

# Northern Messenger

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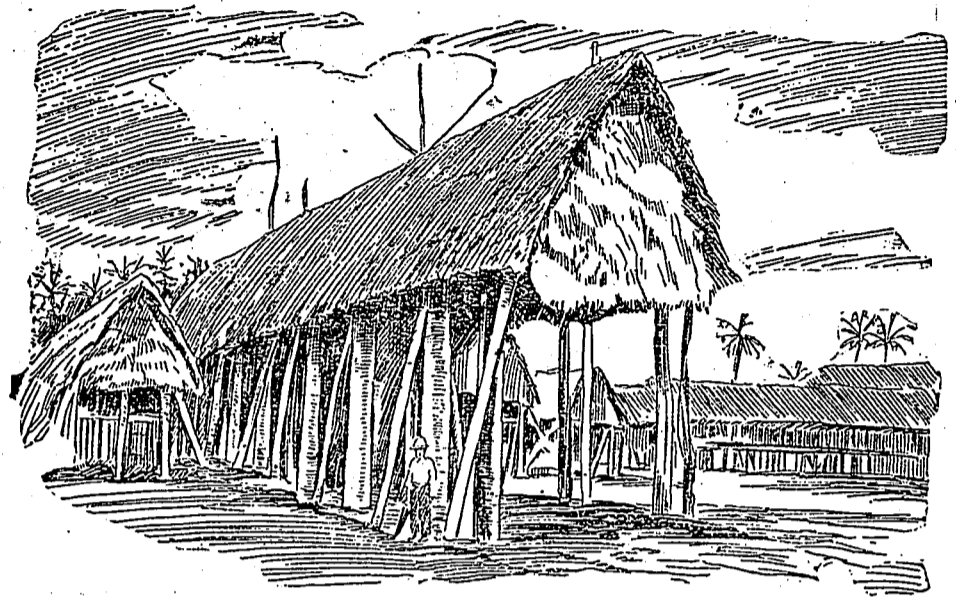
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## A Visit to New Guinea.

(By Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, in 'L. M. S. Chronicle.')

The Kemp-Welch River, near to the mouth of which Kálo is situated, is a fine stream, which has a long course among the hills, and apparently has its source not far from Mount Douglas. Kálo is not actually on the river, but on a creek on the west side of it. We found the river coming down in strong current, and apparently in flood, as the result of recent rains, but our 'John Williams' crew pulled the ship's boat across the bar and up stream without much difficulty. We soon turned out of the current into the sluggish waters of the creek, and thought of malarial fever and other evil things as the boat was poled up its narrow and almost stagnant waters, amidst a dense undergrowth of vegetation, to the furthest point to which she could be got, and where we landed on the slime of a bank of clay. A considerable clearing was being made at the point where we got ashore, and we had no difficulty in making our way along the bank to the spot which has given Kálo an unenviable notoriety in the history of the New Guinea mission. As we stood listening to Mr. Pearce's description of the locality and the scene, and trying to imagine it, a number of native women came across, laden with food which they had been to their gardens to fetch, and we learned that the village was almost deserted at present on account of the preparations for the great annual heathen feast. The village is a large one, having 190 houses and a population of more than a thousand. The houses were certainly among the largest and finest we saw in New Guinea. They were not like the huge communal places we saw on Kiwai Island, each of which was the home of a whole village, but were what might be described as good family houses, and furnishing accommodation for a large family. They were raised above the ground, on very substantial posts, to a most unusual height. The platforms of many were fully fifteen feet

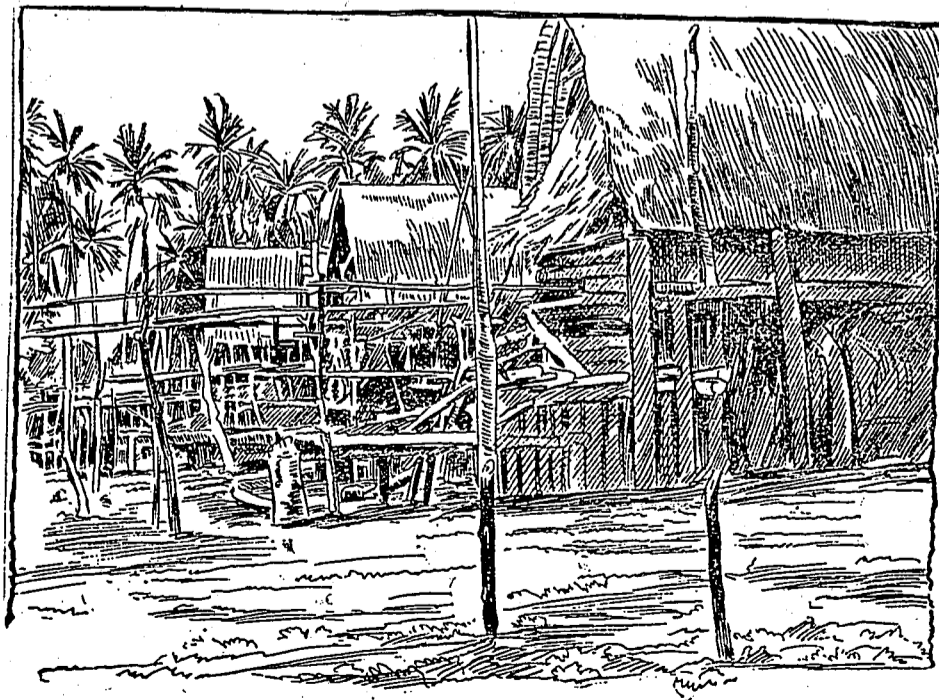


CHIEF'S HOUSE AT KALO.

from the ground, and the house rose fifteen or twenty feet above that. As the space between the posts was quite open, this gave them a very peculiar appearance. Some were very long and broad, as well as high. One which we had the curiosity to pace was fully 90 feet long. There is a resident native teacher and a church. The teacher seemed a capable young fellow, but the condition of the church building bore out his statement that the people of Kálo were not nearly so responsive to Christian teaching as those in many other places. The indications of preparation for the approaching feast were unmistakable in the enormous piles of native food heaped up or hung up on posts in front of the houses of the sorcerer and the chief. The native idea of a feast is evidently 'plenty to eat, and eat until it is finished.' The neighboring villages come to share in the festivity, and then return the compliment by following the good example. So many were away at their plantations that even the crowd of children which usually followed us merrily was strangely absent. Under such conditions it did not

seem advisable to stay very long, so, after spending half an hour with the native teacher at his house, we moved on to a small village named Kamali, where we were to stay at the teacher's house for the night. There is no twilight in New Guinea, so that travelling has to be finished by sunset—i.e., about six p.m. Late as it was, it was intensely hot, and though we were walking parallel with the coast, we were completely shut off from the sea-breeze by the native gardens and the dense fringe of high trees beyond them. Moreover, as we went along the native path through long grass or among the trees, we stirred up all the mosquitoes in the district, and soon were tormented past endurance by their fierce and ceaseless attack. Notwithstanding this, we thoroughly enjoyed the walk on account of its novelty. The vegetation in some parts was rank in its luxuriance, in other parts one might have imagined oneself looking upon some fair scene in a park in England or Scotland. The flowers on the trees and climbing plants were many-hued and lovely, and numberless cockatoos, parrots, paroquets, bee-eaters and other birds of brilliant plumage flitted about.

The teacher at Kamali was a Rarotongan named Lutera. His house is fortunately about half a mile from the native village, and is surrounded by a good garden. He is a man of taste, and has planted in the garden round his house a number of lovely crotons, whose richly-colored and variegated foliage form a most striking and effective ornament of the place. Nearly all the houses are on one plan—an oblong single-storied building, sometimes entirely surrounded with a verandah, at other times having a verandah at the back and front. Two-thirds of the interior is given up to one large room, the other third is divided into two rooms, each of which opens into the large one. The large room is the place of reception, and is often used for a day-school. The greater part of the room is entirely destitute of furniture. At the end nearest the smaller rooms there are, probably, a table and a couple of home-made sofas or settees, over which are thrown the pride of the house, cotton patchwork quilts of startling designs in turkey red and white. The two smaller



HOUSES AT KALO.