

THE LIME POTS OF UIAKU

BY CANON JAMES BENSON.

I WAS shaving at the end of the Mission House verandah at Wangala, some time in 1920; and Father J. E. J. Fisher, priest-in-charge, was reading the log of my first missionary journey in the district. Bishop Sharpe's idea was that I should take charge of Wangala when Fisher returned to England, in about six months' time.

Fisher looked up from his reading and said "I see you noticed it too!" "Noticed what?" I said. "The real presence of the devil at Ulaku."

"You thought it might be fever coming on; that depression you talk of, but it belongs to the place. Don't look so surprised. Just as in an old church at home, a place where the holy mysteries have been offered for centuries, and holy men and women have prayed for ages, you can feel the Real Presence of God; so, of course, in a place which has been the centre of a devil cult for who knows how long, you would expect to feel the real presence of the devil. But it is not nearly so bad as it was before Stephen broke the lime pots."

And at dinner that night he told me the story. It is a sort of a Garden of Eden story, and it is one of the great epics of New Guinea. Besides Fisher's story, I have had it also from Father Stephen Malerot and Father Gregory Awul.

Father Gregory is still alive, assistant priest at Gona with John Wardman. Stephen died under an anaesthetic during an operation for a hernia complication in 1926, during the present Bishop of New Guinea's primary visitation of the diocese; and his death had nothing to do with Governor or Borega. Indeed Governor himself had been dead long before.

It is important to emphasize this as shall appear. Also for the full veracity of the tale, it is important that you should know Sister Ilma Townsend acted as interpreter for me in 1933 at Gona, when Stephen told me his story, and that Archdeacon Romney Gill did the same a few years ago, when I had a full version of it from Father Gregory; also at Gona, and John Wardman was listening in.

This was necessary as neither Stephen nor Gregory had sufficient English; and I had no Wedauan, while, of course, Father Gill and Ilma Townsend were Wardman scholars.

Before going on with the story it is interesting to note the apparent discrepancies in these three accounts. It is in line with all reportage: versions never fully agree; there is always a "synoptic problem." Fisher said Stephen broke the lime pots. Both Stephen and Gregory say that all four boys took a hand in it.

FISHER gives the chief sorcerer's name as Borega; Gregory remembers him as Governor. But that presents no difficulty, because every New Guinea man and woman has at least two names.

Then, too, Fisher's account has nothing about swelling arms and the death of Bernard. He did not live in the village, as did Stephen and Gregory—both are emphatic about the swelling. On the other hand, Gregory is not so sure as Fisher about the origin of the cult: and is unaware of its connection with Balgona, the snake cult.

So we will continue the story as I first heard it from Fisher in 1920, and we will call the chief sorcerer Borega, and we will begin at the beginning.

Some time ago — perhaps it was a very long time ago, who can tell? — an ancestress of Borega of Ulaku, returning from the water hole with full water pot on her head and some gourds, also full, hanging by a string as is the fashion, found a wounded snake on the path and in the sun.

The snake, being her totem,

The next story in this series, "The Lime Pots of Ulaku," was written by Canon Benson on board the S.S. "Araadis" in the Mediterranean on his way to England last month. The second part of this story will appear next week.

she could understand it when it asked for help. "Please," said the snake, "Move me into the shade and give me water to drink, that I may grow well again. An enemy man has injured me with a stick." So the woman moved the snake into a shady place and made it comfortable, and in return the snake said she would be given a great secret.

That night in a dream the snake spirit appeared, and most convincingly told the woman to take the bark and leaves of certain trees, burn them and mix the ashes with the lime in the gourds, or "pots," which is used when chewing betel nut.

Betel nut (Areca nut) is the universal narcotic of the Pacific and it is always chewed with lime; a hardwood, flat spoon or spatula, often with a beautifully carved handle, being used to lift the lime to the mouth. Variety of flavor and effect can be produced with the leaves and roots of various peppers and ginger. Lime, of course, is easily made by burning shells.

THESE magic ashes, added to the lime, would give a wonderful potency to the lime pots and the man who had them would become the most powerful sorcerer in New Guinea.

So it became a family and tribal affair, and the Lime Pots of Ulaku became the terror of North-East Papua from Bolanai in the far south to Ekorro away in the north, 200 miles of coastline, and well into the mountains.

I don't think Fisher in 1926 was conscious of its far-flung power. He never seemed to regard it as of more than local importance. But to get on with his story.

I had been here nearly two years, so what I am about to tell you happened four years ago. I returned from the trip you have just done, and like you I was feeling depressed, only more so. Ambrose, the Melanesian teacher at Ulaku had told me of some fearful thing there; something about some lime pots, but what could one do? You can't just go barging in on a matter of that sort, something you are supposed to know nothing about.

Stephen Malerot had been a Christian for only two years, and he was teaching in the

school here. Seeing my dependency he came to me and said: "Father, I think you're sorry because of Ulaku. God cannot enter the hearts of those people, and it is because of the lime pots. I think, Father, the work of God will not grow at Ulaku until we go and break those lime pots."

"But, Stephen," I said, "Do you mean that you would dare to go and break those lime pots?" "Yes, Father," he said so simply. "It is God's work, and if God is with us what does it matter who is against us?" A challenge, truly, to me, a priest and a white man.

There was work to do at Sinapa, beyond Ulaku, so we decided in a few days we would go. All the teachers wanted to go, but I decided to keep the party as small as possible, and I took with me Stephen, Bernard and John; young Gregory, the cook boy, also came.

A few days later, by whale boat, we arrived at Ulaku, to be met by a troubled Ambrose, who said fearful things were happening and the people were greatly afraid.

I called for Borega to come down from his house. Slowly the wickedly leering old man came down the ladder, ancient moth-eaten old headdress of horn bills and birds of paradise feathers halloping rakishly to one side, some smear of vermilion slathering the stale rancid mixture of coatings and super-coatings of pot black and old coconut oil, with which his face and body were smeared.

THERE was a canary-yellow hue through the sepulture of his nose, of course, and the whole ensemble stank to high heaven. Small is salesmanship in sorcery.

I told Borega I knew all about his lime pots, and that he was to tell all the men that had such pots to bring them in. I was going to Sinapa, but would be back next day, then I would expect all the lime pots to be here, and I would tell them what to do.

So we went on the further three hours' pull to Sinapa. I did my inspection of the school and saw to other things. Also I discovered two of the lime pot sorcerers there, and persuaded them to give up their pots.

Next morning, after Mass, we set off back to Ulaku, the two sorcery lime pots with us. About half-way across I leaned over the side of the whale boat and filled the two gourds with water and left them to sink.

Not they, they just set off, rock bobbing in the current definitely back to Sinapa. This would never do! What a boost for the Lime Pot Purri Purri! So we had to 'bout ship, chase the things, collar them and smash them against the side of the whale boat. That decided me the pots must be broken.

AT ULAKU old Borega was there with his evil leer and his high smell, but he had done nothing, neither would he bring his own lime pots from his house.

I had the names of all the other men, and I called them all together. Naming a man, as you know in New Guinea, is to command him, and so they came, and for the rest of that day and evening we talked of the evil of sorcery.

Then I told them that in the morning each man was to bring his sorcery lime pot—we were not concerned with lime pots of ordinary use—we would put all the lime pots together, and then I would break them. If there was any power in the pots, then it might kill me; but I knew full well, I told them, that there is no power in them at all. They are just beautiful old pots and nothing more.

Here old Borega leaned forward, the long index finger of the left hand pointing at me, as that of the right ran up alongside the great hooked nose to emphasize the leer; and, as he thought, to add meaning to his remark: "You! oh you; that is easy for you. You are a white man, and you know that New Guinea Purri Purri has no power over you. It is easy for you to be brave."

"Yes," said young Stephen, from his place in the sitting circle around the fire. "Yes, but Borega, I am a New Guinea man, and I will break your lime pots."

"You," spluttered the now frenzied Borega. "You! you miserable whipsnapper you! Who are you, to talk such talk? I could bluster you and wither you, you! son of an Ubir bitch! Who are you to talk to Borega of Ulaku etc., etc." as breathless, or perhaps lacking the words for his feelings, he spluttered into silence.



This photograph of the Nave and Baptistry of St. Paul's Church, Malvern and Caulfield, Diocese of Melbourne, was taken by Mr. J. S. Simmonds, a vestryman, on Easter Day. The Nave and Baptistry is the completed portion of the church, the Sanctuary and Chancel still being portions of the old wooden building. Just prior to the Jubilee celebrations last year parishioners decided to complete the church, so probably the Easter celebrations were held in the old Sanctuary and Chancel for the last time this year.

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Duraruk

THE LIME POTS OF UIAKU

BY CANON JAMES BENSON

STEPHEN speaking calmly and quietly said "Borega, it is useless for you to bluster and talk like that about your own strength. I am a Christian. I belong to God. God is my Father, and quite able to take care of me so that nothing you can ever do or say can ever hurt me. God is stronger than Borega, and to-morrow we shall prove it with the lime pots."

In the morning, however, though all the other men brought their pots, old Borega was obstinate and refused to bring his. Stephen even taunted him saying "Ah Borega is afraid. He dare not trust his own sorcery. He does not believe in his own lime pots."

"If he does not bring them here then we shall go round all the villages and we shall tell everybody that Borega is an old humbug, he is afraid to put the lime pots to the test."

It was for all the world like Elijah taunting the priests of Baal, and Borega stamped around in a rage of frustration.

Gregory Awi, now priest at Gona, says "Finally Stephen and I climbed into Borega's house and found the lime pots hidden away under some big cooking pots."

So the pots were assembled, and we said a prayer asking that all should be done according to God's will. Then signing himself with the sign of the Holy Cross, Stephen took a stick and began to smash those old gourds, some of them very beautiful old things.

Then the other boys took sticks. I and Bernard and John, and the Solomon Island teacher, Ambrose, we all took sticks and broke them. And Borega said "Your hand that broke those pots will swell, and the swelling will go up your arm and you will die."

"No," said Stephen, "look you, Borega my friend. This hand belongs to God. God made it, and nothing that Borega can do can hurt it. Some day God will make me a priest, and that hand will be used by God to take the Holy Bread and the Holy Cup to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Borega I am sorry for you my friend, because you know nothing of these good and holy things. All you know is altogether evil."

AND GREGORY Awi, who tells that part of the story says "I think it was then, when Stephen spoke those words, that God first began to tell me that I too must be a priest."

Well, when the pots were broken we made a fire over them and at the flames went up we sang the Te Deum, and we said prayers, and all the Unaka people expected us to die and we did not die. Then the

CONFERENCE ON CITY MISSIONS

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

Melbourne, April 28

About 123 delegates from over 20 auxiliaries of the Diocese, Mission to Streets and Lanes and of the Children's Homes met at the Retreat House, Cheltenham, Melbourne, on April 27.

After a welcome given by the Reverend Mother, the morning was spent in discussing various problems connected with auxiliary work.

In the afternoon the gathering was addressed by Miss Rose Austin, Mrs. R. T. Breen and Mrs. E. F. Moodie. The chair was taken by Mrs. Russell Clarke.

Miss Austin spoke of newspaper collection. Mrs. Breen on the work of the Marriage Guidance Council and Mrs. Maudslay on the work of auxiliaries. She said the importance of the Auxiliary Work was

Proceedings were closed by the warden Archdeacon R. H. B. Williams, who thanked the chairwoman, the speakers and the delegates for their contribution, and their attention

This is the second part of the story, "The Lime Pots of Ulaku". The third and concluding part, telling of the great gathering of natives at Wanigela, when all the lime pots were finally broken, will appear next week.

people came to us wondering, as we sat by the Rest House, and Father Fisher talked to them about the things of God, and next day before we left for home there were many names down in the book as "Heavers", and that was the beginning of the Church at Ulaku.

BUT as we left, old Borega was still saying "Your hand will swell, and the swelling will go up your arm and you will die." And we all said, as Stephen had said, "This hand, and this hand belong to God, and nothing Borega can do can hurt it."

So we came home to Wanigela, and the story had gone before us by people along the beaches, and as the whale boat came in through the surf at Wanigela we heard much wailing and weeping.

Our mothers were all crying. My mother and Stephen's mother, and the mother of John—all, of course, were still poor heathen women—they came through the surf weeping, clinging to our hands and arms

over the side of the whale boat, and crying "Oh, my Gregory! Oh, my, my Stephen!" "Why did you do it, my dear Majorot?" "Borega is very strong. Your hand will swell, as he says it will! Let me see, is your hand swelling? It is! It is! Oh, my Majorot! My Stephen! Oh, my Gregory! Oh, my John!" What shall I do when my son dies? What shall I do?"

And we said to our mothers, "Be strong. O mother mine! If you were a Christian you would know that God is stronger than a million Boregas. That Borega can do nothing to me, because I belong to God."

BUT ALL the people, in all the villages, were every day saying the same thing: "Has Stephen's hand swollen yet? How is Bernard's hand? And what about Gregory and John?" And so it went on day after day. And Borega sent messages about all this; and there was much talk everywhere. Always we said, "This

hand belongs to God, and Borega can do nothing."

But poor dear Bernard was not so sure, and he began to be afraid; and one day, I think, it was about three weeks after we had broken the lime pots, Bernard's hand did begin to swell, and the swelling went up his arm, and in a few days he was dead. The people then, of course, said, "Ah, who will be next? Will it be Gregory, or John, or Stephen?"

We three then said we were very sorry that our brother Bernard was not strong. He was a good boy and he did want to follow Jesus and all good things. But he was not so sure, and he allowed the devil to get into his heart. You see we are sure that we belong to God, and one day God will call us to be brothers and nothing the devil can do will alter that."

And so the days passed, and the weeks, and nothing more happened.

BOOK REVIEWS

LIGHT-HEARTED TRAVEL

INNS AND OUTS. Gwen Meredith and Abiswurth Harbison. Angus and Robertson. Price 18/-, Pp. 249.

Gwen Meredith, well-known to radio serial listeners, and her husband collaborate in writing a lighthearted account of their trip in Coronation year through Great Britain, Europe, Turkey, the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and the Persian Gulf.

Although many of their comments and impressions will strike the experienced traveller as naive, the reader will delight in their amusing reaction to different customs and different ways.

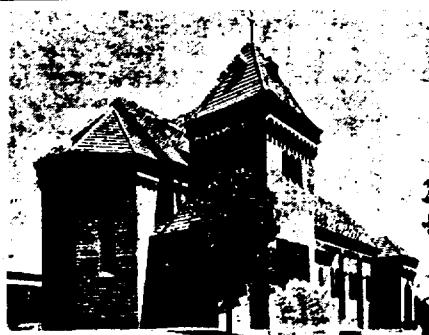
Their style is conversational, their account, too, is a subjective one.

"Inns and Out" is by no means a serious travel book, but at times, as in the chapters on Turkey and the Near East, it does provide pungent comments on life in the far land.

The book is well illustrated with a number of half-page plates.

—J. M. S.

OUR REVIEW BY ERIC COOPER, THE PUBLISHER.



This handsome Church of St. Patrick, Mount Lawley, W.A., built on high ground overlooking one of the main roads leading out of Perth, is liquidating its capital debt of £2,500 by asking 500 people to contribute 15 each. After a few weeks' drive, nearly £400 is in hand. The rector, Canon J. Faice, and the Vestry anticipate its completion during 1955. Each donor receives a beautiful photograph of the church in three colours which forms part of an attractive acknowledgement suitable for framing.

S.E. ASIAN FAIR IN PERTH

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

Perth, April 24

The inviting smell of Chinese, Malay and American foods drew a big crowd to the hall of St. Margaret's Church, Nedlands, Diocese of Perth on April 16.

Dishes of many kinds were offered for an evening meal. These included shark's fins, watermelon chicken, jasmine tea and the Malay national dish sate.

The occasion was the church's annual fair to raise money for mission work in South-East Asia.

Mrs. S. L. Pratt, who spent many years as a doctor with her husband in Peking, opened the afternoon, and among the speakers was the Quaker missionary and history lecturer, Miss Lucy Barratt, who is on a short visit to Perth.

Mrs. D. Andrews, of Nedlands, presented a display of Manchu mandarins' gowns, ming-sung silk screens and banners and many other items of historical interest collected by her as early as 1910.

In a talk about China where he worked from 1930 to 1951, Mr. S. Burt said that among good things that the communist Government had accomplished was the translation of the tremendous produce in national history and culture.

The Peking regime was taking care to preserve the excellencies of art and embroidery and had revived the civil service in China.

A NOVEL ABOUT THE CRUCIFIXION

THE DARKNESS. Evan John. Heinemann, Melbourne. Australian price 15/-, Pp. 205.

NOTHRY years ago to-day as I write Rupert Brooke is buried on the Greek Island of Skyrus, one of the Lesser Sporades. His death on the eve of the Anzac Landing is reported in native of the loss our culture and our British way of life have suffered directly and indirectly through the two World Wars.

Of this character is the loss by his death in 1953 of Evan John, after his work with the relief expedition to the Indian Islands following the terrible earthquake.

Indeed his last literary work was a brilliant description of the aftermath which in "Time After Earthquake" expressed the Hellenic culture in which he shared.

War service in the Middle East inspired his excellent picture of the Crusades in "Ride Home To-morrow".

I have somewhat labouriously worked from his Academy of Kannada Panditana to the question: Has he, to his credit, the phenomenon of the mighty tomb? He repeats this question in the 60th section of "The Most Powerful Novel".

He accepted the very last sentence of the day that I have ever seen. It is as inevitable as the other.

—W. B.

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THE LIME POTS OF UIAKU

BY CANON JAMES BENSON

This is the third and concluding part of "The Lime Pots of Utak," a story of the triumph of Christianity over sorcery.

THEN CAME the time when Borega said that all the lime pots had not been broken. That was when the bishop (Bishop Sharpe) came to Wanigela; and Father Fisher told him about it, and the bishop was sad.

So the bishop called all the peoples together; from all the villages; from the Malain of Utak and Marua, to the Winiai of Cape Nelson; including, of course, the Wanigela people, the Ubir, Oberesan, Rainu, Onjob and the Koya Koya, from the villages behind. All were there.

It was the greatest gathering of peoples ever held at Wanigela; and our bishop's heart was full of sorrow, as he heard of the fears of all the peoples. One after another the speakers said that, until all the sorcery lime pots were broken, there could be no happiness in the villages; there could be nothing but fear.

The bishop said, "Love can drive out fear. God is Love and perfect Love casteth out fear. If you wish to avert your choice, then do it by destroying the things of which you are fearful; break your sorcery lime pots."

The Utak men, as chief sorcerers, said the words of the bishop were good words; and they would search out all their remaining lime pots when they returned to their village, and they would smash them; so there would be happiness again.

Then a wonderful thing happened. There were several Wanigela men who had used their lime pots for sorcery; and the leading man of these leapt to his feet with a great shout and, rushing round the cleared space with his lime pot held aloft, he stopped suddenly as he came before the bishop, saying, "See, I break it," and dashed it in pieces to the ground.

ONE AFTER another the Wanigela men followed his example, and eyes began to turn to Nonis, the village constable of Wanigela, who sat on the grass next to Father Fisher, who also sat on the grass alongside the bishop, so that he might interpret for him.

Now, Nonis was nursing a very fine lime pot; and the bishop looked across to Nonis and shook his head. I think the bishop was thinking in his mind, "What sort of a policeman is this? That lime pot is much too grand for ordinary daily use. But can a policeman be a sorcerer?" We people of Wanigela, also, did not feel happy about our policeman, Nonis.

Then Father Fisher did the very best thing, and he did it in the way we New Guinea people can understand. He called out, "Are there any more sorcery lime pots?" There was no reply. Nonis sat nursing his lime pot, and with his eyes cast down to the ground. Father Fisher looked across at him and all the silence continued, and all eyes were now on those two.

Then Father Fisher leaned across and said, "Please, Nonis, lend me your lime pot." Looking up very suddenly, Nonis replied, "Yes, Bada, but please do not break it." "I shall not break it," said the priest, "lend it to me. I want to talk about it."

Then holding up the lime pot, Father Fisher said, "This is a lovely lime pot. But we all know Nonis, and we know there are times when he makes a wrong use of this lime pot. Now, what Nonis claims for this lime pot is not the truth, for only

One can do what he claims is his power through this pot, and that One is the God in Whom Christians believe. If Nonis is able to affect you at all, it is because of the fear that I am in your heart. You do not believe in God, if you fear the lime pot of Nonis."

Then leaning across again to Nonis he returned the lime pot, saying in a loud voice, so that all could hear: "Here you are Nonis, take back your silly old pot, and if ever again you try to make use of it for sorcery, you will find that everyone will laugh at you!"

In a moment Nonis was on his feet, furious, because he was caught as it were in a left stick. Speaking rapidly in On job, his own language, he lashed the assembly right and left, one after another—Mains, Ubir, Oberesan, Koya Koya—all of them, and every man, Jack of them, were this that, and the other sort of fools, and weak-kneed blatherskites, etc. etc.

AS FOR Father Fisher and the CHURCH, coming in and interfering with an ancient and honourable occupation, well, he had no words sufficient to say what he thought about them.

"Here am I," he said, "if I am a sorcerer, I am a good sorcerer. I try always to use it well. This is a good lime pot. It has served me well. But after all that you have said and done this day—his voice rising to a scream—"what can I do with my lovely lime pot? What can I do, now?" And, holding it high, and looking fondly at it, he seemed to push it higher, and higher, as he stood now right in front of the bishop.

People held their breath in suspense, as he shrieked: "It is useless," and dashed it to the ground at the bishop's feet amid the ruins of all the others, and he himself collapsed with it, under the intense strain.

But the tension was broken, and the whole assembly heaved a huge sigh of relief. The bishop and Father Fisher helped Nonis to his feet.

In a few moments that great crowd was on its knees, and the bishop praying in its midst. He stood and blessed us, and we arose and went quietly into the church, so many as could get in for Evensong.

The menace of the lime pots in Collingswood Bay was destroyed, and a great step forward made in the work of evangelisation.

At Utak the great church-cathedral-like in its proportions—stands on the very place where, in 1920, Stephen Major broke the lime pots.

Louis Deo: (Finally old Borega died in Grace just before Fisher died. And his very big son, Fisher, banded it. Borega claimed that it miraculously healed and that the dead man, when standing, trilling him he must be a Christian. During the influenza epidemic he died.)

BISHOP G. E. CHAMBERS

Our Paris correspondent for the past two years, the Right Reverend G. E. Chambers has resigned his post as Chaplain to the British Embassy in Paris.

It is not true, as reported in an Australian Church magazine, that Bishop Chambers is en route home to Australia by sea.

He is enjoying a short holiday in England, and will spend the next five months preaching and lecturing for the Colonial and Continental Church Societies.

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THE ANGLICAN
(See Rates, Page 12.)

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