

Of the Biagi tribe, in this Division, inhabiting the western highlands, little at present is known, beyond a few villages within easy reach of Ioma. Recently they murdered three natives in the employ of miners on the Yodda, and several murders which have come to light have taken place amongst them. They are very inimical to the Government, and do not seem quite to understand its object.

A case of sorcery recently came before the Native Magistrate's Court, in which it was found that an old policeman, named Tai-imi, profiting by what his travels afield had taught him, had set up practice as a sorcerer on the Gira River. As is usual with all native sorcerers, he had his snakes, invisible to ordinary eyes, but nevertheless very deadly and real to any who obtained the ill-will of the sorcerer. To further enhance his dignity, and add to the terror in which he was held, Tai-imi chose five other men to assist him. One he created a sergeant, and another a corporal; as such, they were addressed. The remaining three were appointed orderlies; their duties were to cook for and attend to the wants of Tai-imi and his officers. In order that there should be no doubt about the superiority of the sergeant, he was endowed with a snake similar to the one possessed by Tai-imi; the corporal was also given one, but smaller, and the three orderlies were promised snakes should their loyalty and labour merit such a reward. Every day when Tai-imi arose, his company fell in in the centre of the village, and saluted him in military fashion. Very gravely Tai-imi returned the salute, and inspected the company. Presently, everybody in the village were saluting, from them it spread to other villages. The village constables on the Gira thought it better to fall in with the prevailing custom, and they commenced to salute; if they did not, they were arraigned before Tai-imi, and threatened with a visit from the snake. In the meantime, Tai-imi's appetite for pigs was growing. The calls for fresh supplies was every day becoming more frequent, and the victims began to murmur. Superstition can go far, but even amongst the most superstitious there is a limit to the amount of goods that they are willing to part with to ward off evil; Tai-imi applied for more pig, and the bubble burst. The people complained to the Government.

#### VILLAGE CONSTABLES.

There are twenty-three village constables at present in this Division. Seven more will be recommended for appointment during next year. There is no doubt that the village constabulary in this Division is a valuable force. Taken individually, one may find fault with each one in many ways, yet, on the whole, the Government would get on very badly without them. It is noticed that in parts seldom visited the presence of village constables keeps the people in a fairly law-abiding state; no serious crime can be hidden for long, and the offender is sooner or later brought to task. In other places, where no village constables have been appointed, serious crimes may be committed without the Government ever having knowledge of it, and the people are more or less wild. Though a village policeman may be weak, and have little influence with the people, though he may have sympathy for the law-breaker, and have but a luke-warm regard for the Government, yet it seems to me, he is always in their sight as a visible, tangible instrument of the Government. On the rare occasions on which he dons his uniform he probably looks upon himself as a most important person, and is inclined to resent any infraction of the law, of which he is the sole guardian in the district. Moreover, he always has a fear that he may be held responsible if things go wrong, and this knowledge, combined with the tremendous egotism which is present in every Papuan, compels him to discountenance the vicious proclivities of his fellow tribesmen.

#### ARMED CONSTABULARY.

Fourteen of the Ioma detachment were relieved in February last. At present the detachment numbers seventeen; three short of the proper complement. The discipline of the men is good, and there has been only a few minor offences brought against them. During the past three months they have done a good deal of patrolling, and acquitted themselves well. Their health is excellent, and they seem to be quite happy here. They are exercised for an hour every morning in infantry drill; afterwards they repair buildings, work in the garden, or do any other work required, until 4 p.m. All hands then turn out for cricket on the pain of being kept to work till five o'clock. This, however, is unnecessary, as they are very fond of the game. It is a pity that there is no canteen at which they could buy the usual native goods. There is no store at which they can spend their money, and, in consequence, they place little value on the wages they receive. A native canteen at each station, while making little extra work for the officer, would provide sufficient funds, if the goods were sold at a reasonable profit, to purchase cricket material, footballs, food, and many other things dear to the heart of a native, besides furnishing a fund for prizes at sports.

#### AGRICULTURE.

There are no plantations so far in this Division. On the rivers all the arable land is more or less occupied by the natives, and, as it consists of only a narrow strip on the banks, it is not likely that any agricultural development will take place. There is, however, some excellent land, reported to be equal to any in the Territory, between the Opi head-waters and the Kumusi River.

#### TRADE.

There are no trading stations in the Division, though the abundance of wild rubber ought to be sufficient to maintain one. The natives are, however, too indolent to work the rubber, except spasmodically. They have sold a quantity to the stores in the past, and to the mission, but the closing of the stores, and the resolution made by the mission, to cease all trading with the natives, has left them no market at which they could dispose of any rubber they made. This is a pity. Rubber collecting by the natives is one that might well be encouraged.

#### MISSIONS.

The only Mission station in the Division is situated on the Mambare River; it belongs to the Anglican Communion, and is in charge of a native evangelist. The Rev. Copeland King visits the station every month. There is an attendance of about thirteen children at the school, and the church is well attended by the natives living in the vicinity. In addition to the work at the mission, the evangelist holds services at intervals on the Gira River and the Lower Mambare.

Acting Resident Magistrate, G. H. Nicholls, in  
Magisterial Report, Mambare Division  
(from Resident Magistrate's Office, Mambare Division,  
Ioma, 30th June, 1911).

exception of certain tribes in the D'Entrecasteaux Group, settled down into law-abiding citizens, and the most valuable supply of plantation labourers probably comes from this Division.

The drought to which the Resident Magistrate of the Eastern Division refers has been felt almost all along the coast of Papua, though to a varying extent; it was particularly severe in the D'Entrecasteaux Group and on the coast opposite. Drought, such as that of 1911 and 1912 are, fortunately, rare in Papua, but droughts of less intensity and more limited extent are not uncommon; so that the native population is often hard put to it to get enough to eat, and would be still harder put to it were it not for the presence of the white man with his constant offer of employment—a fact which is often ignored by those who interest themselves in Papua.

The Resident Magistrate, South-Eastern Division, has always been handicapped by the want of a proper power boat to patrol his Division, and during the year under review he was particularly unfortunate in losing his sailing vessel in the end of May after only having her in his possession about five months, so that, beyond an occasional visit which the *Merrie England* has been able to make to Misima, Sud-Est, and Rossel, this Division has, during the past year, hardly been patrolled at all. I am glad to say that provision is made on the Estimates for the purchase of a suitable vessel.

Fortunately the inhabitants are law-abiding (for even the Rossel islanders have at last given up their peculiar custom of smothering one another, of which a description is given in the Annual Report for 1907-8, and, except in the Trobriands, they are not very numerous. There is a Special Magistrate for the Trobriand Islands—Mr. Bellamy, Assistant Resident Magistrate—who is also a Medical Officer, and has charge of the native hospital at Losuia. This officer reports the drought very bad on Kiriwina, an unusual state of things since usually there is a considerable export of food from that island. It is interesting to note that the natives blamed the Government for the want of rain.

The old Northern Division has for some years been divided into the Kumusi and Mambare Divisions, embracing the Yodda and Gira Gold-fields respectively. Since the discovery of gold on the Lakekamu, the Yodda and Gira have been practically deserted, and there were never during the past year a dozen miners working in the two Divisions. In the Kumusi Division patrols have visited the practically unexplored country of the Managulasi to the south of Mount Lamington, and it may, I think, now be said that the whole of the Division is known, at least, superficially.

The Baigona myth, as related by the Resident Magistrate, Kumusi Division, is interesting, for it illustrates the growth of a movement which is developing into a new religion before our eyes. The sorcery of Baigona seems to be of the kind generally known as white magic, like the Babalau of the Motu, but there is a danger that it may develop into systematic extortion. There is already, I am told, a form of initiation connected with the Baigona, and the beginnings at any rate of a regular cult and ceremonial. Baptism is practised, but not on the initiates themselves; it is, I am told, the friends and relations of the initiates who are baptized, as a sign perhaps of their allegiance to him.

The further development of the Baigona movement will be carefully watched, for it may be of great value in throwing light upon the origin of other similar movements, although, of course, due allowance must be made for the influence which Christianity and European civilization in general must infallibly exercise upon many of the details.

In the Mambare Division little is known so far of the tribes who inhabit the rough mountain districts in the north-west corner near the German boundary. Mr. Keelan, who has been sent to patrol the Goilala district, proceeded further on to a village which he calls Sorpu, and from there was apparently compelled by want of provisions to strike across for the station of the Roman Catholic Mission at Mafulu, in the Central Division, which he reached on the evening of the fifth day from Sorpu. Unfortunately, Mr. Keelan had no means of observing his position, and the route he followed is largely a matter of conjecture. The village of Dai Ivi (apparently a Goilala village) is described by Mr. Keelan as lying about 6 miles north-west (as the crow flies) of Mount Albert Edward, near a stream called the Guima, a tributary of the Waria.

Sorpu is five days from Goilala; the party first ascended a mountain which Mr. Keelan calls Uduru, and describes as being almost as high as Mount Albert Edward, and they then reached a grass plateau at an altitude of about 10,000 feet, over which they walked for two days. This plateau is practically treeless, and is intersected by

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