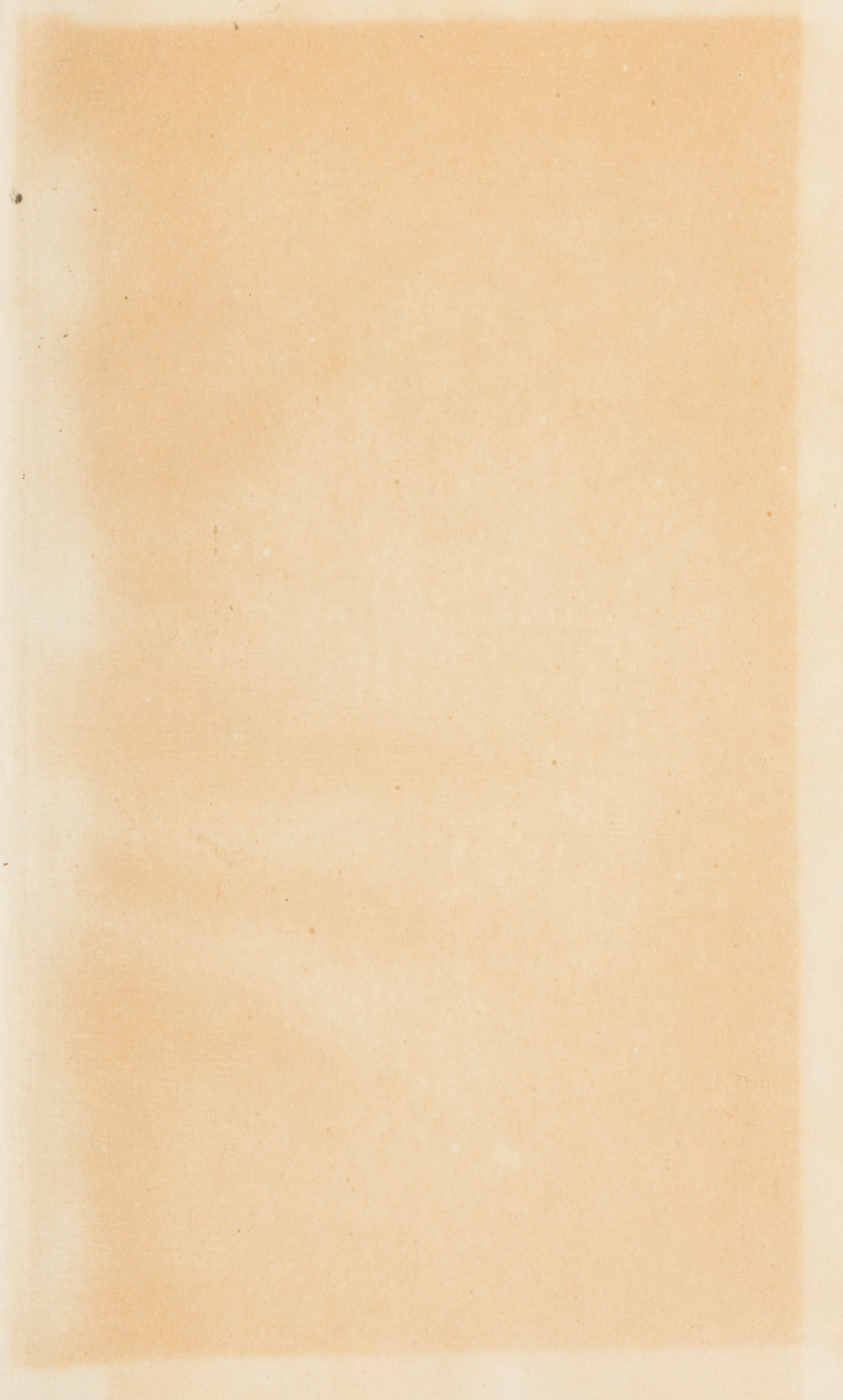


...HAIN LA TIESLLE. — Past Explorations in
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PAST EXPLORATIONS IN NEW GUINEA

AND

A PROJECT

FOR THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION
OF THE GREAT ISLAND

BY

E. MARIN LA MESLÉE

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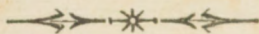
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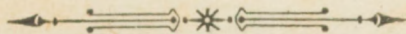
AND

A SCHEME

FOR THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION OF THE
GREAT ISLAND.



PAPER READ BEFORE A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALASIA, IN SYDNEY, BY E. MARIN LA MESLÉE,
HON. SECRETARY.



I.—PAST EXPLORATIONS.

THE subject which I have to treat this evening is one of great importance, both to geographical science and to the future of British Australasia. The news that the colony of Queensland had annexed part of the great island of New Guinea to the colonial empire of Great Britain, a few weeks ago, took everybody by surprise, both at home and in the Australian colonies.

The action of the Queensland Government has necessarily attracted towards New Guinea a large share of public attention; people have all at once recollected that New Guinea, one of the largest islands in the world, has remained up to this day a sealed book to the geographer, and apart from some flying surveys of portions of its coast, some important explorations within 20 to 40 miles from its shores, and the discovery of a few rivers, little is known of the interior of the country.

The sailor who happens to pass within fifty miles from its eastern shores perceives, on the distant horizon, a broken line of high mountains, running parallel to the coast, the highest peaks towering to a height of 12,000 and 13,000 feet above the sea level, but beyond them no white man has dared to brave the unknown terrors of the interior of the dark island. Two Europeans have ascended the course of a mighty stream, which carries to the sea the drainage of an immense watershed on the south western

part, but they only ventured within gunshot of its banks, and in many cases met with great hostility on the part of the natives. More dangerous, perhaps, than the arrows of the Papuans, a terrible fever reigns supreme on the low lands ; no one escapes the effects of the malaria, and, if nature appears clothed in its most brilliant tropical garments, inviting by its splendid aspect the admiration of man, the poisonous air itself stands guard over the islands' treasures, and seems to forbid the explorer the entrance to that magnificent garden of Eden. Not only is the country rich beyond description with an admirable and varied flora, but insect and animal life are both of a profuse character. Amidst the brilliant foliage which shades the rivers banks, under the green dome of the silent forests, myriads of insects and birds have their home. The latter are among the most beautiful of the Almighty's creatures, so marvellous, that the first naturalists which described them, in ecstasy before the exquisite colours and the splendour of their gorgeous plumage, have deemed them worthy of a place in *Elysium*, and have classed them under the generic name of "Birds of Paradise." Many are the speculations which at various times have obtained credence as to the value of the natural products of New Guinea. It has been currently believed that gold would be found in profusion, and the mineral resources of the island have been spoken of as probably of an extreme richness ; but so far little is known which might tend to verify such assumptions.

New Guinea is now in the position of Australia when Captain Cook hoisted the British standard on the shores of Botany Bay. Little more is known of its coast than was known of those of the Australian continent a century ago, and its interior has yet to be explored. The time has come for an expedition of a scientific nature to visit the dark island, and since, sooner or later, its eastern portion will become part of the future dominion of Australasia, to which geographical system it belongs, such an expedition almost becomes a national undertaking.

It may be well that I review before you to-night the history of past explorations, and that I give you a general idea of their results in a geographical point of view. The experience of those who first had dealings with the natives, the information of a varied and interesting character which they have obtained, as to their customs and habits, and their observations on the climatic conditions of the island, are of the greatest importance when it is attempted to penetrate a country so completely unknown.

I need not describe the geographical position of New Guinea ; any one who has cast a glance at the map of Australasia could not fail to notice that large island very much longer than it is broad, terminated at the south-east by a long narrow peninsula through which runs a range of high mountains, and the extreme north-west of which is formed of another peninsula, almost round in shape, nearly cut off from the main land by a deep inlet on the western side, and that great indenture of Gelwink Bay on the eastern. It is situated opposite the extreme northern point of the Australian continent, and, if York Peninsula was prolonged, it would almost cut the great island in two equal parts.

From its extreme south-east to its north-west point, the distance is nearly 1100 miles, and its greatest breadth is not less than 500 miles. The superficial area of New Guinea, as far as can be ascertained from our yet incomplete geographical notions, exceeds 300,000 square miles, being a larger area than that of France. The population, composed of a great many different races, among which the Papuan and the Malayan types are the most conspicuous, is estimated by some at 8,000,000, and by others at 2,000,000 only. This leaves a very large margin for any possible error ; but if we may rely on the descriptions of the few travellers and naval officers who have visited its shores, there is no doubt that the population will be found nearer the first than the last figure.

The discovery of New Guinea is attributed to a Spanish sailor, Alvaro de Saavedra, who sighted its coast in the year 1528. It is however presumed that the Portuguese who had settled in the Moluccas about the year 1512, had obtained a knowledge of its existence. Long before the Europeans ever came to that part of the world, the Malays and the Chinese had been in the habit of communicating with New Guinea, and they have left undeniable proof of their intercourse in the alteration of the original characteristics of the native races. The Malays must have circumnavigated the island at an early period, as the mixture of Malayan blood is to be found amongst the coast tribes on both the east and west coast, as well as near its south-easternmost point. The island of Salwattee, which is separated from the mainland by the strait of Galewo, is inhabited by natives of various races, but the prevailing element is Malayan, and the political power is in the hands of a Malay rajah. The intercourse

between the Malays and the natives of the north-west has been constantly kept up from ages past, whilst the former have probably long since ceased to visit the southern coasts.

Of all Europeans who have left records of their travels to those parts of the Southern hemisphere, the next who saw New Guinea was Luis Vaz de Torres, who has given his name to the Straits which separate the island from the continent of Australia. Seventy years elapsed before other European navigators visited the shores of the great Papua, and in 1676 the Dutch sailors, Schouten and Lemaire, recognised part of the south-western coast. The French navigator, De Bougainville, in 1768, and the celebrated English Navigator, Captain Cook, whose name is for ever associated with the history of the discovery of Australia, followed in 1770, calling at some point of the coast, which was afterwards visited by the Dutch officers in the first half of this century. Among English navigators who subsequently came in sight of the shores of New Guinea, I may cite Forrest in 1774, Edwards in 1791, Captain Bligh, of the "Bounty" in 1791, and Captain Flinders, in 1799. The records left by them are, however, of very small importance, as they do not go beyond a few notes entered in their journals. The French navigator, Dumont d'Urville, who made a voyage to the east coast, was really the first to give an interesting account of the island. He landed several parties, and the naturalists attached to his expedition made very complete zoological collections, and wrote interesting reports on the natural history of Papua.

The Dutch, who had annexed to their Malayan colonies the northern part of New Guinea down to the 141st parallel, sent several expeditions to visit and report on its apparent natural resources. In 1825 and 1826, the Dutch man-of-war, "Dourga," under the command of Lieutenant Kolff, reached the entrance of what was supposed to be a large river, emptying itself in the Timor sea, which he christened the St. Bartholomew. It is situated by $8^{\circ} 25'$ south latitude and $139^{\circ} 2' 2''$ east longitude. He describes the coast in the vicinity as low and covered with mangrove trees, the sea being of very little depth, and great mud banks extending far from the land. He pursued his course along the coast, and after rounding False Cape discovered the entrance of another river which he named the Dourga; but it was afterwards found by the expedition of the "Postillon" in 1835 that the Dourga and the Bartholomew were not rivers at all, but formed a strait separating Prince Frederick Henry Island from the main land. The shores

of that island were so low as to be almost inaccessible on account of the mud banks and the low mangrove vegetation, already described.

Lieutenant Kolff proceeded along the coast in a northerly direction, and between the entrance to Dourga Straits and the Outernata River he traced the mouths of many large streams ; but owing to the low formation already noticed was unable to approach the shore. To judge from the number of villages seen from the vessel the coast seems to be densely populated. On arriving at a point opposite the island of Adi the land becomes very high. The people of that part of the coast showed themselves very hostile.

The flying survey of Lieutenant Kolff was completed by the two expeditions of the "Siren" in 1832 and the "Triton" in 1835 (the results of which Dr. Solomon Muller has published). The coast of Adi Island, Nautilus Straits and several points of the south-western coast were examined. This was the second voyage of the "Triton," as in 1828 that vessel had visited the south-west coast, the Outernata River and Triton Bay. In 1858, the steamship Etna, also of the Dutch Navy, explored the same region ; the river Karoefa was examined and ascended for many miles, the country which it waters being described as high and covered with the most admirable vegetation. The Dutch steamer subsequently visited Etna Bay and the Bay of Caimans and made a survey of Humboldt Bay. The Dutch expeditions were completed by scientific missions, that of Van der Crab in 1871, and that of Teysman, Correngel, Langeweldt, Hemert, and Swaan in 1876, who examined the northern coast and made splendid collections of natural history specimens, adding greatly to our knowledge of that part of New Guinea.

We now come to the English expeditions and surveys, commencing with that of H.M.S. Fly in 1842-46, to which the discovery of the Fly River is due, and that of the Rattlesnake in 1846-50, in which Prof. Huxley took part. These expeditions, however, did no more than survey part of the south-east coast, and never ventured to send parties inland to explore the country.

Captain Owen Stanley in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1851, spoke of a range of very high mountains following the direction of the extreme South-east coast, one of them attaining an altitude of 12,800 feet. This mountain is the magnificent Mount Owen Stanley which forms so conspicuous a background to the scenery of the coast at Port Moresby.

We are now approaching a new period in the history of the geographical exploration of New Guinea. The first English missionaries made their appearance, and with them Christianity and civilisation have dawned on the natives of New Guinea. Until now, be it said to the great credit of the missionaries, their efforts has been attended with the best effects; the Papuans have been made to understand the pacific intentions of the white man, and the days of murders and cannibalism seem to have passed away, unless perhaps at the beginning of a new era of colonisation steps are not taken from the first to prevent any difficulties arising between the natives and the early colonists.

In 1867 the Rev. Mr. Chalmers, together with Mr. Chester, the same gentleman who recently annexed the island in the name of the Government of Queensland to the colonial domain of England, visited the South-eastern shores, and subsequently the Mai Cussar River was discovered, which has been re-christened the Baxter by the missionaries who visited it in the steamer Ellengowan. Mission stations were established on the coast, and they have flourished and done a great deal of good in opening the country to the influence of civilisation.

We now come to the most complete explorations of the coast made by English navigators; I mean those of Captain Moresby in 1871 and 1876. He left Sydney under orders from the Commodore of the Australian Station, picked up *en route* the remains of an ill-fated expedition, of which I shall speak further on, anchored in Redscar Bay on the south-east coast, and proceeded to examine the surrounding country. He found the natives of the Malay type, small well-built people with a fine and pleasing expression of countenance, living in large houses raised on piles of the unusual height of 15 to 20 feet. He discovered a wide estuary into which several rivers empty themselves, but unfortunately unconnected with the sea by any navigable passage, otherwise it would be one of the finest harbours in the world. An exploration was made of the Edith and Usborne Rivers, which are described as fine streams with a strong current, but which would be easily ascended by steam launches.

The inhabitants, very shy at first, soon became friendly, and he never had to complain of their conduct in any way. Below Redscar Bay the coast was examined and the magnificent harbour of Port Moresby discovered. Yule Island and Hall Sound were afterwards visited, and Captain Moresby described the latter as a

perfectly land-locked harbour, in which hundreds of vessels could lie in safety. Yule island is a very remarkable, highly mountainous country, covered with magnificent tropical vegetation, and relatively healthy. The inhabitants belong to the Malay group, but the type is coarser than at Redscar Bay. They are also friendly and well disposed towards traders. Iron hoop and scrap iron have the greatest value as articles of trade.

Captain Moresby completed the survey of the extreme South-East coast of New Guinea, which the early French navigators Bougainville, d'Entrecasteaux, and the English captain Owen Stanley had seen ; but they had not approached sufficiently near to find the outline of the land. Milne Bay was completely surveyed, and Moresby anchored in a small bay inside the greater one, on the shores of which a beautiful village is situated. He called it Discovery Bay. The natives were very friendly and came alongside the English vessel in beautifully ornamented canoes, from 50 to 60 feet long. A very curious custom of the natives was observed along that part of the coast of New Guinea. When the Papuans desire to extend a welcome to strangers, they sacrifice a dog by dashing his brains out before them. That ceremony was performed for the first time on board the vessel under captain Moresby's command, and the disgusted sailors very soon cleared the deck from the intruders who had thus defiled it. Rounding the easternmost point of New Guinea, captain Moresby made a flying survey of the east coast, and expressed himself in very glowing terms as to its aspect. "Between East and Vogel Cape there is a coast line of about 100 miles ; villages abound, and the valleys, not seen from the sea, on account of the lie of the hills, appear well cultivated. The villages are scattered on this part of the coast on a plateau of park-like land, which intervenes between the shore and the mountains within, which, rising by gradually higher undulations, terminate at a height of many thousand feet above the sea. There can be no doubt, says Moresby, as to the capabilities of this land if cultivated. On the hills herds of cattle, and sheep innumerable, might find pasture ; whilst from the cold summit to the hot plain, all the products of of wide extent of climate might be grown. The climate of that part of New Guinea would not be prejudicial to Europeans, high land possessing every degree of temperature, abounds, and the Europeans who inhabit the islands of Polynesia appear to enjoy perfect health." The English captain continued his survey of the

east coast as far as Astrolabe Bay, and describes its aspect as magnificent. He found, however, the natives of that part of New Guinea seemed very much more savage and intractable than those of the south-east coast and of Milne Bay. A meteorological peculiarity which he observed, was that whilst the western part is exposed during the months of March, April, and May, to very bad and extremely hot weather, on the eastern shore, although the heat is great, the air is always beautifully and clear.

Captain Moresby's coast survey in 1876 is the last which I have to record, although the "Wolverene" made a flying trip to the south-west coast in 1881, and the vessels of the Australian stations have frequently visited portions of its shores within the last few years. The sailors must now give place to the naturalists, to whom is due most of the knowledge we possess of the parts of New Guinea, extending at any distance from the coast, which have ever been visited by Europeans.

To Wallace, who explored the northern coasts of New Guinea, we owe most of our geographical knowledge of that part of the island. The Italian naturalists, d'Albertis and Beccari, in 1872, proceeded along the coast to Salwatee Island, visited Tangior Bay, Kulokadi and Kapauer Harbour on the north-west, where the people trade with the Boughis merchants of Macassar. All along the Northern Coast the country is splendid in its aspect. Hills beautifully covered with vegetation rise from the sea, and behind them higher hills, everywhere thickly wooded, form the background. Round to the East the mountains become gigantic, and Mount Arfak measures 12,000 feet. The interior is completely unknown, the natives are dreadful cannibals, very numerous and well armed. Along that coast they appear to be a mixture of Malays and Papuans, many of them have embraced the Mussulman faith, and missionaries of that religion reside on the mainland. This fact shows that little friendliness can be expected from them in that quarter. Wherever the Malays have had dealings with the Papuans, the result has been to render them, if it were possible, more savage, and it is a fact too well known that Europeans have always found great difficulty to establish relations with any kind of native races, where Islamism has penetrated. The French in Senegambia and in the Cayor have met with the greatest opposition on the part of the Mahomedan blacks. The institution of slavery, dear to every follower of the Prophet, necessarily implants itself wherever

this religious system has sway, and as the white man's first care is to put a stop to that horrible trade in human merchandise, he can expect nothing but a most determined opposition. Dr. Beccari and d'Albertis remained some time in the vicinity of Mt. Arfak until the Italian corvette "Vittor Pisani" picked them up and brought them to Australia. They touched at Orangerie Bay on the voyage down and described that part of the country as very beautiful, and the natives as very friendly. There they found that the New Guineans of that region had not got beyond the age of stone, as all their implements were made of beautifully polished hard stone. Iron, however, under the name of *dim dim*, seemed to be in great requisition.

But the most important of d'Albertis' explorations is that in which, in company with Mr. Law Hargraves, as engineer of the steam launch *Neva* which was lent to him by the Government of New South Wales, he ascended the Fly River for a distance of 454 miles, and discovered its principal affluent the Alice Hargrave River. He first visited Yule Island and Hall Sound, and on the Ethel River made a flying exploration in search of specimens of natural history. The *Neva* afterwards entered the Fly river, which is described as running for a considerable distance from its mouth, between mangrove skirted shores, very low and unhealthy. The source of the river, which was not discovered, probably lies at the foot of a long range, which seems to cross New Guinea from the South-East to the North-West. The river winds between low hills, gradually increasing in height towards the North, and making a turn Westerly runs through a large extent of low flat plains, admirably covered with vegetation, forests of sago palms, nutmegs, etc., etc. The mouth is a wide delta of numerous islands, Kiwai, the largest of them, being very densely populated. The Italian naturalist's opinion is greatly against the possibility of Europeans ever being able to stand the fearful climate of the low plains, but he thinks that on both sides of the high Central Range, the mountainous regions would offer chances of success. D'Albertis found the natives very savage, and had several times to use force, in order to save the lives of himself and those of his party. As they ascended more into the interior the race became totally different, and the real Papuans were met with, free from any admixture of Malay blood.

The explorations of d'Albertis and Dr. Beccari must have been highly successful, as I see from a paragraph in the Proceedings of

the Geographical Society of London that they have brought home about 5,000 species of plants and 100,000 of animals, of which 10,000 birds and 80,000 insects deposited by them in the Museums of Genoa and Florence.

Besides Italians, naturalists of other nationalities have visited the great island. In 1876, the French Government sent Mons. Raffray on a scientific mission, and he visited the Dorei Andrai Peninsula, and the natives of the Arfak tribes. His splendid collections of natural history specimens were forwarded to the Paris Museums. New South Wales is also represented by two expeditions; that of the "Chevert," which was equipped at the expense of the Hon. William Macleay, was on a scientific point of view, eminently successful. Geographically speaking, little new information was gained, as the vessel visited spots already known, but natural sciences were greatly benefited. In 1877, the trustees of the Australian Museum sent Mr. Alexander Morton in search of specimens of natural history. He landed at Pt. Moresby, in company with the botanical collector, Mr. A. Goldie, and started for Redscar Bay.

The whole of the land round this district appears to belong to the Pt. Moresby natives, but the next village called Momeara is inhabited by another tribe. Mr. Morton relates that he found great difficulty in obtaining natives to carry the provisions, owing to certain laws which seem to have force in the whole of that part of New Guinea between various tribes. The Pt. Moresby natives were willing to carry goods as far as Momeara, but nothing could induce them to go a step further. The Momeara natives were also disposed to carry as far as the next village, but the same difficulty was met with there, and as the villages became more and more numerous, and the tribal boundaries narrower as the travellers penetrated further inland, they found this curious custom a great drawback to their explorations.

A new river was discovered at a distance of about 45 miles from Pt. Moresby, emptying itself into the Laloki, and Mr. Morton, named it after Mr. Goldie. This river runs very rapidly, with many falls of great height, and as far as could be judged seems to have its source at the foot of the Owen Stanley Range.

The explorers afterwards came across a village which was built in the forks of trees, the natives of which were very shy, but an incident occurred there which shows how very beneficial an influence the presence of the missionaries has exerted

in the natives of that part of New Guinea. When the inhabitants of the village had recovered from their fears, they became a little bolder, and, approaching within speaking distance, one of them inquired in his language if the white man was a friend of Mr. Lawes, and on an affirmative answer being given they immediately became friendly. The missionary referred to had never been in this part of the district, but his name was known to the natives as a bye-word of peace, and the simple fact that the white men were his friends was sufficient to ensure a good reception. Mr. Morton observed that the natives had a very good knowledge of tropical agriculture; their gardens are neatly fenced, and they grow in profusion yams, taro, sugarcane, bread fruit, and some extremely fine tobacco. He and his party experienced great kindness on the part of these natives. Prospecting was also tried both along the Goldie River and its numerous small tributaries, and up to the point whence they returned, the colour was found only in the river itself, but none could be found in any of the tributaries; this seems to point to the fact that the gold has been washed from the foot of the Owen Stanley Range where it is surmised lies the source of the Goldie.

In 1871 the Russian corvette *Vitiaz* landed on the eastern coast of New Guinea, a gentleman who has devoted his life to the advancement of our knowledge of the natural history of the great island, and who for over four years has resided among the wild tribes of that inhospitable coast, collecting a vast amount of scientific information and studying the beautiful animated nature of that splendid country, I have named the Russian savant, Baron Miclouho Maclay. The part of the coast which he explored is situated on the eastern side of New Guinea, between Dampier Island and King William Cape. It extends over a distance of nearly 200 miles, and the Russian naturalist made numerous excursions inland, exploring the country at an average distance of 40 miles from the coast. That part of New Guinea is very high, and between the sea shore and the high summits of the coast range the total distance does not exceed 50 to 60 miles. Beyond a certain height on the slope of the mountains the country is uninhabited. Near the coast, however, the natives are very numerous; they were very troublesome at first, and the Baron often felt very insecure among his savage neighbours, but his great energy, his just and kind treatment of them, enabled him to pass safely through all dangers. That part of

the eastern coast is now named the Maclay coast, and the Russian naturalist's explorations are by far the most important made by any traveller in New Guinea. But Maclay did not confine his labours to the east coast of the island. In 1874 he visited the Papua-Koviay coast, which was formerly examined by the Dutch, penetrated at a certain distance inland, and discovered at a height of 1,500 feet above the sea level the beautiful lake of Kamaka-Wallar.

Besides the vast amount of important geographical information about New Guinea which Maclay has collected, the results of his investigations in other fields of science, his anthropological and ethnological researches in a country so admirably suited for such studies, will be awaited for with impatience by the scientific world. After a residence of eighteen months on the Maclay coast in 1871-72, and excursion in 1874 on the Papua-Koviay coast, two or more years' travels in 1876 and 1877 in his scientific domain among the Papuans of Astrolabe Bay, his explorations of the south coast in 1879 and 1880, a trip on board the "Wolverene" in 1881, and a last visit in 1883, three months ago, on his return from Russia, to that admirable coast, which is so rightly named after himself, the Russian savant needed rest.

He has now returned to Sydney, and is putting together the results of his numerous experiences, in that little retreat at the Biological station near Watson's Bay, awaiting the time when the work of twelve years passed outside the pale of civilisation will have seen light, and ready again to return on his Maclay coast among the savage races, who regard him no more as an enemy—but as their friend and benefactor.

After the naturalists come the missionaries, and to them we are indebted for the knowledge we possess of the customs and habits of the natives of the inland tribes round Pt. Moresby. They were the first to ascend the Fly River, a distance of over 200 miles, and the mission steamer "Ellengowan" has visited many parts of the coast. The Revd. Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers have at different periods visited the districts round Pt. Moresby, Hall Sound, and Yule Island. In August, 1880, Mr. Chalmers started from Pt. Moresby and examined the district lying behind Redscar Bay, and Messrs. Chester and Beswick started for an inland journey under the guidance of the chief of Momeara. The year before Mr. Chalmers had visited the country between Pt. Moresby and the foot

of Mt. Owen Stanley and went to the Elkiri district. He tried but in vain to cross the Owen Stanley Range, and reach the East coast, but on his return journey crossing the head of the Laloki he traversed two districts at the foot of Mount Astrolabe, and from the summit of a high spur obtained a splendid view of a country which he says has no equal in New Guinea. It is a succession of green ridges between which are fruitful and well-watered valleys; the country is densely populated, beautifully cultivated near the villages, and the natives are very friendly. In one of these excursions Mr. Chalmers came across a splendid fall on the Laloki River, the height of which he estimated at 900 feet.

I have to record two more expeditions,—one of a commercial character along the north-west coast and the shores of Macleur Inlet, and the other in search of gold in the Port Moresby district and near the Owen Stanley Range.

In 1877, Mr. Hartog, a Dutch merchant of Macassar, visited in the "Egerton" the district situated in the vicinity of McCluer Inlet, which the traders from Ceram have long been in the habit of visiting at irregular intervals. The scenery on the shores of the Gulf is magnificent. The hills, which rise from the sea, are covered with virgin forests inhabited by the Alfuras tribes, and about forty villages containing a population of 20,000 Papuans form a regular *cordon* of trading centres round the bay. The coast tribes act as go-between the traders and the Alfuras of the interior, and Mr. Hartog describes the people he was in connection with as neither savage, treacherous, nor cunning, but rather lively and energetic, and showing great eagerness to trade. The commerce of the Gulf is estimated by him at a value of £80,000 to £90,000 annually, and could easily be increased. The merchants of Macassar, Ceram, and Goram, however, are afraid of establishing regular communications with the country; but, according to Mr. Hartog, the fear is more one of tradition than real insecurity. Sago forms the principal food of the natives, and the land produces naturally and in abundance everything desirable. Nutmegs grow wild and in profusion, and the soil is of surpassing richness.

The results of Mr. Hartog's expedition were both interesting and useful, more so than those of the Australian expedition in search of gold, which visited the country about the Laloki and Goldie Rivers, and returned without having been successful in

their search for the precious metal. They left behind them their horses which have considerably multiplied, and will probably be found very useful to an exploring party intending to start from Port Moresby. This was about the only good result of that expedition, which did not increase our knowledge of the geography of that part of New Guinea the party visited. Since then, Lt. Powell visited part of the east and south-east coast, and lately published the results of his observations in a paper which he read before the Geographical Society of London.

Such is in a brief resume the extent of the knowledge we actually possess of the great island. Compared to what remains to be known, it is very little indeed, but the experience acquired by others is of the greatest importance.

II.—FUTURE EXPLORATIONS.

Before entering upon any scheme of future exploration, it is necessary to form as good an idea as possible of the extent of the country to be examined, and of the probable difficulties to be encountered. It plainly appears, judging from past experience in New Guinea that nature and the natives have placed many difficulties in the ways of small and ill-equipped exploring parties. Isolated explorers cannot go very far from the coast, and fever and ague would soon put a stop to the enthusiasm of the most eager adventure-seeker. But there are always to be found in the world, inexperienced young men ready to jump at any chance they may get of acquiring fame, without any definite aims, and without calculating beforehand the risks they may run in rushing into undertakings which cannot in any way bring any beneficial results, either to the public or to themselves. We have had in our own colony, and in connection with the very island which is the subject of this lecture to-night, a sad and striking example of the results that may be anticipated from ill-contrived expeditions in search of adventures in a new land. The fate of the "Maria" expedition twelve years ago is still within the memory of many of my hearers.

Captain Moresby has related the rescue of the survivors of that expedition. The "Maria" was wrecked on the Queensland coast before ever reaching New Guinea, and almost the whole of its passengers were drowned or killed by the natives, seven or eight of them were rescued by the "Basilisk," and a few others reached Cardwell in safety, whence they returned home. "Thus," says Moresby, "ended this unfortunate attempt to reach New Guinea, an attempt which is but one proof out of many that Australian interest points to the possession of that great island." This last reflection of the gallant officer contained a hope which is near being realised, and now that the attention of everybody in Australia is attracted towards that magnificent country, the necessity of obtaining an accurate knowledge of the features of the island, and of the distribution of natural resources throughout its interior becomes almost a National care. It would be an everlasting shame if we were to allow others to perform a task which is so essentially our own. One great difficulty to be surmounted will probably be found in the hostility of the natives, who, on the banks of the Fly River, and on many points of the coast, have shewn themselves very much opposed to the white man's intrusion. Wherever the Malayan influence is great, this will be found to be the case; in the far interior, however, where the true Papuan race will probably be met with in all its purity, the difficulties may not be so great. These people have never seen any white men, and their first impression will be one of curiosity and possibly of fear if the party have horses. It has been noticed that the natives were greatly afraid of horses, and it is the opinion of Mr. Hargrave and other New Guinea explorers that the presence of horses will be in itself a great protection to any party that may attempt to explore the island. The New Guinea blacks are afraid of those great creatures which they have never seen, and acting on the thought that "discretion is the better part of valour," they keep away from them as much as they can. But we are now looking on the bright side of the picture, and the facts may be found very different. The Papuans of the interior may show towards a party of white strangers the same hostility that the coast tribes have evinced, and this opinion will find support if the narrative of d'Albertis is not exaggerated. The Italian naturalist had several encounters with the noble savage on the banks of the Fly River, and found him more ready to deal in arrows than in birds of Paradise.

However, difficulties of that sort have been met with in other countries, and may be overcome in New Guinea, but those who undertake to join an exploring party to the dark island must be prepared to face great and unknown dangers. One who does not possess great natural courage, a cool head, and sound judgment, and who is not willing to bow, without the slightest hesitation, to the authority of the head of the expedition, is unfit to be a member of such a party and had better stop at home.

In dealing with native races, experience has taught the necessity of acting with the greatest caution. Intending explorers in New Guinea must be alive to the necessity of treating the natives with the greatest kindness, avoiding any interference in their affairs, respecting their customs, however barbarous they may be. "Be just in all your dealings," says Baron Maclay, "and above all, try to impress the native's mind with the fact that you have come for a special purpose, and that you will not interfere with them; they *may* then leave you alone." I say *may* leave you alone, as it would be foolish to neglect other precautions; those indicated above are only dictated by the experience of the past, and, if acted upon in every point, they will probably afford sufficient security; but, however just one may be towards savages, they sometimes prove very treacherous, and it is often when they appear the most friendly that they are most to be dreaded. The fate of the gallant commodore Goodenough, the most humane of commanders, has taught others that prudence must be exercised.

The greatest of other difficulties, which an expedition will have to contend against, is the unhealthiness of the climate. In the low lands on the coast, and even up to a certain height on the mountain slopes, fever and ague reign supreme; but the first white men who settled in the north of Queensland, and those who now are colonising the Northern Territory of South Australia, had to contend with the same climatic difficulties. At one time the Queensland fevers were spoken of as the greatest obstacle towards the colonisation of the northern districts by the white man. No doubt a great many of the pioneers of those far away districts succumbed to the effects of the climate, but experience has taught their followers what precautions should be taken against the fever. These precautions may be resumed, thus: The utmost sobriety should be observed and the use of spirits condemned from the first; no water should be drunk unless it had been previously boiled, and this rule should be strictly insisted

upon ; no one should be allowed to sleep on the ground ; and an exploring party ought to be well provided with Ashantee hammocks ; lastly the party should be accompanied by one or two medical men, and carry a large quantity of sulphate of Quinine and other medicines generally used to combat fever and ague. Should these precautions against the possibility of hostility on the part of the natives, and against the unhealthiness of the climate, be strictly adhered to, prompt obedience to the orders of the head of the expedition exacted from every member of the party, and care be taken not on any consideration to interfere with the natives ; then, some success may be anticipated.

The preceding remarks point to the necessity of an expedition on a large scale. A party should be formed of sufficient strength, properly equipped and armed, whose object should be the geographical exploration of New Guinea. Such expedition, placed under the command of a man having had previous experience in tropical countries, would be composed of surveyors, skilled collectors, and persons possessing special knowledge in various branches of science. Men already accustomed to tropical travels, able to turn their hands to anything, and a few Malays well skilled in the preparation of sago, which will be found of the greatest use as an article of diet, should accompany the expedition as subordinates. Two medical men should go with the party, and it would be all the better if they happened to possess special abilities as naturalists. Although the principal object of that first expedition would be the study of physical geography of New Guinea, its results would be much more important if the party was so composed. There is little doubt that men of ability would be found both at home and in Australia to form such an expedition. As to the task of selecting men for an enterprise of that sort, the Administrative Council of the Geographical Society of Australasia would probably correspond on the subject with scientific societies at home, and appoint on their recommendation such gentlemen as may appear most eligible. The services of properly qualified medical men, surveyors, and collectors could easily be obtained in the Australian colonies, as there is no lack among us of men of the right stamp, who will be ready to brave the dangers of the expedition ; but we may have to look at home for specialists in the various fields of science. The necessity of the formation of a party of sufficient strength to be able to resist the possible attacks of savages is apparent,

although no doubt a great deal might be accomplished by smaller expeditions. But if it is considered desirable that the party be so composed, it is essential that the services of the best men be secured, as the results would necessarily be of the greatest importance, not only to geographical science but also to all sciences in general, and as a necessary consequence in view of the future colonisation of the island, to those who may wish to settle in New Guinea.

As to the route that such an expedition might take, much will necessarily depend on circumstances, but a scheme might be agreed upon which would allow of the possibility of maintaining, in a certain measure, correspondence from time to time with the expedition, and affording it relief in case of fever or the hostility of the natives had reduced its strength, besides relieving it of all cumbersome luggage in the shape of large collections of specimens which it would be most necessary to preserve intact, if possible.

The south-western watershed of New Guinea offers for that purpose the greatest advantages, as the island is admirably watered by numerous and large rivers, navigable to a considerable distance with steam launches of little draught. In connection with the expedition operating on the mainland, a second party might operate along the coast, whose object would be to recognise the principal features of the coast, the entrance of rivers, and which would ascend the largest of them up to their highest navigable point, exploring the country on either side. It might be agreed upon that the two expeditions meet at certain given points. For instance, should the main expedition start from Hall Sound, its first stage would be thence to the highest navigable point of the Aird River, which disembogues in the Gulf of Papua; then it would meet the relief expedition, which would take back the sick and those of the party who would not care to proceed further, and also the correspondence and the collections of natural history, specimens made during this first part of the exploration. The main body might then be reinforced with men of the relief expedition, and whatever provisions be needed, might be procured. They would then separate, the main body proceeding towards the interior, gaining higher levels as soon as possible, so as to escape the effects of the malaria in the lowlands, and they would examine the south-western slope of the main dividing Range, crossing on their way the head of all streams and rivers which may have their source in the mountains. They would then make for the confluence of the

Alice Hargrave and the Fly River, the position of which is approximately known, and meet there for the second time the relief party, who, after descending the Aird River, would examine the coast along the shores of the Gulf of Papua, ascend the Fly and explore the country on its banks at a greater distance and in a more systematic manner than was done by d'Albertis. There they would separate again to meet on the eastern coast, the main body, after exploring the country on the western side of the main range, might endeavour to cross the mountains and reach the opposite coast. It is probable, however, that after crossing the main dividing range, the explorers would come upon the source of that large river, the mouth of which forms such an immense delta on the north-east of New Guinea at the head of Gelwink Bay. It might be deemed more prudent for the expedition to follow the course of that river, either in canoes or on rafts, which could be easily constructed, as there will be no lack of material at hand. Should the state of the party permit of gaining the eastern shore, and reach Humboldt Bay, the explorers might there be met by the relief expedition and brought back to the nearest Australian port. This, however, is only a sketch of what might be accomplished, but circumstances may greatly interfere with the carrying out of such a scheme, and much must necessarily be left in expeditions of that sort to the discretion of the leaders. As to that part of the country extending between Port Moresby and the extreme south-east, the missionaries of the London Missionary Society have already established many stations on the coast, and we may leave to them the task of completing our geographical knowledge of that part of New Guinea.

Thus important geographical and scientific information might be gained as to the aspect and capabilities of New Guinea, and the efforts to colonise the country might be in the future guided by the results obtained. Experience of that sort in a country offering great inducements to Australian trade and enterprise, cannot be too dearly bought, and the first expense, although probably large, would be the means of saving the expenditure of much larger sums and preventing the sacrifice of many human lives in attempts at settlements in places most unsuited for colonising purposes. The necessity of obtaining information as to the population of New Guinea, the customs and manners of the natives, the probable reception Europeans might expect to meet at their hands, are subjects of the utmost importance to future colonists.

A telegram the other day announced that the British Government would simply allow settlements to be formed at some point of the coast facing Torres Straits. This information evidently emanated from persons little acquainted with the character of the country, and still less with that of the kind of colonists who might be expected to cross over to New Guinea. The coast must be the starting point of colonisation certainly, but is it reasonable or even possible to expect that Europeans will remain in the fever-stricken districts of the low coast lands, when greater and better inducements may be offered to their enterprise in healthier and more suitable localities, on the mountain slopes in the interior. Large navigable rivers offer splendid natural highways to the sugar, tobacco, sago, and nutmeg producing districts, and is it likely that Europeans could be prevented from trading in those commodities with the natives.

But we must bear in mind that the colonisation of New Guinea will be very different to that of even similar tropical parts of Australia. In the latter country, the white man has had to deal with nomadic tribes, having no fixed settlements, no plantations, and hardly any social order, besides being neither numerous nor powerful. In New Guinea we are brought in the presence of a very opposite state of affairs. Not only are the natives numerous, but in most parts they have attained a certain degree of rough civilisation, they live in large communities, independent from each other and follow agricultural pursuits. The fact that they cultivate all kinds of natural products in their small, neatly fenced gardens, denotes that the idea of property exists among them to a high degree, and it is needless to say that they will resent any kind of interference with their customs. If the white man does not take the necessary precautions to ascertain the traditions of the natives in that and many other respects, conflicts will certainly arise that may ruin all efforts to colonise New Guinea, set the black and white races at each other's throats, and end in disaster to both.

It is of no use trying to put a stop to colonising enterprises with a race whose genius itself lies in that particular direction. Wherever money may be made, or gold found, nothing will prevent the Anglo-Saxon race from emigrating to any part of the globe. The rapid means of communication we now possess precipitate events which, but for the advent of electricity and steam, might not have occurred for the next two or three centuries. Wherever

a steamer can take them, if there is any chance of making money Europeans will go, and it is useless hoping to preserve even one spot on earth free from their intrusions.

But humanity has its rights, which, unfortunately, have not always been respected in the past, and this, the present generation has to atone for. It is the duty of the future governing power in New Guinea to see that no harm should befall the natives in their intercourse with Europeans. Attempts at exploration and settlement will be made, and past experience in the islands of the Pacific has shown, that in dealing with the black races, the first settlers have in many instances acted in a most unscrupulous manner towards them. It is to be hoped that the Government will enforce a law, prohibiting the sale of fire-arms, powder, or dynamite to the natives, under the most stringent penalties. At the same time no necessary expense should be spared that will help in affording us reliable information as to the geographical features, the capabilities, and the actual state of the native races in a country which is likely to be colonised from Australian shores. New Guinea will have to be explored, and these questions settled, before any attempt at colonisation is likely to be successful. As for the means which will have to be taken to meet the expenses of future expeditions, it is evident that the Geographical Society of Australasia is yet too young to be in a position to contribute in any other manner than in seeing that the funds subscribed by the public, or the Australian Governments, are properly used. Wilfrid Powell lately stated that a sum of £6,000 would be sufficient to cover the expenses of an expedition to New Guinea, and the Geographical Society of Australasia, besides appealing to the public to subscribe, might make an effort to obtain the financial aid of the Governments interested, and act in conjunction with the Royal Geographical Society of London, of which we would be proud, like our confrères of Bombay, to form a branch. In any case £6,000 is a small sum when the exploration of such a country as New Guinea is the object, and the future of millions of our black fellow creatures is at stake.

I will terminate this long paper by making a fervent appeal, in the name of humanity, to those who may first have to deal with the New Guinea natives. Let the first care of the governing power be to prohibit, under the heaviest penalty, the introduction of spirituous liquors in any part of the country; and let future colonists bear well in mind that they will bring upon the native

races, and upon themselves, and those that will follow them, nothing but desolation and ruin, should they, in their desire of excessive gain, introduce among them rum and other poisons. In European communities, much of the misery which we observe is due to the abuse of spirits; but with natives of hot climates, such as New Guinea, spirits are the most terrible poison that could be introduced, as their use fatally tends to procure the wholesale deterioration and ultimate destruction of the race.



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