Project Canterbury

Twenty-One Years in Papua

A History of the English Church Mission in New Guinea (1891-1912)

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"Believe me, my dear Bishop, what would be most in harmony with the feelings of Mr. Maclaren when alive would be that his memory were honoured by the speedy and vigorous prosecution of the work he spent his life in initiating in this country. That your Church will be of this opinion I do not for a moment doubt."--Sir William MacGregor (letter to the Bishop of Brisbane, February 13, 1892).

Chapter II. Goodenough Bay (1892-1897)

UP to the end of November, 1891, little had been heard in Sydney of these doings at Dogura. It was taken for granted that the party in New Guinea were busy with the inevitable preliminaries of land-clearing, house-building, language-learning, and the rest, and that nothing of a specially "missionary" character had yet been possible.

But the Board of Missions was already becoming anxious about the expenditure, which was far heavier than had been expected: they knew that the building material which had been sent to New Guinea was not altogether satisfactory, and that there was trouble with the carpenters, but Maclaren's hurried hopeful letters to the Primate seemed full of promise for the future.

And then, on Monday, December 7th, came letters overland from Queensland, "which quite altered the complexion of affairs."

Copland King and the carpenters had broken down in health; they had left New Guinea; they had reached Brisbane; their boat was due that very day in Sydney!

They arrived, and one of the carpenters was carried unconscious from the ship to his home in North Sydney, and there next evening he died. Yet there was consolation in a letter from Mr. Maclaren which came to hand by this same vessel. He had not, he said, been touched by fever, though he was still suffering from the after effects of a slight attack which he had had in 1890. The tone of this letter was "most hopeful and cheerful." At any rate, the leader of the Mission was still at his post, and in good heart and health, and everything would yet go well!

And then, three weeks later, on another Monday, three days after Christmas, came telegrams from Cooktown. Maclaren had died at sea the previous day, and been buried at Cooktown that afternoon.

The Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, on the last day of the year, in a column headed, "A History of Misfortune," summed up results of the six months' work as follows:--

"Two lives lost, and two men ill, state of the others uncertain, house unfinished, no leader, and the result of all this, and many months' labour and time--*nil*!"

This depressing newspaper summary was neither more nor less than the dismal truth. Of the laymen left in New Guinea, none was qualified to act as head of the mission, or even to take temporary authority. The Dogura house, which had cost too much already, was "a mere forest of piles, with the roof over two rooms only," and it was likely to cost a good deal more before it was habitable. On the other hand, the rainy season was beginning and the material already on the ground would quickly perish if the work were not completed.

There was no regular communication between Sydney and Samarai. The *Merrie England* had already gone back to New Guinea; and though a B. P. boat (Burns Philp) was to leave Cooktown in about a week there was no way by which Mr. King could get to Cooktown in time to catch it, even if he were well enough to return so soon.

The executive council of the Board of Missions held a special meeting, and Mr. King attended, but there was little they could do, except pass a resolution concerning the death of Albert Maclaren, and then go on to wonder whether the Church had after all begun a task too big for her? Whether further expenditure might not be throwing good money after bad? Whether any one with experience could be found to take command?

The Primate published an appeal for volunteers, and though "several men talked of going, and one unsuitable layman actually offered," nothing came of it.

Mr. King had not understood the severity of his illness until he found how long it took him to recover, but at last, in March, he was well enough to go back, and the Primate wrote a letter appointing him acting head of the Mission. He was to take with him two more carpenters and the timber needed for finishing the house, and he was to send back a report as to the state of affairs in New Guinea, with suggestions as to what must be done to secure the stability of the Mission.

Meanwhile, the little band at Dogura had not lost heart. It was not until a fortnight after Christmas that they heard of Maclaren's death. "The news stunned us all" is the entry in a diary which one of them kept. But the writer's next words were, "And now all we can do is to await the arrival of our new head, and while waiting work away at the language." And work they did, though not only at the language. More paths were made and drains dug, as the heavy January rains showed they were required. A boat-house was built, and a vegetable garden laid out, and several attempts were made to get the children of the villages to come to school. Mr. and Mrs. Tomlinson, and especially the latter, were often down with fever. The whale-boat was sent now and then to Samarai, but mails from Cooktown were few, and no word reached them from head-quarters. It never seems to have entered the head of one of them that it might be necessary to withdraw from the field; and it was just as well, perhaps, that they knew nothing of the disappointment, almost touching despair, which possessed the hearts of people in Sydney.

Copland King reached Samarai on Easter Eve, and was at Dogura early in the morning of Low Sunday.

The two Brisbane carpenters who had come with him set to work at once upon the house, and King himself was busy settling Maclaren's affairs, and preparing the report and the suggestions for which the Primate had asked, until the schooner *Myrtle* had landed her cargo of timber, and taken away the mail, and then he was able to turn his attention to regular work.

The white folk lived together in the palm-leaf grass-roofed house on the hill, with five native boys close at hand in a kitchen of their own. Three of these boys had come from Taupota, and the others from near Samarai. One of them was known as the boat-boy; another, with no very obvious right to his official title, was called the cook; a third waited at table; and the other two passed their mornings "washing up."

School was begun with these five boys each afternoon, and it seemed a wonderful achievement when the entire class could "just manage to say the alphabet." As the children from the villages could not be

persuaded to come regularly to Dogura, Mr. King went down the hill each morning to Wedau, and one of the laymen to Wamira, to gather the children under a tree and have school, and to go round the villages afterwards doing what they could for the sick. This early example has been followed steadily all through the one-and-twenty years. Wherever a station is opened, a village school is established, and though the scholarship of these schools has never reached a high level they have been fruitful nurseries for the catechumenate, and places of elementary and easy discipline for thousands of wild little creatures who would otherwise, except for the savage traditions of their tribe, have had no guidance but their own wayward wills: and everywhere the white members of the staff have done what they could in a simple medical way, healing the sick, as well as preaching the Gospel.

The white men soon began to go up and down the coast by whale-boat, finding the villages and seeking places suitable for mission stations.

Here and there in the high range of mountains which runs parallel to Goodenough Bay there are deep gullies which carry the heavy rainfall to the sea, and on the alluvial flats thus formed such villages as Awaiama and Wedau and Wamira and Boianai are built.

In June, when the rains were well over, the pioneers made the first of a series of journeys inland, going up the winding gorge at the back of Wedau, and after following the bed of the river for eight miles or so, began to ascend a mountain. They found abundant signs of population. The forest had been cleared, and gardens fenced and planted with bananas, sugarcane, taro, and sweet potatoes. But the villages, though numerous, were very small and scattered. At about three thousand feet they reached a village where a feast was being held, and met some hundreds of natives.

In July, the newly appointed Organizing Secretary of A.B.M. (Australian Board of Missions) visited Dogura, but he was ill with fever when he arrived, and had to be carried up and down the hill, and could only stay there a day and a half, as it was thought best for him to be sent out of the country as soon as possible, and there was a chance of his getting a passage on H.M.S. *Lizard* as she called at Samarai on her way to Cooktown.

By the beginning of August, a large part of the house, including the chapel, was finished, and a service of dedication ("choral Evensong") was held on August 10th, the first anniversary of the landing in Bartle Bay. A week or two afterwards the Governor paid a visit to Dogura, coming across in the *Merrie England* from the islands where the Wesleyans had lately begun to work. Sir William MacGregor was struck by the contrast between the large staff and business-like beginnings of the Methodist Mission, and the poor little handful of white people, ill-found, and with no very bright prospect of reinforcement, which represented all that the Church of England had been able, or willing, to do for its Mission to New Guinea.

The Governor went on along the coast in a whale-boat, accompanied only by a Wedau chief, a Dogura station boy, and two of his own natives. He found the people at the head of Goodenough Bay, as Maclaren had found them, "a wild lot." They stole his belongings, and treated him and his companions with very scant respect. A party from the *Merrie England* was afterwards sent to teach them manners, and in the end five natives were shot, and one taken prisoner, and a white man was speared through the thigh. The prisoner, after spending a year in gaol, was appointed village constable, and sent back to teach his fellow tribesmen the ways of "Government," and especially to receive visitors with more politeness.

The carpenters went away in September, leaving the house habitable indeed, but with very much more yet to be done. For weeks and weeks the missionaries, after their morning's work in school and village, spent the afternoon nailing down floors, putting up verandahs, fixing ceilings, and finishing spouts and drains. They had to wait, too, for another load of timber from Australia, and interruptions to their work were frequent, so that the house was not really finished for another six months. As much as possible, they got the natives to help, both for greater speed in the work and also for the sake of the natives themselves, who soon began, here a little and there a little, to understand something of the white man's point of view.

Presently the missionaries noticed that some of the natives attended to what they said, and were anxious to associate with them, while others did not seem to bother very much, as long as they could get tobacco when they wanted it.

In October, a piece of land was bought at Taupota, through the Government, in readiness for the opening of a station.

In May, 1893, a conference was held at the London Missionary Society's station near Samarai, at which Mr. King was present, as well as representatives of the Wesleyan Mission. The Government had been passing regulations for the natives in such matters as marriage and divorce--fruitful causes always of quarrelling in New Guinea, as in other lands--and, as the missionaries had not found these regulations satisfactory, the Governor had asked that this conference should consider the whole question and make recommendations, if they wished to do so, to him. An attempt was also made to secure unity in other directions. It was agreed, for example, that the Name of our Lord should be uniformly Iesu Keriso in all the different Missions.

On the day this conference ended, a small fourteen-ton schooner arrived in Samarai. She had been built by the A.B.M. for the Mission, and named the Albert Maclaren. She had a white captain, and brought a new layman and two South Sea Island teachers for the staff.

The arrival of these first Christian coloured men from Australia was an event of importance in the history of the New Guinea Mission. They, and the other Kanakas who followed, had been imported as labourers from the southern islands of the Pacific for work on Queensland sugar plantations; and now, instead of going back to their own islands, they came to work as humble mission agents in New Guinea. Some of them had been baptized in childhood and educated by the Melanesian Mission: and others had gone as adults to night schools and Sunday schools connected with various Kanaka Missions in Australia. They were not highly educated, as a rule, and most of them were only one generation removed from savagery, but almost without exception they proved themselves devoted, faithful Christian men, and it is not easy to express in written words what the Mission and the natives of New Guinea owe to them.

In many ways these South Sea Islanders are closely akin to the Papuans of the north-east coast, who themselves are partly Melanesian; and a coloured Christian teacher, at a certain early stage, and up to a certain limited point, has sometimes proved more useful than a white man. He is at home in a native house; he eats native food; his manner of speech and habit of thought and general outlook on life are such that he very soon learns Papuan languages and finds his way to the Papuan point of view and becomes familiar with the ins and outs of village life; and he does all this, not only more quickly, but also very much more patiently and thoroughly than is possible for the ordinary white man, with the centuries of Christianity and civilization behind him, and his grammar and his logic and his philosophy and his science and his notions about "efficiency," which he has brought with him from the other side of the world, along with his exotic food and his peculiar clothes.

At first, then, in the very beginning of Mission work with new tribes in Papua, these partially civilized, partially educated, and wholly converted Melanesian teachers have been invaluable. The time comes, and it often comes very soon, when their preparatory work must be supplemented by something more strong and energetic and capable, and they need careful supervision throughout; but these humble black fellows--"Gospel ploughmen," as somebody has called them--have not only outnumbered the white staff in New Guinea, but, man for man, they have done work as truly missionary and as permanently useful during these one-and-twenty years as the more ornamental and expensive white bishops and priests and lay people; and they have done it, too, more continuously, with no long breaks for holidays to Australia or to England; and more quietly, because they are not advertised, and their names rarely get into print, and hardly any one on earth knows, or cares, anything at all about them, unless it be the white missionary in charge of the district, who depends so greatly upon their help, or the scattered groups of undeveloped savages, whom they are gently leading the first few steps of the way which in the end will carry them out of the darkness and into

the light. We need not grumble because the steps are very short and slow at first, and the light rather feeble and intermittent. A blind man, when his sight is given to him, must see other men as trees walking, and then, afterwards, all things plainly. First of all the dim softness of the dawn, and by and by the distinct glory of the day.

Our South Sea Island teachers are true heralds of the Dawn in Papua.

And now it seemed that better times were beginning. The missionaries already in New Guinea had found their first year of waiting very difficult. Help had been promised, but it was long in coming. Here, at least, was an instalment, and they began to make good use of what they had got.

The new-comers were kept for a month at Dogura, to get used to the natives and the climate and to learn something of the language and methods of work.

The layman who had come at the beginning with the Tomlinsons was then sent to live at Taupota, and a S.S.I, teacher was placed at Awaiama. The new layman stayed at Dogura, and worked Wamira village from there.

Soon afterwards, the first native-built church in the Mission was opened at Taupota, near the centre of the long straggling village street. It was large, with a sago-leaf roof, interior walls of sago, and a number of very stout logs, some of them fifty feet long, extending the whole length of the building, so as to form the lower part of the outer walls.

The builders gave their help freely, and it has generally been the custom of the mission that such work as the erecting and repairing of churches and schoolrooms should be done by unpaid volunteers, though small gifts of tobacco are often made while the work is going on, with a feast of native food, including perhaps a pig, at the charges of the Mission, when it is finished.

In some ways, this first white man had a rough time at Taupota. Boys whom he thought he could trust stole his tobacco before a place was built in which to store it: and they set the whale-boat loose one night, with the sails set, and it drifted across to Cape Vogel, where some traders saved it from going to pieces on the reef. At one time all his boys left him and others threatened to spear him. But he held on, and at last was able to gather together a large school of village boys, and seven or eight years afterwards it could be written of these Taupota natives that "they showed the greatest promise. Some most intelligent boys from there are training at Dogura, and it looks as though Taupota would supply our first native evangelists. Sturdily built, without the tendency to home-sickness which marks other villagers, quick both in and out of school to learn new things and new ways, quiet and well-behaved, but by no means easily discouraged or soon wearying, they are material on which the Holy Spirit may stamp the lineaments of Christ, and fire with zeal for His service."

Churches were also built at Wedau and Wamira, with grass roofs, and walls of coconut palm lined with pandanus leaf. The work was done entirely by the natives, but in each case under Mr. Tomlinson's supervision.

It has already been told how, on the southern side of Goodenough Bay, the high mountains slope very suddenly down to the water's edge. On the northern side, running out between Good-enough and Collingwood Bays, is a long tongue of low-lying land, covered with grass and scanty scrub or light timber. There are no good harbours and few anchorages: the shore is either coral rock or shingle, and the water is very deep close up to the shore all along the coast. The few hills on this narrow tongue of land are hardly more than four or five hundred feet high. The population is scanty and very scattered, the most important centres being Paiwa, at the head of the bay, and Menapi to the east of it.

Willie Miwa, a South Sea Islander, was settled at Menapi in July, 1893. Mr. King took him over in the

schooner--a five-hour journey from Dogura--and the natives lent a house for his occupation, and promised to help him build one of his own. Two village boys came away from Menapi to become boarders at Dogura, but when the schooner put in at another village their courage failed them and they ran away.

Mr. King went over every month in the whale-boat, and found that though Willie was unable to hold services, being slow at the language, which was quite different from Wedauan, he was getting on well with the natives, and had started a school. When the whale-boat arrived for the November visit, the people of the village met Mr. King on the beach, and told him that "their father was dead." He and another man had eaten some poisonous fish, and Willie had died within a week. Before he died he assured the people that he had not been bewitched as they thought, and that when the white man came they were not to be frightened and run away, as they would otherwise have done, since every death in New Guinea is attributed to the act of an enemy, and these people would have expected Mr. King to take revenge as a matter of course for the death of his teacher.

The village people had buried him close to his house, and had tidied up the place and fastened the door, and everything was safe. More than this, when the boat left next day, the Menapi people allowed one of their little boys to go and live at Dogura, and other boys followed soon afterwards. Willie Miwa's grave in the village at Menapi was described at the time as a challenge to the Mission to go on with his work; but it was eleven years before another teacher could be placed there; and when, in 1904, a South Sea Islander, with three Dogura trained Menapi lads, was sent, one of the boys died, and the S.S.I, and his wife had bad health, and were greatly disconcerted by the pretensions of sorcerers, who threatened to kill him as they claimed to have killed Willie Miwa in 1893.

Within the past year a white priest and layman have been stationed at Menapi.
The new layman who stayed at Dogura with Mr. King after the other workers had been scattered soon failed in health, and within four months he had to be sent back to Sydney. He came back to New Guinea after eighteen months, but his attacks of fever were "severe, continuous, and complicated," and he had to give up altogether in a few weeks.

In September, Mr. King went with the Governor for a fortnight's trip in the *Merrie England*, past Gape Nelson, and then from point to point right up the north-east coast past Mitre Rock. Returning, they visited many villages, and noticed several rivers for the first time. Two crowded centres of population were found in Collingwood Bay, and Mr. King came back to talk and write many letters about "the great need for extension of our Mission."

There is not much to record of the rest of 1893. At Christmas the staff assembled at Dogura to consult about their difficulties and discuss methods of work and make plans for the future. Although it was now two and a half years since the foundation of the Mission, Harry Mark, S.S.I., was "the only member of the staff who was not one of the original band."

1894 was a year of steady work, though very little extension was possible. King tried to explore Collingwood Bay in the schooner, but got aground among the Jabbering Islands, with considerable damage to the ship. She was sent over to Australia for repairs, and got on to the Great Australian Barrier Reef, and was nearly wrecked altogether.

A magic lantern was now used at Taupota and Dogura; and in Wedau village one night the lecturer tried to astonish the natives by telling them that all the London houses they were looking at were built of stone, but they only asked whether that was because there was no wood to be had in the white man's country. In Wamira, at Christmas time, they were shown a slide of a man with eyes that rolled very funnily. During the week that followed there was a good deal of rumbling thunder, and the people said, quite seriously, that it must have been sent by the spirit with the rolling eyes! At a lantern service on Good Friday they shed tears, and said their hearts burned at the thought of all our Lord had suffered, and they wanted to go and take revenge for Him on His enemies!

In April, the missionaries got together such of the younger natives as had seemed most willing to attend to their teaching. Their names were written in a book, and classes were begun with a view to Baptism.

In October, the first gold prospectors came to the district, and went inland behind Boianai; but one of them was killed by natives on the second day, and the other three hurried back to Dogura, having had no food for forty-eight hours. The *Merrie England* came up, and half a dozen natives were caught and sent to Samarai. Other parties followed in February and March of 1895, going to the head of Goodenough Bay, while others went in from Wedau. They had much sickness, and found but little gold, and most of them soon went north to the Mamba River.

At the end of 1894, Mr. Tomlinson having gone to a Wesleyan Mission station in the islands in search of skilled treatment for a badly-poisoned hand, and Mrs. Tomlinson having gone with him, it so happened that Mr. King and Harry Mark, S.S.I., were for some little time the only missionaries remaining at their posts in the Anglican Mission district.

Once again, the darkest hour was precursor of another dawn, and within the next few months a young priest from Sydney, with his sister, and four more South Sea Islanders, joined the staff.

It now became possible to open a station at Boianai, and to put S.S.I, teachers to live in Wamira.

The catechumens' class went on steadily, the numbers rising to nearly forty. Mr. King wrote of this class as follows: "Not only was the attendance regular, but when by any chance one missed he was careful to come up the hill as soon as possible and ask for the lesson to be given again. Of course we could not expect perfect conduct from such learners. We know how often baptized Christians fail. But when any of the catechumens were found out in conduct unworthy of their profession we not only exhorted them, but also on occasion stopped their attendance at the classes until we were satisfied of their repentance. The catechumens were looked upon in their villages as professors in their new religion, and were often subjected to taunts, and frequently to petty persecution, generally on account of their refusal to submit to native customs of which they now saw the wrong."

About this time the new Organizing Secretary of A.B.M., who had worked for twenty years and more in Melanesia, came to New Guinea, and his experience and advice were made the most of.

When the natives who had attacked the miners behind Boianai came back comparatively civilized after their year's imprisonment at Samarai, Mr. Tomlinson went inland with them to their villages, and his visit "helped materially to extend the reign of peace." Soon afterwards, a party of these men paid a friendly visit to Dogura, bringing a pig as a return compliment for what the missionaries had done for them.

In January, 1896, the Tomlinsons went to England on furlough; but the staff was reinforced by a layman and a schoolmistress from Sydney.

The first Baptisms took place this year, and the present writer is unwilling to spoil Mr. King's simple account of this historic happening, which the preacher at a missionary service in S. Paul's Cathedral a few months afterwards read aloud and described as "sounding like a chapter out of the Acts of the Apostles."

"The day approached when we should gather in our first fruits. For a long time past the catechumens' classes had been steadily increasing. We were able to explain our standard of rules more fully to them as time went on, and expulsion from the classes became more and more a severe punishment. But again and again, as we neared the longed-for goal, we were disappointed, and the natives who had raised our expectations by their attention to our lessons, lapsed from the narrow way, and dispelled our bright hopes. At last we found that there were only two young men whom we could venture at first to admit to the Sacrament of Baptism. We spent much time and care over the preparation of these two. The Baptism service was translated, revised and corrected, typewritten, and taught; the Catechism was made the basis of

instruction, though it had not yet been translated, nor if so could it have been used without adaptation. They were taught the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and had long before learnt the Ten Commandments; and the temptations which they were daily withstanding, and others were falling under, were a vivid illustration of the teaching they received concerning the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"The training culminated towards the end of Lent, 1896, and we decided to have the Baptism on Easter Day on the beach near the village. So we cut down the grass on each bank of a running stream; one could see the water bubbling out of the ground, and its whole length was not thirty yards down to the sea. It ran strongly, but was not too wide to be stepped over. On the Sunday afternoon the village church bell rang, and all the inhabitants came along the shore, and seated themselves on the right bank of the stream. The body of Christians, three missionaries from Dogura, five South Sea Islanders, and seven casual visitors (miners) were on the left bank, and the catechumens were on the right bank in front of the heathen. The address explained to all the meaning of the service, and when the time came, the two candidates, each dressed in white singlet and calico, remained standing in front of their fellows, and answered distinctly the questions put to them. Then the Baptism came. I took Aigeri by the hand, led him into the water, and as he stood there I poured water on his forehead, and baptized him Samuela, and having been signed with the sign of the Cross, he stepped up into the assembly of the Christians, and then we did the same for Agadabi, and Pilipo was added to the Church."

Other Baptisms took place on the following Whitsun Day, in the chapel at Dogura, when Samuela's wife and child, and another young man, were brought into the fold. The names given to the mother and her child were Rebeka and William, and the young man was called Selwin.

Mr. King, a year or so afterwards, wrote that "some of the old people in the village rather object to our giving folk these new-fangled names, but that very fact shows that they consider it sets them apart from the heathen."

More missionaries arrived in September, 1896--a priest, a layman, a trained nurse, and a South Sea Islander--and Mr. King was more free to attend to translation work.

A custom had grown up that teachers from out-stations, with their pupils from the scattered villages along the coast, should come to Dogura, to spend a week or so, three times each year. Christmas, Easter, and the August anniversary were the times generally chosen for these gatherings. There would be school for all the children, classes for the native teachers, consultations of the staff, special services and singing lessons so that everybody might learn the new tunes, and also a day of sports and entertainments.

One of the new-comers was a conjurer, and "the boy in whose mop of hair he found a hen's egg said the place was so painful that he was sure there must be some more, and he would like Mr. Clark to get them out for him to take to his mother." The village native constable, a Government official, said that if the missionaries kept getting shillings out of them like that the diggers would be smashing their heads open to get at the store inside. But when it came to pounding up Mr. Tomlinson's watch with a tomahawk and swallowing the pieces, and then bringing it out of the top of Mr. Tomlinson's own head, the audience decided that it was altogether too uncanny, and rushed for the door.

After these wonders the ghastly glimmery ghost that was brought on in blue flickering light as a grand finale, proved a mere anticlimax, and nobody was frightened and nobody ran away. There are limits, it seems, even to a Papuan's power of letting himself be startled.

Missionaries of the right sort are the merriest men and women in all the wide world; and these early New Guinea missionaries, at the end of one-and-twenty years--during which a few others like themselves, as well as many lesser men and women, have died or fainted at their posts, or have simply come and gone away again--these pioneer missionaries are still proving themselves of precisely "the right sort," but they needed all the fun they could find in those early days. The work was going on, and they themselves were

ever growing more fit for the work, but reinforcements were so very slow in coming.

During five years after Maclaren's death, two priests had come to New Guinea from Australia. One of them started for the mission within twenty-four hours of his Ordination, and left again within a year, having been ill and unable to do much work all the time he was in the country. The other remained eight months. Of three laymen who joined, one stayed ten, and another seventeen months; and the third died within three years. Three ladies came: one served nearly eleven, another seven and a half, and the third over five years. Seven South Sea Islanders joined, of whom four died in New Guinea, and one (Bob Tasso) is still on the active list, after seventeen years unbroken service. The layman who joined at the beginning with the Tomlinsons left the mission at the end of three years.

Except for the continuous persevering work of "King and the Tomlinsons," and not forgetting the three ladies, and with another tribute to the faithfulness of the coloured S.S.I, teachers, it cannot be claimed that very much had been done in these five years to justify the confident words of Sir William MacGregor which precede this chapter.

All honour to those who came, honour and reverence most of all to those who stayed and worked and waited and began to reap, in days when the New Guinea Mission was not yet popular, and when the Church in Australia, bishops and priests and lay people alike, was, at the worst, coldly critical of what King and his fellow-workers were doing, and, at the best, with but few exceptions, merely indifferent.

It is, perhaps, only fair to remember that 1893 and 1894 were years of commercial depression in Australia, and that the Australian Board of Missions, in common with other religious and charitable societies, felt the pinch of the lean years. When he is compelled to economize, the Australian, like many other men, sometimes chooses his economies with considerable care.

But once again, as at the beginning, the Church found herself forced into some sort of tardy possession of the unoccupied ground, and when the Executive Council of A.B.M. met, early in June, 1897, they had to consider another letter from Sir William MacGregor, in which he "pressed for definite information as to the extension of the mission work; or failing that, that the Church of England should face the question and declare their inability to extend and their willingness to cede a portion of the territory allotted to them, and allow him to invite some other body to take up the work."
