

Kaiser Wilhelm's Land: Queer Countries and Peoples of Germany's Island Empire of the Pacific.



NATIVE OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

THURSDAY ISLAND, Torres Strait. South Pacific Ocean, April 30.—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 Teutonic 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 was once known as the New Britain Archipelago is now the Bismarck 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 Landau. They have long owned the Marshall Islands, and in 1899 they bought the Carolines, the Peleus and the Ladrone Islands 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 altogether 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 will long remain untrodden by white men. The country is better known as German New Guinea. It forms the northeastern quarter of that island, having been under the rule of the Germans for the past 17 years. Until 1899 its government was in the hands of the German New Guinea Company, but the administration was taken over by the Imperial government about 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 German population is just 33 souls. It has, in addition, about 110,000 natives and five other Europeans, so you can see that the land is by no means overcrowded. The seat of government at present are the town of Stephentown, on Astrolabe Bay, and Herbersholze, on the island of Neu Pommern.

Resources of the 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, though I am unable to say anything as to the extent. Consistent graves to the extent of 30,000 acres 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 Huon Gulf. Here there is a good harbor, and the country is said to be well populated.

lated. The land is wooded along the coast, but further back it 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 the water from one level to another, and to distribute it over their 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 cotton from 25 acres, or an average of 520 pounds per acre. The yams 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 Plantation 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, much 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 of enormous size. The natives are very fond of native houses, and which has steam and sailing vessels moving from port to port.

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, and which often lasts 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 about the same as that of the Samoan Islands, their chief diet being yams, taro and bananas. In German New Guinea, strange enough, the natives are natural beer drinkers. They make a liquor by chewing the root of the kava plant, and fermenting the spittle-soaked mixture. After awhile it becomes intoxicating, and is then used in ceremonial feasts. Both natives and Europeans are fond of it, but they do not drink intoxicating liquors. In British New Guinea it is against the law to sell intoxicating liquors to the natives, and in German New Guinea it is also against the law.



GERMAN SUBJECTS FROM THE SOUTH SEAS.

natives, and any one who does so is subject to a fine of \$100 or more.

The islands of Bismarck archipelago have some stranger tribes than those of New Guinea itself. On one island, according to my best authorities, the girls are kept in cages from the age of 6 or 8 years until they are married. The cages, made of wicker work, are set up inside large houses made for the purpose. The girls are only taken out once a day to be washed, but otherwise they are not permitted to get outside the cages. Their food is handed through the bars, and they move about at times like caged lions.

These cages are under the charge of the old women of the tribe, who see that the girls do not flirt with the passers-by or the peepers-in. The young men have the right to look at the cages now and then, and probably after making proper presents to the watch guards and the parents of the girl, they can woo the maiden through the meshes of bamboo.

I am told the girls do not suffer in health from their imprisonment, and that, notwithstanding their seclusion, they make very good wives and, later on, are by no means averse to having their daughters caged up as they were. The girls mature very rapidly in this hot climate. The marriageable age is 11 or 12, and at 15 a girl is an old maid.

In Neu Mecklenburg. The island of Neu Pommern is 350 miles long, and Neu Mecklenburg perhaps 200 miles shorter, with a width, on the average, of about 15 miles. Both islands are more or less rolling. Neu Mecklenburg having the Schlenitz mountains, which reach a height of 7000 feet.

In Neu Mecklenburg the people of each village are divided into two classes, 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 eatables. It is said, being eaten in a raw state. The people live in small huts, which are of a beehive shape and surrounded by bamboo fences. The young, unmarried men have clubhouses where they live together, and the girls, as I have said, are confined in cages.

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, is still German, and 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 in some of the islands 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 or bone or shell worn through it.

Necklaces of Shell. 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.

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 sharks' fins as one of the delicacies of every celestial feast.

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. They use boats of five or six tons each, and travel from place to place gathering the sea slugs and preparing them for the market. They are caught by diving, the best divers coming from the various islands, some from the Louisiade group, some from the Solomon and some from New Guinea. Some are men and some are women, the latter being paid as little as \$1.25 a month. The men divers often receive 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.

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 are obtained by diving down to a depth of from 12 to 15 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 24 hours. They have now shrunken to the length of six inches and look like well-cooked Frankfurter sausages. They are next bagged and shipped to China. The best of them will sell here for \$50 a ton, and the exports amount to many thousands of dollars a year.

The Queensland Government Commissioner of Fisheries, W. Saville Kent, who has recently made a special study of the sea worms, says they live on the foraminifera or microscopic shell animals which are found in great quantities in the waters of the coral rocks. 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 these one is 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 there is talk of making cement from it. It has also some of the properties of rubber, and it is a question whether it might not be used for similar purposes.

Shark Fins at \$800 a Ton. Another Chinese delicacy which is found in and about Torres Strait is sharks' 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



SOLOMON ISLAND DIVERS—HAIR BLEACHED BY SUN.



NATIVE HUTS IN KAISER WILHELM'S LAND

bought by the Chinese, who will pay as much as \$800 a ton for them. A recent shipment here sold at \$800 a ton, and in the reports of the Australian Government I see it 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 several waters 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 stewed in a soup and served with crab meat and a little ham.

I am surprised at the number of islands scattered over the part of the South Pacific Ocean is peppered with them, and I shall be traveling in and out among the islands for weeks on my way to Java. From the steamer, as 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. Clubb and below it is the Prince of Wales Island, which gives the name to the Torres Strait group. A little further over is Booby Island, and to the northeast are Murray Island, Darnley Island and others.

Each of these islands has its own curious people, too, in many cases, and are unlike the aborigines of Australia, save that they seem to be more civilized. Some have huts of straw thatched, which look for all the world like haystacks hollowed out for houses. Murray Island has a

court-house, where the English judges hold forth, and which the natives consider a wonderful structure. It is a mud building of one story, roofed with straw thatch.

Missions of the South Sea. 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. Mr. Dauncey, 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 10,000 native Christians and 100 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 2000 boys and 1000 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 also 23 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.

"OLD STITES," OF SCOWTOWN, AND BENNY, THE WAIF.

(Continued from Page 25.)

duller. Benny, who saw it only through a blur of tears, became gradually conscious that he was being observed. Down on the old scow beneath him, in the lee of a heap of nondescript rubbish, lay a yellow dog who regarded him with honest and sympathetic eyes. The dog, when he perceived that he had attracted the child's attention, acknowledged it by an expressive wag of his tail and a slight lift of the right ear.

Then he conveyed to the boy, in his subtle canine fashion, quite as plainly as any words could have done, an invitation to come down and join him. It was as if he had said: "My duties do not permit me to leave these premises; therefore, I cannot come to you. But I will consider it a kindness, if you will favor me with your company down here."

Benny understood. He rose and made his way to the gang plank, and the dog rose, too, stretched himself and came to meet him. The boy laid his hand on the dog's head, and the dog reached up and licked his cheek. Thus the bond of a lasting friendship was sealed between them. When Benny returned from the mill, a little later, he found the two huddled together in the shelter of the rubbish heap.

"Hello, young 'un!" he cried. "What you doin' here?" The dog sprang up, and, advancing, nuzzled his master's hand. Then he went back to the child, looking from one to the other in mute appeal. He was clearly intervening for the little stranger.

"Oh, I see; you've got company, Cub. Well, come in, come in!" He pulled open the door and fumbled about in the half light for the matches

and kindling; soon he had a fire going in the rusty stove.

Stites was not particularly fond of children. In fact, he knew little or nothing about them. His own childhood was so far in the past that he had well-nigh forgotten it. He entertained a vague notion that boys were a bad lot. Perhaps he judged them by the particular lot that had tried to drown Cub in his puppyhood. But the big, innocent eyes that were lifted to his, and the sad, thin face, with the tear stains on the cheeks, touched something within that Stites would have known was his heart, if he had been in the least given to analytical sentiment.

When the tomato can that served as teakettle and teapot in one was on the stove, and the lamp, inclined to smoke and smelling strongly of kerosene, was lighted, he turned to the child, who was shivering in the corner.

"Come up to the fire, young 'un," he remarked; "come up to the fire; set down on that box there and dry off. You're wet as a water rat. Where do you live?"

"Nowhere," replied the child; "not now."

Stites paused in the act of taking the frying-pan from its nail behind the stove. "Nowhere?" he echoed. "Ain't you got no folks?"

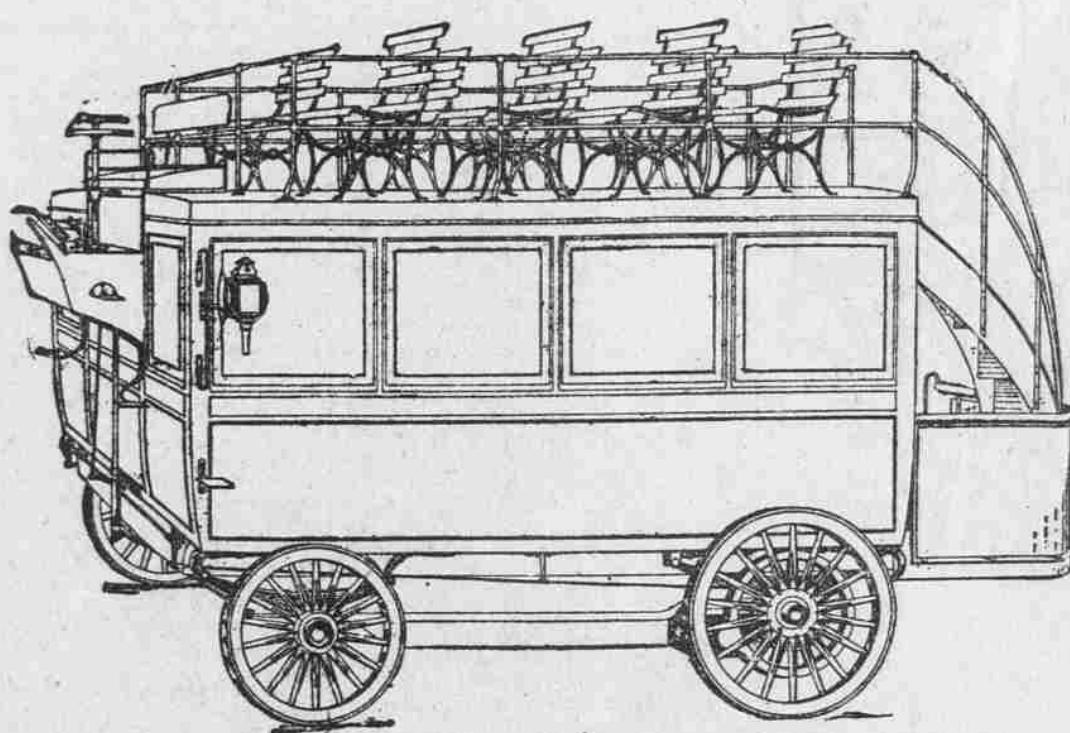
The child's lips quivered, but his brave voice answered steadily. "Only mother, and—and she's dead."

Stites was uneducated, without hope, ambition or desire, meanly clad, and housed in a kennel; but—

"Look here, young 'un; you're settin' too close to the stove. Move back a bit, or you'll burn your jacket. Now, if you'll tend this skillet while I get a pail of water, we'll have supper. Cub, here, is awful hungry. Ain't you, old chap?"

Cub thumped the floor with an assent.

AUTO STAGES ON FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.



MOST FASHIONABLE AVENUE OF COUNTRY'S METROPOLIS TO HAVE UP-TO-DATE OMNIBUSES.

For years New York's most fashionable thoroughfare—Fifth Avenue—has been infested by Elliott-Shepard omnibuses, of an uncompromisingly uncomfortable and inappropriate design, drawn by horses. Now it is to have automotor stages of the latest and most luxurious model, of which this is a sample.

ing tail and laid a friendly paw upon the little, damp knee beside him. And Cub's master saw, though he seemed not to see, how the child leaned to the dumb creature for comfort. "I ain't a golt" to be outcome by no dog," he muttered to himself, as he bent over the side of the scow to dip up his pail full of water.

When supper, served in tin plates upon the stove hearth, for there was not room for a table, was disposed of, the visitor eating delicately but hungrily of the rough fare, Stites casually remarked: "Seem' it's so wet tonight, and Cub there's a-plin' for company, I reckon you'd better stay where you are till mornin'." "Commodations ain't much to brag of, but," he pointed to the doubtful-looking bunk nailed up against the wall, "such as they be you're welcome to 'em."

"Thank you," replied the child, simply. He fell to stroking the yellow head at his knee. "The man said I could sleep in our room tonight, but I'd rather not. Tomorrow they're going to take me to the 'Home.'"

"The 'Home'?" repeated Stites. "What home?"

"I don't know. I guess there is but one. It's where they take boys when their mothers die." The lips trembled again, but the voice went on bravely. "Boys, you know, who have no place to go to and nobody to care."

"Oh," said Stites, slowly. "I see, I see. I've heard of such places." He was silent a long time. The fire crackled in the stove, and the rain dripped from the eaves with a melancholy tinkle.

"And where," he said, softly, at last, "did you live before—she died?"

"At number 63 in Blank's Row," returned the lad. "We lived in the back room, upstairs. Mother sewed for Cash's. We had almost enough money saved up"

a dreaming look crept over the pale, pinched face—"almost enough to take us back to the country. It's beautiful in the country. Mother said we would live in a little house in the woods and have a roachpot growing by the door, and—"

suddenly the dream dissolved. "Now, we'll never go, and they took the money to buy her coffin." His voice broke, and he hid his face against the yellow head at his knee.

There was another long silence. Stites was pondering something in his mind, and although he was hardly conscious of it, his own eyelashes were wet. He got up finally and moved about, putting the crowded room in order and fixing the covers on the bed.

"Young 'un," he said presently, and the boy lifted his head to listen; "you and me and Cub's all in the same boat. We ain't got nobody and nothin' but just ourselves, and I reckon we'd better hang together. This shack ain't much of a place, but there's room for us three, and you can help Cub take care of things, while I'm at work at the mill. Think you'd like to live here?"

"Yes," replied the child, "I would." Then he added timidly, "Thank you."

LISCHEN M. MILLER.

THE PAST. I'm dreaming tonight of you, sweetheart; Of your face, as I saw it last, And the love once said, Now buried and dead.

And memories too sweet to last. The memories have all grown sad, sweetheart; On my brow they've left deep lines of care, While my heart— That was all your own, dear one— Lies buried with you over there.

I'm dreaming of you tonight, sweetheart, And the mist o'er my eyes seems to fade; The moon's gentle light, In the churchyard plays, On a grave that has long been made.

C. LATTON.