Going Home
THE KWATO MISSION OF PAPUA


Conducted since 1918 by the Incorporated Kwato Extension Association

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THE KWATO MISSION is an evangelical, international and interdenominational mission for the people of Eastern Papua. The workers desire your sympathy, prayers and support. The quarterly, Kwato Mission Tidings, will be mailed to any friends who wish information about the work.
A New Nurse for Kwato

On April 10th, Miss Margaret Drennan, of Canterbury, New Zealand, a Registered Nurse, and certified midwife, sailed for Kwato to fill a much needed position in the mission hospital. Since the former nurse from England left a year ago, there has been no trained worker to fill this very important place. The Papuan Government has agreed to make a sufficient grant to cover the living expenses of the new nurse at Kwato.

After being graduated from Wairarapa Hospital in 1921 and St. Helens Hospital in 1922, Miss Drennan had some years experience in nursing and recently spent two years as a student in Auckland, at the New Zealand Bible Training Institute, of which Rev. Joseph W. Kemp is Principal. It was there that she heard the call of God to work in the Kwato Mission. Mr. Kemp writes of her: "Miss Drennan is fully qualified and in every way is most suited to the position in New Guinea. Her spirituality is beyond question and she is a keen worker." She is a member of the St. James Presbyterian Church of Auckland, where she has had valuable experience as a visitor, Bible teacher and member of the choir. The filling of this need of a nurse at Kwato comes in answer to definite prayer.

Alexander Pyott Spence

The promise of Christ—"I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age"—comes with peculiar comfort when earthly friends and partners are suddenly called to rest from their work here and go to be "at home with the Lord." Last year, on April 10th, our loved friend Charles W. Abel was suddenly called Home and it seemed that the loss was irreparable. But the promise of Christ has been remarkably fulfilled and, while the earthly leader has been greatly missed, the work in the Kwato Mission has gone forward with renewed energy and strength. The missionaries, the Papuan Christians and our fellow workers in New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain and America have taken up the added responsibility with new energy and with more complete dependence on God.

This year we have been called upon to part with another friend and partner—this time one of the valued members of the Governing Committee in America, Mr. Alexander Pyott Spence, formerly of Montclair, and recently of Morristown, New
Jersey was suddenly called Home on Monday, April 27th,—due to heart disease from which he had been suffering for over a year. Mr. Spence had proved himself to be a true friend to Mr. Abel and a generous supporter of the Kwato Mission. About three years ago he was made a member of the Board of Directors of the New Guinea Evangelization Society and later was elected a member of the Governing Committee of the Kwato Mission. His prayerful and practical cooperation, made his services of great value. Barrows, Wade and Guthrie, of New York and London, the firm of which he was the executive head, has annually audited the books of the mission, without charge, and in many other ways the success of the work has been promoted by Mr. Spence. He was born in Dundee, Scotland, on April 28, 1873, and had lived in America for over thirty years.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Spence who, with her daughter and three sons, continues to live in Morristown. With the keen sense of loss to ourselves and the work we have the knowledge that Christ’s continued presence will bring blessing to the mission at Kwato, courage to the workers there and new partners to support and guide the work in America.

The annual meeting of the Kwato Extension Association was held at the home of Mr. Hugh R. Monro, Montclair, May 8th. Reports of great interest were read by the secretary on the year’s work of the New York office, by the treasurer, whose accounts had been duly audited, and by the Field Secretary. Several hundred letters have been written, fifty or more public addresses have been made, three issues of the Tidings have been published. At Kwato, a House of Prayer is being planned as a memorial to Mr. Abel, largely to be the gift of Papuan Christians. A nurse has been sent to take charge of the hospital work, and a tour of investigation of much unevangelized territory has been completed. The year closes with many reasons for renewed thankfulness and consecration.

Friends of Kwato will be interested to know that Mrs. Charles W. Abel and her son and daughter are now in England. It is to be hoped that the change of climate will restore Mrs. Abel to health and vigor. The stay in England will give Russell Abel the opportunity to make new friends for the work and to complete the biography of his father, and story of the Mission. Marjorie Abel is to enter Ridgeland College for a course in Bible training. Their address while in Great Britain is in care of Children’s Special Service Mission, 3 Wigmore St., London, W. 1.

It is necessary to announce the resignation of Mr. A. C. Matthews, of London, as assistant secretary of the Governing Committee of the K. E. A., who is forced to give up his work on account of ill health. Mr. Matthews has served the Association ably for several years and his assistance has been very sincerely appreciated. His resignation is accepted with much regret.

Two men and one woman have volunteered and been approved for service at Kwato, one to go as a missionary engineer, the other two to serve as teachers. All three applicants have passed all the requirements, are fit physically, have had special training in their professions and are equipped by character and spiritual outlook for this missionary work. One thing alone is lacking—the necessary money to send them out. The Governing Committee has not, at present, sufficient income to enlarge the Mission staff, great though the need is. For each applicant, a thousand dollars is needed to cover the cost of outfit and travel expenses, another thousand dollars is required for each yearly budget.

The workers are ready, and the harvest waits for the gleaners. Who will send out these laborers to this Papuan field? Will you? Think of having a missionary entirely, or in part, your own, in the South Seas. Some one who will bring the message of Christ to some man or child, who will make a life, dark with superstition, bright with hope—and in place of hatred, fear and ignorance, will implant love and faith and knowledge in another’s soul.

Answers to this appeal may be sent to Miss J. H. Righter, Secretary, Room 1018, 156 5th Ave., N. Y. C.
MOREEN is one of our mascots at Kwato. There are several of them that play and tumble around the verandahs of the mission house to the joy and amusement of us all, but Moreen is their "boss." She hustles the others and orders them about from morn till dusk. She is a quick elfin child. The others, who are podgier, trail after. But Moreen, the will-o'-the-wisp, is the moving spirit in all their escapades.

Moreen and her comrades-in-mischief are the children of Christian parents employed in various capacities in the Kwato Mission. They are truly lucky little Papuans. Their parents are both loving and ambitious for them. They are taught from their earliest years to love the Lord Jesus, and young as they are, He is very real to them.

Alas, a young person of Moreen's temperament and high spirits cannot go far in this world without an occasional woeful clash with authority. But clouds are soon dispelled, sunshine breaks through, and Moreen is her bright self once more. The other day in one of these lesser moments poor Moreen was being taken in tow by a kind but reprimanding hand. With the tears scarce dry in her eyes she confided bitterly that the devil was to blame for her woes. "Does devil tell you to be naughty sometimes?" she earnestly inquired. The questions were becoming rather personal, so the kind but reprimanding hand discreetly sought to direct the wee miscreants mind in other directions. She spoke of the Lord Jesus, who loved and helped little girls in trouble. Moreen was soon comforted and composed. "I like Jesus," she affirmed very decidedly. "He is a nice boy."

The other evening Moreen was in a most affectionate mood. She followed me about as though I were her long-lost brother. Sweet as her chatter always is, I was too
busy to pay much heed to her baby wisdom just then. I picked her up.

"Moreen," I said, "I'm busy."

"What busy?" she replied.

"I have to go to Samarai to-night. I'm going to tell all the poor sick people in the hospital about Jesus. Poor people so sick and don't know about Jesus at all."

"Don't know about Jesus!" exclaimed Moreen with great astonishment. She opened her big eyes very wide and pondered.

"Moreen knows Jesus," she said.

Lucky Moreen! I thought swiftly of Moreen's home, unconsciously implied in her solemn statement. I compared it with other Papuan homes I know. It struck me forcibly that of all things that really matter in implanting Christ's standard in Papuan a Christian home is of supreme importance.

A Christian home: that is what we try to create at Kwato for our large family. Such a crowd there are, with such possibilities bound up in each life. What our boys and girls absorb in these days they may some day radiate. We dream of what they will be able to give out in future days. We think of influence spreading to the ends of Papua. We remember those who are already giving of their best in this district for all they have received here at Kwato.

Kwato has been criticized in times past as a "hot-house system." We regard it as a "home" system. A home cannot be compared to a hothouse, where exotic flowers are reared in artificial circumstances. A truer simile is that of a garden, cared for and loved, where plants may grow in ideal conditions, in circumstances that will induce their best of flower and fruit. That is a home, and its antithesis is a waste patch of obnoxious weeds, producing growths stunted and perverted.

Every part of our life and daily routine has its contribution to make to the general background that is Kwato. Even such things as bells and roll calls, the punctuations to our day, play their part. There is the religious life of the place; the early morning praise with the hymn sung in parts and harmonizing so well with a Papuan sunrise that displays its glory at the same early hour. There are the vespers, a benediction to a busy day. One cannot omit the fanatical insistence upon cleanliness till it becomes second nature. It would be impossible to be more fastidious in this respect than are old Kwato trainees, upon whom falls more and more the burden of carrying on this work. There are many familiar sounds that belong to this busy hive. There is the healthy din of voices, the hungry round-up for kadkai: the sudden hush, and grace, softly sung, rising from it. There is the resurgent babble. There are the siren blasts that call the whole island to work. Monitors may now be seen, organizing the morning's work for their charges, and marshaling them off thereto. Work at Kwato is almost sacramental. The exceptional cases of "failures" who, alas, have had to fall out from our ranks and seek an easier path in life, are invariably those who, whatever their niche may be, have found temperamentally unable to learn to work hard and rejoice in it.

In briefly summing up some of the influences at Kwato one must give a prominent place to the schools. Here competition is keen, and examination days produce an outward look of deep concern and that inward feeling of void that after all do testify to an anxiety to excel, and to figure well on the examination results lists. Last, but a long way from least in the category at Kwato, is sport. Cricket is the great game, and football is indulged in during the wet months. The boys play a vigorous game, with hard kicking that is no less than amazing when one remembers that the ardent players are barefoot. However in the long, sultry summers cricket is the game par excellence, from the infants up. Papuans have adopted cricket in a remarkable way. Even village folk derive the keenest enjoyment from watching this game. At contests against the local white team at Samarai one may sometimes notice almost a total absence of white spectators, but always a good crowd of Papuans looking on. They watch every movement of the game, applauding with as much appreciation as the most seasoned of enthusiasts at a county match in England.

There are many things that contribute, directly and indirectly, to put the Kwato stamp upon our boys and girls. But the greatest of all that we seek to give to each one is a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus as Saviour. The conversion of each boy and girl is the object of all our prayers and hopes for them. What transformations we have seen in the past! Some of our most difficult and incorrigible characters who have given us no small tally of anxious moments are now helping others to find the
Saviour. That is our highest ambition. We want those who pass through our schools, with all the advantages, intellectual, cultural and spiritual, of a Christian home influence behind them, to become servants of their fellow-countrymen, and to know the blessedness of giving all for the Master’s sake.

At present we are short-handed for want of Papuan helpers at Kwato, but it is a joy to know that some of our most trustworthy helpers, whose presence we would covet here, are drafted out almost as soon as they have graduated to help in the village schools. Some of these village schools, staffed and run by superior Papuans, are a very hopeful side to our work. It is splendid to see good work being done in the villages entirely by trained Papuans.

There are many things, great and small, that help to create the atmosphere at Kwato from which our boys and girls will unconsciously imbibe, and which will leave its imprint for good upon them. In America and England there are many and varied Christian influences that help in developing character and moral fiber. Here at Kwato the whole responsibility is ours.

Russell W. Abel.

ARRIVING AT KWATO FROM LOGEA

Logea School

Catching the School Bus

I O F T E N wonder what children at home would think of the way children out here come to school.

The channel between Kwato and Logea is about 200 yards wide at its narrowest point, and at all times has a strong current running through it. This has to be crossed somehow or other to get to school. On a calm day they paddle their outrigger canoes; on a windy day they sail gracefully, and on an unlucky day they swim.

I love to picture the scramble before they get off in the morning—a great bustling of grass skirts, last touches to their carefully combed hair and shining bodies, and then—"Boys, boys! where have you left the canoes? You had them out fishing all night! Hurry up and pull them down the beach or we shall be late for school." One or two of the older boys swagger down to where their own little “two-seater” lies, hollowed out and finished off with their own hands; they get quietly in and paddle off. At one point on the beach stand a forlorn little group of
children whose fathers have appropriated the family vessel for the day; they are not really forlorn though, for in a trice they have divested themselves of any superfluous covering, schoolbooks are entrusted to those in canoes, then they cast themselves into the sea, and are soon half-way across the channel. I never tire of gazing at rows of woolly black heads bobbing up and down in the waves.

At 8:30 a.m. when I walk into the schoolhouse to begin a morning's work with prayer, the children all look fresh and cool and sweet.

“Coming to school in Papua” may sound very exciting and unusual to us, but I suppose the children themselves have no more thrill out of it than you have catching the eight-o’clock business train every morning!

The Scholastic Side

We work pretty hard in the Logea school. There are seventy odd children on the register, and I have two native teachers to help me. Unfortunately I cannot give the time I would like to training the native helpers, as my class, the oldest ones, numbers twenty-two, and they are almost appallingly regular, and therefore keep me well occupied. They learn Bible, English, arithmetic, a little geography, and singing. The boys on the whole are quicker than the girls, and come in bigger numbers. I give the older ones home work to do but it presents a problem financially, for they seem to be eternally dropping their pencils in the sea, or letting their books get washed overboard by the waves!

We have no cheering on breaking-up day, for the children are nearer tears than mirth. It is quite a sad day for all.

Sports

Twice a week after school we repair down to the playing field for sports. The boys enjoy a free untrammeled game of cricket. As they stand in front of the wicket the fact that sometimes the only protection for their whole body, should they miss the oncoming ball, is a leaf, in no way cramps their style. They slog all over the field.

The girls are, I think, the most amusing spectacle of all, racing about after the football with grass skirts flying in the wind, and shrieks and squeals of delight.

Things Spiritual

The teachers and I meet week by week to pray for these children whom the Lord has given to us to love and care for, and win for Him. And indeed we do love them. Logea school has been my greatest joy these past six months: to teach these children, to play with them, to talk with them, to pray with them, to visit them in their own homes and try to understand their joys and their temptations. In all this our enthusiasm has never flagged because of the love wherewith God has filled our hearts. There are four older boys who are baptized, and two others who have recently been converted. There are no girls as yet who have taken the step. But there are many whose hearts are softened and we believe they will soon promise to follow the Master Teacher. Pray for Logea school.

Halliday Scrymgeour.

Some time ago we had the Australia here. She is the flagship of the Australian fleet, and one of the largest and latest battleships of her kind. With her was a torpedo boat, the Anzac. We took all the boys and girls over in batches. The people on board were exceedingly good in explaining everything to them. They were amazed and astounded beyond words. There were over 750 men on board the Australia and the thing that struck the boys was the order and quietness and discipline of such a number. What they retained of all they were told is surprising. One girl wrote in an essay on the subject, “There are 700 men over 50 on board.” Another said, “I was sad to think none of all those men knew the Lord Jesus.”

A well-known character around here, of very bad reputation, was in jail when the news of Mr. Abel’s death reached him. He was so struck with grief that he determined that father’s life in Papua should not be fruitless as far as he was concerned, and he gave himself to God right there. A few days ago he brought a friend of his to Christ. He has sought him unceasingly for a long time. It seems extraordinary to me, that this man, so notorious for his crimes and very familiar with the interior of the local jail, should now be winning his friends to Christ.
Holiday Time

HOLIDAYS! What scenes that magic word conjures up. The seashore, the rural countryside, long days, swimming and tramping, an enticing book in some shady dell, relaxation, recreation, rest! All thought of the crowded city, the noisy classroom, the busy mart, are deliberately thrust from the mind as the happy holiday-maker turns to the task of enjoying the brief respite.

When the village schools break up the native teachers all come "home" to be replenished for next term. So there are classes to arrange for them, a syllabus to be set, and lessons to be given on each subject. There are problems to recite, and solutions sought and given. There are Bible lessons and talks on how best to teach Scriptural truths and to reach the need of ignorant village people. We have lessons on simple hygiene, nursing, drill, handwork and games. And thus fitted and equipped the teachers return to their various spheres, shining lights in the darkness of heathenism. This is all part of the missionary's holiday program.

Sometimes she will be able to go into the district spending a week or two at the various mission camps. There again she is confronted with the urgent need of those amongst whom she has come to stay. Men and women, boys and girls, loiter round the doors of the little bungalow waiting for a talk, or to pour out some tale of woe or complaint, and there is the constant output of sympathy and help and teaching.

"During the holidays I shall do so-and-so," and the pile of "little things" grows higher. The meagre wardrobe must be repaired and replenished. So rapidly clothes fade and wear out with the action of drenching perspiration or the tender machinations of the cockroach who can ruin a garment in a night.

But the holidays are not all toil. It is a gorgeous moonlight night, such as is only known in the tropics. The sea, like a deep mirror reflects the silvery path of the moon, and, like some rare jewel, each star. The launch is packed with a merry crowd of boys and girls, who, to the accompaniment of ukeleles, sing well-loved choruses and hymns in perfect harmony. Away we go to some beach to play games on the shore, or moving quietly over the waters. Can anything be more restful and soothing at the end of a long, hot day?

Cricket and football matches and all the excitement of barracking, a lively combat on the tennis court, an occasional evening of indoor games, all help to keep the missionary young, and to lend some measure of the "holiday spirit."

It seems no time before the teachers are sitting in conference over next term's program and arrangements. And before long, on a steamy hot afternoon, the key turns once more in the schoolhouse door.

Phyllis D. Abel.
Snapshots from Duabo

Our Discipline

It is 2:30 p.m. On the front verandah there is scarcely a sound. Fourteen heads are bent over their books with varying expressions of joy or despair. Sudden­ly the stillness of the afternoon air is rent by cries of "Mamari! Mamari!" Had I really had a class before me ten seconds ago? Scarcely had the first of those cries burst upon our ears before books, pencils, rulers, and all other impedimenta were thrown aside and each one had jumped the steps of the verandah and joined the knot of smaller children on the brow of the hill. After definitely identifying the white speck on the shimmering sea 1,200 feet below as the mission launch and no other, they cry "Mamari! Mamari!" for about three min­utes on end, then, perfectly satisfied, they rush back to the scene of their former mental activities, and the peace of the afternoon closes in upon us once more.

Scarcely orthodox, and yet why not?

Evening Class

An amazing quartette gathers round the lamp on the floor of my dining room after dinner. They are widely different from each other in language and tribe and tempera­ment, but are united by one great common bond—a desire to learn. One of them is a lately converted bush­man from the Duabo hills. A second, who hails from we don't quite know where, has the unpleasant stain on his past of having done away with his grandmother; a very at­tractive lad for all that. A third has traveled many miles from the West in search of education, and having come all that way doesn’t intend to waste a minute of his time; he goes ahead like a steam engine. Unfor­tunately he has great linguistic difficulties; his efforts are generally followed by stifled explosions of laughter from the other mem­bers of the class! The fourth, an older mission boy, is reading English. These boys are not isolated cases. At all the outstations there come in boys and girls, long past the school age, converted, and longing to read the Word of Life for themselves.

Saturday Half Holiday

It is a very small minority of our com­munity at Duabo that is not strangely in­fected with that "Saturday afternoon feel­ing." Only the very lazy, or the very weary, or the very naughty ones, stay at home. The rest of us set off on some expedition determined to make the most of our holiday. Most of the children, small and large, are equipped with a large stick of sugar cane which they suck appreciatively until some-
thing more tempting to their palate looms on
the horizon. One of our favorite resorts is
Dorio, a waterfall which splashes into a
rocky pool large enough to swim in. I love
to watch my large family winding merrily
down the sun-patched glade, singing, shout­
ing, rushing into the bush every now and
then after some specially beautiful butterfly,
or a tempting wild fruit. At last, very hot
but very happy, we turn the corner and see
the sparkling, splashing stream, and in a mo­
ment we are all in the pool, kicking about to
our hearts' content.

The older boys of course go off on their
own. I am accompanied only by the older
girls and the small children; but whenever
the road is steep or rough my escort rises to
the occasion, the small boys having observed
the ways of their older brothers, take com­
plete charge of me, and land me safely back
at the house as fresh as when I left it.

I sometimes wonder what it will be like
to get back home, and have to cope with all
the difficult places without a strong brown
hand to lean on.

A Dinner Party

It is Sunday evening. The missionary is
sitting alone at her dinner table in the lamp­
light. Beside her is a pile of letters, for that
afternoon the Mamari came bringing a mail.
She opens her letters....

Did I say she was alone? One by one
other forms gather round her table. Mother,
father, family, friends. Her company gives
her such joy that she is forgetful of time
and space, and goes on reading, reading,
reading.

Suddenly a door opens and a soft voice
says, "Sinebada, shall I ring the bell for eve­
ning service?"

The happy dinner party is at an end.

A New Gospel

As you may remember, I was in the mid­
dle of getting St. Mark in the Tavara lan­
guage through the press. It is half printed
and half the copies will be used by us and
half by a Methodist missionary at Eastcape,
whose people speak that language.

I have an excellent pundit helping me—an
old blind man and a real authority on the
language. He has had a varied life and was
mixed up with the old pirate days when na­
tives were kidnapped from Milne Bay for
slave traffic in Queensland. I am glad to
say the Gospel is done—the printing part
will not trouble me much, as we have com­
potent printers who can work without super­
vision. It has been interesting work and has
given me a new grasp of the Tavara lan­
guage which no one else of us here has. I
long to put this into practice amongst the
Tavara people.

My old pundit wants to begin another
Gospel. He warns me that his days on
earth are numbered, and I really don't know
who else has his knowledge of the language,
plus his education.

At Sariba

The work at Sariba is most encouraging.
It used to be the deadliest and most depress­
ing place, and now there is a keen band of
Christians. Amongst them is an old back­
slider who through his scheming and world­
liness and dabbling in dark practices has
long been far from God. He was such a
hindrance to all Christian work, that father
used to warn him that God would not let
him stand in the way of his work at Sariba
for ever, and that if he did not repent God
would one day remove the obstruction. He
is very old and one of the old cannibal gen­
eration. Well, he came over very much
convicted of sin and broken-hearted, and
after much prayer and talk with mother,
yielded all to the Lord. He gave his testi­
mony at an evening communion service that
we had. He said that when a gun was
choked up with dirt so that when you peered
down the barrel you saw nothing, it needed
skewering with a rod and flannel and clean­
ing until when you peered down the barrel
you saw at the other end a shining spot of
light instead of dirt. He said, "I was like
that gun, choked up with sin and filthiness,
and when I came to see mother it was as
though I brought her the rod and flannel
and sought to be cleansed. She has shown
me the way to Christ, and He has cleansed
me from all sin—and now peering down the
barrel instead of dirt there is a shining light
—it is shining in my heart now."

We have now 600 children coming to our
schools, which is more than ever before, and
better still, a fine band of intelligent Kwato­
trained teachers who can be trusted to carry
on this work at different centers. With
their education and wider outlook, they are
able to help their own people splendidly.
They Returned With Joy

At the beginning of this year we prayed that God would specially bless 1931, and that we should see even greater evidences of His power than before in the transforming of lives to His glory. It was not long before God graciously allowed us to see that our prayers were heard.

The thought first came to Cecil Abel that a fitting start to the New Year would be for some of our younger evangelists to explore into places where our missionary activities do not at present extend. This idea was aired and prayed over, with the result that on the last day of 1930 six evangelists set off, two and two, in different directions to places where owing to inaccessibility, or sparse and widely distributed population, we have no regular work being done.

At Kwato we do not have the system of paid evangelism. Our evangelists earn their living by useful crafts that they have been taught, at which in many cases they have become expert. Their work for God is freely given whenever opportunity arises. Most of them spend their week-ends at various centres at which they conduct services, hold Bible classes, work amongst the children. Most important of all, they find many opportunities of having talks with those who come to them to discuss the great things that have made such a difference in these fellow-Papuans of theirs that one would sometimes hardly recognize them as being of the same race.

We farewelled our friends on the jetty at Kwato, committing them in prayer to God, and speeding them on their way with some praise choruses. As the Lord’s disciples went forth with no provision for their journey save that of human companionship, so they went their opposite ways. Two went to Sidea, a large island of scattered settlements, making work amongst them difficult. Two went due west, cutting inland across the mountains, to seek out the bush people in their isolated hamlets, far from the new influences that their coastal compatriots know. Four went to the Sagarai valley, dividing forces when they reached Buhutu, and striking out in opposite directions. They all set out full of joy in the adventure that was before them, not knowing exactly where they would find themselves, but knowing well that God would be with them and guide them each step of their way.

For the next two or three weeks we here at Kwato upheld them daily before God and sought to fulfill our parting promises to back them with our prayers.

At the end of this time they returned, full of tales of all that had befallen them. There was so much to tell, and so many who wanted to hear it all, that we made opportunities at the services on two successive
Sundays for representatives to tell of their doings, so that all could share the inspiration of their story. Both meetings, while stirring in us a great sense, and burden of the need of the scattered people outside the boundaries of our usual activities, were essentially praise meetings. We were made to recognize God's hand so clearly in all that had transpired that the meetings resolved themselves into spontaneous worship of the One who had so wonderfully heard our cries to Him.

Tiraka's Story

Tiraka, the first evangelist to speak, told us of the darkness and depravity that they had seen, and the great need of these people. It was strange to hear a Papuan speaking earnestly and with obvious feeling, of the need of some of his own countryman and pleading that we should bestir ourselves in prayer and effort on their behalf. One thought of the great things God had already done in Papua in these keen and intelligent servants of His, trained and disciplined, supporting themselves by the skill of their hands, a contrast to the aimlessly drifting existence of the average Papuan, taking to others the many blessings that Christ has brought to them.

Tiraka spoke of the extreme poverty of the people with whom they had met. Wherever they went there was the same dread of witchcraft, sorcery and allied cults, gripping the people like a vice. Village communities had been broken up through the mutual distrust of the inhabitants of each other. “If we live together we die,” was the reply to their queries everywhere. At one place, the scene of a once prosperous and now disbanded village, the inhabitants had died one after another with such marked regularity that the survivors had fled, every man suspecting his neighbor of malignant designs and occult powers. The whole life of the people is paralyzed by these pernicious beliefs. It was a distressing story of people living on the ragged edges of an existence in which fear, and the resulting misery and hunger, are the chief factors. The same fears that cause these people to eschew each other’s company convince them that it is unlucky to make good gardens. An adequate and well-fenced garden will make its owner conspicuous. He will then run the risk of becoming a target, perhaps of envy or malice, and finally of applied magic, to his disaster.

Thus it was that everywhere the evangelists went there was semi-starvation. The people keep hunger at bay by eating coconuts, and the acrid hard bush mangoes, but are seldom really fed. A medical man would doubtless find many and patent causes of the deaths from alleged sorcery that these people lay at many an innocent door. The evangelists had to endure many privations, especially in lack of food. But they were glad, they affirmed, that this was so. The people could see that they had not come for any gain. (Papuans are quick to suspect that it is food you are after wherever you go.) Tiraka and his friends gave away what rice they had to the children, few in number, and for the most part sadly under-nourished. These were mostly very young children. There seemed to be none growing up. “They will die,” their parents said with apathetic resignation. One old man whom they met laid the blame of the moribund condition of life in that valley upon the pig-feasting and dancing ceremonies. He had reached his withered old age, he boasted, through abstinence from them. Papuans travel for miles to the celebrations of these affairs, which are bound up with spirit-cults and are the very life of them. This old man’s disassociation from it all had, he believed, rendered him immune to spirit machinations. Right or wrong he showed enlightenment, at least, to have tried to track the trouble to its source, and believing he had found it resolutely to have made up his mind to have none of it.

There was much that the evangelists met with to depress them, with the stagnation in these parts so great, and the people spiritually hungry and yet unable to lift their eyes above the sordid level of their monotonous and unlovely existence. And yet wherever they went there was the pathetic pleading with them to come again. “Do not leave us,” the people said. “You have given us hope, but you will go away and all will be as it was before.” What a Gospel it is that can raise these forlorn people, turning them into sincere followers of Jesus, and more than this, can give them hope, and the will to live, and make them useful and progressive citizens of their country. Almost everywhere in southeastern Papua there is declension, except amongst the Christian communities or in places where Christian influence is strongest, and here the ring of children’s voices in the villages is the best testimony of a changed outlook.
Makura's Story

When we had heard of all that had happened in the Buhutu-Sagarai district on the Sunday morning Makura stood up to tell us how they had fared at Sidea Island. Makura looked in the pink of health. He must have realized this, for he half apologized that where his steps had led him so far from privations in food they had had an abundance of good things. The people of Sidea, though scattered, live in conditions far superior to Buhutu. Their gardens are well cultivated, and as the evangelists would set off from each hamlet they would find that their canoe had been surreptitiously laden with well-grown yams and taro as a parting present from their new-found and hospitable friends.

The people of Sidea, though complacent, listened readily to the Gospel, and many of them expressed a desire to hear more and to be taught. At one hamlet a man rose at the end of the meeting and publicly declared his intention of following "Christ's Way." "Each man for himself," said he, "but as for me, I have chosen road that ends in heaven."

As the evangelists progressed on their way round Sidea they were warned by all to avoid a certain place where lived the terror of the countryside. "He has been the death of many. Tabosima!" whispered their informants. "He lives alone with his wife. No one will approach him. We, of Sidea, fear his tabosima (wizardry)." The evangelists declared their intention of visiting him. "Most certainly we will see him," they said. "He is the very man we have come to seek and help." Having implored them to do no such thing and to no avail their well-meaning friends tried to scare them with terrifying stories, but to no effect. "We will go," insisted the evangelists. That night they were awakened in the small hours by two old women. "Sons," they pleaded, "you shall not go, for if you do it will be death." So rubbing their eyes at that unearthly hour they testified, not only to their Lord who would certainly preserve them from evil, but also to the fact that they did not believe in occult powers and therefore did not fear them.

The following day they visited the man Kuki, renowned for his tabosima and held directly responsible for the death rate of Sidea. Kuki, a middle-aged man, was touched beyond words that the evangelists had cared enough for his welfare to go and visit him. He was a lonely and ostracized man. He described himself as a kind of scapegoat of all Sidea. "The whole of Sidea lay blame upon me," he said. "Whenever death occurs they say, 'It is he.'" He said that he had decided to leave Sidea and settle in a Christian community in Sariba. It will be a test to those Christians to give evidence of their abandonment of old beliefs and to welcome this "danger" to their midst.

Makura and Palemeni had a reward of encouragement before they turned homewards. Two old men accepted Christ. One of these had said in conversation, "I have waited for someone to show me the New Way and help me to find it." "Wait no longer," they replied. "We are here to lead you to Christ who is the Way." The other old man, expressing his joy in the real change that had come to his heart when he let Christ in, said, "My body may be old and dirty (no doubt he spoke the truth!) but my heart truly is God's abiding place."

Back from the Hinterland

On the outward journey a westerly wind had sent our friends spanking along on their way. When their time was up and they steered their outrigger homewards the wind changed, and a stiff southeast breeze brought them back in racing time, with their hearts aglow with praise for many mercies that had followed them all the way.

We praised God at the close of our gathering for this splendid start to a new year of service unto Him. And yet there were greater things for us to hear on the following Sunday.

In the week that intervened Philip and Saullea arrived from the hinterland to the west. Their faces were enough to tell us that our prayers for them had been answered. Their verdict on all that had happened in reply to our first eager queries was "wonderful"! Later on we had the details of their doings that sounded like a portion from the Acts of the Apostles, and reminded us that the Holy Spirit was at work amongst us to-day, even as in those times.

When Philip and Saullea began their journey everything seemed to be against them. Saullea was sick with fever, and to add to his troubles he cut his foot badly on a clamshell while crossing a river. Thus limping and weary he arrived at the first stop. They feared that it would be necessary for them to come home with their task unfinished and
their hopes unfulfilled. They gave themselves much to prayer. And here they were to tell us how wonderfully their prayers had been heard.

"It was all through your prayers," declared Saulea at the service on the second Sunday. "We felt the power of them and saw the results of them all the way we went." Philip too confirmed his companion's words. "We have tested again and again the power of prayer," he said. "Our way was long and beset with many difficulties, but all the way we went we were praising God, and praising Him with tears in our eyes. It was for very joy we wept. For God led us all the way, tenderly as a mother leads her loved child. He even used our weakness in His mercy."

For the first few days the evangelists stopped at various villages where they were entertained, helping the people in each place as much as they could. At one village they met with an old man who said he was a Christian, and had found the Way through a dream. He had been seeking to know God, and felt that God was arresting him. No mother would walk on, he pondered, and be deaf to her child who was crying to her. Compassion will cause her to turn to its help. Similarly when any man calls to another he will immediately turn in response, he will not walk on. With these thoughts he came to the conclusion that God, full of compassion, was calling to him. What could he do but turn to Him? While these important discoveries were fresh in his mind he dreamed. There was a river in flood. Great logs of driftwood were being hurled out to sea. He and his friends wished to cross. He plunged in and crossed over, but his friends were afraid of the fury of the water. So alone he reached the other bank, though he knew not how he had managed to do so. The people on the other bank were amazed. They exclaimed, "How did you get across?" He replied, "I do not know. I only know that I have arrived and am here." Then this old man awoke, having great joy, and believing that he was now on God's side, though he could not tell how he had got there. He had testified to all of the new life he was now to lead, and of the dream he had had. Six others were anxiously seeking the way through this man's testimony. "Surely it was your prayers that bore him across that river to God's side," said Saulea as he narrated this story.

A Strange Dream

The two evangelists had spoken to many on their way and had been shown kindness by all. And yet by the time they reached Kobekobe on their way across the mountains they were depressed, and felt that they were not accomplishing all that could, with God's help, be done. So instead of gathering the people immediately at Kobekobe, as had been their habit, they told them to come the following day, which was to be Sunday, and to bring all their friends. That evening they spent in prayer, and in the night Philip dreamed. His dream had best be given in his own words, taken down verbatim while he was addressing us.

"In my dream," said Philip, "I saw father (Charles Abel). He was conducting a large choir, leading them with all the familiar characteristics that he used when conducting singing, and that we all know so well. The hymn that he gave out was 504. The tune was new to me, but the words that great choir sang were, 'Soldier, soldier, fighting in the world's great strife.' And then I awoke. The first thing I did was to raise the lowered light of my lantern, reach for my hymn book, and hunt up 504. ere I forgot the number. And there it was:

'A Strange Dream

'Soldier, soldier, fighting in the world's great strife
On thyself relying, battling for my life;
Trust thyself no longer,
Trust to Christ—He's stronger:
I ran all things, all things do
Through Christ, who strengtheneth me.'

'Those last two lines were God's message to me. I saw what had been my weakness and prayed for help. Indeed I rose three times during that night for prayer, for God had indeed spoken to me and my heart was very full."

Makura, a Volunteer Evangelist
"The next day we met with the people and that day five of them were really converted, and we stayed there till the evening helping them.

From that time on God used His servants in a wonderful way. They seemed to be guided in every step they took. After a long trek, and just when they were wondering whether they were on a blind trail, they met a small boy who had wandered by chance away from his mother who was shrimpimg at creek in the neighborhood. This boy led them to his father’s camp, far from any other life. They found the old man waiting to hear them. The Holy Spirit had already been working in his heart. And thus it was all the way.

Heart Cries

"Teach us to pray" was the one request on all sides. "I know there is a God," said an ancient bushman, "but how can I reach Him? Teach me how to pray and it will be well." Two women set out from their village and tramped far in the hopes of waylaying the evangelists. When they at last met them on the bush track they blurted out their pathetic request. "We are looking for you. Teach us too how to pray." Another hungry soul said, "I will ever remember this track. Here it is that I have found Christ." Though everywhere the ignorance of the people was very great, yet the enlightenment in some cases was no less than marvelous, and can only be accounted for by the Holy Spirit’s work.

The two evangelists would do their work in one hamlet and then set off for the next, singing for joy as they went. The chorus that both inspired and expressed their feelings as they went about their work was, "Ièsu, esam i amna" (Jesus, O how sweet the name!) "We would sing it as we walked along, and twice men, hearing it, asked us to sing it again for them," said Philip.

The story of this early harvest to our new year of work for God has given to each of us at Kwato a very real fillip. Praising God has a wonderfully beneficial reaction upon one, and we have certainly been constrained to praise our God who has so mightily blessed our prayers and our efforts on behalf of these very inaccessible neighbors of ours. We want our partners overseas to share our praises. We want you to hear in these good tidings a call to prayer. That God’s Spirit may work increasingly, breaking down barriers of sin, degradation and ignorance, and creating in the lowest and darkest a hunger for Himself, and a seeking to find the Way Everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R. W. Abel

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A Sunday at Koeabule

Early in the morning the rain fell heavily, but it cleared later on. By the time the people arrived from Gogoari, Lilehoa, Mutuiua and Rabi, it was fine. Russell Abel, who happened to be staying here, took the service in Suau. We usually address these people in Suau, though it is not a Milne Bay language. Some do not understand Suau and others only a little, though the younger generation all understand it. Therefore, as a rule, we require interpreters when we speak to the people for the sake of those who are not conversant with Suau. Russell had with him an unbound copy of the newly translated and printed St. Mark in Tavara. He read a portion during the service in Tavara. No one had any suspicion that the longed-for wish of the people was to be realized that morning. The expression of astonishment and delight on the faces of the Christian people when they heard the Word of God in their own language brought tears to one’s eyes. They said themselves that their hearts were so full they wanted to jump or to laugh or to do something! They could understand every word and they were full of joy. They did not know how to express their appreciation.

After the service the whole crowd surrounded the mission bungalow to express, in person, their thanks, and then they gave three of the heartiest cheers. It was truly a memorable Sunday to them and to us.

Very shortly, copies of the new Gospel, printed by the boys at Kwato, and bound by the girls, are to be sent over here. Will you praise God with us for this?

Our thanks are due to the British and Foreign Bible Society who have so helped us in our work. You little know what it means to these people, who, ignorant though they are, love the Lord and are eager to have His Word in their own language in their hands.

M. E. Parkin