

IN KAISER WILHELM'S LAND

The Queer Countries and Peoples of Germany's Colonial Island Empire of the Pacific.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Germany is rapidly spotting this part of the Pacific with her possessions. She is giving new names to her different properties, so that one will soon need a Tautoune dictionary to know where he is. Just north of Torres strait on the other side of British New Guinea is Kaiser Wilhelm's Land. This is the German section of New Guinea, the largest island of the world. The great collection of islands to the eastward which were once known as the New Britain Archipelago, and instead of New Britain and New Ireland, we have Neu Pommern and Neu Mecklenburg. The Germans now own the Admiralty islands. They have renamed the Duke of York islands, Neu Laubenburg. They have long owned the Marshall Islands, and in 1899 they bought the Carolines, the Pelews and the Ladronez de Spain for something like \$4,000,000. They would have included Guam in the bargain had we not taken possession of it in our settlement of the Spanish-American war, and they are still looking about for everything loose. All the islands I have mentioned are now governed in connection with Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, and together they form what may be called Germany's colonial island empire of the Pacific.

KAISER WILHELM'S LAND.

Let me first give some new information about Kaiser Wilhelm's Land. The country is almost unknown and a vast part of it is yet unexplored. The Germans have their scientific parties and surveying expeditions scattered here and there over it, but the interior with long remain untrodden by white men. The country is better known as German New Guinea. It forms the northeast quarter of that island, having been under the rule of the Germans for the past seventeen years. Up until 1888 its government was in the hands of the German New Guinea company, but the administration was taken over by the imperial government two years ago and all appointments now come from the emperor himself. The material developments are all still in the hands of the New Guinea company, which controls the trade not only of the mainland, but of the islands, and which has steam and sailing vessels moving from port to port.

Kaiser Wilhelm's Land proper is about one-third as large as the whole German empire and its total population is just fifty-three souls, man population is just fifty-three souls, natives and five other Europeans, so you can see that the land is by no means overcrowded. The seats of government at present are the town of Stephansort on Astrolabe bay, and Herberichscho on the island of Neu Pommern.

RESOURCES OF COLONY.

Not far back of Astrolabe bay are the Bismarck mountains, which are now being prospected for gold, and that so successfully that mines have recently been opened, although I am unable to say anything as to the output. Coconut groves to the extent of 25,000 trees have been set out, and there are also plantations of coffee, cotton, tobacco and rubber.

One of the best parts of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land is at the southeast, off Haon gulf. Here there is a good harbor, and the country is said to be well populated. The land is wooded along the coast, but farther back is consists of rolling plains, which are dotted with trees and are as green as an English park. The New Guinea company has a station here, and the natives raise horses and cattle.

Some of the land is irrigated by the natives, who use tubes of bamboo to carry water from one level to another and to distribute it over the little fields. They are natural farmers and grow yams, sweet potatoes and bananas, and of late Indian corn. A great deal of the work is done by the women, although both women and men work on the plantations of the New Guinea company.

The best products so far have been cotton and tobacco. There are several cotton plantations about Astrolabe bay, one of which, near Konstantinshafen, recently produced 13,000 pounds of cot-

German New Guinea and Its Resources—How a Syndicate Sets Out Coconut Groves and Cotton Plantations—Queer Tribes and How They Live—The German Possessions in the Solomon Islands, Where the Natives Are Cannibals, and in the Bismarck Archipelago, Where the Girls Are Kept in Bamboo Cages Until They Are Married—Some Queer Industries of the South Seas—Shark Fins Which Bring \$300 a Ton—Fishing for Beche De Mer or the Cucumbers of the Sea—The Prince of Wales Islands—Missions and Missionary Work.



A NATIVE OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS. Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.

ton from twenty-five acres, or an average of 520 pounds per acre. The wages paid on the plantations range from \$1 to \$2.50 per month. The best workmen, come from the islands of the Bismarck Archipelago, and the New Guinea company is using some imported labor from there. There are plantations also in the archipelago itself, the largest being in Neu Pommern, where one man has 500 acres in coffee and cotton, and where the Hamburg Planting company is said to be growing coffee successfully.

QUEER SUBJECTS OF THE KAISER

The German emperor has some rare birds in his colonial aviary of the Pacific. The natives of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land are, if anything, wilder and more savage than those of British New Guinea. There are thousands of them who go naked save for a breech cloth of bark for the men and a short petticoat of woven grass for the women. Along the extreme northern coast there are some tribes which go entirely naked, with the exception of a shell necklace and a few bird of paradise feathers which they stick in their hair. Some tribes paint themselves in stripes of white, red, yellow and black, and some scar themselves with flints and also by burning scars, as the Japanese burn themselves with the moxa.

I have photographs of native houses recently taken in Kaiser Wilhelm's Land. Many families live together and many of the houses are of enormous size. They are frequently built upon piles, a platform of poles being first constructed, a skeleton framework built upon this and mats of woven leaf or grass fastened to it. The mats are so arranged that they can be raised or lowered so as to keep out the mosquitoes and flies, which are exceedingly bad. In other parts there are houses built in the trees, in which the people retreat in times of danger.

WAR AND CANNIBALISM.

The different tribes are frequently at war with one another, and the missionaries tell me that they have a system of vendetta which goes on between tribes and villages often lasting for years. Cannibalism exists in some localities, though not to a great extent. The British have observed it among the people along the Gulf of Papua, and it is also found in northern New Guinea. The ordinary food of the natives is

and marriage between the classes is strictly prohibited. If a woman marries outside of her class the punishment is death, and if a man, he suffers a heavy fine. The women and men go naked. Cannibalism is common, and both human beings and pork are cooked for food, all other kinds of animals, so it is said, being eaten in a raw state. The people live in small huts, which are of a bee hive shape, and surrounded by bamboo fences. The young unmarried men have club houses where they live together, and the girls, as I have said, are confined to the cages.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS COLONY.

A little to the east of the Bismarck Archipelago are the Solomon Islands, which until 1899 belonged almost entirely to Germany. The uppermost part of the chain, including some of the larger islands, are still German, and they are now under the officials of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land. The principal island in this group is Bougainville, which is bigger than Porto Rico. It is a mountainous country, having two volcanoes, which are constantly active, and one mountain of an altitude of more than two miles above the sea. The natives here are of the same race as those of New Guinea, and they are quite as savage. In most cases the men go naked, and the women do not wear clothing until they are married, and after marriage they have but little. Still both sexes are fond of ornament. Men and women pierce their ears, the holes in the lobes being gradually stretched until they are as big around as a napkin ring. Among some tribes the nose is pierced and a long pin of bone or shell worn through it. Necklaces of shark and crocodile and bracelets of chains of beads and shell are frequently worn. There is some tattooing, and the scars made by burning the moxa are considered fine ornaments. There are club houses here as in New Guinea, but the people generally live in huts of different sizes, those of the chiefs being large.

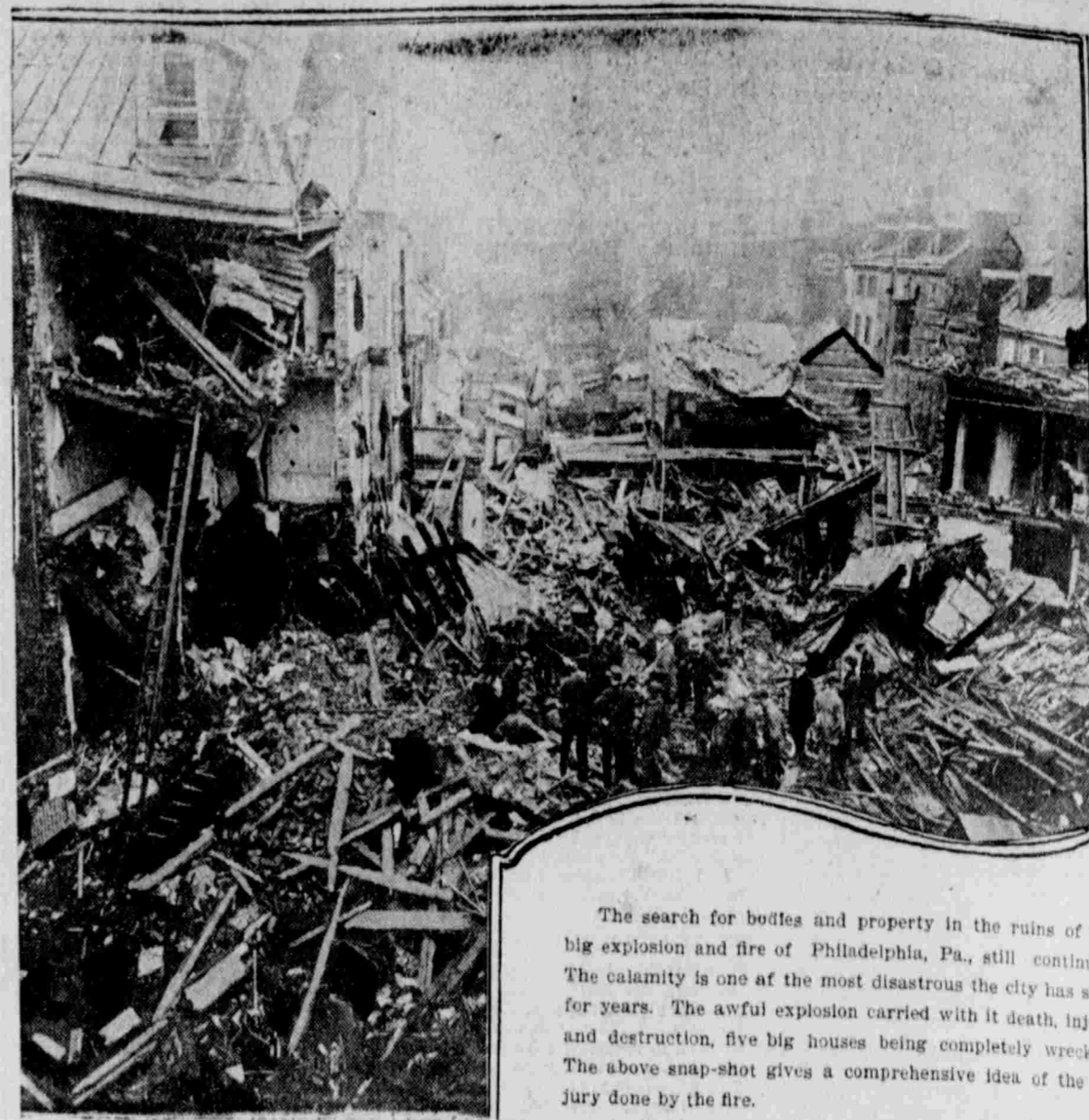
These people are also cannibals, and head hunting is the profession and pleasure of a part of the young men. Polygamy is practiced, and some of the chiefs have as many as a hundred wives. They are to a certain extent farmers, and raise bananas, yams and taro. They are good fishermen, and gather shells and pearls for sale.

THE BECHE DE MER FISHERIES.

Along the coast of these islands, and especially about New Guinea and in Torres strait one of the chief businesses is gathering and shipping beche de mer, the gigantic sea worms or slugs which are so much prized by the Chinese, ranking with birds' nest soup and shark's fins as one of the delicacies of every celestial court. A large part of the shipments of beche de mer are from Thursday Island. There are companies here which are engaged in the business, employing hundreds of men. The strait one of the chief businesses is gathering and shipping beche de mer, the gigantic sea worms or slugs which are so much prized by the Chinese, ranking with birds' nest soup and shark's fins as one of the delicacies of every celestial court. A large part of the shipments of beche de mer are from Thursday Island. There are companies here which are engaged in the business, employing hundreds of men. The men divers after reefs as high as \$5 a month, but on the average about \$2.50. The wages are often paid in tobacco and clothing instead of money.

THE CUCUMBERS OF THE SEA.

The beche de mer are called the cucumbers of the sea because they look so much like cucumbers as they lie in the water. They range in length from one foot to four feet and from the thickness of your wrist to that of your calf. They are found upon the coral reefs and are picked off at low tide or obtained by diving down to a depth of from twelve to eighteen feet. The fishermen collect them in sacks and carry them to curing stations, where they are boiled, cleaned and laid in the sun to dry. After that they are carried to the smokehouse and smoked for twenty-four hours. They have now shrunk to the length of six inches and look like well-cooked Frankfurter sausages. They are next bagged up and shipped to China. The best of them will sell here for \$50 a ton, and the exports



The search for bodies and property in the ruins of the big explosion and fire of Philadelphia, Pa., still continues. The calamity is one of the most disastrous the city has seen for years. The awful explosion carried with it death, injury and destruction, five big houses being completely wrecked. The above snap-shot gives a comprehensive idea of the injury done by the fire.

THE SULTAN OF THE SULUS.

Through the Queensland government I have been able to get photographs of these curious sea worms and also some information as to their habits from the government commissioner of fisheries, W. Saville Kent, who has recently made a special study of them. He says they live on the foraminifera or microscopic shells which are found in great quantities in the waters of the coral reefs. Each slug has hundreds of little feelers about its mouth with which it brushes the rocks and draws the food from them into its throat. It might be better to say that each sea worm has hundreds of trunks corresponding to those of an elephant, save that they are of infinitesimal size, and that with each of them it picks up its food and puts it in its mouth.

There are different varieties of beche de mer, the red and black bringing the highest price. There are some kinds which are not worth the gathering, and of the one known as the cotton fish because it ejects a mass of white cottony stuff upon anything that seizes it, the stuff adhering with extreme tenacity to all it touches. The matter ejected is so strong that the making of cement from it is talked of. It has also been used for the purpose of glue, and it is a question whether it might not be used for similar purposes.

SHARK FINS AT \$300 A TON.

Another Chinese delicacy which is found in and about Torres strait is shark's fins. The waters of the Barrier reef and about New Guinea are filled with sharks, and they can be caught by the hundreds. Their fins are eagerly bought by the Chinese, who will pay as much as \$300 a ton for them. A recent shipment here sold at \$300 a ton, and in the reports to the Australian government I see it is suggested that the industry be encouraged. The fins are dried in the sun and then bagged up for shipment. In cooking them after the Chinese fashion they are first boiled with wood ashes in seawater and then scraped and washed until perfectly clean. After this there is another boiling in spring water to take out the ash taste, and they are then steamed in a soup and served with crab meat and a little ham.

THE PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND.

I am surprised at the number of islands scattered over this part of the globe. The South Pacific ocean is peppered with them, and I shall be traveling in and out among islands for weeks on my way to Java. From the steamer - it lies in the Thursday Island harbor a half dozen island groups are in sight. To the right is Horn island, where the Australians are now mining for gold. Close by and below it the Prince of Wales island, which gives the name to the Torres Strait group. A little further over is Basky Island, and to the north are Murray Island, Burnley Island and others. Each of these islands has its own curious people, who in many cases are not unlike the aborigines of Australia, save that they seem to be more civilized. Some have huts of straw thatch, which look for all the world like hay stacks hooked out of houses. Murray Island has a court house, where the English judges hold forth which the natives consider a wonderful structure. It is a mud building of one story roofed with straw thatch.

THE MISSIONS OF THE SOUTH SEAS.

The missionaries are at work in all the islands and also in British and German New Guinea. In Dutch New Guinea there are no stations that I know of, but in Kaiser Wilhelm's Land three Protestant and two Catholic missionary societies are at work.

In British New Guinea the work has gone on for twenty years, and there are now a large number of native evangelists. Dr. Danney, one of the missionaries, who has spent ten years there, tells me the people are being slowly but surely civilized, and that a number of them are Christians. One missionary society has 15,000 native Christians and 1,500 church members. It has more than 100 native preachers, and in its Sunday schools there are 900 scholars, while in the common schools the scholars number 2,500 boys and 1,000 girls.

On one of the islands off southern New Guinea the Roman Catholics are doing a great deal of work. They have eighteen priests and a number of lay brothers; they have twenty-three chapels and a number of schools. In which there are a thousand scholars. So far the missions are entirely English and French, the Americans not having entered the field.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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headgear he had a skull cap, on the front of which was set an enormous diamond. He is a little man, with a more striking personality than is given him by his costume. When standing he hardly comes above the elbow of the average American." Captain Smiley has now been transferred to Madison barracks and was seen yesterday at the Grand hotel, where he was visiting General Bates.—New York Tribune.

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