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New Guinea a Quarter of a Century Ago and Now.

(By Rev. W. G. Lawes, D.D., of Vatorata, New Guinea.)

'Who hath despised the day of small things?'

In December, 1874, the barque, 'John Williams' and little steamer 'Ellengowan' arrived at Port Moresby, then a newly-discovered harbor. Mr. and Mrs. Lawes were on board as the first resident English missionaries for New Guinea. Four South Sea Island teachers went off with some natives in a canoe to welcome the new arrivals. They had been a year at Port Moresby and knew a little of the native language. One of them,

Ruatoka, still lives at Port Moresby; the others have long since passed away. Natives were very numerous, children swarmed, and the village was lively and noisy. A piece of land was purchased on which a small weather-board house brought from Sydney was soon erected. The work started with a good stock of tools, and ended with only two or three. Every native was a thief, and many of them accomplished and clever. The men were all armed, and before the house was finished the work was temporarily stopped by a crowd of angry men with stones, clubs and spears. The service held on the first Sunday was attended by a few people, who sat round the verandah of a native house, from which one of the South Sea Islanders

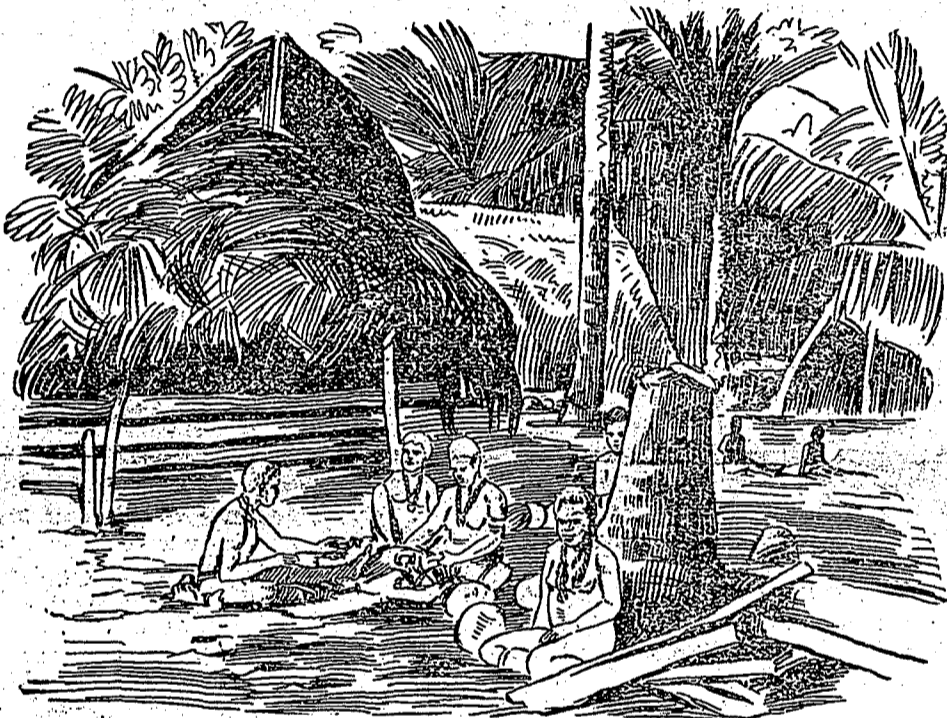
preached. All the men were busy chipping shells for armlets, and the women shaping clay pots. Some of them talked, while all were amused at the clothes and appearance of their white visitors.

'Darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people.'

Suspicion and distrust was written on every face. No man left his house without the accompaniment of spear or club. The people only ventured from their village home in armed parties. Superstition reigned, and sorcerers tyrannized the people. A drought caused scarcity of food and nine inoffensive men and women in a small village were killed, because they were said to have prevented rain. Extortion and intimidation made everybody afraid of the 'sacred man' who could cause famine, sickness and death. The distinction every able-bodied man coveted was to be known as a blood-shedder. Tattooed chests, feather head-dresses, and shell ornaments indicated that those so adorned had killed, or helped to kill, someone. A woman and her three little children surprised and killed gave many men the desired honor. Had not their spears tasted blood?

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.'

After twenty-five years, although much remains of heathenism, a great and marvellous change is manifest. From East Cape to the Fly River in the west, covering a distance of 700 miles, are many centres from which light is being diffused. Ninety churches are dotted like lighthouses along the coast. The appearance of the people has changed. The wild suspicious look has gone. In every village are some whose short hair and decent clothes contrast with the frizzy mops and the strips of heathen times. The



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.



AND NOW—STUDENTS' HOUSES, VATORATA.