tamate secured a passage on board the *Kevaubada*, one of these *lakatois*, and, after a voyage of five days, arrived in far-distant Elema, making the port of Vailala. The *Kevaubada* was a two-master, and he took up his sleeping quarters on two planks covered with a mat and set on the top of a large crate of pottery between the masts. From Vailala, he journeyed on foot, and by the aid of native canoes, into the cannibal districts of Orokolo and Namau, renewing old acquaintances, visiting new villages, and making new friends. Returning to Vailala, a week later, he spent some time in the work of teaching and preaching until the arrival of his whaleboat, the *Rarotonga*, when he bid his Elema and Motu friends farewell, and returned to Port Moresby, calling at several places on the coast in the by-going, and reaching headquarters on the 1st of November.

The various sea risks of this trip were considerable. Tamate gives us a graphic description of the crossing of the bar at Vailala, which the *lakatoi* had to make after dark.

“What excitement! We hoped for a clear sunset, but the sun disappeared behind a thick covering after taking his nightly bath. When nearing the passage, orders were many, and great were the preparations made. We must go in on the other tack. ‘Bout ship,’ and all young fellows were warned to keep to their stations, fore-and-aft men stand with paddles, the hawsers (canes) are also ready to be thrown to the crowd standing on the point,

## Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883

who are to pull us over the bank and up the stream. The deep passage is avoided, as the wind is light and the river current strong. When I heard that the hawser was to be handed ashore, I thought immediately of getting my books and a few things I wished to keep dry together, and if possible get them ashore; for I expected nothing but a general smash-up, in the great white surf. I looked steadily ahead; on she goes, up, down, all around terrific breakers. Ah! There it is now. One sea has boarded us; we are right in the breakers; shore lights are guiding us; everybody is shouting. One man is calling on his ancestors and talking to the wild seas, and saying, 'Oh, my *lakatoi*, my *lakatoi*! Oh, my *lakatoi* will be broken!' Well done! She is on the bank—I now see all know what they are about. Halo! A terrific sea. She swings; is soon righted. A loud voice calls, 'Boys, don't be afraid; keep to your stations.' She is away! Sails are drawing, excitement getting greater; shouting fore and aft, some calling, 'Pray, oh, pray!' On we go, on the tops of seas; nearer, still nearer. The men on the shore are close by; what now?

"The hawser is left; we are aground. One rush on to the platform over the bulwarks, fore and aft, regardless of *lakatoi* coming to grieve. About 150 men have boarded us, shouting, yelling, and rubbing noses. What is it? In the dark one might think a certain region had opened wide its portals and the imprisoned got free. Oh no, they are all excited friends; joy overflowing at meeting us. All right now; majority step overboard into the surf, seize the hawser, and soon walk us away into calm water and up the river to the village. We are all right; no damage, not even a wetting."

Tamate enjoyed his unique voyage in the *lakatoi*. He experienced much kindness on board, and found his quarters more comfortable than those afforded by his whaleboat.

The return from Elema to Port Moresby was "a long journey to take in an open boat and in a nasty gulf sea." At the outset, the ugly bar at Vailala threatened to baffle the intrepid voyager. "Before getting to the bar, we shipped a good deal of water, and, as we got nearer, it was evident the boat would never ride the heavy seas running. I fancied I might be of use another day, and as to attempt to cross the bar undoubtedly meant death to all, I gave orders to put about. In doing so we shipped a large quantity of

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

water, and—oh, horror!—close by us was a huge, ugly crocodile. Imagine my feelings—for describe them I cannot—on seeing the monster. We had to keep baling, and found it difficult to make headway against the strong current. I felt very anxious, as I have a horrible dread of crocodiles. ‘A long pull, a hard pull, and a pull all together,’ brought us right in and up to our landing, where we were met by a sympathizing crowd, who feared when they saw us near the bar that we should never be seen again.”

There were other perils of the sea. The coast natives set envious eyes upon the rich freights of the Motuan *lakatois*, and often endeavoured to intercept them and compel the crews to disgorge their cargo. An attempt of this sort was made upon the *Kevaubada*. Off Pisi, a large fighting canoe was seen to be coming toward the *lakatoi*.

“They seemed prepared to fight; bows and arrows were all handy on the platform, fighting armllets were on, and a few had their clubs hanging on their backs. They said they had come for us, and Tamate and the *lakatoi* must go with them. I told them, ‘No, Tamate must go to Vailala, and I intended going to Namau.’ They replied, ‘You will not go on, we shall keep you;’ and their canoe getting close, two of them stepped on board, giving orders to make for their place. One of them seized me, and rubbed noses, and begged of me, as his friend, to land. ‘No, I will go on; I shall not go in here.’ They were very excited, and looked nasty; but our people were beginning to look as nasty; especially Aruako, the robber-chief. I was anxious to avoid a collision, as this would make it unpleasant for me afterwards. A piece of rope fell into the water, and was picked up by them. Their canoe being close enough, Aruako stepped into it and took it from them, when one of them seized his club. Aruako looked black and fierce, and asked if they wanted to fight, for if they did (let them) just say so, and they would have plenty, for his first action would be to break up their canoe, and then with arrows to shoot them down. ‘No, no, we do not wish to fight; but, great chief, your *lakatoi* must come to us. Our wives say we are weak and worthless, hence we have no *lakatoi*, and they have sent us off.’ We insisted on their leaving, and, anxious they should do so without a threat, I addressed my new friend, and told him they must not press on us, as I must go to Vailala. Again, we rubbed noses; he asked me for an uro, and as I had none,

## Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883

he begged for a piece of cloth. I took off my shirt, which wanted washing, gave it to him, and so saved myself trouble with soap and water. Again, we rubbed noses, spoke of sincere friendship; they got into the canoe and left us, saying, 'It is good; Tamate go.'"

Throughout his various western journeys, Tamate was usually accommodated in the village dubu, a large building with an outside platform sacred to the adult men. In it were performed the various religious rites and ceremonies which constituted the initiation of the young men to the prerogatives of manhood. In it were stored the trophies of war and of the chase—skulls of men, women, children, and wild beasts. From the dubu, the women were rigorously excluded, and there the unmarried men had their sleeping quarters—so that the structure combined the functions of a sacred place, an arsenal, and a bachelor's club.

The dubu occupied by Tamate at Vailala may be taken as representative. "The dubu is large, about 50 feet in height in front; the platform I am on is about 10 feet from the ground, and one with the flooring of the dubu. I am outside, preferring it for light and air; and hanging around there are charms, large and small, nets used for river and surf fishing, and fish traps—made like foolscaps of the spines of the sago frond—bows and arrows, and a few clubs. Entering by a small aperture, we are quite in, and when the eyes become accustomed to the darkness many are the charms, masks, bows, and arrows to be seen; and, running along each side, places like stalls, inside of which are fireplaces, with pieces of rope hanging over—on these the sleepers hang their feet. During the day, very few are about, but at night, the building is well-filled with men who come tumbling in at all hours. My compartment is seven feet by three, with room for my goods and chattels, and for Johnnie to sleep alongside. I have slung my hammock between the posts on the platform." In another place, Tamate says, "Man-killing led to the building of dubus, in order that the men might be sacred and have a place to themselves; that they might have a sacred place for Kanibu where to present the slain; and that they might have a place for rejoicing when they returned from a successful manhunt. These are the reasons given me for the existence of dubus."

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Always keeping his eyes about him and seeking intimate intercourse with the natives, Tamate made considerable additions to his store of myth and legend and ethnological information, fresh facts brought into relief by his earlier experiences among Polynesians. He also confirmed a discovery made in 1879, on his first visit to the west—a discovery which Sir William MacGregor has characterized as “really a very important one”—that of the mouths of the Purari River.

Of his intercourse with the natives, he tells us much that is of genuine interest, and, by inference, we can see for ourselves how thoroughly he had equipped himself for “getting alongside of them,” winning their confidence, and drawing them toward a more enlightened view of life. Such phrases as “an old, handsome gentleman,” “an elderly and communicative gentleman,” and “my friends, the cannibals,” reveal the human interest that lies bestowed on every hand. He would show illustrations in periodicals received from home: “I was showing them some pictures in the *Magazine of Art*, and the one that struck them most was that of ‘The Miser.’ They seemed at once to see his bad qualities. A portrait of Leon Cogniet pleased them, but did not strike them in any particular way; and that of Keeley Halswell seemed to them as that of a pleasant man. The miser had to be seen by all, old and young.” He would sing to them, and greatly regretted that he had neglected music in his youth. “Often,” he once said, “have I seen hundreds of savages wild with delight when ‘Auld Lang Syne’ was sung, and the enthusiasm passed describable bounds when the joining of hands took place; and then all would seek to do the same, and imitate our singing with shouting.” He would smoke with them; not once, but a hundred times—“tobacco smoke had a wonderful effect in assuring them that we were friends.”

While Tamate appreciated the childlike impulse and cordiality of the native salutations, these must occasionally have been embarrassing, to say the least.

“Alas, alas! I cannot say I like this nose-rubbing; and having no looking glass, I cannot tell the state of my face. Promiscuous kissing with white folks, male or female, is mightily insipid—but this! Ah, say you, well; but

## Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883

this! When your nose is flattened, or at a peculiar angle, and your face one mass of pigment, cover it over and say no more.

“In getting near the village a canoe comes down to us, and there is soon on board my old friend Avea, calling out, ‘Tamate, where are Misi Lao and Misi Haine?’ (Mr. and Mrs. Lawes) ‘I thought they were to have been here long ago.’ I could not see the face in the dark, but I knew the voice well. ‘Let me go, Avea; this hugging business on an empty stomach is bad.’”

With the same large tolerance, he satisfied the curiosity of the simple-minded and astonished black. “Went out to be seen, examined, and scrutinized by the crowd of old and young. My heavy black traveling boots were the wonder of all, and certainly, the majority thought I had particularly black feet. The unlacing of one caused mouths to be opened wide; but on taking it off, how shall I describe the terrific shout? ‘Twas as of a mighty host, and beggars all description. I removed my sock, and then another shout; and those not too much afraid pressed round the platform to have a nearer look, and some to feel. I exposed my breast, and that, too, excited great wonder. What seemed to astonish them much was the softness of the skin, especially of the sole of the foot, which was carefully examined. I thought I was safe enough here (Vailala), but it may be as well not to do so at Maipua, as they might take a fancy to cooked feet and breast.” When he reached Maipua, he had to record, “The daintiest dish here is man, and it is considered that only fools refuse and despise it.”

Of course, the prime object of the expedition was evangelization, and Tamate was gratified with the measure of success that attended this renewed effort to reach the most savage tribes yet within his ken. At Vailala, he ministered to the Motu traders and to the natives of the place. “One night, the *lakatois* being close by the large platform on which I live, I gave instructions that when they saw my lamp burning brightly all should be quiet, and we would have evening prayers. So about 7 p.m., quietness stole over the immense gulf-sailing craft and the usually noisy Vailala natives about me. I read from St. Matthew’s Gospel, and then gave an address. The audience was large, and seemed to be deeply interested.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

At Orokolo: “Last night in the dark we had evening prayers. The deacon gave a short address, I—through him—another, then he engaged in prayer. It was a strange, weird meeting. There were about a dozen present, and we taught them to pray, ‘O Lord Jesus, give us light, save us.’ Nothing more; it was quite enough. And will He not answer them? Long the deacon spoke to them and told them of God’s love. . . . Aruadaera (the deacon) and Aruako have been away for a long time, and have just returned. On the platform of the neighboring dubu, they have been telling the story of divine love as expressed in the gift of Christ. Again and again had they to go over the good old story. The people, they say, were much astonished, and very attentive.”

Tamate had the gratification of seeing the gospel preached in cannibal Namau.

“Slept outside on the platform, and had a splendid night. Aruako fulfilled his promise, given at Orokolo, and for long held forth on Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood; and both he and Aruadaera spoke about Jesus our Lord and His love. It was a strangely weird scene. A large, dark temple, lit only by flickering firelights; a crowd of savages, real cannibals, who pronounce man to be the best of all flesh, and whose wives also relish it; skulls in abundance in the various courts, and at the end, in the most sacred place, six Kanibus, who hold life and death, fighting and peace within themselves; and in the center of the crowd, Aruako and Aruadaera preaching Christ as the revealer of God’s love and the Savior of sinful men. It was the most attentive congregation of the kind I have ever met. They listened well, asked questions, and expatiated freely. Soon after sunset, it commenced, and when I sought sleep, it was still going on. Although not a prepossessing people, yet they seem kind, and would, I believe, listen to the gospel and receive it as good news from God to man.

“When I awoke, the sun, I found, had preceded me, and they were then, perhaps *still* talking and listening. I went into the dubu, and looking my friend Aruako (who was now quite hoarse) in the face, I said ‘Arua, have you been at it all night?’ He replied, ‘Yes, and when I lay down they kept asking questions, and I had to get up, go on, and explain. But enough; I

## Work and Adventure in the Gulf: 1883

am now at Jesus Christ, and must tell them all about Him.' Yes, my friend had reached Him to whom we all must come for light and help and peace. When Arua had finished, there was but one response from all their lips: 'No more fighting, Tamate, no more man-eating; we have heard good news, and we shall strive for peace.'" Truly, the mantle of the missionary of the Cross had fallen upon the shoulders of Aruako, the Motu robber-chief. Well might Tamate's heart glow as he penned the words, "This is indeed a splendid field for missionary labor. . . . How niggardly we act in everything for Christ! We speak too much of sacrifices for the gospel's sake, or for Christ. I do hope we shall forever wipe the word sacrifice, as concerning what we do, from the missionary speech of New Guinea. May there never be a missionary or his wife in this mission who will speak of their 'sacrifices' or of 'what they have suffered!'

Of this trip, Mr. Lawes wrote home at the time: "The district west of Maclatchie Point is but little known, and before Mr. Chalmers' visit had never been visited by a white man. Mr. Chalmers, who has traveled more than anyone else in New Guinea, and seen more of its tribes, was particularly anxious to add this district to those he already knew. . . . Mr. Chalmers has been the farthest yet into the interior. He has been as far as latitude S. 90° 2' and longitude E. 147° 44½', so that the English flag has traveled farthest inland in the hands of the missionary."



## CHAPTER 15

### Placing Teachers

When Tamate returned to Port Moresby, he found, to his great disappointment, that a splendidly equipped exploring expedition, fitted out by the *Melbourne Age*, had returned to the coast, spoiled of all their goods, hungry, fever-stricken, and disheartened—the leader of the party, Mr. G. E. Morrison, being himself wounded. The expedition had started on July 21, 1883, and was back again upon the 14th of October. Great results had been expected from this exploration. Tamate had entertained hopes that his theory of plateau and inland lakes would be confirmed, and that “Morrison would tell such a tale of New Guinea as had never before been told.”

His chief concern, however, arose from the reports of hostility on the part of natives in a district in which he had established friendly relations with the people. Although he was sick, and many thought it was too late in the season for inland travel, as the rains had commenced and the rivers were swollen, he fitted out a strong party and set off on December 4th for the scene of the alleged outrages, anxious to know the cause of attack and to restore peace and amity.

In the course of a week, with a rest on the Sunday, Tamate and his party were back in Port Moresby, having in that time covered the hundred miles that had taken the *Age* expedition three months. They had found the Varagadi villages deserted, but were able to ascertain that native pilfering had led to reprisals and the use of firearms. Certain signs, recognized by most travelers, had been given by the villagers, but Morrison had not understood them, and had stumbled on to his fate.

“I asked an old friend if he thought it safe for white men to travel inland, as in a few months a large party might be coming. He replied, ‘It is perfectly

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

safe; no one will hurt a white man.' I told him to tell all the tribes of our visit, and that we wished to bring them peace and friendship, and that they must be careful as to how they meet the white man in the future. He told us our inland journey and its object would soon be well known."

A week or two later, Tamate was away west at the Annie River. This time he had an opportunity of seeing the Motu traders setting forth on their homeward voyage. The building of *lakatois*, consisting of 12 and even 14 canoes lashed together; the filling up of cargoes of tons of sago, peppers, and areca-nuts; the adventurous crossing of the bar—all added to his personal familiarity with the customs of the people.

At the Annie River, he was in touch again with the cannibals. "Two large canoes came in, with an average of 15 men in each; they were in quest of cooking pots. They say it is very annoying not to be able to cook their man and sago in pots, and, being without them, a lot of unnecessary waste occurs, and the gravy escapes. They have drunk none for a length of time now. They visited us, and we visited them. They were from a large village farther west than I had been last trip, and were extremely anxious that I should accompany them to their home; but it was out of the question."

Incessant work in the unhealthy climate of New Guinea must have engendered frequent attacks of malarial fever, although Tamate seldom makes his moan in his journals. On his return from the Annie River, however, in January 1884, he had a severe illness, as we learn from Mr. Gill, as well as from his own pen. "I was away on my restive New Guinea steed again; hot, panting, excited, dreaming, moaning, groaning, burdened, sick, weak, tired of life and all its belongings—down with fever, in a word, and finally, nursed back by kind hands to convalescence."

By February 6th, he was about again, and able to welcome his old friend, the Rev. W. Wyatt Gill, who had crossed from *Rarotonga* in the *John Williams III*, bringing with him a fresh draft of Polynesian teachers for the New Guinea Mission. Mr. Gill, it may be remembered, had been associated with the Rev. W.A. Murray in locating the original band of Polynesian teachers on the shores of New Guinea in 1872, and it was with particular

## Placing Teachers

interest that he now had an opportunity of seeing for himself what 12 years of devoted labor and the Christian gospel had done for the dark land. From him, we get a snapshot of the colleagues at Port Moresby.

“Never did I see brethren cooperating together more harmoniously. Both are able preachers in the Motu language; both in the prime of life—men worth looking at; and a fine physique is not without its value among savages. The calm, able translator and tutor is linked on to the impetuous, fearless pioneer, whose name is loved from Bald Head to East Cape, and far away into the interior.” When Mr. Gill left in 1872, the languages of New Guinea were not understood by the missionaries; now, he found the Motu dialect reduced to writing, and Matthew and Mark translated into that tongue.

The next seven weeks were spent in showing Mr. Gill a considerable number of the mission’s stations, where he renewed his acquaintance with some of the Polynesian teachers whom he had known before these had left the Hervey Islands. Teachers were gathered in from the nearer stations, a conference of missionaries and teachers was held at Port Moresby, and the new teachers were introduced—if so formal a term may be used—to their future colleagues.

When the conference was over, Tamate and Mr. Gill proceeded to various stations east and west, returning the teachers to their spheres of work, and leaving under their care the new additions to the staff, in order that these might become acclimated while within the reach of men and women of their own kind, who could tend to them and cheer them in their first separation from home and people. In these executive journeys, Mr. Gill had the opportunity of visiting Maiva and the coastline between that and Port Moresby, as well as the whole of the eastern coast stations, as far as East Cape.

Mr. Gill had also the fortune to be present when friendly communications were reopened with Kalo, the scene of the massacre of teachers in 1881. The village was visited, promises were asked and given that the new teacher should be kindly treated, and a site for his house was selected. The son of Quaibo asked Tamate to stay while he cooked a pig for him. Cooked vegetables were presented; but Tamate whispered in Mr. Gill’s ear,

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“Taste nothing: they are expert poisoners.” The crowd of men, women, and children was great. In the excitement, the children rushed into the river, although it was the well-known resort of crocodiles, splashing about like South Sea Island boys and girls. Hundreds of adults stood on the banks, large numbers standing round the boats, up to their waists in water, selling food or curios.

The one cry was, *kuku!* (tobacco). The excitement increased terribly. At length, Kulu said quietly to Tamate, “Go, quick!” The boats were shoved off, and the Kalo people were left to speculate upon the possibility of their having a teacher located with them again. “When it became known among the new teachers,” adds Mr. Gill, “that it was proposed to reopen the mission at Kalo, the Samoans volunteered for the forlorn hope. The Raiatians, too, earnestly begged to be permitted to go. The Rarotongans came privately to me to intercede with Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers that the post of honor and peril might not be given to others. Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers wisely said, ‘As Rarotongans were martyred, let Rarotongans have the preference. If they show the white feather, let others go.’”

In May, the new teachers were considered to have passed the initiatory stage of acclimation, and Tamate made a long round in the work of placing them at stations at which he had previously ascertained that they would be acceptable and welcome. It is unnecessary, however, for the purposes of the present narrative, to give any detailed account of the places visited, or even of the by-excursions to Moveave, Oiabu, and Mekeo, among others, which Tamate took the opportunity to make when his work of placing teachers brought him within a few days' march.

The greatest importance was attached by Tamate to the settlement of a teacher at Motumotu. “Ever since Mr. Lawes joined the mission, the one cry of the Motu natives has been ‘Westward Ho.’ The largest population, and the freest, kindest, wildest natives are there. They, especially those in Freshwater Bay, care for no one, domineer the other tribes, and think their sweet will is law. I know them well, and my cry has been, ‘To the West—to the West with our youngest, strongest, bravest, best teachers.’ Again and again, have the natives of Motumotu asked for teachers, promising to treat

## Placing Teachers

them well, and to live peaceably with their neighbors. They have them now," he adds, "and they feel our promise is sure, though often long delayed, through no fault of ours.

"Securing Motumotu means our filling up the whole Elema district in a few years, and then pressing inland. I think 20,000 is too low an estimate for the Elema population, and that, being once under tuition, Namau and Vaimuru will follow in no faraway future; and so an extensive coastline will be open, or, rather, is even now open, to Christianity and to commerce."

Of his Motumotu teachers and their wives he wrote: "We bade our friends farewell, leaving these young men and women, who, for Christ's sake and from sympathy with Him in His great work of redeeming the race, had left their comfortable homes, peace and plenty in Eastern Polynesia, willing to endure sickness, want, and trials, relying upon His care who alone can care for them. They are certainly the heroes and martyrs of the nineteenth century."

For his dusky comrades, Tamate entertained the sincerest affection and the deepest regard. Of them, he said: "They are the true pioneers in New Guinea, and to them travelers of all kinds, scientists and explorers, as well as Christian missionaries, owe much." He looked on them as pioneers of civilization, as well as missionary teachers. "Ten or 11 years ago," he said in 1887, "the natives of Hula, Hood Point, had no plantations, and bought all their vegetables with fish from inland people. A teacher of the London Missionary Society, a native of Eastern Polynesia, was placed among them; he started plantations of bananas, yams, and sweet potatoes, and the Hula natives, seeing the large returns, made plantations for themselves, which produced much, and became a market for the Motu tribe and Kerepunu, so that now a large and lucrative trade is carried on. It will be the same with whatever we can introduce."

Of the spirit of devotion in which these men and women have carried on their work, many tales are told, many testimonies are given. When Mr. Murray first landed on Darnley Island, in 1872, an effort was made to intimidate the teachers from attempting to settle upon another island.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“There are alligators there,” it was said, “and snakes, and centipedes.” “Hold,” said the teacher, “are there men there?” “Oh, yes,” was the reply, “there are men; but they are such dreadful savages that it is no use your thinking of living among them.” “That will do,” replied the teacher. “Wherever there are men, missionaries are bound to go.”

Another traveler, Mr. Hume Nisbet, the artist, writes of “the noble devotion and self-sacrifice displayed by the colored teachers whom I met at the different stations—great, simple hearts, who live a life of purity and tenderness, reflecting, every hour of the day, the noble example, and instructions of their white leaders. I think, on the whole, I felt closer to God in the company of these South Sea Island exiles, with their little Papuan huts, watching them go about their daily duties in the midst of these savage sons of nature, than I have felt before or since; their faith was faith unvarnished and utter, their patience sublime to heroism. Great men, noble martyrs, they go to New Guinea to lay down their lives for the cause of their Master, as their instructors have taught them by precept and practice, and the result has been wonderful, considering the time.”

Of one of the teachers, Dr. Gill wrote: “Ebera had lost his wife and child through the terrible New Guinea fever; and yet, in his loneliness and sorrow, he wrote to me the other day and said, ‘It is a work of joy to me to be here in New Guinea, doing the work of Christ our Master.’ These noble men and women,” Dr. Gill goes on, “are the flower of our churches; and their simple faith and wholehearted devotion to Christ are worthy of all praise. They have their faults, doubtless, but the same may be said of the ministry in other parts of the world.”

It was one of these teachers who, believing himself sick unto death, said to his missionary, “No good heart belong you too heavy for this; by ‘n by, God help you. S’pose I die, you send place belong me, tell my people I die, plenty more man stop along Samoa he want to come.”

However lame may have been the attempts of the colored teachers to master the English tongue, they proved themselves adept at picking up the New Guinean languages—allied in some instances to their own—and

## Placing Teachers

several of them have rendered great aid to the missionaries in the translation of portions of the Scriptures into the dialect of the district in which they were settled.

In many cases, the teachers were appreciated as friends long before any heed was paid to their message, or the slightest attempt was made to attend religious services. To these teachers Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers said, "Persuade, pray, be patient; but on no account bribe or pay them to come."

Tamate was careful in his choice of teachers, and fully appreciated the value of physique. When the Motumotuans inquired whether their teachers were to be "big men," and were answered in the affirmative, they were greatly delighted. "Not only do the savages look for physique in the teachers, but more civilized nations like appearance also. It is a grand mistake to send out men of small stature to the savages. Pick the giants, and they make their mark at once; the wild, kind, nobly built savage will respect them."

Tamate was under no illusion when he bargained for the admission of teachers to a village. "I sincerely hope no one will think that it is because they wish to be taught the gospel that they desire teachers, as they hope for tomahawks, knives, beads, tobacco, and clothing, and they see that those places where teachers live are at peace all round, and do not fear their neighbors."

This last remark was made in connection with the request of Kabadi for teachers. He took a short trip to see his old friends on the subject, and was able, at the same time, to cement a peace between Kabadi and Lealea. To the Lealeans, Urevado of Kabadi said, "You have never been here before, because of our fathers. Enough, let that enmity now die; and here is Kabadi before you to buy yams, bananas, and sugar cane, whenever you like to come." And the Lealeans replied, "'Tis because of these, God's men, we are enabled thus to meet; and we shall certainly come here in future for food. Often have we seen the laden canoes of the Boerans and Motuans pass our doors from here, and wished we, too, could only secure some; but now we shall be as they are."

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

When we get as far as the point we have reached in the narrative of Tamate's pioneering work, we begin to find him more careless in his records, and he, indeed, makes confession of a certain staleness. "How stale things become! Perhaps of all things, traveling becomes stalest after long continuation. Visiting new districts in a very little known land, there is little to write about that has not already been written of regarding other districts; for what is written of one may be written of nearly all."

But his buoyant spirits never forsook him. He still could find "good fun" in wading across a large creek; he could enjoy the discomfort of "the true cannibals of New Guinea—the mosquitoes. I lay on the sand, inside my net, and heard the din of the attacking armies. When I fell into unconsciousness, they were in full force; and when in the early morning I awoke to life, it was still to hear their songs and shouts of vexation at being baulked of their prey. I wonder what Burns would have written had he spent one night with these fierce, venomous 'beasties.' There would not be enough adjectives in the English language to suit him, and certainly, his Italian would egregiously fail. I have had more to fear from these pests than from all the savages New Guinea can produce."





## CHAPTER 16

### A Protectorate Proclaimed

For Tamate, as for his beloved New Guinea, the 6th of November 1884 was an ever-memorable date, for on that day, the southeastern portion of the island was formally taken under the protection of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

In 1864, a company had been started in Sydney, New South Wales, with the object of colonizing the part of New Guinea not taken by Holland, but the idea had to be abandoned when it was discovered that it was not possible to found a British colony without the sanction of the Imperial authorities.

Again, in 1873, Captain Moresby, convinced of the importance of the strategic position of the southeastern coast of New Guinea—dominating the shores of northern Australia; commanding the Torres Straits route, as well as the pearl-shell and the *bêche-de-mer* fisheries; and in itself a fertile land of promise—took formal possession of the island in name of Her Majesty. But the colonial office did not see its way to accept this new responsibility, and the annexation was allowed to lapse.

Later still, in 1883, Mr. Chester, magistrate at Thursday Island, on behalf of Her Majesty and the government of Queensland, took possession of all that part of New Guinea and its adjacent islands lying between the 141st and 155th meridians of east longitude. But, in spite of the unanimous feeling expressed by Australia in the matter, this annexation was annulled.

At this stage, Chalmers had written as follows: “The whole matter must, I have no doubt, be reconsidered and the island be eventually annexed. It is to be hoped the country is not to become part of the Australian colonies—a labor land and a land where loose money in the hands of a few capitalists

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

is to enter in and make enormous fortunes, sacrificing the natives and everything else. If the Imperial Government is afraid of the expense, I think that can easily be avoided. Annex New Guinea, and save it from another power that might harass our Australian colonies; administer it for the natives, and the whole machinery of government can be maintained by New Guinea, and allow a large surplus. We have all the experience of the Dutch in Java; I say, accept and improve.

“It will be said that, as a nation, Britain has never tried to govern commercially, or has not yet made money out of her governing; and why should she now? She does not want New Guinea. Why should she go to the expense of governing? Her colonies may be unsafe with a country of splendid harbors so near in the hands of a foreign power, and the people of that country need a strong, friendly, and just power over them, to save them from themselves and from the white man—whose gods are gold and land, and to whom the black man is a nuisance to be got rid of as soon as possible. Let Britain for these reasons annex, and from the day of annexation New Guinea will pay all her own expenses; the expenses of the first three years to be paid with compound interest at the end of that period.

“Let us begin by recognizing all native rights, and letting it be distinctly understood that we govern for the native races, not the white men; that we are determined to civilize and raise to a higher level of humanity those whom we govern; that our aim will be to do all to defend them and save them from extermination by just humanitarian laws—not the laws of the British nation—but the laws suited for them. It will not take long for the natives to learn that not only are we great and powerful, but we are just and merciful, and we seek their good.”

After sketching a scheme for the commercial development of New Guinea as a colony, Chalmers concluded, “As a nation, let Britain, in the zenith of her power and greatness, think kindly of the native races, and now, for once in her history, rule this great island for right and righteousness, in justice and mercy, and not for self and pelf in unrighteousness, blood, and falsehood. It is to be hoped that future generations of New Guinea natives will not rise up to condemn her, as the New Zealanders have done, and to

## A Protectorate Proclaimed

claim their ancient rights with tears now unheeded. I can see along the vista of the future, truth and righteousness in Britain's hands, and the inhabitants of New Guinea, yet unborn, blessing her for her rule; if otherwise, God help the British meanness, for they will rise to pronounce a curse on her forever!"

The proclamation of November 6, 1884, recognized in its preamble that the establishment of a Protectorate had "become essential for the lives and properties of the native inhabitants of New Guinea, and for the purpose of preventing the occupation of portions of that country by persons whose proceedings, unsanctioned by any lawful authority, might tend to injustice, strife, and bloodshed, and who, under the pretence of legitimate trade and intercourse, might endanger the liberties and possess themselves of the lands of such native inhabitants."

The Protectorate was proclaimed by Commodore, now Rear-Admiral, Erskine at Port Moresby. All the vessels of the Australian fleet were present, and the dignity of the British nation was born in upon the natives by the booming of cannon and the crackle of *feus-de-joie*, with nocturnal exhibition of searchlights and rockets, accompanied by demonstrations on the fog sirens. In addition, the commodore used every effort to make the Protectorate a public fact, intelligently understood among the natives. With the assistance of Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers, the chiefs of several districts were taken on board the flagship, where the proclamation was read, translated, and explained to them; and this ceremony, coupled with the hoisting of the Union Jack and the exchange of presents, was repeated at various points along the coast.

Tamate accompanied the commodore on this cruise of proclamation. It lasted for three weeks, and when he was landed at South Cape to resume his mission work, he was not sorry to have a rest and a change of work. His respite was short, however. Within a month, H.M.S. *Raven* returned, with instructions to secure his assistance and proceed to Huon Gulf for the purpose of hoisting the British flag there.

For another three weeks he coasted along the northeastern shores of the peninsula, visiting places he had never seen before, and giving all

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

possible assistance to Commander Ross of the *Raven* and to Captain, now Vice-Admiral, Bridge of H.M.S. *Dart*, in opening up friendly relations, with the natives on these distant shores, and explaining, as far as possible, the purpose of the proclamation.

“It would have been impossible to have carried out the delicate and important duty with which I was entrusted, with any degree of reality or thoroughness,” Admiral Erskine has written, “had it not been for the able and willing assistance I received from Dr. Lawes and Mr. Chalmers, in making our communication and intercourse with suspicious and treacherous savages, and, in some cases, the cannibal tribes, with whom we had to deal, feasible and effective. Among other acts which I remember with gratitude, the rendering into the various dialects of the coast tribes of the terms of the proclamation, and of the address with which I invariably prefaced the ceremony of hoisting the flag, was due to their initiative and exertions; and it was entirely owing to the wonderful influence exercised by Mr. Chalmers among the savage tribes—who called him ‘Tamate’—that, accompanying as he did, at my urgent request, the smaller vessels attached to the squadron, the principal and influential chiefs in the various and comprehensive and scattered districts were induced to come on board the *Nelson* and other ships of war, and to take an interested and intelligent part in the ceremonials.”

Of Tamate, Admiral Bridge also has written: “His vigilance, cheeriness, readiness of resource, and extraordinary influence over native savages made his help quite invaluable. I can honestly say that I do not know how I should have got on without him. He had an equal power of winning the confidence of savages quite unused to strangers, and the respect, and even love, of white seamen. Notwithstanding the great inconvenience and, I fear, not inconsiderable expense to which he had been put by giving his valuable services in the expeditions, he firmly refused to allow his name to be officially submitted in any claim for pecuniary remuneration, or even to accept the legitimate compensation to which he was entitled.”

Tamate himself rejoiced that the Protectorate had been established, and was glad to bear his share in the work. He allowed himself to hope that its earliest effect would be the immediate stoppage of the Kanaka traffic so far

## A Protectorate Proclaimed

as that affected New Guinea, and for this reason he dreaded that the active control of the Protectorate would be given to Queensland, whose labor-vessels had done all the mischief. "The Annexation is accomplished," he wrote in the preface to one of his books, "and the author does not doubt that the native rights will be reserved, and that for once we shall attempt to govern a savage race in such a way as best meets their needs. It is open to us to hope that for once we may not exterminate the race in the process of ruling it. At the same time, he has grave fears that if New Guinea is handed over to Queensland—and this seems to be by no means improbable—there will be a repetition of one of the saddest and cruelest stories in Australian history; the weaker race will go to the wall, and might be substituted for right. The young colony will not readily admit that the savage has any rights, and it is altogether too fond of the doctrine that the day of the savage has gone, and it is time that he made way for the robust, so-called civilized race. The Australian pioneer of the 19th century has more faith in physical than in moral suasion, and it will need careful watching to see that England's annexation promises are not like pie crust, made only to be broken."

When the "Beritano war canoes" had finally left the island, Tamate settled down again to the routine of mission work. This became, in an increasing degree, principally the pastoral supervision of the teachers at the out-stations, and the supply of their temporal wants. Advising, encouraging, and, if need were, correcting the teachers, making personal friends of the chief and people in the neighborhood, and preaching and teaching in the churches, he labored faithfully for the promotion of the great cause to which he had consecrated his life.

A pleasing incident in this work occurred in July 1885, when Tamate was able to install the promised teacher at Kalo. Tau and his wife had been ill with fever, and the promise made in February 1884 was only now fulfilled. Tamate was well received, and Tau took possession of the new house, which the natives had made for him. In the evening, it became a question whether Tamate should remain overnight or return to the village of Hula. Anxious to show the Kalo natives that he trusted them, he decided to pass the night with Tau.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“Shortly after sundown we were left alone, and at first I doubted if I had done right in remaining, lest I should be the means of leading our teachers and their wives and my boat’s crew into trouble. No Europeans had slept there since the massacre. We were quite at their mercy, being in an unprotected house and unarmed, and had they attacked us we should all have been killed. In one sense, it was foolhardy, as the natives had often said that nothing would satisfy them but my head. On the other hand, if all went well it would be the best augury for future success. I did not feel quite at ease, and had fully intended to keep awake and watchful through the night. But, after evening prayers, I rolled myself up in my blanket, feeling it very cold. In spite of my prudent intentions, I soon was sound asleep, and never woke until the next morning at daylight. The people were pleased that I should have shown such confidence in them, as they all knew we were quite unarmed. May He who protected us soon become known to them!”

Before going back to Port Moresby, Tamate visited Aroma. In 1880, he had been the first white man to land on its shores, he had visited the 14 villages in the district, and he and his party had run great risk of being speared and clubbed. “It was the most desperate plight in which I have ever been in New Guinea, and I have had a few narrow escapes.” Now, in 1885, he found that at last there were a few who were anxious to be taught, and were inquiring more diligently into the gospel preached to them. He asked the chief, Koapena, when he was going to receive and believe the gospel. The reply was—”Teach me more, only keep teaching me, and if you had done that I might have been the first to understand and believe.” “Well done, Koapena,” comments Tamate, “faith, blind faith without knowledge, you are not willing to have; mere acquiescence would never become my big strong-minded friend.”

Tamate closes the record of this trip with the remark, “So, east and west, we keep extending, and I trust will continue to do so, until New Guinea is occupied with earnest men and women preaching Christ and leading thousands to Him.”





## CHAPTER 17

### With the Special New Guinea Commission

It was now nearly 20 years since Chalmers had left his native shores, and he had begun to plan a visit to the Old Country, when information was received that Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley, defense adviser to the Australian colonies, had been appointed special commissioner for New Guinea, with the duties of taking all New Guinea matters into his charge, visiting the country, meeting the natives and foreigners, making inquiries, and reporting to the colonial office. At the same time, Tamate was informed that the commissioner was most anxious to meet him, and, if possible, to get him to accompany him all around the Protectorate.

Sir Peter Scratchley arrived at Port Moresby with his staff on August 28, 1885, and at once preferred his request in person. From an entry in Sir Peter's diary, we gather that Tamate consented after considerable hesitation. "I had intended leaving this morning for Redscar Bay, where I wished to have a look at some land, which is said to be valuable. But Chalmers, who had promised to come with me, told Askwith he thought he would not go, not even to the eastward. This was serious, so I countermanded our departure until Tuesday, and sent early a note to Chalmers to say that I would deeply regret if he abandoned the idea. He came to breakfast, and gave in. So this is a relief, for I feel that without him I could do nothing."

The best account of this episode in Tamate's life-story is found in an article from the pen of Mr. G. Seymour Fort, contributed to the *Empire Review*. Mr. Fort was private secretary to Sir Peter Scratchley, and had many opportunities to study Tamate in his relations with the New Guinean natives.

"During the period of Sir Peter Scratchley's administration," Mr. Fort writes, "we made many expeditions both inland and along the coast, for

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

the purpose of inquiring into murders of white men, and of gaining a practical knowledge of the country. Some 30 islands and over 100 villages were visited, and the littoral as far as the northeast boundary at Mitre Rock explored. In almost all these expeditions, we were accompanied by Chalmers; in fact, without him we should have been helpless. Thus, I had special opportunities of seeing the man in the midst of his work, and of witnessing his great tact and courage.”

From the commissioner’s diary, we get an interesting glimpse of the New Guineans, as they appeared to a man who did not require suppressing his personal preferences. “The surroundings are disgusting; naked barbarians (not savages, because, poor creatures, they are quiet enough if only fairly and justly treated) everywhere; dirty, without clothes, and living purely animal lives; but with great capabilities for a better and more useful life in the future. They must have energy, when you see a fleet of canoes going for a voyage of several hundred miles, several hundred men and children (no women) taking some 30,000 pots to the westward to be exchanged for sago and other things.”

Sir Peter describes Koapena, the chief of Aroma, as “a fine old fellow, over six feet high, about 60 years old. . . . When he laughs, which he does very often, and shrugs his shoulders, he has the appearance of a Papuan Mephistopheles.” The commissioner wished to hoist the British flag at Aroma, but felt that he could not do so until the skulls of the seven murdered Chinamen were removed from the dubu and buried. “Our proposition,” writes Mr. Fort, “aroused the greatest consternation and opposition. At his own request, however, we left Chalmers for two days alone in the village in order to influence the meetings and discussions that were to take place. At the end of that time we landed, when our men quickly buried the skulls, and the flag was hoisted in the presence and with the acquiescence of the chief and the villagers. Chalmers himself admitted that the affair was a very critical one, and that more than once he had despaired of overcoming the opposition. The successful result was entirely due to his wonderful power of persuasion, for had the chief and people refused to allow us to remove the skulls we should never have resorted to force for the purpose.”

## With the Special New Guinea Commission

Mr. Fort adduces further instances of courageous and tactful action on the part of Tamate, and we venture to quote them for their value as firsthand descriptions of the acts of bravery, which were of almost daily occurrence throughout his New Guinean experiences, and yet have found small place in his own published journals.

“Owing to the barrier of coral reef that runs parallel to the shore on the New Guinea coast, the intervening stretch of water is so smooth that villages are sometimes built in the sea at a short distance from the shore, for protective purposes. In the course of a cruise, we arrived at one of these as it was being attacked by some inland people. The women and children were in a state of panic, and the men were maneuvering and fighting on the beach. Chalmers at once insisted upon wading ashore alone, and by dint of shouting and expostulating, the fight ceased and the invaders retired.

“A few days afterward, we had anchored near a village situated on the hills overlooking the beach, when suddenly, just as darkness had set in, a fearful turmoil, shouting and yelling, with tom-toms beating, arose. We soon discovered that two of the sailors on the yacht (*Government House*, for the time being) had gone ashore in a canoe. Knowing well the danger that awaited them, Chalmers immediately set forth alone in the dinghy toward the village, and above the din we could hear his penetrating voice expostulating, scolding, asking questions; eventually he returned with the two scared sailors, whose lives he had certainly saved.

“On another occasion, we were anxious to catch a native who had murdered a white man, and who had been recognized on the beach of an almost unknown island. Chalmers suggested that we should begin trading with the natives, and, when opportunity offered, seize the murderer and haul him on board. The plan was risky, and natives are proverbially difficult to hold, but Chalmers seized him and held him with a grip of iron, as we bent our oars to escape from the shower of spears that followed us.

“Absolutely fearless in action, he was also wise in counsel, and, when necessary, very prudent and cautious. Natives often have curious codes of signals, whereby they show their attitude and intentions; sometimes

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

even the nature and position of the flowers in their hair signify hostility or friendliness, and for these signals, Chalmers was ever watchful. Once we landed on an unknown spot and among natives who had never been visited before. For hours, however, he kept us waiting in the boat until presents had been exchanged, we giving them a colored pocket handkerchief, they pushing out to us on a canoe a few coconuts.”

Tamate objected to the burning of native houses when the inhabitants at Normandy Island could not or would not produce a murderer for whom the commissioner was in search. “Such warfare,” he wrote, “is detested by those engaged in it, and by no one more than our good general. I think every such act of war should be reported faithfully and publicly, and I have no doubt the English people would soon demand that such things should not be done under our flag. In acts of this kind, innocent and guilty suffer alike; this certainly not being in harmony with John Bull’s love of fair play. Questions have been asked in the House of Commons, and will, I trust, be asked again and again, until the practice entirely ceases.”

Dr. Doyle Glanville, another member of Sir Peter Scratchley’s staff, has added his testimony to the tremendous influence that Tamate had attained: “Whatever had to be done, from special commissioner downwards, the first question was, ‘Where is Tamate?’ ‘What has Tamate got to say about it?’ ‘Ask Tamate.’

“I assure you,” Dr. Glanville said to the members of the Royal Colonial Institute, “that had it not been for this gentleman, whatever work has been accomplished on the expedition could never have been done without his valuable help. His profound knowledge of the native character, his wide experience, and his great tact placed us on a footing with the natives that otherwise would have been impossible. He taught us how to understand the natives and their little peculiarities and ways, and he taught them to understand the members of the expedition, and what were the motives that prompted us to visit them.”

The vessel that brought the special commissioner to New Guinea had also on board Mr. H.O. Forbes, the explorer, from whom Tamate expected

## With the Special New Guinea Commission

much in the opening up of New Guinea. That traveler was most anxious that the missionary should join him on his expedition, but he decided that he could be of most service with Sir Peter Scratchley. However, as in the case of the commodore's earlier visit, the government vessels carried Tamate to New Guinean shores previously unknown to him, and, in company with the members of the commission, he discovered two new rivers in Milne Bay and visited many places previously unknown.

The special commissioner appreciated the vast amount of pioneer work accomplished by the missionaries, and as—from our point of view—this had largely been accomplished by Tamate, we may quote from the pages of Sir Peter Scratchley's biographer.

“Missionary labor in New Guinea has not only opened up communication with the natives along nearly the whole coastline of the protected territory, and far into the interior; but, what is more important, has inspired them with confidence in white men. Had the result been different, and the natives been made hostile or suspicious, none but armed bodies of men could have ventured into the interior, nor could individuals have cruised along the coast in fair security. Under present conditions, a single, white man, unarmed, can go 50 miles into the interior from any point between Port Moresby and Hula in perfect safety.” “Much of this success,” he adds, “is due to the native teachers, who have been pioneers to break down native superstition and distrust.”

It must not be supposed that Tamate was neglecting his own peculiar work during this season of special usefulness. The commissioner was able to carry him from point to point, and really to facilitate his visitation of the mission stations, as well as to help him to pave the way for the occupation of new fields. One of these visits was paid to his old station of Suau. “I met with a large company of Christian men and women, and I sat down and partook of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, administered by a native pastor—one of our South Sea Islanders. There, I was united with, and shed tears of joy with, men and women who, only a few years before, sought our lives. What did it? It is the old story, still, of the Gospel of Christ.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Sir Peter Scratchley's useful services were brought to an abrupt close by his contracting a fatal illness that quickly ended in his death.

In the end of 1885, Tamate wrote to Mr. Lawes: "I hope next month to open up new country to the west, and to spend a time with my cannibal friends. We get new teachers about the end of the year. I want to see them placed, and then home, I hope, or the colonies. I do believe I am of more use here than I can ever be in England.

"We are all in excellent health. . . . Our greatest joy is to see New Guineans teaching New Guineans. I want to live until I see every tribe supplied with New Guinean teachers."

When he had accomplished the program which he had set for himself, Tamate sailed for Great Britain, and arrived in London on August 10, 1886, after an absence of 20 years.





## CHAPTER 18

### Tamate in England and Scotland

In 1885, the directors of the London Missionary Society had published, under the title of *Work and Adventure in New Guinea: 1877 to 1885*, a compilation of extracts from Tamate's journals and reports, with the addition of several chapters from the pen of the Rev. W. Wyatt Gill, describing his short visit to New Guinea in February 1884. The information gained by the public from this volume had prepared them for appreciating the pioneer missionary at something like his true worth, and on all hands, he received a cordial and even enthusiastic welcome.

At a special meeting, the directors of the Society entertained him at the Mission House on the 30th of August. They heard from his own lips a summary of the work he had accomplished, and received his valued counsel as to the lines to be followed in the extension of the mission in the immediate future. With little circumlocution, he told them that he had come home to deliver a message, and that, but for the urgency of this message, he would not have left his sphere of work. New Guinea must have men.

In the course of the winter 1886–87, large gatherings of the members of the London Missionary Society, and of others interested in foreign mission work, met at various centers throughout the country to listen to the vivid and firsthand accounts of the frontier work Tamate had been engaged in.

Nor was it solely in the missionary world—if we may use a cant phrase—that Tamate became the lion of the hour. Many of the civil and naval personages who had made his acquaintance in the Antipodes hastened to render some return for the bountiful hospitality of heart and hearth that he had accorded to them.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

In scientific circles, too, Tamate was hailed as an explorer of note, ranking with his great countrymen Livingstone and Moffat. On January 11, 1887, by invitation, he read a paper on "New Guinea: Past, Present, and Future," before the Royal Colonial Institute, and, a few days later, addressed the Royal Geographical Society on "Explorations in Southeastern New Guinea."

At the Colonial Institute, Tamate sketched the social aspects of his work in New Guinea, claiming an experience of native life from Dauan or Cornwaffis Island in the west, to East Cape and around to Astrolabe Bay in the northeast. On the question of the civilization of the natives, he expressed a very emphatic opinion.

"We are constantly reminded that the natives of New Guinea are terrible savages, and ought not to live, but we, who have lived among them, think otherwise, and will do all we can to preserve them as a people or peoples. The only real attempt at Christianizing or civilizing them has been made by the London Missionary Society, at a great outlay of money and loss of life.

"I hold very strong views on what is called civilization. For more than 20 years, I have been among natives. I know a little of New Guinea, have visited the New Hebrides, Loyalty Group, Samoas, Hervey Group, Society and Leeward Islands, Penrhyns, Humphrey Group, and Danger Islands, and nowhere have I seen our boasted civilization civilizing, but everywhere have I seen Christianity acting as the true civilizer.

"I look upon the inhabitants of New Guinea as semi-civilized savages, very impulsive, easily won; who can do terribly cruel things, and who can be tender and sympathetic as the most civilized, refined lady or gentleman. They are not at all like the Australian aborigines, and cannot be, living as they do, in villages and towns, and being everywhere cultivators of the soil."

On the cognate subject of the clothing that the native, in his untutored state, had found to be superfluous, Tamate had also a word to say.

## Tamate in England and Scotland

“I am opposed to clothing natives in European fashion, except in those cases where they would, perhaps, look a little more decent with a loin cloth. My experience is that clothing natives is nearly as bad as introducing spirits among them. Wherever clothing has been introduced, the natives are disappearing before various diseases, especially phthisis, and I am fully convinced that the same will happen in New Guinea. Our civilization, whatever it is, is unfitted for them in their present state, and no attempt should be made to force our so-called civilization among them. Teach them, and let a more suitable and better civilization be theirs.”

To exhaust the topic of Tamate’s opinion as to native dress, we may quote from his account of the cannibal inhabitants of the district of Namau, on the Gulf of Papua.

“The dress of the men is exceedingly simple, the majority wear nothing at all, and the few only a small string or vine.

“The women certainly do not wear much, and I am not astonished at it. They are very modest and think themselves respectably and well clothed. Why savages should always be spoken of as immoral, I fail to see. They are not so when compared with the more highly civilized countries of the world. I am sorry to have to say that it is contact with the civilized white that demoralizes them, and they then become loose and immoral.”

It is interesting to note that Robert Louis Stevenson, who had many opportunities of studying the social life of the Polynesian, would seem to have shared Tamate’s indifference as to the extent to which the Christianized native adopted the habiliments of the white man. “The married missionary, taking him at the best,” Mr. Stevenson says in his *South Seas Sketches*, “may offer to the native what he is much in want of—a higher picture of domestic life; but the woman at his elbow tends to keep him in touch with Europe and out of touch with Polynesia, and to perpetuate, and even to ingrain, parochial decencies far best forgotten. The mind of the female missionary tends, for instance, to be continually busied about dress. She can be taught with extreme difficulty to think any costume decent but that to which she grew accustomed on Clapham Common; and, to gratify this prejudice, the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

native is put to useless expense, his mind is tainted with the morbidities of Europe, and his health is set in danger.”

We turn, with a smile, to the passage in which John Williams expresses innocent gratification upon the introduction of bonnets into Rarotonga. “The Rarotongans improved much in every respect during our residence among them. The females were completely transformed in their appearance, for, although both the teachers are single men, they had taught them to make bonnets; but I must add that their taste in forming the shape did not admit of equal commendation with their desire to raise the character and promote the comfort of the female sex. These deficiencies, however, were supplied by Mrs. Pitman and Mrs. Williams, who made some hundreds of bonnets, and rendered many of the natives proficient in the art. They also made for the chiefs’ wives, European garments, and instructed them to use the needle, with which they were much delighted.”

Tamate’s address to the Royal Geographical Society need not detain us here. It consisted of a rapid survey of the geographical results of the explorations, which he had been able to carry out, and a graphic sketch of his voyage to the Gulf in a Motu *lakatoi*. The reader has already made acquaintance with these facts in our earlier chapters.

During his visit to Great Britain, Tamate found time to throw together, in book form, a number of passages from his journals and descriptive articles originally contributed to the *Queenslander* and other colonial newspapers. In his preface, he disclaimed any attempt to make a finished book. “The author . . . is more at home in his whaleboat off the New Guinea coast than in his study, and his hand takes more readily to the tiller than to the pen. Hence, the bulk of this volume is made up of journals somewhat hastily written while sitting on the platforms of New Guinea houses, surrounded by cannibals, or while resting after a laborious day’s tramp under a fly-tent on some outlying spur of the Owen Stanley Mountains, or while sailing along the southeastern coast in the Ellangowan. Writing thus, liable to manifold interruptions, the author has sought to preserve only what was essential to his purpose, namely, to record exactly what he saw and did; how the natives look and speak and think and act; what, in his judgment, New

## Tamate in England and Scotland

Guinea needs, and how her needs can be best supplied. Solely for this end has he printed this volume, and he can only trust that, as some compensation for its roughness, the narrative may be found both vivid and accurate.”

*Pioneering in New Guinea* was well received when it issued from the press. The *Athenaeum*, for instance, confessed that “few books written by missionaries breathe a more humane and enlightened spirit, and few deal with a people more interesting from many points of view than are the natives of New Guinea.” In the course of a favorable review, the *Spectator* pertinently remarked that the work would be “none the worse of judicious editing.” We fear that the lack of the editing has militated against the widespread success of one of the most “vivid and accurate” sketches of pioneer work that it has ever been our lot to read.

Visiting Inveraray, Tamate was able to meet face to face with his old pastor and correspondent, the Rev. Gilbert Meikle, and a jocular prophecy—dating from his departure from his native town more than 20 years before—was fulfilled in his dining at Inveraray Castle with the Duke of Argyll. The Duke manifested great interest in his work, and gave him his meed of honor in requesting him to plant a Spanish chestnut tree in the castle park, in close proximity to one planted by Dr. Livingstone.

On March 4th, at the Mission House in London, Tamate was afforded an opportunity to meet with the professors and students of the congregational colleges. With some hope of a response, he called for volunteers to go out and rescue the degraded cannibals of New Guinea. He asked for strong men, able to rough it; men able to hold their own in difficulty and danger, the dangers being, as he phrased it, “a little bit of pepper and salt to one’s life.”

In May, he was the “lion” of the 93rd anniversary meetings of his Society. In a magnificent speech, he pled for New Guinea, and told of the great strides, which the gospel of peace had made. He rejoiced over “those grand men,” the South Sea Islands teachers—“the real pioneers of Christianity in New Guinea”—and over his New Guineans. “There are 12 New Guinea teachers in our Eastern Branch Mission, young men and women, five of whom were cannibals when I went to New Guinea. The others were at Port

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Moresby, and they were what is called savages when I went there; and to-day — what? The fruit — the summer fruit all ready: we gathered it in; they have gone up to the front to help us in the great work.” He adumbrated a policy of advance. “What is wanted is this: that we should press on the mission along the banks of the Fly River until we get right away into the interior, and then spread out right and left to all the people that we may come in contact with.”

Perhaps the finest passage in this speech was that in which he declared his unabated devotion to his work: “Will you at home here stand by, see one after another drop to the grave, and no one come to our help? Do we look back? No, no retreat; no retrenchment either, I trust. I was afraid I was coming to this meeting to hear that we must give up the work, and I was going to tell you that I should have to leave next week, and proceed direct to New Guinea; that there, with the others, I might cover the retreat of the London Missionary Society from the work which has been so gloriously begun. You want men. I hope I am not an old man yet; I feel just as young today as I did 20 years ago. I feel ready for any kind of work, and I say, recall the 21 years; give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give it to me surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give it to me back again with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back, and—I will be your missionary.”

Tamate bade farewell to his directors on June 13th. We may be at fault in imagining that we detect in the report of the valedictory speech of the secretary a suggestion that there had been some difference of opinion concerning Tamate’s methods of work. But, if this ever existed, it had been satisfactorily disposed of. “Mr. Chalmers, in returning to his work, was going back with a free hand. His adventurous pioneering spirit might possibly bring him into danger; but he had a way of his own of getting out of difficulties, as well as of getting into them; and the principles of the Society were sufficiently elastic to allow him to prosecute his missionary enterprise in the way that was most congenial to him.”

## Tamate in England and Scotland

Sailing from Great Britain on June 25, 1887, Tamate reached Australia after a favorable voyage. There he had a cordial reception in the different towns visited. On September 13th, he left Sydney for New Guinea, and arrived at Port Moresby after an absence of more than 15 months. "Just imagine—New Guinea at last!" he wrote to a friend. "The reception was enthusiastic. One dear old lady threw her arms round my neck and kissed (rubbed noses) in a most affectionate manner. I was then on my guard. It was very affectionate, but it is not nice to come into too close contact with their faces. . . . I am delighted with the appearance of things. Fine new church here (Port Moresby), and good attendance; many more in catechumen's class, and good staff of young students."

Almost at once, Tamate was off to the interior to visit and pacify a tribe that had been punished by the Protectorate authorities for the murder of a teacher. He received the cordial welcome he had hoped for, and, returning, to the coast, felt that he was again in the full swing of active work.



## CHAPTER 19

### Motumotu

Although Tamate had returned to Port Moresby in the first instance, it is clear that he was now developing plans for a forward movement. Before he left Great Britain, he had declared that he hoped to complete the planting of teachers along the whole Papuan Gulf and the southeast coast, beginning where he had left off.

During the months of March and April 1888, he contrived to visit all the stations of the mission, east and west. At Vagavaga, he saw a change even in the appearance of all the natives. "They were a wild cannibal lot a few years ago. One of the natives who came off spoke a little English. Pearse asked him if they eat man, and was answered, 'No. No eat man now; all fellow missionary now.' In the evening at seven, a bell rang, and some hymn-singing was heard: they were having evening prayers. You cannot realize it—savages, cannibals, murderers—now seeking to worship God."

"I had a good time at South Cape," he wrote again. "I got refreshed in visiting the stations with the New Guinea teachers. At Savaia, where, only a short time ago, there were cannibal feasts, there are three catechumens and six who can read well, and all the people friendly. The teacher is a Suau lad, and his wife from here. She is a mite, good and clean, keeps a clear head, teaches in school, and has singing classes. She more than holds her own with the savages, ordering them around. . . . At Navaopou, quiet, steady, gentle Hari of Suau is making way, and the people really love him. He, too, has three wishing baptism, men who already take part in services, and who speak a word for Christ when they can. I always like to see all who desire to profess Christ by baptism showing their love to Him by working for Him. 'Tisn't much they can say for Him when being examined.'

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“A New Guinean, preaching last Wednesday, said, “The time has come for us to be up and doing. Foreigners have brought us the gospel; many have died of fever; several have been speared and tomahawked. Now let us carry the gospel to other districts, and if we die ‘tis well, for we die in Christ; if we are murdered ‘tis well—‘tis in carrying His name and love, and ‘twill be for Him. Motu, let us do it.’ He knows a little, so very little; yet he loves, and he is willing to endure for Christ. I saved the lad a few years ago from being attacked, perhaps murdered, by his own people.”

Of a prayer meeting, Tamate wrote: “I wonder if we are selfish? We do so confine ourselves to this island. Then, you know, it does require all our energy, sympathy, and devotion. . . . The prayer of faith is being answered.”

On the occasion of Tamate’s address to the Royal Colonial Institute in January 1887, Sir James Garrick, agent-general for Queensland, had said about the Protectorate in New Guinea, “It is clear that matters cannot continue as they are. There is at present no security in British New Guinea for either life or property. There is no jurisdiction under which the natives can be punished for the cruelest offenses, and no control whatever over the subjects of foreign states. Such a condition of things must lead to reprisals, which will have a very disastrous effect upon our future relations with the natives. The remedy for this is to proclaim sovereignty, and to organize our administration, which, while abundantly safeguarding the interests of the islanders, will adequately represent the imperial and colonial interests.”

The counsels of Sir James Garrick, and of those who thought with him, would seem to have prevailed with the British government; for, on September 4, 1888, Dr. William MacGregor—afterwards Sir William MacGregor—made a proclamation at Port Moresby definitely annexing British New Guinea to the dominions of Queen Victoria, and thereby raising its status from that of a mere Protectorate to that of a Crown Colony. Sir William MacGregor, as administrator of the colony, laid the foundations of British rule in New Guinea “with a true sense of the native position,” and earned the regard of the missionaries for the wise and sympathetic quality of his management of the affairs of the colony. Some years later, Tamate was able to say, “I am always in a difficulty to know what civilization is; but

## Motumotu

I can only say that, so long as Sir William is governor, he will help to make them (the New Guineans) a better people.

He has done all he could to help and defend the natives, by refusing to allow them to be supplied with spirits or with arms, and if they do not get spirits, they will advance and become better men and women.” This good opinion was fully reciprocated by the governor, who put a proper value upon the wide experience and splendid pioneer work of the missionaries. “The names, for example, of Lawes and Chalmers,” he once said, “will always be associated with the early history of the colony.”

In the Parliamentary Paper in which the founding of the new colony was formally reported to the British government, it was stated that “all the preparatory arrangements have been made for Mr. Chalmers to reside at Motumotu, a station from which the important tribes inhabiting the country at the head of the Papuan Gulf can be approached much more readily than from Port Moresby.”

Tamate had made his home under the roof-tree of Mr. and Mrs. Lawes’ dwelling, at Port Moresby, ever since the death of his wife in 1879. He was now to be married for a second time. When in England, he had obtained the promise of a widowed lady, Mrs. Harrison of Retford—who, as Sarah Eliza Large, had been an intimate friend of the first Mrs. Chalmers—to become his wife, and share with him the privations, vicissitudes, and hopes of missionary life in New Guinea. By arrangement, this lady followed Tamate to the Antipodes in 1888, and the marriage took place at Cooktown, Queensland, on October 6th, the Rev. Canon Taylor officiating.

Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers left Port Moresby for their new home at Motumotu early in 1889. Dr. Lawes tells us that he looks back upon the years that Tamate spent with him at Port Moresby as the most memorable in his missionary life: “We lived together; we talked together; we prayed together.” But the Port Moresby district was becoming too strait for Tamate. “He seemed to lose interest when a place became settled, and a teacher was stationed there.” Dr. Lawes also notes that since 1889, “his letters have been

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

fewer, but his spirits have been the same.” This may account for a distinct falling off in the biographical material relating to these later years.

At Motumotu, a village at the mouth of the Williams River, he was in the center of the wild tribe of Elema, and more than a hundred miles nearer to his “cannibal friends” of Namau and Vaimuru. His new district extended as far east as Port Moresby, and included the coasts of the Gulf of Papua west of Motumotu, and the islands in Torres Straits.

The missionary’s house at Motu—motu was situated on an exposed spot on the seashore. “It is close to the sea indeed,” Mrs. Chalmers wrote. “Big waves often wash nearly up to the fence. It is rarely calm enough to land on the beach, and we have to go some miles around to a point up the river to land.” “I do wish you could see this house,” she wrote again. “The walls are of very roughly sawn planks, which overlap each other, so that inside there are ledges innumerable from floor to thatch, every ledge being a nice accommodation for all kinds of insect life. I should think the house is 50 feet long, and divided into three rooms. The partitions are the height of the outer walls only, and leave the very high pointed thatched roof open from end to end. Tamate thinks it a delightful place. I am not quite so much in love with it. At night it is too lively; rats, mice, and lizards run all over in armies. I don’t object to the latter. They are very tame, and make a cheery chirp. Best of all, they hunt the spiders, tarantulas, cockroaches, crickets, beetles of all kinds, and others, big and little. At night, the bats fly in between the walls and roof. Ants and mosquitoes also abound. If you look down on the mats and floors, you perceive they are covered with life, even this paper is continually covered with tiny moving things, which I blow off. There are 3,000 wild savages here—fine, handsome men, got up in truly savage style. I do believe I would rather face a crowd of them than the insects in the house.”

Tamate Vaine (as the natives called Mrs. Chalmers) and Tamate himself were not long in Motumotu before they experienced the New Guinea fever. They had arrived at a bad season, and, after fighting with sickness for some time, decided to return to Port Moresby in search of rest and strength. We have made several quotations from Tamate’s letters and

## Motumotu

journals in illustration of the dangers and hardships of these coast voyages. Here is Tamate Vaine's account of this perilous run to Port Moresby:

“The long journey in the boat was terrible. The first morning we were nearly upset, and shipped a big sea. Everything was wet through, and completely ruined; most of our provisions were spoiled, too. Well, Tamate wrapped me in a blanket, and there I had to remain until sundown. All day there was a rough, nasty sea, and very heavy swell; but the wind and current fortunately were in our favor. I thought at times that the waves must engulf us, but the little boat rose to them splendidly; sometimes she seemed almost perpendicular, and then down into a deep trough with waves as high as a house, behind and before.

“Arriving at Maiva, we were warned not to land—the boiling surf looked dreadful, right along the beach. Two splendid fellows swam out to us, and said we could not land in safety. Tamate nearly lost his life here some time ago, when he attempted to run the boat ashore in such a sea. It was sunset; I was ill and wet; we had had nothing all day but biscuits and water; the wind was now right ahead; and the boys would have to pull to Delena, 15 or 20 miles off. Tamate said we should not get there until morning, and so he determined to risk it, especially as we had two fresh men to pull. I sat straight up, and threw off the blanket. I think the excitement cured my sickness and headache. Before turning the boat for the boiling surf, Tamate said, ‘Now, Lizzie, in a surf like this, the boat, if she goes at all, will turn right over; so do not cling to, but keep clear of her if possible. The boys and everyone will think first of you, and if we get ashore alive, never mind if all goes; the anchor will fall out and keep the boat.’ Then we faced it. The men were so excited, but Tamate and Niami timed the pulling well. We got over the first line of surf all right, and there was a great shout from the shore; then a second and third line were crossed successfully. In the last line we were a little too late, and should have been washed back, and, meeting the next breaker, have been swamped, but dozens of the natives rushed in up to their necks, and dragged us on to the beach. We were pretty wet, but thankful. I went to bed. Some tea in a canister was dry, so we could have hot tea and some biscuit. The sugar had all gone to liquid.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“We stayed from Friday night until early on Monday. Tamate had four services; one at Maiva and three inland. Of course, he had to walk to the latter, and the sand was so hot that one foot got badly chafed, and is only just getting well. Four young men were baptized, and one baby.

“On Monday, we set out on the next stage, had a fair wind, and got in earlier than we expected. The sun was fearful in the middle of the day; and though we had as much shelter as possible, I had sunstroke and fever, and yet feel pain at times. One night we spent at Delena, one at Boera, and then on here, arriving at 10:30 p.m., Tamate says that, what with putting right out to sea to catch wind, and then coming in to the stations, the distance traveled would be about 250 miles.

“It seems like getting back to civilization to get here, where they have many comforts and plenty to eat. The beds at the various stations were horrid—especially after sitting or lying in a boat all day—wooden planks covered with mats, sometimes a sort of mattress made from the cotton they gather from trees. My bones have felt so stiff and sore at times. The teachers themselves always sleep on mats on the floor, but they all have a bedstead, and sometimes two, for the use of the white missionaries.

“The cost of living here,” Tamate Vaine continues, with the interest of the housewife, “is something to wonder at; *everything* out of tins; nothing in the country to fall back upon except sago (native made). We have not been able to get a native vegetable for months, and very little fish. Here, they get wallaby now and then. We cannot even obtain that at Motumotu.”

While Tamate and Mrs. Chalmers were still at Port Moresby, the mission suffered a severe loss in the death of the wife of Piri, the faithful and tried Polynesian teacher at Boera. Of her, Tamate wrote, “She was a splendid worker. . . . Wherever she went she was at home. She could command the biggest, nastiest-looking savages, and get from them whatever she wanted. She could take services, preach a sermon, teach in school, superintend work about the station, take charge of a boat, and handle it well in the worst of weather.” Dr. Gill has told us that she was a good housewife, and scrupulously clean and neat. Once again, Tamate and his colleagues were

## Motumotu

justified in their choice of their dusky comrades and in the sound training they had been able to give them.

On his return to Motumotu, Tamate set to work upon the duties of his new sphere. In September 1889, a conference of the white missionaries in New Guinea—now numbering four or five instead of two—was held at Port Moresby, and it was decided that Murray Island had proved to be too far from the mainland to serve as a stepping-stone. And it was agreed that this island should cease to be the headquarters of a white missionary, and should thereafter rank as an outstation, and be left in the care of a South Sea Islands teacher. It was also arranged that Tamate, accompanied by Mr. Savage, should pay a visit to the Fly River.



## CHAPTER 20

### Torres Straits and Rarotonga

Tamate and Mr. Savage spent October 1889 in visiting all the stations from Hall Sound westwards, and also instituted four new stations. They were gratified to find that the two Motuan teachers stationed at Kivori had been doing really good work. "They have more children who can read than our South Sea Islands teachers have."

In November, the governor, Sir William MacGregor, called at Motumotu, and invited Tamate to accompany him in an exploring trip up the Fly River. But, having sickness among his people, he was compelled to decline this first opportunity to exploit the more remote parts of his new district. "I am sorry; but it would never have done to have left sick folk; and besides, I have begun training my own teachers for the Gulf. They are all Christians, who have been some years connected with the teachers, and have helped them much. We shall take none but church members."

In the beginning of 1890, however, he was able to join the governor in a further expedition to Torres Straits. In this way, he was able to render valuable assistance to the civil administration of the colony, and at the same time to carry out the wishes of his missionary colleagues.

The party sailed in the governor's yacht, the *Merrie England*, a vessel of 400 tons, and the cruise extended from January 22nd until March 27th. During this protracted period, Mrs. Chalmers remained in charge at Motumotu, and "kept the people working."

It will be remembered that the Fly River district had been the scene of the earliest efforts of Mr. McFarlane and of the teachers located by him. When Tamate now visited the stations planted by his former colleague, he

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

had to confess that the condition of affairs was disappointing. "In consequence of removals and changes in the missionary staff during the last four or five years, much of the work has come to a standstill, and will have to be commenced afresh. Too much seems to have been looked for from the native teachers, and thorough reorganization has become necessary."

At Kiwai Island, he found that there had been many deaths, and that the Loyalty Island teachers had suffered much. "Some of them have been really good men, and had they only been free from fever and lived, a really good work might have been done. There is no school, and no attempt at one. The Sunday services consist of singing and prayer only. It may be the teachers know very little of the language, and are therefore unable to teach or exhort, The great trouble and drawback is the variety of the languages. Had it been possible to educate these two men in their own languages, they would have taken more interest in the work, and made better teachers."

At the same time, Tamate found that the work and influence of the teachers had not gone for naught. The people had been familiarized with the strangers, and with their friendly purpose. "Certainly the living of teachers among them has had a good influence, and one that has extended to many other parts around (Fly River). Indeed, but for that influence, travelers would not be able to go about in the same peace and safety as they enjoy at present. In many places 'missionary' is equivalent to peace or friendship."

Of the condition of matters at Saibai Island, Tamate was able to report in more satisfactory terms. "Ten years since I last visited this island, and what a change! Then they were a wild, rough people, and only a few years before terrible skull-hunters, and the terror of the mainland natives. I fear the Saibaians, and not the Tuger alone, have driven the tribes away back into the bush. Now they are nice, quiet, kindly, intelligent folk; among them many church members, and all nominal Christians, attending services and holding services in their own houses morning and evening." The king was found to be "a squat, smart young fellow, who speaks English, and is of great assistance to the teachers. He is also a deacon of the church and attends to his duties—if the following is included in a deacon's duty: during service,

## Torres Straits and Rarotonga

should any poor unfortunates shut their eyes, nod, or fall asleep, he walks straight to them, lifts their head, and whispers loudly, 'Awake: no sleeping!'"

Tamate found the teacher Jakoba, a native of Lifu, to be a man well-fitted for his work, and he was constrained to wish that the mission had many more such men. "Altogether," he concludes, "I think Saibai has advanced as well as any mission station I know of."

The expedition was not concluded without an effort to enter into preliminary relations with people on the mainland who had never seen the white man or listened to the proclamation of the gospel of peace. A special attempt was made to get into touch with the warlike tribe known as the Tuger. In this sort of work, Tamate was in his element, and we have a spirited account of the search for the Tuger and the encounter with them.

"At several places up the Wasi Kassa and Mai Kassa (Baxter River), we saw old camps said to belong to the Tuger. We camped at some of them. We were very anxious to meet with these greatly dreaded marauders, of whom such terrible stories are told, such as their being cannibals whose whole occupation is in seeking for human flesh; of all of which I did not, and do not now, believe a single iota; but that they are skull-hunters I do not doubt in the least.

"The country is very low, and although we saw fires burning not many miles inland, yet I believe the natives live well back, and come down to burn the long grass in the season for kangaroo hunting, and to fish in the sea and get salt water. We went west as far as the boundary; indeed, when Mr. Cameron took the stars, we were found to be a few miles beyond. This was a great disappointment to us, as we had met the Tuger that day, and did not like the idea of turning back without making further acquaintance with them, but, of course, the governor could not leave his own territory. On coming around a point, we saw in the bay a clump of coconut palms and a few houses. Soon we saw a couple of natives walking about on the beach.

"Having come about 100 miles without seeing any signs of human life, we were now delighted, and His Excellency gave orders at once to anchor,

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

and away he went with a good crew to the shore. He had great difficulty in getting the few natives about to come near. A quarter of a mile further west was a creek, and it was evident that numbers were there, although at first they appeared one at a time. The tide falling fast, the governor and party only returned, and, our steam-launch and boats high and dry, many natives cautiously came off to trade. They would place their articles down some distance from us, then retire and sign to us to place our's, take their's, and retire. This went on for some time, until, gaining more confidence, they came near the boats and launch and handed what they had, receiving, in return, plane irons, tomahawks, knives, red cloth, and the like.

“About 100 of them were about us, a fine-looking lot of fellows, and better made men it would be difficult to find anywhere. A few of them had bad, evil-disposed faces, and it was well to keep a good lookout. At sundown, they were ordered away. In the moonlight, a few came off professedly to barter; but, we all believe, really to spy out the land. They were kept at a respectable distance.

“For some hours there was great excitement ashore, and eventually a number of canoes began to creep up under the shade of the mangroves, and a few came out toward us, the tide being well in. We felt sure they meant no good, so the governor, with his two boats, well armed, pulled away to meet them and prevent their coming too near. They soon disappeared, as they could see the movements of the boats better than our party could see theirs. We soon had quiet, and, setting a watch, all went comfortably to sleep.

“There is no doubt this is the Tuger tribe, and physically they may well be a terror to those farther east. Being in Dutch territory, it is possible they were near home, and may be Dutchmen, so nothing could be said or done to them. We fancied they were on the move, and that by our returning slowly we should again meet them, and in British territory; but we did not. I wish we had a couple of good Samoan or Rarotongan teachers for them. (Were) they won to Christ, we should indeed have a splendid supply of teachers for the future.”

## Torres Straits and Rarotonga

The routine work of the mission occupied Tamate at Motumotu until the autumn, when he and Tamate Vaine made an extended tour amid the scenes of his early missionary life in the South Sea Islands. The Samoas and the Hervey Islands were visited, and everywhere the voyagers received an ovation. At Rarotonga, in particular, Tamate was glad to meet with all his old friends again after an absence of 13 years. "It was an exciting meeting." Those who were present remarked with surprise how quickly Tamate recognized all his old friends, naming each one as they pressed round to greet him. On Sunday, he preached in the church at his old station of Avarua, using the Rarotongan tongue with absolute fluency. He had looked forward to the meeting with "young, loving Timothy," pastor of the church at Avarua, but he only arrived in time to perform the last rites of Christian burial for his beloved friend and former disciple.

This Polynesian trip had been undertaken with the object of stirring up missionary enthusiasm among the islanders, and securing additional volunteers for the work of the growing New Guinea field. The purpose was fully accomplished. The church at Aitutaki undertook to give him a boat for his pioneer work on the Fly River; and, as for volunteers, the missionary in charge of the Training Institution at Rarotonga had shortly to report—"All the Rarotongan students want to go to New Guinea; but Chalmers must wait: none are ripe."



## CHAPTER 21

### With Robert Louis Stevenson

On the voyage from Sydney to Samoa, Tamate had the unexpected pleasure of being a fellow passenger with Robert Louis Stevenson and Mrs. Stevenson. This proved to be one of the most interesting encounters of his life, resulting in a sincere friendship between these great men. We have most information of Stevenson's estimate of Tamate; and when we have read the various letters in which he disclosed his opinion of "The Great-Heart of New Guinea," as he is said to have dubbed him, we do not feel that it is impertinent to claim that he found in him the ideal Christian, who commended his Master to his friend, and—by influence rather than by words—persuaded him to revise his views of the Christian faith as a rule of life and a sure and certain hope.

The friends would appear to have made an appointment to meet at Auckland in December, when Tamate had completed his tour, and was returning to New Guinea. Writing to Mr. Burlinghame in December, Stevenson says: "Christmas I go to Auckland, to meet Tamate, the New Guinea missionary, a man I love;" and to Tamate, he had already written:

"I cannot come on the *Richmond*; our presence is very needful and work pressing; the most I can do (and in that I do not mean to fail) is to go by the next *Wainui*, and meet you, and arrive about the same time with you in Auckland. My wife, who is tired, and dirty, and rheumatic, and embittered by bad yeast, and yet (like myself) interested beyond means by our hard and busy life here on the mountains, bids me send all things nice. 'I cannot think of anything nice enough,' she quoted, 'to Tamate and his wife.'"

But the new-made friends did not forgather again. Instead, Stevenson wrote Tamate a long letter, which the Rev. Richard Lovett has given to the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

public in an article on “R. L. Stevenson in relation to Christian life and Christian missions,” contributed to the *Sunday at Home*.

In this letter, Stevenson confessed that he had looked forward to his second meeting with Tamate with a pleasure “hard to exaggerate.” The position of his affairs at Vailima rendered his presence indispensable. He had purchased 300 acres of bush land some months previously, and this was now being cleared of its dense, tropical vegetation under his immediate oversight; he was his own architect, and was planning and re-planning the dwelling-house; in domestic matters he and Mrs. Stevenson had only the assistance of one servant, “a feckless, kindly creature,” and “the less competent the servant, the more numerous and miscellaneous were the odd jobs which devolved upon his master and mistress,” as Mr. Graham Balfour tells us; lastly, and finally, his wife was unwell and would not accompany him, and he could not leave her to rough it alone—“Fanny has been quite ill with earache. She won’t go, hating the sea at this wild season; I don’t like to leave her; so it drones on, steamer after steamer.”

Stevenson reluctantly abandoned his project. “Forgive me my failure,” he wrote. “I think your master would have me break my word. I live in the hope of seeing you again. I pray God watch over you.”

The expressed desire to see Tamate again was no pious platitude on the part of Tusitala. “I ask you as a particular favor, send me a note of the healthiest periods in New Guinea. I am only a looker-on. I have a (rather heavy) charge of souls and bodies. If I can make out any visit, it must be done sensibly, and with the least risk. But, oh, Tamate, if I had met you when I was a boy and a bachelor, how different my life would have been.

“Dear Mrs. Chalmers, you say (and very justly) ‘Tamate is a rowdy’—your own excellent expression. I wonder if even you know what it means, to a man like me—a clever man, no modesty, observe!—a man fairly critical, a man of the world (in most of the ill senses), to meet one who represents the essential, and who is so free from the formal, from the grimace.”

## With Robert Louis Stevenson

To his friend Mr. Sidney Colvin, Stevenson wrote, about the same time, “I wish you to get *Pioneering in New Guinea*, by J. Chalmers. It’s a missionary book, and has less pretensions to be literature than Spurgeon’s sermons. Yet I think even through that, you will see some of the traits of the hero that wrote it; a man that took me fairly by storm for the most attractive, simple, brave, and, interesting man in the whole Pacific: he is away now to go up the Fly River; a desperate venture, it is thought; he is quite a Livingstone card.”

A year later, Stevenson wrote to his friend Dr. H. Bellyse Baildon: “Sick and well, I have had a splendid life of it, grudge nothing, regret very little—and then only some little corners of misconduct for which I deserve hanging, and must infallibly be damned—and, take it all over, damnation and all, would hardly change with any man of my time, unless, perhaps, it were (General) Gordon or our friend Chalmers: a man I admire for his virtues, love for his faults, and envy for the really A-1 life he has, with everything heart—my heart, I mean—could wish. . . . I shall look forward to some record of your time with Chalmers: you can’t weary me of that fellow; he is as big as a house and far bigger than any church, where no man warms his hands.”

In editing the letter from which we have just now quoted, Mr. Colvin, Stevenson’s literary executor, notes that Robert Louis Stevenson sometimes expressed a desire to survive Tamate, for the sake only of writing his life.

Dr. Baildon, who knew both men, has written since Tamate’s death: “These two men, in many respects such a contrast, had yet a great deal in common. They were both born adventurers, both explorers in different ways; and no two men I know of, in fact or fiction, were more sworn foes of conventionality. Both men had looked death almost daily between the eyes, without flinching; neither would perhaps have cared to alter the manner of his departure—the one suddenly smitten at the zenith of his intellectual powers, the other dying, like the Master he strove to follow, at the hands of those he sought to save.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Another comparison between Robert Louis Stevenson and Tamate comes from a different pen: "There was a remarkable difference in the ways these two men handled the natives. With all his Christian patience, Chalmers could be firm, and even stern when necessary, with the natives, and the smartest of them could never 'pull his leg.' Stevenson was imperious with the Samoans, but those wily humorists were always 'getting at' him."

It is to be hoped that written record of Tamate's estimate of Stevenson will yet become known. Meantime it is noteworthy that he once said of Robert Louis Stevenson that he was "the making of a good missionary gone wrong."





## CHAPTER 22

### Toward the Fly River

The early months of 1891 were occupied in the work of his district, and Tamate was gratified to observe a gradual change coming over the people. "They are not cowed, and do not give the appearance of being so, but they are changed." Walking from Motumotu to Oiapu, for instance, he was accompanied by a crowd of natives, all armed, and presenting a formidable appearance; "but during the days we were together there was no robbing of plantations, and never an ill word was said in any of the villages we passed through. At our last open-air service at Oiapu—I was going to Maiva in a canoe, they were going to Mekeo—I begged of them to behave themselves, and said I hoped on my return to hear that they had done so. Several spoke, saying that things were altogether changed, that they had come along from Motumotu, and there was no robbing, and they would continue so, and I am glad to say they did." "Don't misunderstand me," he adds, "they are not Christians, converts, nor catechumens."

In July, Tamate left New Guinea on a short visit to Queensland, and once more experienced the perils and hardships of shipwreck. On the 24th, the *Harrier* struck on a reef off Cape Bedford, after nine o'clock at night. "She bumped fearfully, and, a heavy sea running, she got fairly fast."

When it was evident that there was no hope of saving the vessel, passengers and crew took to the boats. They were about 22 miles from Cooktown, and were only saved from having to row the whole way thither in open boats by being picked up by a passing ship.

Tamate spent his 50th birthday in Cooktown. "I am 50 today," he wrote, "and I honestly say I could wish to take 25 off, and begin again the same work. My one desire now is, stronger than in youth, to serve Him

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

wherever He commands. Guess I am older, but really not getting older. I love life as much, as ever; steady work, rough work, pioneering or settled, a prank, a joke, a feast, or famine, all comes well as of old. When with these young fellows at Kerepunu and Port (Moresby), I was as young as they were, and cannot think I should tuck my mantle of age around me; guess I should get rid of it.”

At Cooktown, too, Tamate forgathered with Dr. Bellyse Baildon, from whose pen we have a sketch of the man and of the return to New Guinea.

“In shirt-sleeves rolled back, over the elbow and pith helmet on his head, or bareheaded, with his dark leonine locks setting off his noble face like a natural casque, he looked—what he was— a born leader of men. I can never forget a riding expedition we had, mostly a reckless gallop, when he headed us with the (unconscious) air of a commander-in-chief. For this bearer of the gospel of peace was nothing if not a born fighter. To see the man in civilized drawing rooms was to see Samson shorn of his locks. He always looked out of scale there, like a whale in a tank. He had just come from one of his many hair-breadth escapes—the total wreck of the mission vessel, the *Harrier*—but adventure and danger were the breath of the man’s nostrils. A few hours before we cleared for Port Moresby, all Cooktown said we should never leave that day. Our crew was known to be drinking itself drunk in the grog-shops of Cooktown. But Tamate meant to go by that tide, and go we did; the crew tumbling aboard as best they could, with sufficient dregs of sobriety among them to get up sail and clear the difficult harbor and cast anchor outside before nightfall. One could not help thinking of Ulysses and the swine of Circe.

“Once on the unruly sea, Tamate seemed again to dilate, and he personated for us, in the little ship of 68 tons, a Vasco de Gama, a Cortez, or one of our own ‘Sea Dogs,’ Raleigh, or Drake going to singe King Philip’s beard. What a grand buccaneer he would have made! Then in the hour of apparent danger, when we were running over the reef and might have struck at any moment, what absolute fearlessness, and yet what wise, almost tender, consideration for those about him.

## Toward the Fly River

“Then what a reception at Port Moresby, where he had been rumored dead; how the canoes with the stark-nude paddlers swarmed round the ship. It was like the return of a king to his kingdom.

“And in still worse danger, when the men of Movi-Avi (Moveave) swarmed about us, weapons in hand—a deadly sign—he stood, in Tennyson’s fine image, ‘like a rock in the wave of a stormy day.’ But four months before, only his eagle eye taking in the situation at a glance, and his swift wresting of the club from the hands of a chief, saved his wife and the whole party from instant massacre.”

Of this trip to Queensland, Mrs. Chalmers wrote at the time—”Tamate’s six-week absence was a trying time in all ways. You see he was only here a few days after our return, not long enough to make his influence felt. How thankful I was to see him back, you cannot imagine, and what a tale of trial and danger he had to tell me. In the public reports, he makes little of it, but to me he has told all, and I can only forget all the worries and hardships here, and be thankful that our Father in His great love spared life, and sent my dear husband back in safety. We expected him home in three weeks at the most, and what the three extra weeks waiting was, without any news, and with the new teachers all down with fever— one, as we thought, dying—is more than I can describe.”

“Ten years ago,” Tamate wrote in September 1892, “when little was known of the people west of Manumanu in Redscar Bay, I hoped, if God spared my life, to introduce the gospel to all the districts as far as Orokolo, and thought that the work might occupy a fair lifetime. We got to Orokolo in January 1892, and now my desire has enlarged, and I hope yet to carry the gospel to the Fly River, and to the westward. The plan I have always adopted is to visit frequently, be thoroughly known by living with the people, and, through interpreters, tell them the story of divine love, and so prepare the way for teachers living with them. I place no teacher where I have not first lived myself, and where I should be unwilling to live frequently.”

The foregoing words were penned by Tamate on his return from an adventurous journey in the swampy district of Namau, where the inhabitants

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

were all cannibals or skull-hunters, and where no white man had ever been seen before. The trip was accomplished in part in a whaleboat and, for the rest, in native canoes. The sea risks were, as usual, not inconsiderable, while the dangerous nature of the people visited may be gathered from the fact that Tamate's boatmen were over and over again reduced to a condition of terror. "The flotilla opened, and we passed out, my boys devoutly hoping I had made up my mind to return home. On learning I had not, and that I meant to go right on, some got ill, others glum, and one poor wretch simply sat down and cried. I suppose they knew their own savage nature better than I did, and were frightened accordingly."

In this cannibal land, the question of provisioning, too, was a somewhat complicated one. "The chief was away from home, but the wife in charge had quantities of food cooked and sent to us; but not one of my boys would touch it, saying it might have been cooked in pots used for cooking human flesh, or prepared by hands unwashed since last they rubbed themselves over with the juice from the dead bodies about. No use arguing, eat they would not; and I confess I could not lead off, and so give them an example."

This Namau expedition was full of incident, dangerous, pathetic, or humorous, but it was entirely successful. Acquaintance was made, for the first time, with several chiefs in this wild district, and promise of an early return had been sought on every hand. It might be said that Tamate was sustained by the sense of exultation. "Sleep! All chance of it had gone. The present and future are with me. The gospel is being preached all through Namau, and I saw the end of killing and cannibalism, and another people won to Christ. My interpreter and Ipai were busy also, the one asking questions and the other answering, with smokes. Cock-crowing is near and I must sleep; so I get two hours or thereabouts. By daylight I am up, quite refreshed, ready for a hard day."

Returning to Motumotu, Tamate rejoiced over the baptism of eight natives at Toaripi, regretting only that there were no women—"until the women are got for Christ, we cannot expect any real living Church." In June of the same year, he had secured a very fine tract of country at Jokea and Oiapu, and he had projected the formation of a college for the training

## Toward the Fly River

of New Guineans for the work of teaching. He felt that he still required an adequate supply of native teachers if he was to continue to break ground toward the west. He was anxious, too, to secure New Guineans, for these seemed to be able to live, and even thrive, in localities in which the swamps reeked with malaria, a malaria that induced dangerous, if not deadly, fever.

In the beginning of 1893, Tamate received timely aid in the provision of a steam-launch—christened *Miro* (peace)—to enable him to overtake his visitation, with greater speed, with less regard to weather conditions, and with a slight increase of comfort, if whaleboats or native canoes may be said to have provided anything that can be called comfort.

Tamate was at Thursday Island when the *Miro* arrived on the 5th of January. “She came in through a real tropical downpour, which did not, however, deter Mr. Chalmers from going on board at once. He was at Thursday Island awaiting her arrival, and is delighted with her general fitness for the work she has to do.”

Anxious to prove the utility of his new boat, Tamate set off on January 12th, visited the stations on the various islands in Torres Straits, and then, after touching at Saguane, at the mouth of the Fly River, crossed to Orokolo. Although the *Miro* met with “dirty weather” in crossing the Gulf, she “did splendidly, taking very little water on board.” From Orokolo, he journeyed eastwards, visiting station after station in turn, until he reached Port Moresby on February 23. This was the extreme limit of his district, and he immediately returned along the coast until he arrived at his headquarters at Motumotu. At Jokea, he was delighted to find that much progress had been made with the construction of the new settlement. “A fine, large bungalow and six cottages were finished, and plantations connected with each cottage cleared and planted.”

At some stations, Tamate found occasion to reprove the teachers, at others he was called upon to examine catechumens, and rejoiced to baptize a goodly number in the aggregate. This time he found a number of women among the candidates for admission to the church. At Motumotu, he had “a great day,” baptizing four men and one woman—the first woman in the

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

whole Elerna district. "She said to me the night before, when leaving with her husband, 'Tamate, I do love Jesus, and I do want always to love Him.'"

There is little wonder that Tamate had a serious illness after all this exposure and work at high pressure, and in his sickness, he missed the tender care of Mrs. Chalmers, whose health had become so unsatisfactory that it had been deemed necessary to send her back to Great Britain for a season.

We may mark time at this point by quoting from a dispatch by the governor of New Guinea, addressed to the colonial office, about the date at which we have now arrived.

"Without expressing an opinion as to any inward change produced by the mission on the members of this large tribe (at Kanaheri), I have no hesitation in saying that their outward manner and conduct have been much modified in the right direction by the labors of the Rev. James Chalmers and his South Sea Islands teachers. We were kindly and courteously received by these people, and I had every reason to be well satisfied with them in all respects."

The time was approaching at which Tamate was entitled to another furlough, when he intended to join Mrs. Chalmers in England. He felt, however, that he could not return to Great Britain without visiting the Fly River itself, and making some effort to open up friendly relations with the savage tribes inhabiting the country through which it flowed.

Tamate was by no means the first to ascend the river. In the course of the 20 years immediately preceding his visit, no fewer than four expeditions had ascended the Fly River to a considerable distance, but in every case, the explorers had found the natives to be of a hostile disposition, and had made no attempt to secure their friendship or to explore either bank. As Tamate once said— "Steaming up a river and steaming back is most unsatisfactory exploration, and all that is seen from the deck of a vessel is not worth recording." It was left to him, after all, to obtain the earliest reliable information about the immense and fertile region drained by the Fly and its tributaries.

## Toward the Fly River

The prospecting expedition was made in the Miro, and Tamate was accompanied by a native teacher and two interpreters. At a very short distance up stream, he was able to land at a village where the people “had never before seen white men, except at rifle range, and now they saw and touched.”

“The noise and shouting was great, and to an excitable and imaginative person it might have appeared that the hour of our doom had come. We were, as always, unarmed, having only a walking stick, which is useful in going over native bridges and for long walks. Some of the men were very evil-looking, and the women, who were gathered in the houses—the few we saw—were not at all prepossessing. A few of the men had been to Sumai, and had obtained, in exchange for yams, taro, bows, and arrows, old filthy shirts, and they certainly looked fearful guys.” After a short service had been held, “there were some very suspicious movements—groups consulting, men going to the houses, and a noise of arrows being handled,” and Tamate deemed it wise to return to the *Miro*.

At the next stopping place, “we soon had over 150 canoes around us, and on an average, four men in each canoe, and all shouting at their loudest. We could not keep them from crowding on board, and at one time it was very uncomfortable, and they seemed as if they meant to be unpleasant.” But friends were made here and at other places, and it was found that Tamate’s “fire canoe” was a “peace canoe,” and that he himself was anxious to show himself friendly, and to tell them that “the Great Spirit is love and loves them.” In this preliminary trip, a short run sufficed, and the missionary returned to the coast and shortly left for Great Britain, arriving there on July 3, 1894.

Revisiting his native Inveraray, Tamate was received with great enthusiasm, and this ancient and royal burgh was honored in conferring its freedom upon its lionhearted son. Wherever he went, throughout the country, he won the hearts of those who were privileged to hear him, and it has been claimed that no missionary of the 19th century “made a deeper impress on the minds and hearts of the young people of our churches and Sunday schools.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Dr. Joseph Parker recalls an occasion on which Tamate gave a missionary address in the City Temple; "I remember well," he says, "one sentence that was spoken. He was in a great heat; the spiritual fervor was contagious, the whole town seemed to be in a sacred inflammation of the soul. Said he, 'Do let us have some backbone in our Christianity.' It is the last word of his that I remember. It is a word that should be written all over the Christian church."

We do not find that Tamate had so much to tell in 1894 of actual pioneering work, and—beyond a short speech at the Royal Geographical Society, on an evening when Sir William MacGregor, governor of British New Guinea, was relating his experiences—he did not make any contribution to the programs of the Geographical Society or of the colonial institute. By this time, greatly to his satisfaction, New Guinea had become the object of much patient scientific exploration and investigation; it held the fortunate position of a British Crown Colony, with an administrator of the best type; and his Society and the churches had listened to his appeals for men and means, with the result that the reports of at least six missionaries were now making known the claims of New Guinea.

But the interest aroused by the personality and missionary appeals of Tamate, reawakened curiosity and interest in regard to the work in which he had spent the best part of his life; and, as his two previous volumes had gone out of print, he was constrained to republish selections from them under the title *Pioneer Life and Work in New Guinea*. There is little in this book that is not contained in the two previous volumes, and it suffers, like them, from a lack of "editing," but the reader is rewarded in the glimpses it gives, at firsthand, of the great missionary's perilous and devoted service.

On November 13, 1895, Tamate sailed again for New Guinea.





## CHAPTER 23

### At Saguane

On his return to New Guinea, Tamate removed his headquarters from Motumotu to Saguane, a station upon the island of Kiwai. This island is little more than a mud bank, formed by the alluvial deposit at the mouth of the great Fly River. About 35 miles long, and from four to five miles wide, it divides the main channel of the Fly into two branches. The island and the low-lying land forming the banks of the Fly at its mouth have been described as “about as dreary and uninviting a region as could be found. There is not a hill, or even a decent-sized stone, to be seen anywhere. Much of the land is only a few feet above high-water mark, and when the tide is low, miles of the foreshore appear as slimy mud-flats.” Kiwai is covered with vegetation to the beach, and Saguane is at its southeastern extremity.

As may be easily imagined, Tamate chose this spot as the scene of his labors from 1896 until 1900 only because of its strategic position—commanding immediate access to the waters of the Fly, and yet keeping him within touch of the island stations in Torres Straits. It also had the advantage of a larger share of the sea breezes than had other positions of equal convenience in situation.

Hither came Mrs. Chalmers on her return from the Old Country in 1897. Some idea of the amenities of the station may be derived from her description of an encounter with snakes. “We had a terrible fight in our bedroom not long ago, and killed two large and very deadly snakes. The natives all said, ‘Very bad fellow, suppose he bite man, man he die soon.’

“Jiusi, our half-caste boy, is splendid for killing them, and so is Katie, our teacher’s wife. She is excited, and looks quite like a wild savage while she is about it; it was dreadful to watch her. She got on a table, and with a

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

big knife, they fought, the creature trying to take her unawares, and darting at her all ways, and she trying to cut the head off.”

Dr. A. C. Haddon, in his recent book, *Head Hunters, Black, White, and Brown*, gives an interesting account of Saguane and the work carried on by Chalmers there, his information being derived from personal observation on the occasion of his visit to New Guinea in 1898, as leader of an anthropological expedition. “Saguane was a central and convenient spot for the mission, but that is about all that could be said in its favor. The whole island is little above sea level; it is malarial, and the water-supply is poor. . . . From many points of view, it was a disheartening place, and it was a wonder Tamate bore up so cheerfully. He had great difficulties with teachers; South Sea men are often unsatisfactory, and the Torres Straits islanders are practically useless as native teachers; so Tamate was endeavouring to educate his own men as teachers, but it was a long and wearisome task.

“Like other mission stations, the instruction of the young plays a prominent, one might fairly say *the* prominent, part in the work of the missionaries. Here it is especially needed, and these semi-migratory natives are ruder in culture than those we had met with in the east, and even the energy, enthusiasm, and sympathy of Mr. Chalmers can make relatively little impression on the adult population.”

Dr. Haddon tells us that on his visit to Saguane on September 11th, Mrs. Chalmers was ill with fever, which had prostrated her for some time. “Tamate, as he likes to be called by his black and white friends, had also been quite ill from the effects of a nasty fall from a verandah in the dark, and he was scarcely well yet; indeed, it appeared to me that his health was much shaken; and no wonder, when one remembers all the hardships and privations he has undergone during his strenuous life of self-sacrifice.”

Conversing with several chiefs at Jasa, Dr. Haddon was confidentially asked about the missionaries. “My friends had been describing to me certain ceremonies they employ for the purpose of making the crops grow, and they were really anxious about the wisdom of adopting the new religion, which they fully realized would require them to give up these

## At Saguane

practices; for, if they did not do as their fathers had done, how could the yams and sago grow? 'It's all very fine for Tamate,' they urged, 'as everything he eats comes out of tins which he gets from the store at Thursday Island; but how about us?'

Standing on the shores of dismal Saguane, Tamate cast wistful glances up the river, longing to see vigorous work carried on there; but he had no launch suitable for river work; and, besides, his hands were full of other duties—the care of the Torres Straits stations, and the oversight of the church and school at Saguane. He longed for men and he longed for means. He recognized that it was only the native New Guinean who could settle on the Fly River with any likelihood of keeping his health; he knew that it was only because the exchequer of his directors was little better than empty that he did not receive all the help he needed. "If only I had money," he wrote, "that I might carry on this work on the Fly River without asking the London Missionary Society or anyone."

But Tamate was no grumbler, and for the better part of the four years indicated he devoted himself to what he once called "the humdrum life of a mission station—at first teaching the alphabet to men and women, young boys and girls." When a deputation from his Society's directors visited New Guinea in 1899, the Rev. R. Wardlaw Thomson was constrained to write: "It seemed incongruous and almost ludicrous that Mr. Chalmers, the fearless and successful pioneer, whose name is known, and who is trusted and influential among many wild tribes, should be cooped up as a schoolmaster, with a company of 23 children, teaching them the rudiments of English and Scripture. But he was putting as much heart and energy into this work as he could into the effort to conciliate a tribe of wild cannibals, and was succeeding. He uses the Gouin method in teaching English, and it seems to answer admirably."

"The little girls," Mr. Thomson continued, "were all neatly dressed, and some of them looked very bright and intelligent. The church was a frail structure of bamboo and thatch, without any floor save of sand. It was erected on the verge of the beach, and, not very long after our visit, was

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

completely washed away by a flood which carried off a considerable strip of shore.”

Tamate was working for the spiritual enlightenment of his dark neighbors, and in this respect, he had much encouragement, both at Saguane and at other stations in his district. Writing to a friend in 1897, he described the opening of a new church at Mabuiag, a ceremony that was the occasion of much rejoicing on the part of a concourse of over 600 natives. “I ascended the steps and, opening the door, declared the house open for the public worship of God. . . . The house was soon packed, and an interesting service was conducted, I gave a short account of the work; that the cost of the church, £250, being all paid for, the only debt remaining was £6, 12s. for chairs. We had speeches, two minutes long, and the speakers were chiefs, missionaries, deacons, and evangelists from other islands, and several of our white friends, who became quite enthusiastic. The singing was abundant and good. The service lasted above two hours, and then we retired to attend to mean, earthly, and bodily things. It was a feasting, and it will be long a memory to those who were there. . . . The Sabbath was a grand day.

“Monday was another big day, when I baptized several Prince of Wales natives, who have been much on Mabuiag and Badu, and who affirmed they loved Jesus.

“I also baptized many bairns of church members from various islands. . . . I forgot to say that the natives of Mabuiag, 25 years ago, were wild, naked, nomadic savages. God hath done great things whereof we are glad, and they are the assurance of still greater.”

“Since last March,” Tamate wrote again in December 1898, “a great wave of blessing has been ours in this district. At Mauata, Tureture, Daru, and several other places where there are no teachers, they have regular services, and many meetings for prayer, pleading that a missionary be sent them. . . . Here, at Saguane, . . . we have some young men who preach Christ, but who know not a letter. Our school average is 54. . . . In school now, the greatest punishment is to forbid a child’s coming. All are getting on well.”

## At Saguane

A year later, the report was still one of progress. “The work grows apace; God grant it may grow strong. A fortnight ago, I baptized 80 men and women at Mauata, one of our western stations, and 16 at Yam Island, in Torres Straits. At this same island, they have got from friends and themselves £200 to build a church. In September, we opened a church on Darnley Island, free of debt, and now they are going to put up a new mission house of three rooms. They are going to do the same at Mabuiag. Here and at Jasa we have opened new churches, free of cost.”

A few months later it was announced that Tamate had “his hands and his heart full,” as he had “witnessed a great spiritual awakening among the wild inhabitants of Kiwai and other islands under his care.” Hundreds were being baptized, and gathered into the fellowship of the Church.

Notwithstanding his loyal devotion to the immediate duties of his station at Saguane, and of those in his large district, there still burned in Tamate the restless instincts of the pioneer, and in 1899, he would seem to have come to the conclusion that the next best thing to going himself would be to send one of his native teachers into the unexploited districts that bordered on the limited territory within the influence of the Kiwai stations.

Hiro was chosen for the task, and sailed to the east in the month of June. From an interesting letter addressed by Hiro to the men of Rarotonga, we get a glimpse of the satisfactory manner in which the disciple carried out his master’s commission. One quotation must suffice. Hiro had landed at a strange village, and got into touch with the scared natives. “I then told them why I had come—to bring the words of peace, and that fighting should cease. ‘Now,’ said I, ‘bring the people back, and let them come here that I may speak to all.’ They then went out and called the people, who soon returned and assembled. I said, ‘Let us forever be at peace.’ They answered, ‘Be it so.’ I then divided a piece of tobacco, which we smoked. I also took a coconut and planted it, and called it ‘*Miro*,’ i.e., peace. They answered, ‘May it be a true peace forever, and may no one come here afterwards with guns and shoot us.’ They then brought us cooked sago and a bamboo pipe—a real sign on their part of true peace.” We can almost imagine ourselves to be reading a paragraph from Tamate’s own journals.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

Hiro's next expedition up river, in November 1899, was hardly so successful. "He had the whaleboat, and the *Niué* accompanied. Off the Baramura Creek the *Niué* anchored, and the whaleboat was pulled up the creek. The captain of the *Niué* was anxious to see the large house, and he took a crew of two, and went up the creek in the dinghy. They left the boats, and all entered the house. They bought a few bananas, and were about to gather for a service, when one of them saw the most sacred of their idols on a small platform high up. All were looking at it, when several arrows were fired at them. They all rushed for the boats, showers of arrows following them. The teacher had his gun in the boat, and the night before had shot a pigeon, leaving one cartridge unexploded. He fired it off, and for a few seconds the savages seemed frightened, and the boats were getting away; but the arrows again were flying about them, one man being badly wounded. Getting the boats to the opposite side of the creek, they abandoned them, and rushed to the bush, making for the riverbank. There was no time to be lost, so they plunged into the river and swam off to the *Niué*. When on board, they could hear the savages looking for them in the bush. They weighed and returned down the river." Tamate closes his narrative of the incident with the characteristic comment, "We must try to make friends again with them, and, if possible, give them a teacher."

In August 1900, Tamate again dispatched Hiro up river, accompanied this time by six church members and their wives, with instructions "to preach Christ and hold services in every possible village."

"The church members are to remain three months, and then return here for a spell. They have no education, but they know the story of the Cross, and they are in downright earnest. It would have done your heart good to have seen with what enthusiasm they went. I got wearied of waiting and praying, and it was heavily laid upon me to get, and do something for the heathen."

This experiment was eminently successful. In December 1900, Tamate wrote to his lifelong friend, Mr. Meikle: "Last August, I sent six men and their wives from the church at Saguane up the Fly River, as evangelists, and to remain three months. During that time, they were visited and helped.

## At Saguane

They remained four months, and returned because I sent for them; they were greatly blessed. They lived with the heathen, and preached Jesus. When leaving to return to Saguane, great was the weeping, and everywhere the earnest pleading to 'return quick and teach us more.' Next month we hope to send out eight for four months, and so have the gospel preached far and wide. Writing to another correspondent on the same subject, he concluded, "I cannot hold back. What is a man to do when he is bound to the Spirit's wheels? We can't give up prayer, and we dare not withhold making known the glad tidings."

By this time, however, Saguane had been left to the care of a native teacher, and the missionary had removed his headquarters to Daru, an island 40 miles to the south, and the seat of the western magistracy.



## CHAPTER 24

### The Angel of Death

The decision to remove to Daru was principally dictated by a desire to secure a healthier place of residence. Both Tamate and his wife had to go to Thursday Island in the summer of 1900 for recruiting their health. In the case of Mrs. Chalmers, at least, this trip was ineffectual, and after a long illness, this devoted woman succumbed at her post, dying on board the Niud, off Daru, on October 25th.

“She had been ill for 14 weeks,” Tamate wrote, “and had suffered much. During these weeks, her faith strengthened, her love increased, and her desire to depart and be with Christ intensified. One of her last sayings was, ‘Jesus is near;’ and again, ‘Jesus is very near.’ She was conscious nearly to the end. She prayed that she might be buried on Daru and not at Saguane, and her desire was granted.

“I feel at sea—a kind of wanderer. I return to the Fly River and to work. . . . Pray for me, that more of Christ be revealed in me and through me.”

To another correspondent, Tamate wrote: “God bless and reward you for your kind, consoling words. He has not erred; yet it is strange, and to be explained hereafter. We had dreamt of a little rest together in a cottage out of London somewhere, before we crossed the flood. We shall dream them no more, she waits on the other side as she said—‘I shall be waiting for you all.’ I like dreaming (dreams); never mind though they are never realized. Another dream was to visit China and Japan and cross America. Perhaps in the other life we may do it with ease. She was a grand, good, loving woman; a true, faithful, loving wife; a real devoted worker, and all for Christ. How anxious she ever was that the teachers should preach Christ more faithfully.”

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

In declining an invitation to take a voyage, home at this time, the stricken missionary made excuse: "I fear I am too much attached to New Guinea. I am nearing the Bar, and might miss resting amidst old scenes, joys, and sorrows. No, I am in excellent health, only a stiffness of the legs at times, a great loneliness, and a gnawing pain at the heartstrings. I know it is well, and He never errs, and is never far off. I must, God sparing me, see this work through."

Tamate returned "to loneliness and to work." He had now established 26 preaching stations on the banks of the Fly River, and his desire was "to live long enough to see both banks of the Fly River occupied by the mission for a hundred miles up."

The removal to Daru was completed by the end of December. "We have a very good situation for a station—10 acres, about a mile from the village and harbor, and on a ridge between 30 and 40 feet above sea level. I think it will prove to be fairly healthy." In January 1901, Tamate reported further: "Houses are beginning to look shipshape, but there is long hard work before us. We are doing all on the cheapest possible lines, and hope withal to produce a station of credit, comfortable and healthy. . . . I am superintending five houses going up now. I hope before next Christmas to have all finished, and to be settled down in a comfortable station.

"I shall have to give more time to outside work this year, and arrange for further progress. I am well, and only troubled with stiffness in the legs, arising, no doubt, from the frequent wettings of past years."

In January, Tamate penned from Daru a letter to the Christian endeavurers of Great Britain. Several sentences in it are of biographical value in their accentuation of his warm faith, and his unabated missionary zeal and fire. "I am thankful for the Christian endeavour movement among the young, and feel sure our blessed Master will be greatly honored by it. I know the interest in Christ's work in foreign lands has been greatly increased through it, and I pray your great gathering in Sheffield (the annual convention) may be so abundantly blessed that the interest may still more increase. When you rally, may it be with one heart, and all for Christ, His

## The Angel of Death

Cross, and His Crown. I wish I were there to see that youthful rally, and help cheer the grand old gospel flag. May every heart unite in one prayer, 'The whole wide world for Jesus.' Youth! I envy you, and yet I feel young as ever in the face of the foe."

In March, bereavement and work shared Tamate's mind and heart, as he wrote to a friend in Scotland:

"Eh, John, He does all things well, and never errs; but it is sad, sad, sad, and the gnawing at the heartstrings, and the missing the voice, the touch, the look, are all here; He is near, and will heal, and will guide continually. Next week I hope to have my new whaleboat in the water, and if the directors grant the light-draught, flat-bottomed vessel, we should, with God's blessing, be able to do much more in the Fly River."

Tamate had been greatly cheered in the arrival of the Rev. Oliver Fellows Tomkins in 1900 to share the burden of his large district with him. Throughout Mrs. Chalmers' last illness, Mr. Tomkins had been "a great help and a great comfort. No son could have treated me more kindly than he did." In the accession of this young colleague, Tamate saw reasons for hoping that he might have more time for return to his pioneer work.

The annual committee meeting of the New Guinea missionaries was held at Daru in March, and at that meeting, Tamate planned a visit to the district of the Aird River. As Dr. Lawes has said, "The Aird River was one of the few places on the coast where his personality, and probably his name, were unknown. It was some 80 miles from the nearest mission district on the east, and perhaps 60 miles from his own station on the Fly River. It was one of the gaps in our chain of stations which we were all anxious to see filled."

Accompanied by Mr. Tomkins, Tamate arrived at the Aird River on board the *Niué* on Sunday, the 7th of April. The last entry in the diary of the younger missionary supplies some account of the first communing with the cannibals of this district.

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

“In the afternoon we were having a short service with the crew, when about 20 canoes were seen approaching. . . . They hesitated as they got nearer to us, until we were able to assure them that we meant peace. Gradually, one or two of the more daring ones came closer, and then alongside, until at last one ventured on board. Then, in a very few minutes, we were surrounded by canoes, and our vessel was covered with them. On this, our first visit, we were able to do nothing more than establish friendly relations with the people. They stayed on board about three hours, examining everything from the ship’s rigging to our shirt buttons. They tried hard to persuade us to come ashore in their canoes, but we preferred to spend the night afloat, and promised we would visit their village in the morning.”

That visit was paid, and the crew of the *Niué* never again saw their missionaries or the 12 native Christians who accompanied them. What really happened was only ascertained month later, when his Excellency, the lieutenant-governor of the colony, visited the Aird River with a punitive expedition, and got the whole story from a captured prisoner. This we may quote from an account supplied by the Rev. A. E. Hunt, who accompanied the lieutenant-governor: “The Njué anchored off Risk Point on April 7, and a crowd of natives came off. As it was near sunset, Tamate gave them some presents, and made signs that they were to go away and the next day he would visit them ashore. At daylight the next morning, a great crowd of natives came off and crowded the vessel in every part. They refused to leave, and in order to induce them to do so, Tamate gave Bob, the captain, orders to give them presents. Still they refused to move, and then Tamate said he would go ashore with them, and he told Tomkins to remain on board. The latter declined, and went ashore with Tamate, followed by a large number of canoes. When they got ashore, the whole party was massacred and their heads cut off. The boat was smashed up, and the clothing, etc., distributed. All the bodies were distributed and eaten, Tomkins being eaten at the village of Dopima (where they were all killed), and the body of Tamate being taken to Turotere. His Excellency informs me that the fighting chief of Turotere was the man who killed Tamate. No remains of the bodies could be found, though we searched diligently for them, but we found Tamate’s hat, and pieces of the smashed boat.”

## The Angel of Death

Thus, swiftly and suddenly, Tamate and his comrades were released from toil, and from the heavy responsibilities that had been weighing upon the heart of the lionhearted messenger of peace. Tamate died in New Guinea and for New Guinea, and it is hardly possible to believe that he would have willed otherwise. Only a week or two before, he had written to a friend, "Time shortens, and I have much to do. How grand it would be to sit down in the midst of work and just hear the Master say, 'Your part is finished, come!'"

Various reasons for the massacre have been suggested, but most, if not all, are purely speculative. It has been said that Tamate was rash in landing as he did; but, if the foregoing pages have fulfilled their purpose with any clearness, we believe that the reader will be prepared to agree with the Rev. H. M. Dauncey when he says that Tamate "had done, the same thing many times before, and nothing had been heard of it. If he had got away this time, it would simply have meant another name added to the list of villages he had visited."

The news of Tamate's martyrdom was the cause of worldwide grief and lamentation. On Rarotonga and in New Guinea there was awakened in the hearts of many of the native teachers a great desire that they should be allowed to give themselves to the completion of that work on the Aird River, which had been Tamate's last.

Ruatoka of Port Moresby, Tamate's faithful companion in much of his earlier work in New Guinea, wrote to one of the missionaries: "I have wept much. My father Tamate's body I shall not see again, but his spirit we shall certainly see in heaven, if we are strong to do the work of God thoroughly and all the time, until our time (on earth) shall finish. Hear my wish. It is a great wish. The remainder of my strength I would spend in the place where Tamate and Mr. Tomkins were killed. In that village I would live. In that place where they killed men, Jesus Christ's name and His word I would teach to the people, that they may become Jesus' children. My wish is just this. You know it. I have spoken."

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

When the first report of the massacre reached Great Britain, Dr. Joseph Parker gave voice to the thoughts of thousands of his fellow-countrymen whose privilege it had been to know and love Tamate, when he said, "I cannot believe it. I do not want to believe it. Such a mystery of providence makes it hard for our strained faith to recover itself. Yet Jesus was murdered. Paul was murdered. Many missionaries have been murdered. When I think of that side of the case, I cannot but feel that our honored and noble-minded friend has joined a great assembly. James Chalmers was one of the truly great missionaries of the world. He was, in all respects, a noble and loyal character."

### Great-Heart of New Guinea

Great-Heart is dead, they say.  
What is death to such a one as Great-Heart?  
One sigh, perchance, for work unfinished here,  
Then a swift passing to a mightier sphere,  
New joys, perfected powers, the vision clear,  
And all the amplitude of heaven to work  
The work he held so dear.

Great-Heart is dead, they say.  
Great-Heart is dead, they say?  
Nor dead, nor sleeping! He lives on. His name  
Shall kindle many a heart to equal flame;  
The fire he kindled shall burn on and on,  
Till all the darkness of the lands be gone,  
And all the kingdoms of the earth be won,  
And one.  
A soul so fiery sweet can never die,  
But lives, and loves, and works through all eternity.

John Oxenham

## The Angel of Death

With some effort at chronological sequence, we have now traced the life-history of James Chalmers, from the day of his birth in an Argylishire cottage, in 1841, to that on which he laid down his life for the gospel of peace in far New Guinea, 60 years later. Notwithstanding the rapidity of the sketch, we believe that the reader will have formed already an approximate estimate of the work accomplished by Tamate, as well as a more or less distinct conception of the man himself—his appearance, his personality, his faith. It may be permitted to us, however, to devote a concluding chapter to a short summary of the results attained by Tamate's life of strenuous service, and to an attempt to fill in lines that may help to complete our portrait.

The splendid results of Tamate's life-work may be classed broadly as scientific, imperial, and missionary. In the first instance, he added to the world's exact knowledge of the Papuan land and the Papuan race—if he did not actually lay the foundation of that knowledge. In the second, he contributed, to an inestimable degree, toward the beginnings of friendly intercourse between the civilized world and the savages of New Guinea, and the institution of inter-tribal relations. These made the annexation of the island a comparatively easy matter, and, an equal boon to the Imperial government and to the natives. In the third instance, his pioneer journeys opened up a coastline of nearly 1,000 miles, vast inland territories, and many scattered islands, and that for the express purpose—satisfactorily accomplished in many cases—of introducing the gospel of peace and the message of the love of God, and driving out the cruel and bloodthirsty terrorism of heathen ignorance and superstition.

Perusal of the narrative contained in the foregoing pages will have given the reader an acquaintance—sufficient for the purposes of the present sketch—with the general features of the geographical discoveries with which the name of James Chalmers will ever be associated, as well as with the great variety of peoples and tribes whom he was the first to locate and classify.

No small part of Tamate's task was his pioneering work in the matter of languages. As early as 1885, after barely eight years in New Guinea, he was able to tell the Royal Colonial Institute that no fewer than eight distinct languages had been discovered by Mr. Lawes and himself, and that these

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

had been found to comprehend many dialects. All the great continental scholars received with astonishment the communications which Tamate and his colleague were able to send home. In 1888, there was published a philological pamphlet of great practical value, entitled *British New Guinea Vocabularies*. This contained vocabularies of nine languages, spoken by tribes dwelling between Yule Island and the Aird River, and was compiled by Chalmers. Again, in 1897, he made a further contribution to exact philology in the communication of vocabularies of the Bugilai and Tagota dialects to the *Proceedings* of the Anthropological Institute. These vocabularies were after reprinted in pamphlet form. In the same year, too, he contributed to the Anthropological Institute important papers on "Toaripi" and "Anthropometrical Observations on some Natives of the Papuan Gulf."

Over and above making his own additions to the data of the sciences of geography, ethnology, and philology, Tamate was ever ready to assist scientific explorers, by his hospitality, by his advice, and by placing boats and other vessels at their disposal. We have seen how disappointed he was on hearing of the failure of the Age expedition. Mr. H.O. Forbes, Dr. A. C. Haddon, and others have placed on record their appreciation of his invaluable and ungrudging help. In fact, he welcomed to New Guinea all explorers whose mission was serious. "High mountains, dense bush, weary fetid swamps, hostile natives may lie in the way, yet to every traveler I say, 'Go on; your little adds to the muckle, and by and by the doors will be thrown open, and future travelers, entering by the doors you have opened, will laugh at your troubles, your narrow escapes, your difficulties; and will marvel at what they will suppose to be your highly-colored narratives of danger.'"

Tamate's researches were recognized by the Geographical Society of Germany, by numerous Australian scientific bodies, and by the Royal Geographical Society, which presented its diploma, an honor held also by Dr. Livingstone.

We have already said that Tamate's achievements in the interests of Empire—and of civilization, we might add; but for his expressed dissatisfaction with the term—consisted in his having laid the foundations of a friendly understanding between many savage tribes formerly the victims

## The Angel of Death

of unceasing internecine warfare, and between the Papuans and the white races; as well as in his having given direct assistance to the officers of the crown in the act of annexation, and in the initiatory stages of the establishment of British rule, law, and order. In the course of our narrative, we have noted various occasions on which the beneficent results of peace were secured by his intervention. Treaties of peace were concluded at his instigation, with such frequency that a change was gradually effected in the habits of the people.

In his paper on "Toaripi," above referred to, Tamate told the Anthropological Society of a pedestrian expedition in which he had been accompanied by a friendly crowd of two hundred 200 natives: "Between Jokea and Oiapu the sun was very hot and the sand very heavy, and we had several rests and smokes. At one of these rests, about midday, sitting beside me were a number of men from 50 to 60 years old, and they were comparing the present with the past. Thinking I was asleep, they roused me, and said something to the following effect: 'How different this journey is to all others, as formerly we simply robbed every coconut grove and yam plantation as we came along, and what we did not use we destroyed. But on this journey we have not even taken coconuts sufficient to assuage our thirst.' They went to Mekeo, and returned home, and, I believe, had not a single difficulty in the whole journey, and did not commit any robbery. Such is the effect of mission work among them, although they are by no means Christians."

On the question of 'Tamate's services in securing peaceful intercourse between Papuans and white men, we may quote the testimony of Mr. Seymour Fort: "New Guinea is an unknown tropical corner of our Empire, and, from a commercial point of view, of comparatively little value; but the pioneer work done by James Chalmers in opening up communications with the natives, and thus rendering European exploitation possible, was emphatically imperial in character. As an explorer and pioneer, his name should stand high in the annals of our imperial history."

But, after all, missionary results were the true objective toward which Tamate worked, and his achievements for science and for the empire were

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

merely ancillary to these. He sought to know the land that he, and others following him, might the more easily get at the people; he sought to know the people, that he might understand them and become their recognized friend, thereby finding opportunity to commend the gospel of peace to them; he worked for imperial ends because he believed that the crown would protect the native from the unscrupulous trader and from the harpies who conducted the Kanaka labor traffic, both classes of men whose depredations had engendered a deep-rooted hatred of the white man, and made the people almost inaccessible to the preacher of the gospel of peace.

Passing over the missionary results of the probationary years in Rarotonga, we have now to estimate the work accomplished in New Guinea. Here we cannot have more authentic testimony than that of Dr. Lawes, who shared the burden of the early years with Tamate, and still holds the field at Port Moresby.

Dr. Lawes has told us that, of the 130 stations now comprising the New Guinea Mission, nearly all owed their initiation to Tamate. What he secured, Dr. Lawes helped to retain; and, with acknowledgment of the valued assistance contributed by those who have joined the staff undress, and clothe ourselves in bathing costume; a great shout; the enthusiasm and excitement reaches its height; the missionaries are bathing! What? Missionaries ducking them, racing with them, diving with them, swimming under water with them! What next? A missionary dives some distance out, crawls along the bottom, catches hold of a pair of heels, and over the owner goes, alas! To be nearly drowned. Never mind who the owner was, or who the missionary was; but, in years to come, that bathing will be remembered."

With men, as with children, Tamate was ever ready to share in the joyous side of life's intercourse. "A man-of-war sometimes came, and, whether it was in the captain's cabin or in the wardroom of the officers, he was the popular man. I have seen on the *Wolverene* the commodore of the Australian Fleet and Tamate dancing together a Highland fling. He was always the same, the most jovial and most merry in a group, but the truest, simplest, and most loving of men. . . . He threw himself into all innocent pleasures. You should have heard him describe his ride through London in

## The Angel of Death

a handsome cab, one of his delights." Here, again, we have the unimpeachable testimony of Dr. Lawes.

Possessed of a rich, emotional nature, and no mean degree of magnetic power, Tamate was a hero to all who made his acquaintance, young or old.

But there was sterner stuff in the man's personality as well. His noble courage was probably the attribute that first attracted the admiration of the savage. Moving with frank fearlessness among armed and menacing natives, he gained their respect, and on their respect, he founded an influence that won the admiration of all who had the opportunity of witnessing its reality and its effect. His courage, too, never seemed to fail him when the slow strain of adverse circumstances would have broken many a seemingly strong man.

To courage, Tamate added a simple modesty that helped to preserve the self-respect of many smaller men with whom he was brought into contact. Toward fame, as fame, he was indifferent. His fine unselfishness was allied with his modesty. "Though he had been a smoker from his youth, whenever he was in houses where smoking was not approved, he could put his pipe away, and one would never imagine he was giving up anything." The smoker will best appreciate the force of our illustration.

But, as Mr. Fort has remarked, Tamate's dominant characteristic was a large human sympathy for all sorts and conditions of men. We have seen how he managed to evoke all that was best in "Bully" Hayes, and other such rascals; how he was hail-fellow-well-met with sailors, diplomats, scientists, and other men, in all ranks of life; how he recognized the finer qualities of manhood in naked, painted, and cannibal savages, men of other races than his own; giving expression, in actual fact, to the hopeful desire—

"That man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be, for a' that."

In the external relations of the religious life, Tamate's attitude was characterized by a large tolerance. Although he complained of the parasitic

## JAMES CHALMERS OF NEW GUINEA

action of the Roman Catholics, who—seeking to reap where they had not sowed, and to gather where they had not strewed—settled in territories which he and his colleagues had opened up for the London Missionary Society, he was prepared to testify that they were “doing a grand work.”

“I can safely say for the missionaries of the London Missionary Society that we shall not be a party to the introduction of bigotry; for, I care not whether in Great Britain or New Guinea, it is odious; and where I can assist them (the Roman Catholic missionaries), or they can be of assistance to me, I shall give and accept.” With a large faith in the inherent vitality of Christian truth, Tamate could say, with Paul, “Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

After all, and above all, the driving power, that gave force and direction and persistence and success in Tamate’s personality and life, lay in his spirituality. The jots and tittles of the law, over which creeds differ and churches divide, were infinitesimal in his sight, if they were visible to him at all. His heart was filled with joy in believing himself one for whom Christ, in unsurpassable love, had died; and he burned to carry the glorious tidings of God’s love to the uttermost parts of the earth, in confident assurance that he was a missionary with a mission of peace and love, a mission laid upon him by God Himself. Yes, a missionary to all eternity.

“There will be much visiting in heaven, and much work,” he wrote to an old fellow-worker, in one of the last letters he ever penned. “I guess I shall have good mission work to do; great, brave work for Christ. He will have to find it, for I can be nothing else than a missionary.”