IN THE SAVAGE SOUTH SOLOMONS

The Story of a Mission
Digitalisation of this book is a Marist project, which aims at making previously published books on Pacific mission history available to a global audience on open access.

Permissions have been given by the four international religious congregations and by individual copyright holders or other authorities, as appropriate.

The project was undertaken in 2020.

This digital version is available on open access to whoever wishes to read it. It may be stored in academic, religious and open access digital repositories and websites. Copyright is retained by the original copyright holder. The PDF file may not be used for commercial purposes.

**The Marist Family in the Pacific**
Marist Father (sm)
Marist Brothers (fms)
Marist Sisters (sm)
Marist Missionary Sisters (smsm)
Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth (csn – Bougainville)
Daughters of Mary Immaculate (dmi – Solomon Islands)
Petites Filles de Marie (pfm – New Caledonia)
Sisters of Our Lady of Nazareth (soln – Fiji, Tonga, Samoa)
Marist Laity
IN THE SAVAGE

SOUTH SOLOMONS

THE STORY OF A MISSION

BY

RIGHT REV. L. M. RAUCAZ, S. M.

Vicar Apostolic

OF THE SOUTH SOLOMON ISLANDS

MARIST MISSIONS

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

1928
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Chapter I. — Discovery by the Spaniards**  ....  11

**Chapter II. — First mission.**  
Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia  ....  30

**Chapter III. — Second mission.**  
Vicariate Apostolic of the South Solomons  ....  50
  1. Extent of the Vicariate  ....  52
  2. Population  ....  54
  3. Cannibalism  ....  59
  4. Religion  ....  63
  5. Character of the people  ....  66
  6. The country; its fauna and flora  ....  73

**Chapter IV. — First station of the mission.**  
Rua Sura  ....  80

**Chapter V. — Guadalcanal.**  
  1. Ayuavu  ....  102
  2. Tangarare  ....  122
  3. Visale  ....  140
  4. Marau  ....  170
  5. Ruavatu  ....  179

**Chapter VI. — San Cristoval.**  
Wanoni Bay  ....  191

**Chapter VII. — Malaita**  ....  203
  1. Rohinari  ....  217
  2. Langalanga  ....  233

**Chapter VIII. — Conclusion. Summary and prospects**  ....  250
MAPS

1. Marist Missions of Oceania ........................................ 13
2. Catholic Missions of Northern Melanesia ..................... 17
3. Vicariate Apostolic of the South Solomons ................. 53
4. Rua Sura .................................................................. 81
5. Guadalcanal ................................................................ 103
6. San-Cristoval ............................................................. 193
7. Malaita ..................................................................... 205

ILLUSTRATIONS

Typical natives of the Solomon Islands ......................... 15
Meeting in the Town-Hall ............................................... 21
Near Port Cruz. Mouth of the Mataniko River, where the Spaniards were massacred in 1568 ...... 23
Social climber ................................................................ 27
Mateo Kambo ................................................................ 30
Bishop John-Baptist Epalle .......................................... 33
Death of Bishop Epalle .................................................. 35
Site of Bishop Epalle's grave, on St George Island ........ 37
Father John Paget, who, with two other missionaries, was killed and devoured by the San Cristoval natives .................................................. 39
Bishop John George Collomb ...................................... 43
A Solomon warrior ...................................................... 47
Andrea Tsavuselo ......................................................... 50
A warrior ..................................................................... 55
A cannibal who became a Christian .............................. 61
Bishop Julian Vidal, who brought missionaries and catechists from Fiji to the South Solomons .......... 63
Belasio Kose, a Savo chief ........................................... 67
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Visale brothers, Iakobo and Amedeo</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls coming back from the plantation</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a visit to friends</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A river in the Guadalcanal bush</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakobo, a lazy boy</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument to the murdered Austrians at Tetere, Guadalcanal</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a native hut</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rua Sura in 1900</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A corner of Rua Sura station</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The « Joan-of-Arc » at anchor off Papari, Rua Sura</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interior of the Rua Sura Chapel</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop John B. Bertreux</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rua Sura in 1910</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collars made with teeth of opossums and fishes</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and with pearls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native, armed, with fish-bone necklace, mother-of-pearl ornaments</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and lime designs on face and breast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poitakotsa, bush village in Guadalcanal</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalcanal : A natural grotto, formerly head-hunters headquarters</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenery of the south Seas</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Avuavu, after Mass</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Ferdinand Guilloux, victim of the ocean</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The « Pioneer », Tangarare station sail-boat</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangarare Sisters with three of their pupils</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« Sphargis Coriacca », a sea turtle</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Chapel in the district of Visale</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mataniko village, near Port Cruz, Guadalcanal</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School girls in school uniform</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Residence of Visale</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leosa Bay : Visale station, with Savo in the dis-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tance. View taken from the Bishop’s house      143
Solomon pirogue                         145
Leosa Bay (Visale). Bishop’s house in centre and
native village on the right               147
Port Cruz. Visale Point in the distance   149
Visale Station, on Leosa Bay, with Mount Puraka
in the background                        151
Musicians and others, in the Guadalcanal bush  153
Visale : Girls school                    155
The Visale Sisters and girls on an excursion  157
The hills behind Visale station          159
The stone Church of Visale, destroyed by an earth-
quake in 1926                             161
A Sister of the Third-Order of Mary and her char-
ges                                    163
The first bridge of reinforced concrete in the Sol-
omon Islands, built at Visale by Brother Ro-
berto                                     164
Boats in Leosa Bay, for the blessing of the new
Visale Church. The « Joan-of-Arc » furthest out.  165
Grave of Father Joseph Pellion, founder of the
Visale station                             169
In the Guadalcanal bush : one more river to cross  171
Father Henry Bertheux                     173
Cannibal Curios in Marau                  175
Brother John Claud, with his boys, in Marau   177
Catholic village, Ruavatu                 179
A Guadalcanal divinity (district of Ruavatu)    183
After the blessing of a new Chapel, in Guadalcanal  185
Guest house for the Missionary, at Mataniko, Gua-
dalcanal                                187
Felisita                                  189
A village school                        195
Solomon halfcastes ........................................ 196
The girls school at Wanoni Bay .......................... 199
School lasses ............................................... 201
A pirogue race in the Solomons ....................... 207
A bridge in Malaita ....................................... 211
A shark, with remora or clinging-fish .................. 213
Missionary’s temporary quarters, when starting a
    station .................................................. 221
Mrs Losioa, a catechumen of Rohinari ................. 225
A pirogue among the mangroves ....................... 227
The two Fathers Coicaud ................................. 229
Main Street, in a Solomon village ..................... 231
A fortified island, in the Langalanga lagoon ........ 235
Langalanga, Malaita .................................. 239
Catholic women, in Langalanga, Malaita ............... 243
Malaita boys ............................................. 245
The « Hambia », mission schooner...................... 247
Resina (Queenie) .......................................... 250
Bishop Raucaz and his missionaries .................... 253
School girls admiring their own photograph ........... 255
Explaining our holy Faith ............................... 257
Bishop L. Raucaz, Vicar Apostolic of the South
    Solomons ........................................... 262
Smile! please, this is the end .......................... 264
CHAPTER I

Discovered by the Spaniards

To tell the story of the origin of the faith in the Solomon Islands, we must go back three centuries and a half. In the immense space of the Southern hemisphere, which the Pacific Ocean fills, among its countless number of islands of every size and shape, the Solomon group holds a fair position. These islands were not the first to be discovered, for New Guinea holds this privilege, but at least they were the first visited and explored by Europeans.

They were the first to be trodden by the feet of the bearers of good tidings, the first to hear the praises of the Creator sung upon their shores and to receive the visit of the Saviour in the holy sacrifice of the altar, the first to see placed on the summit of their hills the sacred
sign of the Redemption. This honour these unfortunate islands did not understand, nor appreciate. These natives, who were the first in the Pacific Ocean to be visited by the apostles of the Faith, were the last to enjoy the benefit brought to them, the last to be converted to the true religion.

Although we tell here mainly the story of the last thirty years of apostolic work in the Southern Solomons, we must not pass over the first contact of these people with Christian civilisation; it is well to record the different graces which God in His mercy offered them, in the various periods of their history.

It is towards the end of the 16th century, that we find the first traces of the benefit of the Faith offered to these islands by the Catholics of Europe and it is Catholic Spain which holds the honour of making the first attempt to evangelise these tribes, for many years held to be the most savage of the whole Pacific.

**

The 15th and 16th centuries were, as we know, the golden age of maritime discovery. During this period, Spain and Portugal were keen rivals in sailing the seas and trying to discover new lands.

From Callao in Peru, Alvaro de Mendana, just twenty six years of age, put out to sea at the head of an expedition made up of two ships, the « Capitana » and the « Amíranta », with 150 men. He set sail for the west, hoping to discover some new continent not very far off, within a few days voyage.

The expedition left Callao on Nov. 19, 1567. Weeks passed but, with the exception of a few unimportant
Map of the Marist Missions in Oceania.
islands, nothing was seen to satisfy the expectations of the explorers.

On Feb. 7, 1568, three months after their departure from South America, land appeared in the distance. The discouraged sailors recovered confidence; soon joy sprang up in all hearts. This unknown place which rose to their sight seemed to them like the promised land, for which they had been longing all these weary weeks. The «Capitana», the first vessel to sight land, hoisted flags to signal the good news to the other and with common accord the crews of the little fleet intoned the Te Deum. For the first time the hymn of thanksgiving sounded over these waters; this land, which the Spaniards took for a continent, on account of the long chain of mountains which they saw in the distance, was one of the islands of the group henceforth to be known as the Solomons.

**

We are able to gather the real object of these bold explorers from their own statement. We must remember that we are in the 16th century, a time of lively faith and sincere piety, and that the heroes of our tale belong to Catholic Spain. Spurred on by the ambitious views of a king desirous of extending his kingdom, by their own evident desire to conquer new continents and their eager pursuit of wealth, the explorers had a further aim, much nobler than the others. As we read in the story of one of the witnesses of this expedition, «their great wish was to spread the light of the Gospel in these new countries, to convert all these heathens to the true faith.»

These supernatural thoughts, arising from a faith and
piety, the sincerity of which cannot be doubted, manifest themselves in the various stages of this dangerous expedition, which lasted almost two years.

Four Franciscan Fathers accompanied the explorers. It was not in the interests of science, nor again as mere tourists, that these four priests took part in such a perilous voyage. The Spaniards were glad to have the Fathers with them, so that they could fulfil their religious duties, have them as guides and advisers in their difficulties and above all, if death overtook them, have the consolation of leaving this world, strengthened by the Sacraments and the blessing of the Church.

It was on the feast of St Isabella, Nov. 19, that the ships had sailed from Peru; she was chosen as the patroness and protector of the long voyage and her name was given to the first land they discovered and to the first port at which they touched. On Feb. 9, at ten o'clock in the morning, just before they entered the port, the

Typical natives of the Solomon Islands.
planet Venus appeared shining over their heads. They looked upon it as the star which had guided them to the harbour, as of old the star guided the Kings of the East to the feet of the Infant Saviour. In memory of this, the harbour was named, «Santa Ysabel de la Estrella»), St Isabel of the Star. To-day it is called Estrella Bay and the island, Ysabel.

On the day they landed, they solemnly took possession of the country in the name of King Philip II of Spain; and at the same time, to affirm the reign of Christ over these new countries, they erected, to the strains of the Vexilla Regis, a cross on the highest point near the harbour.

Next morning they all landed again and assisted at Mass, which one of the Franciscans celebrated under the shadow of the large trees lining the shore. For the first time the blood of the Divine Victim flowed on these lands of Oceanica. In this same port of Estrella and later on in the island of Guadalcanal at the Port of the Holy Cross (Port Cruz), and at the port of Our Lady of the Visitation in San Cristoval, Mass was said as often as possible and from time to time the officers, soldiers and sailors went to Holy Communion. Mention is made of a chapel built at Port Cruz and near this chapel were buried the first victims of the ferocity of the natives, who were massacred in circumstances to be mentioned later.

Nor was it merely a sort of outward show of Catholicism that they were proud to display everywhere in their voyage over the ocean. Their piety, fond, it is true, of great exterior pomp, was the index of a lively faith, a great trust in Divine Providence and a devout confidence in Our Blessed Lady.
Map of Malenesia.
We can realise this in reading their story, especially at critical moments. When their ships were struggling with a storm which threatened to engulf them, « a collection was taken up on board, » one of the narrators tells us, « for the house and the work of Our Lady of Guadeloupe in Peru. Each contributed according to his means and all begged from God, through the intercession of His Blessed Mother, that He might grant them fine weather and a prosperous voyage. » « They cast lots, » adds another, « to see which of them would make the pilgrimage to deliver the sum collected. » Later on, at the most critical moment of their return voyage, when a frightful tempest brought them within an ace of death, we find them reciting litanies and imploring the Divine protection, while the Fathers encouraged them with pious words and exhorted them to forgive their enemies. Those who had quarrelled were reconciled and all united to help in working the ships. After the storm had passed, they returned thanks to God and to Our Lady.

Vain glory does not seem to have entered into their minds in this bold expedition. They make a very moderate use of their own names to christen the new countries which they discover. They usually employ names recalling their native land or, more commonly, religious names, the feast days of the Church, on which the discoveries were made, or again names of saints. Thus we have the harbours of St Ysabel of the Star, of the Cross, of the Ascension, of the Visitation of Our Lady; the islands of Ysabel, the Palms, St George, St Christopher, St John, St Anne, St Catherine; the rivers of St Helena, St Urban and others.
Now we come to the relations of these explorers with the natives. As it was the first time that Europeans appeared in this part of the world there must have been mutual distrust. The inhabitants of these islands were cruel, treacherous and cannibals all; this is certain and the proofs are clear. The first missionaries who went there about 75 years ago had the same sad experience, and at the beginning of the present period of evangelisation, thirty years ago, these natives gave examples of degradation and barbarity rarely found in history.

The Spaniards had every reason to be suspicious and on their guard. Everything showed what sort of people they had to deal with; their complete nudity, the ornaments which they wore, the human teeth which they used as necklaces, the weapons of every kind, which they always carried, all showed a low degree of civilisation, and barbarous dispositions.

However in spite of these discouraging signs the Spaniards tried to become friends with them, made them presents and strove to find out something about their language so as to communicate more easily with them.

After only a few weeks passed at the Port of Estrella, we find the leader of the expedition, Mendana himself, trying to give a first lesson in catechism to the chief of the place, whose name was Bilebanara. The Spaniard made the sign of the cross and pointed to the sky; the Solomon chief repeated these actions. Mendana then got him to follow the recitation of the Our
Father and the Creed and to repeat them; all on board were surprised at the ease with which the old native pronounced Spanish. Then Mendana spoke to him about God, the Great Chief of heaven and earth, who owns the sun, the moon, the stars and all the islands. The Great Chief is above everyone, even above the King of Castile. To show that he understood, Bilebanara held out his left hand open and pointing to the higher part showed that God was there; then pointing to the lower part, he showed that the King of Castile, a king of earth, was below.

But it is not in an hour, nor even in a few days or in a few months, that they could hope to change the nature of these savages. In spite of their promise to give up wars, to eat no more human flesh, and even to recognise the King of Castile for their chief, and God for their king, their savage nature soon regained the upper hand and when they got back to their villages they were again what they had been before. Later on we shall see the descendants of these cannibals, cannibals themselves, strike down with a club, in this same island of Ysabel, a few miles south of where the Spaniards had landed, the leader of that first group of missionaries, who had come to teach the Catholic religion to these barbarians and speak to them of the God of Mendana.

The relations of the Spaniards with the natives, especially in the immediate neighbourhood of Port Estrella were relatively peaceful. But in the interior, they were more than once obliged to use their fire arms.

Some writers have accused the Spaniards of cruelty with regard to the natives. The principle of lawful
defence is not always easy to apply, especially when dealing with savages who have no respect for the most natural rights, whose ordinary pastime is head-hunting. The Spaniards had excellent reasons for distrusting them; during several expeditions into the interior, they had to be on their guard night and day, being continually molested and attacked by the natives who hurled at them lances and arrows, stones and other missiles. Moreover we must say that it is clear from the story of those with the expedition, that the Spaniards rarely made use of their weapons unless attacked. If at times they employed strong measures to get the food which they wanted to buy, they were in the absolute necessity of providing for 150 people on board, many of them weak and worn out by fever or by the climate. The natives often refused to sell, and the Spaniards then took what they needed; but
they usually left some objects on the spot to pay for the food which they had taken.

***

The stay of the ships at Port Cruz, on the north coast of the island of Guadalcanal, was marked by rather hostile relations with the natives. There also, on the day of their arrival, the Spaniards planted a cross on the top of the small hill above the port; when they left, the natives knocked it down and then carried it off; soon after however, getting alarmed no doubt, they brought it back and tried to fix it up again as well as they could.

A few days later, on the Feast of the Ascension, ten sailors went to the river to renew the stock of fresh water. They were treacherously massacred by the savages. One alone managed to escape and was able to swim to the small island, which is just beyond the point. The crowd of natives along the river was noticed from the ships; then they were seen brandishing the limbs of the victims. An attempt was made to bring help, but it was too late, the deed was done. They found the bodies of the unfortunate men cut in pieces, some without arms or legs, others headless, others with tongues cut out, skulls smashed, with evidence that the brains had been devoured. The Spaniards had to avenge their dead and prevent further attacks. Next day they organised an expedition; twenty of the savages were killed, several wounded and a group of huts was burnt to the ground.

It is worthy of note that these tribes of the north coast of Guadalcanal, so warlike in those days, were the
Near Port Cruz. Mouth of the Mataniko River, where Spaniards were massacred in 1568.
first to be converted to the faith, when the missionaries landed there three centuries and a half later. At the present time most of them are fervent Catholics.

**

The third stop of the little fleet was on the south west coast of San Cristoval. We cannot exactly fix the spot at which the Spaniards landed; the details lack precision. We only know that they called this harbour, the Port of the Visitation of Our Lady, because they reached it on the eve of this feast. However the chief pilot Gallego, more exact than the other chroniclers in what concerns navigation, mentions that the entrance to the harbour was narrow and lofty. This suggests the belief that it corresponds to what is now marked on the maps as Makira Bay, which suits the description exactly. If this is the case, there exists a curious coincidence between the arrival of the Spaniards in this port, to which they gave the name of the Visitation of Our Lady, and the arrival here 268 years later of the first band of missionaries who came to try to convert the natives of these islands and called it Port St Mary, without having any knowledge of the Spanish story.

At the Port of the Visitation as elsewhere the relations with the natives were not cordial; continual attacks, constant exchanges of arrow shooting and gun firing.

Before the final departure, anxious to get interpreters, with a view no doubt to a future exploration of these islands, the Spaniards carried off from one of the mountain villages, a native, his wife and child and a young girl, probably his wife's sister. Mendana refused at first to take a woman on board for such a
long voyage; but on learning that they were a married couple, he consented, ordered them to be suitably clad and well cared for. Mendana himself tells us that, on their arrival in Peru, they became Christians and showed much zeal in learning their prayers. They died not long after in the city of Los-Reyos, « like good Christians, invoking constantly the name of the Lord Jesus. Let us thank the Lord, » he continues, « for having shown His mercy to this land, in calling to Himself the first privileged souls of this people, so long deprived of the light of the faith. »

Assuredly these were the first Christians of our Solomon Islands, even of all the islands of the Pacific. Privileged souls without doubt, the first sowing of Christianity, but the ground which received the precious seed had yet to be watered with tears and blood. It was the countrymen of these early Christians that the apostles of the first mission to Melanesia, towards the middle of the 19th century, tried to convert. But it is they also who massacred and devoured three of these apostles and drove the others away from their shores. However the seed was not dead and, to-day, the station of Our Lady of the Martyrs at Wanoni Bay extends its labours to the districts which were witnesses of the Spanish visit and of the heroism of the first apostles of the Solomons.

**

On Sunday, Aug. 8, 1568, the Spaniards decided to leave the island; they heard Mass once again on the shore and all went to Communion. On account of bad weather, they were unable to leave that day. It was not until the 11th, that they sailed away to the south and,
turning the extreme point of San Cristoval, steered for South America.

The return voyage lasted no less than thirteen months. They experienced a frightful storm, during which their two vessels, sails blown away, main masts gone, seemed only by a special protection from Heaven to have overcome the fury of the waves and the wind. At last, on Sept. 11, 1569, they reached Peru and the port which they had left on Nov. 19, 1567.

***

Mendana and his men were surprised at the luxuriant growth of the islands; many were convinced that gold would be found there in abundance. This is no doubt the reason why these islands were named the Solomons. They might well be, it was said, the Ophir of the Bible where Solomon sent his fleet to get gold for the building of the temple of Jerusalem.

Mendana, when leaving the Solomons, made up his mind to return and to found a colony. It was not till 1595, nearly thirty years after, that he was able to carry out his plan. This time his fleet was made up of four ships. Don Quiros was the chief pilot; Mendana's wife, Dona Ysabel de Barreto, went with the expedition, accompanied by her three brothers. The new explorers sailed towards the Solomons but were unable to reach them. They landed on an island which they named Santa Cruz; it lies to the south east of the group which they had visited thirty years before. They entered a deep bay which they called Graziosa and set about founding their colony; it was far from being a success. Sickness came, fever, quarrels among the members, attacks from the savages, the illness and death of Men-
Social climber.
dana himself: all these misfortunes forced Don Quiros, now in command of those who were left, to leave this dreadful land.

In 1605, Don Quiros and Torres made a new attempt. They discovered the New Hebrides which they called the Austral Land of the Holy Ghost. But once more the Solomon Islands could not be found.

***

The Solomon Islands had flashed for a brief moment on the civilised world; for two hundred years they became mysterious islands, the search for which was the cause of many discoveries in the Pacific Ocean. There are few cases so singular in the history of maritime discovery; the veil which hid these people from civilised nations was raised for a few months; something of the mystery of their existence, their manners, their mode of life came into view for a short time; then the veil dropped. During two long centuries nothing broke the silence of these regions; their people were free to devote themselves without restraint to their savage sport: man hunting.

Towards the end of the 18th century, Europeans arrived once more upon the scene; the Englishman Carteret in 1766, Bougainville in 1768, Surville in 1769, Shortland in 1788. But none of them recognised the islands of Mendana.

A French geographer, M. Buache, working in his studio, rediscovered the Solomons, lost during two hundred years. In an article, published in 1781, he proved that the islands visited by Bougainville and Surville could not be other than those discovered by Mendana in 1568.
La Pérouse, with his two vessels, the «Boussole» and the «Astrolabe», set out in 1785 to try to verify the conclusions of M. Buache. He never reached the Solomons. During a violent storm, the two vessels struck on the reefs surrounding the island of Vanikoro, some 200 miles to the east of San Cristoval. Nothing, was ever again heard of him or of his men; the fragments of his ships discovered by Dumont d'Urville in 1828 proved the sad end of the illustrious navigator and of his vessels.

In 1791, d'Entrecasteaux, with two vessels, the «Recherche» and the «Espérance», had sailed from Brest to look for La Pérouse, but failed to find him. He discovered however the Solomons and restored the name given them by the Spaniards. He visited also certain points in the islands of Guadalcanal and San Cristoval and gave them names which recalled far away France and remind us of the fine achievements of the French navy in Pacific exploration.

Discovered for the first time in 1568, then lost and forgotten for two centuries, these islands were at last found again and civilisation could now attempt their exploration.

The Church rejoices at such discoveries. Navigators and explorers open the way to the apostles of the Gospel and during the first half of the 19th century the islands of the Pacific, still hardly known and seldom visited, will receive their missionaries. For many it will be the hour of salvation, of birth to the true faith. Others will fail to profit by the grace offered to them. They will massacre their missionaries as Jerusalem massacred her prophets. Among the latter were the Solomons, as we shall see in the following pages.
CHAPTER II

FIRST MISSION
Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia

We now reach the second stage of our history of the Solomons. It is a necessary prelude to the story of our missions as they are to-day. The country which we evangelise for the last thirty years had already during the past century received the visit of workers of the Gospel and these workers were our brothers in religion.

We may say that we gather now the harvest, the seeds of which were sown three quarters of a century ago in the tears and the blood of our heroic predecessors.

Our actual Vicariate Apostolic, large as it is, forms only a small part of that which, by the Propaganda decree of July 19, 1844, was entrusted to our first confrères. It extended from 125° to 160° East Longitude and from the equator to 12° South Latitude. To this we must add the Vicariate of Micronesia, stretching from 125° to 180° degrees East Longitude and from the equator to 13° North Latitude. They were two distinct vicariates, but were united under the direction
and administration of one head. To-day they form seven Vicariates and three apostolic prefectures.

These valiant workmen of the first hour began their attempt to sow the good seed of the Gospel and convert the natives to the true faith in a spot which at the present time forms part of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Southern Solomons.

The story of their sufferings and of their apostolic labours has been written at great length by one of the witnesses, a hero of the first expedition (1). Later on one of our confrères, whose literary talent seems to have been fired by his admiration for the heroic exploits of his brethren in religion, has revived with poignant interest the admirable examples of these apostles of a former age (2). The latter has written in the preface of his book: "The story of the Melanesian Mission is as short as it is sorrowful: a few years of the most severe privations and bitter sorrow, with no success, without a gleam of joy, ending with violent death; the workers struck down, one after the other, on the thankless and deadly soil, where the seed still awaits for its growth the hour of Providence."

We shall briefly recall here the chief incidents of the noble story of the first missionaries of the Solomons. These islands have been sanctified by their presence, by the holiness of their lives, by their sufferings and, for several of them, by a heroic death. These memories are dear to us, and it is our duty to recall the precious inheritance handed down to us by Providence.

---

(1) Histoire de la Première Mission Catholique au Vicariat de Mélanésie, par le chanoine Verguet (Carcassone, 1854).

(2) Dix Années en Mélanésie, par le P. Monfat, S. M. (Lyon, Vitte, 1891).
The success gained by the Marist missioners in Wallis, Futuna and New Zealand decided Pope Gregory XVI to develop the Missions of the Pacific. By a letter of July 19, 1844, he entrusted to the Society of Mary the immense region which extends from New Guinea to the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. Father Epalle was chosen as leader for this advanced post and proclaimed Vicar Apostolic of Micronesia and Melanesia; he set sail from London on Feb. 2, 1845, bringing with him Fathers Frémont, Paget, Verguet, Chaurain, Montrouzier, Thomassin and Jacquet, with the lay brothers Prosper, Charles, Hyacinth, Gennade, Bertrand and Aristides. After a long and stormy passage the missionaries reached Sydney in June. There, still more than in Europe, the natives of Melanesia had an ugly reputation for ferocity and great interest was taken in the expedition. When all was ready, Bishop Epalle chartered a schooner, the «Marian Watson», Captain Richard, and they set sail at the end of October, 1845.

On Dec 1st, they sighted San Cristoval, the most southern of the Solomons. After sailing for a time along the coast of this island, still quite unknown, the captain took a risk, entered a broad, deep-water bay and anchored in safety; they named it St John the Baptist, now Marau Harbour. The natives appeared very quickly, and surrounding the ship in their pirogues, smilingly asked to be allowed on board. They climbed up unarmed and made signs to express that there was nothing to fear from their presence. The provisions which they brought along were exchanged for small objects, amongst which were coveted empty bottles. There was no apparent hostility on their faces or in their behaviour; they made a very good impression
and there was no warning of any treachery in store.

Bishop Epalle wanted however a more central position, so they sailed to the island of Ysabel. On Dec 12,

they moored near the coast in the bay of Astrolabe. At once the natives hastened out to the ship; they seemed turbulent and daring, brandished their lances and uttered shrill cries. The captain decided not to
allow them on board. At close quarters, their faces and gestures showed them to be hostile. For three days Bishop Epalle went along the coast in a boat to examine the shore. Then, on Dec. 16, the boat, in charge of the mate, Mr Blemy, and four sailors, steered for the shore to land the Bishop along with Fathers Fremont and Chaurain and Brother Prosper. The sailors had firearms; the missionaries had no weapons. « How could we expect, » said the Bishop, « with firearms to attract souls to the merciful Saviour, who let Himself be done to death without complaint? » He took off the green tassels which were round his hat, so as not to excite the greed of the natives. When Mr Blemy asked him where he wanted to go he replied, « Straight to the huts. »

Drawing near to the shore in the boat they noticed at a distance a number of natives, silent and motionless, armed with clubs, lances and hatchets. This unexpected attitude caused astonishment; but the visitors did not want to show alarm and they landed. Two sailors were left to guard the boat; Mr Blemy and the other two sailors followed the missionaries, but, ashamed of showing less confidence, they left their guns in the boat. The little party went forward in two groups towards the band of natives, following a chief who had come forward to meet them. Anxiety increased with the sinister attitude and insolent replies of the natives. « These people have evil intentions, » said Brother Prosper. « It is true, » said the Bishop, « our sailors should have their guns. » They turned to go back to the boat, but it was too late. At a signal from the chief, the savages closed up to the two groups and surrounded them.
Death of Bishop Epalle.
The chief, with a loud shout, raised his axe and struck the Bishop on the head. The Bishop stood, holding his hands to the wound, but fierce war cries answered his groans and clubs were swung on all sides. Father Fremont thrown down twice, got up each time, covered with blood. Mr. Blémy was struck down from behind by a blow from a tomahawk. Brother Prosper avoided death by plunging into the sea, which was tinged with his blood. Father Chaurain, facing the danger, with his eyes fixed on the attackers retreated backwards. He stumbled over a couple of stones; stooping down, he picked them up and, using them as weapons, forced his way by main force to the boat. Then he saw the Bishop lying on the ground while the savages kept on striking him. He at once jumped into the water and rushed to rescue the Bishop, while his companions, who had reached the boat, opened fire and struck terror into the savages, who scattered. Father Chaurain reached the Bishop, who was half stripped and bathed in his blood, picked him up and carried him off in spite of the rage and shouts of the natives. Father Frémont and Brother Prosper hastened to his help and brought the Bishop to the boat, which at once moved off to sea.

They reached the schooner and gently lifted the wounded prelate on to the deck. The doctor examined him, then turned and said in a low tone, «There is no hope.» Blood was flowing from five deep wounds in the head. All tried to restrain their grief, but tears flowed from their eyes, while the dying Bishop murmured, «My God! My God! Jesus mercy! Mary help!»

Some yards away, Captain Richard growled in a low voice, «To-morrow, for revenge!»

Next day, Thursday, Dec. 18, at seven in the morning,
Site of Bishop Epalle's grave, on St George Island.
just when the crew fully armed were going to lower the boat, Father Chaurain gave Captain Richard the following letter, signed by all the missionaries. « Dear Captain, we do not know why you are sending your boat to the shore where our Bishop was mortally wounded, but we wish to protest strongly against any act of reprisal, as it is contrary to the nature of our mission, which is all for peace and self-sacrifice. We beg of you and, if necessary, we shall insist that our protest be inserted in the log book. We remain, etc. » Deeply vexed, the Captain ordered the boat to be hoisted on board.

The agony of the venerable prelate lasted till the evening of Dec. 19. When he had breathed his last sigh, it was agreed to bury his body as near as possible to the place where his life had been sacrificed, while at the same time hiding it from the cannibals. The place chosen was the uninhabited island of St George, far enough from Ysabel to conceal the treasure which it held. During the night the body was laid in a deep grave; then a pile of stones was raised, on one of which a short epitaph was carved. All was covered with sand and the exact position carefully noted.

Then, under the direction of Father Fremont, Provicar, measures were taken with regard to the future. The condition of the wounded was satisfactory and it was agreed first of all, in compliance with Bishop Epalle's wishes, that they would not give up the attempt to settle on Ysabel, unless it was shown to be impossible. Having been taught prudence by their sad experience, the missionaries, when they continued their exploration of the coast, were under the protection of armed sailors. Relations with the natives were more agreeable than had been expected. They were inclined to trust
Father John Paget, who, with two other missionnaires, was killed and devoured by the San Cristoval natives.
these favourable appearances, but not being able to find any good anchorage on the south coast, nor any place to land supplies, they returned to San Cristoval.

On Jan. 10, 1846, the schooner entered a sheltered bay which seemed suitable for the desired settlement. They named it Port St Mary. A native village, Oné, stood near a creek; the missionaries decided to settle on the opposite bank at a place called Makira, so that they might be able to visit the natives without having to live in the midst of the degrading scenes of savage life. They began to build a house; trees were bought, trimmed and carried to the spot; the frame was erected, the walls set and the interior arranged; this took them two months: at night they slept on board.

One day, before the house was finished, the missionaries were taking a meal on the shore, surrounded as usual by the natives from the neighbouring village. Amongst them were new faces hostile and fierce looking. Before the end of dinner Father Fremont got up to pay wages to some of the islanders who had helped in carrying material. The strangers made off at once and plunged into the forest. They were men from a mountain tribe, who had planned to kill the missionaries towards the end of dinner, attacking them from behind while they were still sitting down. When Father Fremont suddenly got up, they thought their plot had been discovered and at once took to flight.

Father Montrouzier too had a narrow escape from a native who nursed a grievance against one of the sailors of the «Marian Watson». Hidden in the bush, the islander watched for three days to attack the first white man who would pass near him. It happened to be Father Montrouzier. He was struck by a lance and
the point got fixed in his back breaking against the ribs and leaving a bit of wood in the wound. In spite of the efforts of the doctor, this piece of wood could not be extracted and the wound did not heal till after months of suffering. The guilty man was named Orimanu and came from a neighbouring tribe. Two of the Fathers went to visit him in his lair on the hill plateau. When Orimanu saw them coming he was much frightened; he opened the door of his cabin, and with an alarmed air, timidly offered cocoanuts and bananas. He got in exchange some iron tools and beads and was made to promise to return the visit to the Makira mission. He came to Oné the next day, but was too frightened to go near the mission. Father Verguet went to meet him. «Come;» he said, «and bring your weapons, bring as many warriors as you like with you, but you must come.» Orimanu was conquered. Little by little the brutish looks of these black faces seemed to grow milder when the Fathers drew near; their hearts seemed to be gained.

However every day new alarms proved to the missionaries that they were only at the beginning of their work; and disgusting scenes of cruelty, frightful and desperate deeds of death, took place under their very eyes. Poor women were beaten to death, babes killed, hellish conversations held in which they boasted of treachery, of the killing of their enemies and gave horrible details of the way in which they cooked and ate them; all in a matter of fact, playful tone, with the cool reply to the indignant protests of the missionaries, «Everyone to his taste.»

Furthermore the unhealthy climate of the country was rapidly having its effect and attacks of fever,
growing worse each time, undermined the health of the missionaries. «When I was entering Port St Mary, » wrote Bishop Douarre to Father Colin, after visiting the Solomons, «I saw a whaleboat coming; at the helm was a Father with pallid face and trembling hands; it was Father Verguet, formerly so rosy and strong; Father Paget was not much better. Soon after I found all the other Fathers and Brothers in the same sad plight; eight sick out of nine. Still they were full of courage and hope, full of tender piety and confidence in God. »

Meanwhile the successor of Bishop Epalle arrived. This was Bishop John George Collomb, who was born in Savoy in 1816. After a most successful course of studies, crowned by a doctorate in theology and in Canon Law, he became a professor in the seminary of Moutiers. From there he entered the Society of Mary for the foreign missions. After his novitiate he sailed with Captain Marceau on the «Arche d’Alliance». He was in high spirits at finding himself on the way to his mission work, when suddenly his joy was changed to deep anxiety on learning that he had been appointed Coadjutor to Bishop Epalle. All that he could obtain was that the secret of the nomination would be kept till he could place the Papal bull in the hands of the Vicar Apostolic who was to consecrate him.

The dreadful news of Bishop Epalle’s murder reached the «Arche d’Alliance» at Tahiti. Captain Marceau hastened his course across Central Oceanica and on Feb. 11, 1847, reached San Cristoval. The Bishop elect left Father Crey there and went on to Sydney and thence to New Zealand, seeking a prelate to consecrate him.
During his absence the missionaries of Makira set about looking for a healthier place of settlement. In March, 1847, Fathers Fremont and Crey went to live with the tribe of the Pias, who gave them a cordial welcome. A month later, Father Crey died of fever at the age of twenty-four; his body was brought to Makira. The Pias insisted that he should not be buried in their
district, because, « having killed nobody during his life, his ghost would certainly claim many victims after his death. »

A few days later, Fathers Jacquet and Paget, with Brother Hyacinth, wanted to visit the village of Ouango, which had been recommended to them as a a very suitable place for a residence. A little less tried by fever that day, full of confidence in their plan, they left Makira at five in the morning, by the most direct road to Ouango, through the tribe of the Toros.

« At nine o'clock in the morning, » wrote Father Montrouzier, « I saw a native of Oné passing by, who cried out in a frightened fashion, « Maté, Maté, » their word for expressing a violent death. Soon, alas, I learned that they were speaking of our confrères, and that they had been massacred. The news was overwhelming. The Toros, not content with killing our companions, had sent messengers to the people of Oné urging them to get rid of us and pillage our property. The people of Oné came in a crowd to Makira; they were fully armed and kept calling to me, « Take your gun; we will go with you and we will kill the Toros and eat them. » Then it was that I got the details of the sorrowful happening. Our confrères, when passing through the village of the Toros, had been saluted as usual; the natives had even accompanied them, seemingly to do them honour, singing their praises; but on reaching a group of huts, perched like a vulture's nest on a gloomy peak, the savages after closing round the group to prevent any escape, broke into loud yells and attacked them fiercely. Father Jacquet was felled by a blow from a club, Father Paget pierced by a lance through his breast; Brother Hyacinth was struck by a lance and
finished by a stroke from a tomahawk. The murderers at first ran off as though frightened by their deed, leaving the three victims bathed in their blood. But soon after their cannibal instincts got the upper hand and returning they sprang like tigers on our unfortunate brethren. I offered all I could that might tempt their greed to obtain the remains; it was in vain. No doubt their heads are now resting on the beams of the huts as trophies of victory.

«On the days following the massacre, when the Toros found that we did not seem to intend attacking them, they grew bolder; one day, quite close to the house, two arrows were shot at our brother gardener; happily they missed him; but evidently their thirst for blood was not slaked. To prevent them from coming too near unseen, we cut the high grass and bushes from around our house, and hung bells on the necks of our two dogs, so that the sound might warn evildoers that we were on the alert; every night we put lighted candles on each side of the house; the natives called them night guns which could see everything. One of us kept watch all through the night.

«On one occasion we heard our dogs barking; looking through the slits of our door, we found that our palm-leaf roof was on fire. To rush out to extinguish the flames was to expose ourselves to a shower of lances; to remain inside meant being burnt to death. We rushed out however and were lucky enough to escape wounds. The wind which had been blowing strongly all day died down suddenly; our water barrels were full and in a few minutes we overcame the fire. At last, on August 28, after more than four months of anxiety, a ship appeared and the next day we
had the consolation of greeting our new Vicar Apostolic."

Bishop Collomb, consecrated in New Zealand by Bishop Viard, hastened to return to the Solomons. On his way he had called at New Caledonia and escaped with great difficulty from the sacking of Balade, when the natives attacked and plundered the mission house, killing Brother Blaise Marmoiton; the Bishop and the Fathers fled hurriedly, and in the midst of the greatest dangers reached the neighbouring station of Pouébo. A French man-of-war, the "Anonyme", brought Bishop Collomb to San Cristoval. On his arrival he heard the disastrous news about his own mission. During several days an anxious council was held as to what action to take; should they remain or seek a more promising field elsewhere? While the Bishop and his missionaries were discussing this grave question, Commander Raballand, in charge of the French war boat, was somewhat puzzled at this delay and sent an officer with some of his blue jackets to bring on board the missionaries and all their belongings. The Bishop was astonished at this action of the Commander and protested, but the officer replied, "No, no, my Lord, Raballand is not going to leave such fine men at the mercy of the cannibals." He could not understand that there could be any hesitation about leaving at once; his men would not venture on shore except for business and fully armed. The Bishop accepted this decision of the Commander as the expression of God's will and prepared to leave, grieved to the heart at the thought of the unfortunate people, but cherishing the hope that he might be able before long to resume the work.

"On Sept. 3, " says Bishop Collomb, "we sailed out
from Port St Mary. The natives showed no signs of hostility. Some even seemed full of sorrow at our

departure. We steered westward for the Woodlark Islands about which we had heard encouraging news in Sydney; and on Sept. 15, we dropped anchor in the excellent harbour of the principal island.»
Thus they left the Solomons. After working for some two years in the islands of Woodlark and Rook, Bishop Collomb died on July 16, 1848, at Rook Island, worn out by fever and privations of every kind; four months later Father Villien, his companion at Rook, died, also, of fever. The Superior General of the Marist Fathers, Father Colin, hesitated to send any more missionaries to Melanesia where no results could be gained, while other places, where progress was being made, were in great need of priests. He put the situation before the Roman authorities and in 1852 the Congregation of the Propaganda relieved the Marists from their advanced post in Melanesia so that they might concentrate their forces on other Vicariates where the harvest was ripening, and gave over Melanesia and Micronesia to the priests of the Foreign Missions of Milan. For several years this Society spent itself vainly in the work; the sufferings and lives of their missionaries were lavished on the same ungrateful lands. In September 1855, Father Mazzucconi was martyred in Woodlark, where the scenes of massacre of Ysabel and San Cristoval were repeated and the Fathers of Milan were forced in their turn to abandon the thankless task.

***

For nearly two years, from Dec. 2, 1845, till Sep. 3, 1847, these Solomon Islands were favoured with the presence of the ministers of the Gospel. Can we say that their stay bore no fruit? Apparently it was so, but in matters of the sort appearances count little and the success of a work in which the cooperation of man is nothing in comparison with the work of God cannot
be calculated by material results. It is with the eyes of faith that we must look for the true result of the work of these apostles.

Suffering endured in a Christian spirit has always value in the eyes of God. « Is not suffering, » said a missionary, « half the vocation of an apostle? » God disposes of these sufferings according to His hidden designs. Christ redeemed us by His sufferings and His violent death on the Cross; the Apostles, their successors, and all those who carry on His work, must follow along the same path.

The natives of San Cristoval had heard the word of the Gospel; they were daily witnesses of the virtues and sufferings of their missionaries. Yet they did not gain the grace of conversion.

Still, we learn that baptism was given to a certain number of children and adults at the moment of death. As we have no registers we are ignorant of the exact number of these privileged souls. But the fact remains and shows that the sufferings of the missionaries were not all in vain. The salvation of a single soul is worth a high price.

Besides, the designs of God extend farther than our human views. Time is for men, but eternity belongs to God. A day was to come when the seed, cast on ground which seemed barren, would, by the grace of God, produce fruit. The toil, the tears, the sufferings, the blood even, of the first apostles, added to the merits of the Eucharistic Sacrifice so often offered up for the conversion of these people, gained for them the favour of having once again ministers of the Gospel.
CHAPTER III

SECOND MISSION
Vicariate Apostolic of the South Solomons

For fifty years the Solomon Islands remained unvisited by our missionaries. But the Marist Fathers had not forgotten the glorious deeds of the early apostles and many were the prayers offered up that a day might come when the Society would be able to make a new attempt. At last the day came.

In 1897, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda asked the Society of Mary, in spite of the difficulties, to make another effort; there was no hesitation in accepting.

Less than a year afterwards, a new group of apostles landed on the Solomons and settled down, this time for good.

+ + + + +

This Mission of the South Solomon Islands, begun in 1898, raised to a Vicariate Apostolic in June 1912, has also had its share of sufferings and crosses. Up to the present it has not had the honour of counting new
martyrs among its members, but it has had to pay heavy dues to the deadly climate, from which the apostles of the first mission already suffered so much.

Of twenty seven priests who have been working at this portion of the vineyard of the Lord, seven have died. One, quite young, perished at sea; the others fell victims to the fever or its complications. With the exception of Bishop Bertreux who died at an advanced age, after having spent 17 years in the Mission of the Solomons, besides 23 years in Fiji, the others died when they were scarcely thirty years of age, some of them after only two or three years of service.

Our good nuns too, while sharing in our work, share also in our sorrows and our sufferings. They have paid their own tribute to the unhealthy climate. Of seventeen Sisters who came to this Mission since the beginning, five have already gone to receive in Heaven the reward of their life of charity and devotedness. Of these, one toiled for sixteen years; the others were cut off in the flower of their youth, after a few years of service in Mission life.

Happily, it is not suffering which alarms the missionary or the aspirant to the missionary life. Those who feel in their hearts the love of Christ crucified and the love of souls redeemed by His blood may come to the Solomons without fear. It is not probable that they will gain the palm of martyrdom; still the thing is not impossible, as even cannibalism has not yet shot its last bolt. But they will certainly have to undergo the martyrdom of suffering, of suffering endured for the love of souls, of the suffering which filled with joy the heart of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Like him, the missionary in the Solomons can say with truth:
« I, Paul... now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church. » (Col. 1, 23, 24.)

I. Extent and Limits.

The Vicariate Apostolic of the South Solomon Islands extends from 7° 30' to 13° South Latitude and from 156° to 170° East Longitude. This gives it a total area of 340,000 square miles and about 30,000 square miles of land surface.

It includes, going from west to east, or rather from northwest to southeast, the group of New Georgia, the islands of Ysabel, Cape Marsh, Guadalcanal, Florida, Malaita and San Cristoval; then two hundred miles east of this last one; Santa Cruz and several less important islands, Utupua, Vanikoro, Tukopia, etc.

The five chief islands average about 75 to 120 miles in length, with a breadth varying from 15 to 20 miles. We may say then that each of these islands has the extent of an average English or Irish county.

If you place the map of the Vicariate on a map of Europe and put the former central station of Rua Sura towards the centre of France, at Bourges say, then the north west end of the New Georgia group would correspond with the Channel Islands. Mitre Island, the island farthest to the south east of the Vicariate, would fall near Naples. From one end of the Vicariate to the other, there is a distance of 870 sea miles.

From all this it is easy to see how the evangelisation of such a vicariate is difficult and toilsome. On the large islands, there are villages scattered along the coast;
Map of the vicariate apostolic of the South Solomons.
these are accessible by sea, but only in fine weather, and very often we have to be resigned to follow on foot all the ins and outs of the shore under a burning sun or under the torrential rainfall so frequent in this tropical climate. A good number of villages are far in the interior, several hours walk from one another. They can only be reached by narrow paths following the course of streams or else by climbing over mountain crests, which often rise to several thousand feet above sea level. From one island to another the distance varies between thirty or forty miles. The passage across is difficult and dangerous on account of the currents or the reefs. Perils by sea are those to which the missionary is most exposed. Although there has been in this Vicariate only one such death to regret up to the present, still the dangers that have to be run from this point of view are continual. The ordinary way by which the missionaries must travel in this part of the world to spread the Gospel is by sea. At times it is calm and fine, but there are days when it produces very disagreeable surprises. The missionary has great difficulty in getting accustomed to it. Happily he has learned to count especially on the protection of her who is so justly called the Star of the sea.

II. Population.

What the exact population of the Solomons may be is hard to say. Up to the present no accurate census has been taken. One fact is sure: that it is gradually decreasing and this from olden date, even before the appearance of the Europeans.

In the story of the Spaniards, we read surprising,
almost incredible, statements with regard to the population of the Solomons three centuries ago. Mendana tells us that near the port of Estrella in Ysabel island they could have easily raised an army of 30,000 men; in the island of St George at the south east of Ysabel, at least 10,000; this place is now uninhabited; it was so when the first missionaries touched there in 1845 and that was the reason why they chose it as the burial place of Bishop Epalle. In the island of Guadalcanal, the figure given by Mendana is 300,000 fighting men, in Florida, 50,000, and more than 100,000 at San Cristoval. After one of their expeditions into the interior, the Spaniards speak of villages with two or three hundred houses. It is difficult to credit the accuracy of these figures. But even while admitting that they are much exaggerated, it is certain that the population of those days was very dense in every island of the group.

At the present time, these lands, formerly so full of people, seem almost deserted. Guadalcanal, the lar-
gest island of the Vicariate, counts hardly 20,000 inhabitants; San Cristoval, 7,000 to 8,000. Malaita is the most thickly populated; it is probable that it reaches to 60,000. The total population of the Vicariate may be estimated at 100,000; we are far from the fantastic figures of the Spaniards.

What is the cause of such a rapid decrease? Are we to attribute it to the unceasing wars that the different tribes have continually carried on during recent centuries, or to the head hunting, pursued as a sport in most of the islands, or again to the frequent raids that warriors from the neighbouring islands liked to indulge in, when they usually massacred the whole of the male population and carried off as slaves the women and children? All this does not sufficiently explain so rapid and so considerable a decrease. Wars, man hunting, warlike raids, usually cause only a small mortality. We must rather believe that from time to time there have been violent epidemics which caused considerable ravages in the population. In these densely crowded villages, where no hygienic care was taken, the mortality must have been very high. Thirty years ago we had an epidemic of this kind; while in our schools, where the sick were cared for, the mortality was hardly one or two per cent, in the villages it was as high as twenty five per cent.

During thirty years the white element has steadily increased. Scarcely fifty at the beginning of the Mission, there are now more than a thousand whites and a couple of hundred Chinese. With them came civilisation, and it seems to advance with giant’s strides in these islands, which have hardly emerged from cannibalism. One can scarcely assert that this is good for
the native population; things are going too fast. The work to which the natives are subjected, the new needs created for them, have no other result than to upset and confuse them. The thirst for money attracts thousands of our young natives to white centres; they take a liking to this kind of life, as in civilized countries the farming people have a passion for the amusements and distractions of the large towns. When they come back, the native life no longer offers any pleasure to them; the native plantations are abandoned and family life disappears more and more. We seem to be assisting at the death agony of this race formerly so strong, so deeply attached to the land. This fact is common to many of the Pacific Islands; the native peoples only increase and multiply in proportion as their life and social organisations are respected. Unfortunately we do not profit by this lesson of experience; personal interests pass before everything else.

The natives living in European surroundings suffer by contact with the whites and soon lose their former simplicity. Too indifferent to understand, especially too listless to imitate, their good qualities, they pick up their defects and seem to learn only the use of the dangerous novelties that come to them from civilised countries. The small amount of money that they make is quickly spent in buying things that, as a rule, are of little practical use to them. In this tropical country, where nature seems to have pointed out the costume that best suits its inhabitants, they insist on all the dress refinement of our modern civilisation: trousers, coats, shirts, ties. Wearing clothes, which they never change by day or by night, which they put on the day they get them new and never take off till they fall in
pieces, is by no means good for their health. Dry or wet, they do not care, these clothes seem to be one with themselves. Consequently diseases of the chest and skin are frequent and often fatal. Perhaps they may in time learn to use the safeguards of civilised life and then the decline in the population may cease and the curve of natality take an upward turn.

The indifference of the whites in matters of religion makes a bad impression on the heathens and even on our Christians. These also easily yield to the temptation of « going on a tour in the country of the Whites, » as they say. Then they spend two years at least far from us and beyond the reach of our influence. We must put up with these drawbacks. From this point of view civilisation is far from being favourable to our work; on the contrary, it continues to be a great obstacle to the conversion of our islanders.

The natives of the Vicariate belong to the Melanesian race. However some Polynesian tribes are found in a few isolated islands (Sikaiana, Rennel Island, Bellona, Tukopia, etc.). Their presence in the midst of a black population is difficult to explain. We can only surmise that they settled here when their people emigrated to the South, or on the contrary were driven from their country of adoption by war and when returning north got wrecked on these islands.

The colour of the Solomon natives varies greatly; very black in the northwest of the group, the tint becomes lighter as we go south. The elements are rather mixed in the south; it is not rare to find in the same island various shades of colour, which leads to the conclusion that there are certain Polynesian elements present. The types of each island differ notably, so that it can
be guessed at first sight to what island a native belongs. Their language, though it has a common origin and a similar construction of sentence varies considerably between one island and another. It is not rare to find the language of two neighbouring villages totally different. This is a serious difficulty for the missionary, who is thus obliged to learn several of the native languages.

III. Cannibalism.

Some people seem inclined to believe that cannibalism exists only in the imagination of missionaries and tourists. It is true that descriptions of feasting on human flesh, of cutting up a victim and cooking it in an oven to the accompaniment of songs and dances, form excellent food for the curiosity of readers in search of sensational matter and perhaps some imaginative authors have been led into overdrawn descriptions of the sort. But here in the Solomon Islands, imagination has very little to do with the matter; it is enough to open one’s eyes and to relate facts that have been witnessed more than once.

The Spaniards speak at great length about the abominable customs of Solomon natives. « I think it certain, » says Gallego, « that they eat human flesh. » And he relates how at Port Estrella fourteen canoes arrived as Mass was being celebrated, and how the chief of the expedition, thinking that he was thus paying high honour to Mendana, sent him, as a present, one half of a child. The Spaniard, to show his horror at being offered such a gift, had it buried at once in presence of the natives, « to their great annoyance », adds the
narrator. These irksome visitors made haste to get away from the white men who were incapable of appreciating the good things of life and went off to a neighbouring island to continue their cannibal feast. Catoira, a purser, gives us the story of the massacre of Port Cruz in detail; it ended also with a feast in which the bill of fare included the brains of the victims.

The Fathers of the first Mission relate several incidents of a similar nature. Cannibalism seemed quite natural to these savages and when they were blamed for it they replied that tastes differ; it might be that human flesh did not appeal to the whites, but for themselves it was excellent. Canon Verguet relates several acts of cannibalism carried on unconcernedly; the perpetrators had no idea of hiding what they were doing. The three missionaries who were massacred in the interior of San Cristoval suffered the fate of all those who fell under their clubs; they served as a meal to these monsters in human shape.

Now we come to the present day. First, a distinction must be made between the different islands of the group; all the natives have not the same fierce character. The island of Guadalcanal seems to be one of the most peaceful of the whole archipelago; still, cannibalism existed there thirty years ago, if not in the coast villages, at least in those of the interior. On the west coast of this island, from which our first Christians came, a young man told a story of his being sent, while yet a boy, by his chief, to carry a large piece of human flesh to a neighbouring chief, with an invitation to him to take part in an expedition against a hostile tribe. An old man said that he had shared in nine festivals of human flesh and he was careful to add that they were
A cannibal who became a Christian.
first rate. We may note here that the skulls of victims were sometimes used as cups, which these monsters used to fill with water from a stream to quench their thirst.

Many stories like these could be given. At present cannibalism has completely disappeared from Guadalcanal. The same holds good in almost all the other islands of the Vicariate. Malaita alone is an exception. Nevertheless even there man eating is going out of fashion. This is no doubt due to the efforts of the Government to suppress it and to the frequent visits of the whites, who find in these cannibals excellent recruits as workers for the plantations. Still all the southern portion and many other districts of the island have not fallen into line, and the murder of white officers and fourteen native police in 1927 shows that the fierceness of these savages is not yet quite subdued. Our station at Rohinari is in the centre of the district where cannibalism is still the order of the day. It may be that many of the victims do not meet the same fate and that all the murders do not end in feasting; but it is still true that the natives indulge in the eating of human flesh. Not very long ago one of these cannibals, after having cut up his victim, took the notion of using the thigh bones as drum sticks to sound the wooden gongs of the forest and thus announce to the neighbouring villages that the head-hunters had to their credit another deed of valour.

Happily these occurrences are now less frequent and we may hope that in a few years time, when the old generation will have disappeared, these savage wolves will become gentle lambs and enter the sheepfold of the Divine Master.
IV. RELIGION.

Can beings so degraded, with so little human feeling, really have any religion? They have one assuredly, crude no doubt, like all the customs which prevail amongst them, but still, a sort of religion. We may even assert that the whole existence of these islanders is imbued with and swayed by religion, and chiefly by the worship of spirits.

These spirits may be divided into two distinct classes:
living spirits, as they call them, who have never dwelt in the body of man, and dead spirits or souls of ancestors, especially of great chiefs, who made a name for themselves and were dreaded during their life time.

All these spirits have their individual worship and their names differ according to the locality; each tribe has its own. The living spirits are naturally the most powerful, the most dreaded and, as a result, the most honoured. Their names usually express something unattainable by human effort: «Gereparako», he who cleaves the clouds; «Vula ma na aso», the moon and the sun; «Levuganaoka», the middle of the sky, etc.

The souls of ancestors share also in a similar worship and certain great chiefs of olden days have become powerful spirits, who are as much respected as those of the higher class.

The ruling idea in the worship of the spirits is fear, and the natives seem to invoke them and to offer them sacrifice only to soothe them, to make them favourable. The sacrifices are as a rule of blood, even of human beings in certain circumstances. The customary victim of these sacrifices is the pig, preeminently the sacred animal. He is fed and fatted for this purpose and sacrificed on certain fixed days. A small part of the animal, the heart usually, is directly offered to the spirits and is consumed by fire; the rest is eaten in common by those who assist, as sharing in the sacrifice. Women are not, as a rule, admitted to these celebrations. The fruits of the plantations, yams, taros, almonds, cocoanuts, and areca nuts form the matter for ordinary sacrifices.

These spirits, who for our islanders take the part of gods, have their dwellings almost everywhere. They
frequent the points of land which project into the sea and they are held responsible for the rough seas in these spots; they dwell in certain trees in the forest, in the hollows of the rocks, and also in the reserved enclosure, surrounded by stones, where the sacrifices are offered; they play a considerable part in the lives of our natives and preside over the principal acts of their existence, their birth, their illnesses, their hunting, fishing, travelling, their wars and their death.

Belief in the immortality of the soul is not in doubt amongst them. They have their paradise which they place in the island of Malapa (Marau), at the south east end of Guadalcanal. Hell exists too; this place of punishment is at the opposite end of Guadalcanal, some miles to the west of the station of Visale. Who does the winnowing amongst this people, whose innocence is more than contestable? The chiefs naturally keep paradise for themselves and put the others in hell. It is very likely that they consider the really wicked people to be rare and the Solomon hell to be filled mostly by people of hostile tribes. At a little distance from this hell there is, we have been told, an abode of penance where some souls spend a certain time atoning for the faults of their past life, seemingly a confused idea of purgatory.

Such was, and in a good many places, still is, the religion of our Solomon natives. It is a confused heap of absurd, but carefully observed practices. Native wisdom, the product of the fear which the belief in these invisible spirits inspires, consists in yielding to all the demands, to all the monstrosities even, of a religious code, which is very often only the result of the caprice of the chiefs or of the sorcerers.
V. Character and Aptitudes.

From what has been said, it is easy to gather some idea of the time and patience required from a poor missionary to dissipate all the prejudices, uproot the superstitions, clear away odious practices and bring these souls, blinded by fear of the spirits, to the knowledge of the Gospel and the acceptance of Christian law and practice.

The work is indeed difficult, but thanks be to God, it has produced fruit. During the first five years (1898-1903), boys and young men alone came near the mission. They were employed as servants and helpers at first; then gradually religion was talked about; the principal mysteries of the faith were explained to them. In 1901, three years after the arrival of the missionaries, the first baptisms of young Solomon boys took place. The impulse once given, the number of catechumens increased each year and the baptisms became more numerous.

The example of the young gradually won over the elders, more entangled in heathen superstitions. On hearing, from these spontaneous apostles, about the fine things learned in religion they too were moved to inquire. After having seen for some years the missionary at work amongst them, they could not fail to recognise his kindness, his devotedness in their regard. Helped by the grace of God, they began to have their names put down on the list of catechumens and in 1903 the missionary had the consolation of baptising the first married couple. From that date there was no more hesitation. One after the other the villagers burnt their idols, asked for medals and built small chapels;
Belasio Kose, a Savo chief.
then they prayed, received instruction and were baptised.

These islanders, of fierce appearance, brutish manners and without pity, have now become docile lambs, ready to do anything for the missionary.

The boys flock to the schools. Rather idle by nature, with very little strength of will, still they settle down easily enough to the rules given them. They are not unintelligent; most of them quickly learn to read and write. Needless to say the catechism is taught to them every day. They learn and understand it rapidly and there are few who are not ready for baptism after a year.

When not in class, they work in the fields. They clear the bush from our land, cut down the large trees of the forest and prepare the plantations. They do all this willingly enough without any other payment than their lodging and clothing, which are both very simple, and their food, which, as a rule, they grow themselves. They are very observant and quickly imitate anything they see being done; they can be employed at all sorts of work; under the direction of the missionary they adapt themselves to anything. They have been trained to be carpenters, masons and even mechanics for our motor boats. For all these trades some show special skill and taste. But unfortunately, what is wanting to them is will power; they have no perseverance and this is very trying to the patience of the missionary. For a trifling reason they leave and go off to get employment elsewhere. They want something new, some change; the monotony of work becomes too tedious for them. Still, in spite of this, the greater number of them is faithful to us and
we may truly say that, during these thirty years, our school boys have rendered precious service to the Mission.

The girls came too, but later on. When we first visited the villages, the women and children fled as soon as we drew near. To attract these shy, wild natures something more was wanted than the somewhat rough voice of the missionary. For them the gentle voice of a woman was necessary and, with the voice, a woman's heart, more apt to understand women and children,
to love them, to win them over. Six years after the
foundation of the Mission, the first two Sisters of the
Third Order Regular of Mary arrived (July 1904), and
opened the first girls' school. They spent the early
months waiting, all alone; then two or three girls from
the neighbourhood came timidly along to try to live
under their direction. They were pleased and soon new
companions joined them. At the end of the first year
they were fifteen and the number has gone on increa-
sing ever since.

The young native girls are in no way behind the boys
in intelligence and practical ability. They also quickly
learn to read and write, and know their catechism
better than their rivals over the way.

They too work in the plantations, but the work is of
course measured to their condition and weakness; they
weed, clean up and do a bit of gardening. But it is espe-
cially in house work, in keeping clean the church and the
sacristy that they make themselves useful. The weav-
ing of mats, washing, cooking, milking cows and the
like come naturally to their share and for all this sort
of labour, we must say, they deserve honorable mention.

What about the elder people living in their villages
outside the immediate influence of the missionary?
Evidently they cannot make the same progress as
children who, in our schools, are in more direct contact
with the Fathers and Sisters; they remain generally
rather timid and backward. But at the same time in
their relations with the missionary they show a delight-
ful simplicity; he is their father, their friend. They
tell him everything; stories of the home, of disputes
with their neighbour, difficulties with the whites, espe-
cially with the Government officials. The missionary
must listen to everything, know everything and especially be able to console them and settle everything. The missionary can gain great influence over them, and they will usually do anything he wishes.

These simple souls; rather shy, without much will power, only ask to be directed.

They are invited to the station for the chief festivals

---

Girls coming back from the plantation.

of the year; they need no coaxing, because, for them, these are great events. They look forward to them for a long time and fix the day of their setting out. The most distant among them, living from 25 to 30 miles away, take several days to come. It does not matter; they are never in a hurry, and never have much work to bother them; they leave their villages several days ahead of time. Houses of call, to rest in, are not wanting along the road. The caravan increases in size as it passes through Catholic villages; for all who can walk want to come to the festival.
It is curious and interesting to watch the picturesque troop, walking in Indian file, in the morning, along the sea beach, under the shade of the lofty palm trees, the men and the women in separate groups, as in Palestine of old. The men carry nothing but the inseparable basket hanging from their shoulder; it does not hold much, a little tobacco, some areca nuts, some betel, their rosary beads, a few worthless trinkets and their best » lava-lava « to put on when they reach the station. The women carry on their heads a basket of food, and at their side a sleepy baby held by a girdle slung over the shoulder.

Poor native woman! she owes a deep debt of gratitude to Christianity. From being a slave, a beast of burden, she now feels that she is on an equal footing with her mankind, a free creature with the right of loving and of being loved. She has gained all this by the religion which she has embraced; like the men, she has her place in religious ceremonies; she has the right to enter the same church and share in the same Sacraments. No doubt certain heavy duties are still assigned to her, heavy burdens are still her lot; but there is nothing humiliating in all this; it is the custom of the country and she readily complies.

Religion in a few years has brought about these wonders. In certain parts of the Vicariate, Guadalcanal for instance, there are only a few thousand heathens left. The people are Christian, firmly attached to their religion, they have only to be kept in the right road. Elsewhere the same work goes on, slowly it is true, for the workers are wanting. But we have every reason to hope that in spite of difficulties, ever recurring, all this people of the Solomons, formerly so savage and
barbarous, will become a faithful flock, docile to the voice of its shepherds.

VI. THE COUNTRY; ITS FAUNA AND FLORA.

Should I say anything about the beauty of these islands, which we have been called upon to evangelise? Others have done it or could do it better than I. Let it suffice, as a sort of frame work to the picture our story outlines, to note that the group of the Solomon Islands not only is the most important of the whole Pacific, but can hold its own in beauty of scenery. In this hidden part of the great Southern seas, God has scattered in profusion, more than in other places, the wealth of His works and His gifts. The Solomon archipelago presents to the eyes and to the admiration of navigators and tourists all the beauties of tropical countries joined with the special charm of the most picturesque landscape in the Pacific Isles. As in other parts, we have countless low islands, usually small, real baskets of greenery, linked together by a chain of reefs of coral formation, broken in places by channels of varying depth, thus forming lagoons, often of considerable size; that of New Georgia is said to be the largest in the world. Here the calm of the waters is in striking contrast with the tossing surf on the ocean side.

Beside these low coral islands, placed like an army of attendants, clad in green, acting as a guard and protection from the violent waves of the open sea, rise on high the volcanic islands. With their lofty mountains, austere and gloomy in colour, they have a grand and imposing appearance; they seem to be small bits of continents gone astray on the surface of the waters; they make a deep impression on the trav-
eller, these grandiose heights, intersected by narrow gorges, a continuous succession of abrupt peaks and rounded tops, showing the most curious shapes and mounting gradually to the height of eight or nine thousand feet, all clad in a heavy mantle of green, formed by the excessive growth of the vegetation which nothing can stay.

In islands such as these, where abundant rains, joined to intense heat, necessarily produce a marvellous fecundity, the flora is naturally rich. Palms and ferns of all sorts are its most beautiful ornament. The cocoanut tree, the real king of tropical vegetation, with its light coloured leafage, delicately and artistically designed by nature, usually grows along the shores of the islands and seems to deck them out with lace, showing up beautifully against the darker background of the forests.

Men of botanical science have already gathered a number of plants and flowers unknown elsewhere and more may yet be found.

On the other hand the fauna is poor. Living creatures seem to hesitate to make their homes under these impenetrable thickets, through which the sun and air pass with difficulty.

The crocodile is the undisputed monarch of the lonely mangrove swamps. It seems to delight in the solitude of the marshes and rivers. At first sight it appears to be timid; at the approach of man it plunges into the water. Sometimes it is seen going out to sea by the river mouths. It floats carelessly on the surface of the water and at a distance has the appearance of a log carried along by the current; only the notches of its hide betray it to the practised eye of the native.
It passes from one river to another by sea, but always comes back to the spot it has chosen as its home. When hungry it becomes aggressive. Once, one was seen lying, apparently asleep, on the trunk of a tree at the edge of a river, but it was watching for its prey. A pirogue passed at a certain distance. The monster plunged and disappeared in the water. One would
have thought that it had been frightened. By no means; a few seconds later it rose again quite near and by putting its heavy front paws on the side of the boat overturned it. While the passengers were struggling in the water, it seized one in its powerful jaws and dragged the poor victim off to its lair to devour him at ease.

The birds, among which several kinds of pigeons, parakeets and parakeets are the most common, adorn the thick woods with their vivid plumage; their songs alone break the silence of these forests.

Such are the varied surroundings in the midst of which these Melanesian races have lived for centuries and gained for themselves such a sorry reputation for cruelty and fierceness. Such is the scenery in which the missionary passes his life in the Solomons. On his arrival he is naturally struck and entranced by the beautiful bright green and the exuberance of this tropical vegetation. But, alas, he is soon reminded of stern realities by the conditions of life in these gaudy surroundings. This luxuriant vegetation, these thick forests covering our islands sometimes right down to the sea, are the result of the excessive dampness caused by daily rains. Under the intense heat deadly vapours arise from the earth. «Through these,» as Father Monfat says, «at each breath of the lungs, baneful germs are inhaled which inflame and poison the blood.» The missionary sooner or later gets acquainted with marsh fever; before long it becomes his daily companion. There is no need to enter into details. We shall only quote a few lines written by one of the missionaries who were our forerunners in these islands, three quarters of a century ago. «Not one of us,» he says, «has
escaped the fever and at times its attacks are terrible. Four or five hours of chill, followed by four or five hours of great heat. We have no thermometer to note the height of the fever. When the attack has passed, it leaves us extremely weak, and absolutely unable to do anything. The thin face and its pale colour, the sunken eyes, circled with black, the changed tone of the voice, show that the malady has taken hold of its victim; nourishing food would be necessary, but there is none other than rough native vegetables, for which one feels no appetite.

There is nothing to add or to change in this picture; it is complete. Fevers to-day are as common and as severe as in days of old. With a thermometer we know the rise in temperature, but this does not diminish the illness nor prevent its return. We must simply endure it, with all its consequences.

Of course, after thirty years of island life, the missionary has acquired a certain amount of experience with regard to precautions to take against fever and the treatment to follow. The material side of life has also improved; there is more comfort in the dwellings and the food is better than in the early days. But in spite of all we can do, the marshes still exist almost everywhere, the rains are as continual, nor has the sun lost its heat; the fever-bearing mosquitos are far from disappearing and are always a continual annoyance; in such conditions fever is inevitable. Fortunately the missionary is not frightened by it, he tries to avoid it, but when it pays him a visit, he endures, with as good grace as possible, the attentions of his unwelcome guest. The weakness and extreme lassitude already mentioned, is at its worst just after the fever ceases, and it
never completely disappears. Once in the blood, the germ of the malady does not leave its victim, and, as years go on, its sad results make themselves more felt. The only means of regaining one's lost vigour is a long visit to a better climate. But a missionary is not in the habit of leaving his post, however much he may suffer. He loves his work in spite of all, he wants to live for it and to die at it. He who has given up everything to follow the Master counts as a small thing the sacrifice of his life. He has not crossed the oceans to seek his comfort and live a life of ease; he desired suffering and is content to meet it on his path. So he gets accustomed by degrees to this feverish climate; his courage grows as his strength weakens. He puts up with an existence in which illness is on the watch to seize him at every moment, leaving on his body the too evident marks of its passage. Habit becoming a second nature, he may continue joyously, while suffering, sometimes during many years to do the work of God and to labour for the salvation of souls.

Iakobo, a lazy boy.
CHAPTER IV

First station of the Mission. Rua Sura.

Sura or rather Dhura, according to the pronunciation of the people of the place, makes its first appearance in history in the year of grace 1568. On May 23 of that year, the Spaniards of Mendana, sailing in their brigantine along the north coast of Guadalcanal, saw in passing, two small islands, covered with trees, between Guadalcanal and Malaita. These islands were uninhabited and near them was an islet without any vegetation, probably what to-day is Papari, forming on the north an extension of the two islands of Sura. The Spaniards were unable to guess why no one lived there, while Kubara and Vulelua, two islands nearer the coast, were inhabited. If they had landed, they would probably have discovered that, as the dead had been laid there in their last resting place, the living took great care to keep away.

Sura or Dhura is no doubt a recent name. The people of Ruavatu relate that there was once a fierce battle in these islands between the natives of Malaita and those
of Guadalcanal; whence the islands were called Dhura, which means massacre. As the memory of the natives does not go back very far in the course of ages, it is probable that this battle took place not so very long ago and that in the time of the Spaniards the islands had another name, perhaps Sule, which is the name used for the place to-day by the people of Malaita. The word « Sule » means coral stone, and indeed the islands of Rua Sura are nothing else than a shelf of coral raised only a few feet above the level of the sea. « Sule » also means big and « Kiki » small; thus the larger island is now called Sura Sule and the smaller, Sura Kiki. The group is marked on the English maps as Rua Sura, the two Suras. This name was adopted by the Mission.

**

For the space of three hundred and thirty years, from 1568 to 1898, Sura remained forgotten. On May 21 of this latter year, there arrived on the « Titus », at Gavutu (Florida), Bishop Vidal, Vicar Apostolic of Fiji and administrator of the recently created Prefecture apostolic of the English Solomons, along with three
Fathers and one lay brother of the Society of Mary and nine Catholic natives of Fiji. They brought with them provisions, boards to build a house, and a whaleboat. Thus they had a home on the waves, but nowhere to settle down on land. They were uncertain what they would do after leaving the « Titus », which had now fulfilled its contract with them.

Fortunately Mr Woodford, the Resident Commissioner, showed every kindness to the little Mission and got Mr Nielsen, the owner of Gavutu, to take most of the heavy cargo into his sheds. Mr Nielsen also put one of the rooms of his house at the disposal of the Bishop to enable him to say Mass the next morning, Sunday. This was the first Mass said on Solomon Island territory since the departure of the Marist Fathers from Makira on Sept. 3, 1847; for the Austrians, who, with their chaplain, came on the « Albatross » in 1896, only landed at Guadalcanal to be massacred at the foot of Tatuve Hill (1).

Then one of their fellow passengers on the « Titus », Mr. Butchard, was moved to pity by the plight of the missionary band and offered them hospitality in his house at Vulelua. The next day they all re-embarked on the steamer, with their whaleboat and provisions, and set sail for the little island of Vulelua, distant 28 miles from Gavutu. From there they got a view of

(1) In 1896, a vessel, the « Albatross », came to anchor on the north coast of Guadalcanal at a place called Teteré. A group of Austrian professors set out on an expedition to the interior to explore a rocky peak called the « Lion’s Head » (Tatuve); they were massacred in a gorge at the foot of these mountains. In 1901 the Austrian cruiser, « Leopard », came to anchor in Teteré and a fine granite cross was erected on the sea shore to the memory of these victims of the savagery of the natives.
the islands of Rua Sura, ten miles away across the sea; it was May 23, the 330th anniversary of the day on which these islands had been sighted by the Spaniards.

The steamer was to continue its course to Aola, three miles to the south east and from there to set out for the western islands of the Solomons. Bishop Vidal wished to visit this part of the vicariate entrusted to his care and remained on board along with one Father.

The « Titus » reached Aola in the morning and had no sooner cast anchor than a three-master, the « Chitoor », came in from Sydney under full sail and anchored also at Aola. As a rule the « Chitoor » arranged to visit the Solomons between the voyages of the steamer; this time it fortunately happened that they met. The Bishop knew the captain of the « Chitoor », a Mr Keating; he went on board to pay him a visit and to ask him if he knew any place in the Solomons that could be secured for the Mission.
It turned out that Mr Keating was the owner of the Rua Sura islands. He was quite willing to sell them to the Mission and the matter was at once arranged. A few hours later the "Titus" raised anchor and steamed off to the west.

***

The Fathers who had stopped at Vulelua put up a tent under the shade of a banyan tree; there they said Mass every day. The Bishop came back on June 1. They thanked Mr Butchard for his generous hospitality, and set out on June 6, before daybreak, for Rua Sura. There was a dead calm and they had to row all the time. They had two boats, the whaleboat brought from Sydney and a cutter hired for the occasion. The whaleboat forged ahead and reached Papari before sunset; two hours later the cutter arrived and all landed together on Sura Sule at a spot called Olea.

As in the time of the Spaniards, the island was uninhabited; the only living creatures were the lizards and snakes and a few birds, to say nothing about wasps, mosquitoes and other insects of prey. There were trees, koilos (1), giant gugulas (2), and the dense bush, which had grown underneath, impenetrable for the traveller, but not for the rain. A terrible storm, which lasted several hours, broke over the new arrivals, who seemed to have come only to disturb the city of the dead.

They were lucky to find a shelter in a tumble-down house, sometimes used by fishers from Guadalcanal. The roof of the hovel leaked in very direction; but a

(1) Kalophyllum Inophyllum.
(2) Afzelia Bijuga.
Building a native hut.
comparatively dry place was found between the pouring streams. Such was the taking possession of Sura, the first station and the mother house of all the stations in the South Solomons.

When the storm had passed, they quickly put up two tents, one to be used as a chapel, the other as a living room. The weather was very warm, the thick bush stopping the southerly breeze; so they preferred to take their meals under the shade of an enormous koilo tree, which spread its branches over the shore. Up and down this tree went the lizards, much astonished and deeply interested at the arrival of civilisation in their island. They bent over from on high to look at the plates, forks and spoons and knives; the visitors from below saluted them gaily; they had no hens yet and no eggs to guard against the attacks of these lizards, which are greedy on this point. Thus was sealed the alliance between the civilised and the savage worlds.

They worked hard all day; in the morning, after breakfast, each one went off to the bush, an axe in one hand, a knife in the other. They had soon cleared a space for a house and cut the posts to hold the frame; so that, when the «Chitoor» brought along the boards from Gavutu on June 18, they were ready to build at once. A few weeks later the house was habitable; on Aug. 14, on the verandah, Mass was said and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament given.

**

The missionaries had not come merely to settle down in a desert island and make the acquaintance of the wild animals. Many times they tried to make acquain-
ance with the natives on the coast of Guadalcanal opposite Rua Sura, but they were nearly always driven off; the natives even refused to sell them the food they wanted. They were forced to try elsewhere for better disposed minds. Unluckily at the Mission they only had an open whaleboat, 28 feet long; this was not large enough to travel any distance. They had recourse to a trader and it was arranged that he would bring along ten young natives to Sura; they were of course recruited as workers. Instead of ten, twelve arrived at Sura on Sep. 14; they belonged to the district of Tangarare. The Fathers made good use of the time these natives spent at the station to learn their language. Most of them, led by the Fijians, were courageous enough to venture into the chapel, and when some prayers were translated into their language, they learned them quickly and recited them. Later on when they went back to their own place, they helped very much to make relations easy with their people.

It was something to have twelve natives at Sura; but the work of the Mission did not make much progress. The missionaries should visit the people in their homes, get acquainted with them and persuade them to send their children to the school at Sura. With this end in view, they bought a small cutter; unluckily in July 1889, this was wrecked on a reef at Moli. Then they hired a larger boat, the «Myrtle», a schooner, and with it they went as far as San Cristoval. Finally they bought the «Eclipse», a schooner of 19 tons. Henceforth the sea was no obstacle to the progress of the Mission, but on the contrary helped to spread the good news by carrying its preachers in all directions. In 1889 the stations of Avuavu and Tangarare were founded.
Rua Sura is 80 miles from Makira, where the first missionaries had settled and, in the opposite direction, 85 miles from the small island of St George, the burial place of Bishop Epalle. As soon as they had the means of making long voyages, the Fathers did not fail to make a pilgrimage to these hallowed spots.

In October 1898, and again in February 1899, the «Myrtle» cast anchor in Makira Bay, a magnificent port, a deep inlet, connected with the sea by a narrow channel, with a harbour to the right and to the left. When you go through the entrance and cast anchorage, you no longer see the channel and seem to be in a large lake surrounded on all sides by steep mountains. The scene is stern and gloomy in appearance: not a breath of wind; nothing in sight but a few huts, hidden under the cocoanut palms; a cheerless spot, where death
seems to threaten, without any possible hope of help or chance of flight. Here it was that the first missionaries lived for nearly two years, made acquaintance with the fever, the cruelty of the natives and with death.

The place where they had built their hut could be reached easily only by sea. They had been obliged to hollow out a bit of the mountain to make a place for this house and their work was still visible; a few bricks here and there also marked their passage. One or two elders of the village remembered having seen them some fifty years back. «They were good and gentle,» they said. Under their guidance, the place where Father Crey had been buried was found; on digging, his profession cross and pieces of his rosary were found, but of bones or clothing, nothing.

There were so few natives at Makira that we decided not to settle there. Later on, in 1909, when the evangelisation of San Cristoval was again undertaken, the new station was put at Wanoni Bay, on the other side of the island.

**

In October 1900, the «Eclipse» sailed for Ysabel and the islet of St George. First the Fathers went to the place of the massacre on the shore of the large island. The natives could not or would not give any information as to what had happened.

To discover the remains of the Bishop, the Fathers followed the directions and the plans of Canon Verguet. The hills given as clues were easily found, but the cross cut on the trees had disappeared. For three days, search was made by digging and probing at the place where the body was presumed to lie; all was in vain.
In despair of finding anything they were preparing to go on board when a native gave a final drive into the ground with an iron bar. "There is a hole," he cried, "the bar has gone into a hole." They hastened to the spot, dug very carefully around the iron bar and discovered a bundle of twisted roots amongst which bones appeared. The skull, broken in five places by blows of an axe, was easily recognised, from Canon Verguet's description, as that of Bishop Epalle.

The remains, along with the roots which had protected them, were raised from the natural tomb that Providence had supplied, brought to Sura and enclosed in a coffin. In 1901, the coffin was conveyed to Sydney and the bones were formally identified in the presence of Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney. In 1914 they were sent back to Sura, and then later on brought to Visale, where they are piously treasured.

The "Eclipse" multiplied its voyages. From time to time it appeared in Rua Sura, bringing along ten, twenty, thirty children or young men. They no longer came as workers, but to seek instruction. Not that they had much idea yet as to what religion meant, but the Fathers visiting their district, had shown them books, taught them to spell, a, e, i, o, u; and to get more instruction they went on board the boat to come to Sura. Naturally the books in question, printed in their own tongue, spoke of religion and thus religion, under this mantle of learning, entered, without alarming anyone and fixed itself in their hearts. The first baptism of a native given at Rua Sura took place on June 9, 1901; Petero (the first name given) was a child of ten.
Two days earlier however on June 7, four boys, forming part of the crew of the «Eclipse», had been baptised at Sydney by Cardinal Moran. For the «Eclipse» actually paid a visit to Sydney. It all arose out of an accident; on Jan. 16, 1901, in the morning, the strong northwest wind had driven the vessel on one of the reefs of Sura. Still fit for sea but in need of repairs, it sailed forth on the high seas, with its course laid for Sandy Cape, to the north of Brisbane. On board were one Father and some natives, with a sextant, a chronometer and provisions for a month. The natives in their former voyages had never lost sight of land; when it disappeared from their eyes, they were in despair at the thought that they would never see it again. On April 12, the Father announced that they would see a light in the distance that night; nobody went to sleep. At eleven o'clock far ahead was seen the lantern light of the Sandy Cape lighthouse. The Father gained the renown of a prophet, confidence was restored to all hearts and, on April 23, they entered Sydney Harbour. This voyage was the talk of the town; a collection was got up, which paid for the repairs of the schooner and towards the middle of September the «Eclipse» returned home and moored at the station of Tanganare.

Alas! it was wrecked on April 30 of the following year. A high sea flung it high on the reef of Mataloki, where it went to pieces, literally sawn to bits by the coral reefs on each side. For more than four months efforts were made to refloat it and get it out of the hole into which it had fallen; but without success and it had to be abandoned.

During the stay of the «Eclipse» at Sydney and
after its shipwreck, the Fathers in Sura were in great difficulties for want of a boat. The missionaries of the stations of Avuavu and Tangarare had to be visited and supplied with food. For these trips there was only the whaleboat already spoken of. What had been considered too risky in the beginning now became necessary; they had to embark in this cockle shell of a boat and travel 60, 90, and 100 miles. On Aug. 14, they were at sea in a bad spot where the opposing currents clashed and raised high waves. They were steering to the south-east; with the wind strong from that direction, the boat was naturally shipping big seas. Suddenly a very big wave swept down on the vessel and swamped it two thirds full; all set to work bailing out with hats and shoes and hands. Then a second wave full first cousin to the other came dashing along threatening to sink the boat laden with stores. There was just time to bout ship and put the wind aft. The Blessed Virgin brought her children back to Sura for the Feast of the Assumption.

***
Bishop Vidal, being at the same time Vicar Apostolic of Fiji and administrator of the Solomons, could not remain permanently at Rua Sura. He made three visits there, remaining a few months each time; the last time, he left with an attack of fever and dysentery. It was decided to appoint a Prefect apostolic and Father Bertreux, Pro-Vicar at Fiji, was sent in November 1902 with the title of Visitor; then in July 1903 he was named Superior of the Mission and in August he became Prefect Apostolic. Soon after, the stations of Visale (March, 1904) and Marau (October, 1904) were founded and about the same time the Sisters of the Third Order of Mary were installed at Tangarare.

A small schooner, the « Verdelais », had been bought at Sydney to replace the « Eclipse ». From 1903 to 1909 this vessel was the only means for visiting the stations of the Mission. Very often in the Solomons there are strong winds followed by a dead calm; with a sailing ship, in a calm, you stay where you are, while, if there is a head wind, with the current perhaps also against, you make very little headway. It happened on one occasion that the « Verdelais » took 31 days to go round Guadalcanal, 200 miles in all, about seven miles a day. It had the ill luck to be becalmed going from east to west and to have the south wind against when coming back. There was a sick Father on board who never stirred from the cabin or even from his berth.

The foundation of the station of Wanoni Bay, at San Cristoal, in September 1908, increased the difficulties; and, the « Verdelais » being too small for the extending needs of the Mission, it was decided to get another « Verdelais », bigger than the first, 30 tons, and fitted with a motor engine; thus the progress of
The interior of the Rua Sura Chapel.
the boat would not be entirely dependent on the wind. The new «Verdelais» was to be blessed at Sydney by Cardinal Moran. Now this was in 1909, the year in which Pope Pius X pronounced Joan of Arc Blessed. It was decided to call the new vessel the «Jeanne d'Arc» instead of «Verdelais». On July 25, the «Jeanne d'Arc» arrived at Sura from Sydney.

By this time (1909), the large island, Sura Sule, was entirely planted with cocoanut palms. Sura is a coral island, the best sort of land for cultivating this palm; the missionaries had determined to take advantage of this and work had been started from the very beginning. According as the giant trees of the bush were cut down, they were replaced by cocoanut palms, which to-day provide a small revenue for the Mission.

***

As a place for a school, an uninhabited island like Sura offers advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is to have a neutral ground where everyone is an outsider, for which one has no likes or dislikes. A second is not to be disturbed by visitors and to have everyone at hand. The great disadvantage is not to have any native food or almost none; this must be sought elsewhere at great expense or be replaced by rice bought at Sydney; then there is the shortage of water; happily Sura, placed between Malaita and Guadalcanal, is often watered by the rains; with reservoirs to catch the rain flowing from the roofs, we could face a drought of eight or nine days; beyond that, we had first to put ourselves on rations and then go three miles by sea to get water at Guadalcanal.
There was no difficulty at Sura about having pupils; from 1899 to 1910, there were always present on an average from thirty to forty, and more than three hundred young people passed through it. During this period there were 83 baptisms of adults and 33 of children, 116 in all. Some got tired of the rule which they were obliged to follow and left the lonely island of Sura.

Bishop John B. Bertreux.
before being baptised, but they usually completed their instruction and were baptised elsewhere.

In 1910 two important works were founded at Sura, the school for catechists and the printing office.

The mission was increasing, a certain number of villages wanted to become Catholic and there were only twelve Fathers, one lay brother and four Sisters, distributed among six stations. It was necessary to strengthen this force by lay native helpers, who would live in the more distant villages; these helpers would begin the preparation of the catechumens for baptism and of the faithful for the other Sacraments. The future catechists were to come and spend two years at Sura to get the necessary instruction and training. Seven families and a few young men were the first to answer the appeal of the Prefect Apostolic; soon after, four families and twelve young men were added. This was enough for the needs of the moment.

In 1901, a small abridged catechism in the Solomon tongue had been printed in Fiji; in 1905, a book, with prayers, hymns, the full catechism and a short life of Our Lord, was produced by the Westmead Press of Sydney. In 1910, another book was edited from the same press, containing an abridgment of the Old Testament and the history of the primitive Church. There was great difficulty in getting books printed at such a distance, in a language unknown to the printers. We wanted, in addition, to have a Catholic news sheet, with just enough elements, literary and scientific, to train our natives and gradually raise them from their state of ignorance. For this purpose we needed a printing press on the spot; we bought one; some of the young natives were taught how to set type and to work the
machine and in January 1911 the first number of "Turupatu" (News) appeared.

Later on, in 1921, a larger machine was bought, so as to have reprints of the works mentioned above, for the stock had run out; this work was carried through in 1922.

***

In July 1912, the Prefect Apostolic received the news at Sura that he was to be made a Bishop, as the Prefecture of the South Solomons had been raised to the rank of a Vicariate Apostolic. Thus the new Mission was linked up with the old and Bishop Bertreux became the successor of Bishops Epalle and Collomb. The episcopal consecration of Bishop Bertreux took place in France, at Nantes, his native town, on October 28 of the same year.

As often happens, God showed His love by sending heavy trials. On his return from France (Sept. 1913), Bishop Bertreux heard of the recent death of Father Pellion, at Visale, and of Sister M. Salome, at sea, on board the "Jeanne d'Arc", while coming from Avuavu to Sura. In 1915, at Sura itself, dysentery carried off Father Bertheux and Father Allet. In 1916, Father Teytard died at Visale and Sister M. Simone at Avuavu.

In 1916, Bishop Bertreux was so ill at Sydney that it was thought prudent to give him the last Sacraments. He recovered and returned to the Solomons, but he had to go back to Sydney in 1917. In 1918, he was in Sura again, but during the last months of the year, after making the round of confirmation, he became very ill. The fever clung to him and on Jan. 4, 1919, he died almost suddenly at Sura. God found that he had ac-
accomplished his work and called his soul to receive its reward. A few days later, Sister M. Peter also died of fever at Visale.

In 1920, when Bishop Raucaz received his nomination as titular Bishop of Telepte and Vicar Apostolic of the South Solomons, the staff of the Mission was reduced to twelve Fathers, two lay brothers and eleven Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Mary. This was a falling off, for the number of Fathers had at one time risen to eighteen and that of the Sisters to fourteen. From 1920 to 1923 one lay brother and three Sisters came to increase the number, but still the Sisters only numbered thirteen, as Sister M. Bartholomew died at Sura in 1921.

From 1910 to 1919, the schools at Sura had, on an average, fifty pupils who remained for two years. During that period over two hundred children had received instruction there. After the war on account of the rise in the price of provisions, it was found impossible to provide for this number of pupils and they were sent back to the stations to which they belonged.

From 1910 to 1923 there were 49 baptisms of children and, of adults, 103, making a total of 152. In all we had at Sura a total of 268 baptisms. The number of pupils who had come in turn from all stations to receive instruction was about 600.

Such was the result of the work done in Rua Sura during 25 years. Now the headquarters are at Visale and the actual mission work is spread over the other stations. These have developed and the little island has no longer any of the Mission folk living on it; but the plantations still bring help to the Mission.
CHAPTER V

GUADALCANAL

1. AVUAVU

The large island of Guadalcanal stretches from the northwest to the southeast for a distance of about 90 miles and it is from 25 to 30 miles in breadth. The two long coasts of the island are completely different in appearance. The north side is, as a rule, flat and spreads, over more than half the island, in immense plains, sometimes more than fifteen miles deep, to the foot of the great range of mountains which intersect its length and rise in some places to a height of 8,000 feet. The sea, as a rule, is calm; the surrounding islands, the countless small islets and long stretches of reefs, gradually lessen the force of the waves from the ocean, and thus fairly secure anchorage is available on this coast, at least in the season of the trade winds.

On the other coast facing the south, there is neither island nor reef; there is nothing to stem the force of the waves, which, rolling in from the deep ocean, break in
enormous piles of surf on the sands or rocks of the shore. During the stormy period the ocean has a most gloomy appearance and the violence of the waves dashing on the coast can only be measured by the damage they cause. The mountains rise to a great height above the sea quite close to the coast; by their imposing mass they seem to bid perpetual defiance to the ocean. There is no landing possible on this coast except in calm weather; there is no anchorage, no shelter anywhere, from the extreme eastern point to the western coast of the island.

This island of Guadalcanal, being quite close to Rua Sura, the cradle of the Mission, was naturally the first to which the efforts of the missionaries were directed.
But the early attempts on the nearer shore having failed, the missionaries were obliged to go further along the coast.

It was the southern coast, the stormy one, which the missionary next visited and in this part of the island the first regular station of the Mission was founded. Fortunately Providence took into account the inexperience of the missionaries in this new country; it brought them to this shore, usually inaccessible, at the time of the year most favourable for sea travel, and it put in their way, at the right moment, natives of these regions, who readily agreed to act as guides to the pioneers of the apostolates in this new country.

A small piece of ground was bought at Marau in November 1898, scarcely six months after the foundation. In the following month more ground was bought in the district of Moli, about thirty miles from Marau. Being well received by the natives, the missionaries felt encouraged to continue the exploration of this coast.

On April 28, 1899, feast of Blessed Chanel, first martyr of Oceania, the schooner of the Mission the « Eclipse » cast anchor in front of Longu, about a dozen miles to the west of Moli. Ground was again bought at a place called Avuavu. The missionaries were welcomed as such and the people promised to send their children to the school, when it would be started. Although in such cases it is not by any means prudent to trust to first appearances, we cannot doubt that, after such a sympathetic reception, which they had been far from expecting, the missionaries went away with a well grounded hope for the future.

Avuavu was destined to be, on this large island, the first place chosen by Providence to receive the apostles
of the Gospel. We shall follow their adventures and we shall see that it was through much trial and suffering that the faith was successfully planted and took deep root there.

**

Avuavu has something of the wild stamp that marks all this coast. On the south, the sea, nearly always stormy, forms a natural boundary; behind, on the north, at a few hundred yards distance, the horizon is blocked by a lofty chain of mountains, only broken by a large torrent, which runs along the border of the Mission territory.

In the month of June 1899, the mission schooner, profiting by a few days of calm weather, came back to visit the Moli and Longu districts. The natives seemed to continue in their friendly attitude; it was therefore decided to start at once on the foundation of a station at Avuavu. Some Fiji catechists were left there to prepare the way for the definite arrival of the missionary; they were not long in making friends with their neighbours. Nevertheless these people were heathens, cannibals perchance, capricious and fickle in character, naturally taking as their only guide their animal instincts, unaware of anything higher. An experienced mind could guess that they might become enemies suddenly on the least clash of interests; the missionary had to use much tact and forbearance. At this period the natives had no idea of any authority higher than their own and showed all the arrogance of free, proud, pagans.

In October of this year 1899, the first two missionaries arrived to take possession of the station and begin their
labour. From the interior and from along the coast the natives came in great numbers to see the new arrivals. An exchange of presents paved the way to friendship.

But the work of God is only founded and only prospers on trials and sufferings. Already a few months before, the schooner, which had brought the missionary to visit his Fijian catechists, had been unable to hold its anchorage at Moli. Flung on the coast, half broken by the rocks, it was at last swept out to sea by a heavy wave and sunk. It was only a material loss, it is true, but a very severe one at the beginning of a mission. This was the first sacrifice of the Mission to this pitiless sea; later on others were to come.

The missionaries were not long installed before they made acquaintance with the marsh fever, which came at a most awkward time to thwart their hopes and their plans for the future. Its attacks paralysed their strength and in a few months their health was completely wrecked. In 1900, hardly six months after the foundation, one of the missionaries, worn out by fever, was compelled by stern necessity to leave his post. The other held on for a few months more; in June, he too had to go elsewhere to try to get back his health.

**

Avuavu was deprived of its missionaries. No one could say what was to become of it, for the conversion of a people, according to the ordinary ways of Providence, depends chiefly on the presence of him who has received a special charge from on high for this end, the missionary. However the people of this district had not rejected the advances of God; there was hope that the post would soon be re-established.
Towards the end of March 1901, a new missionary came to Avuavu. A modest chapel in boards was built at that date and the work of evangelisation resumed. This first church was to know many gloomy days before being filled with a crowded congregation. It stood erect in the midst of a heathen population, a continuous appeal to souls of good will. To-day it is still there, proclaiming, by its enlargement, that a great change has taken place in the country.
What can a missionary do in the midst of corrupt people who make many promises, but have not the courage to keep them and cannot bring themselves to give up their old heathen customs? Humanly speaking he seems to do very little for the conversion of these souls which are his charge; the months pass and there is no apparent result. In spite of all, the missionary has confidence in Him who has sent him; he prays, he suffers, he offers up the Holy Sacrifice for the conversion and the salvation of his people. His presence in the midst of these heathens is a living sermon. He knows that it is only by patience that the conversion of souls is gained. The seed of the divine word sometimes takes long to germinate and bring forth fruit.

Another missionary came to Avuavu at the beginning of 1902 and more energetic work could be undertaken with the natives. The school, which is the essential work for the training of solid Christians, was at last begun. Several children, chiefly from the interior, came to make a stay, more or less prolonged. Thanks to their help, the land was cultivated and cocoanut palms planted; thus the material future of the station was secured. The mountain region gave abundant supplies of yams for the support of the school children.

On the other hand, the missionary could not remain always at the station. He had to try to extend his sphere of influence and make acquaintance with distant villages. In this district the stormy sea does not give much help in getting from one place to another. The seashore, sandy, in many places full of rocks, always hot, is the only available road to reach the numerous villages which are found by the sea.

About twenty miles to the west of Avuavu live an
important tribe called the Malageti. The missionaries had often heard of this people and often too had it in their minds to pay them a visit. One day they set out, along with some of their boys, but unluckily were unable to reach the place; the rivers, changed into raging torrents by the rains on the hills, barred the way; they had to return with a failure to chronicle. But their effort became known and in these far away villages the natives began to talk about the missionaries of Avuavu. Thus little by little the good news spread afar; it was to bear fruit in God's hour.

In the mean time the station was being organised. Still conversions were slow to come and were not numerous. The missionaries saw that the apostolate would be difficult at Avuavu and along this southern coast. The natives seemed quite ready to accept the faith; they even came to the church services; but they would not consent to give up their heathen practices and even prevented their children from coming to the school. The only ones remaining faithful were a few children from the interior; these after some time were sufficiently instructed to be baptised. By a spirit of opposition the children of the coast remained in their villages; they waited their own time or rather the hour of God.

The people of the district of Moli had no intercourse with those of Avuavu; they had sold land to the Mission but did not mean to have any dealings with the missionary except at Moli itself. It was thought advisable to try to found a second station in this district and a missionary from Avuavu was appointed to begin the work

**
The other missionary was thus left alone at his post. Fortunately he had the help of a fine catechist, a native of Malaita, who, converted and baptised in Fiji, had returned to the Solomons with the hope of working for the conversion of his countrymen. His name was Aloisio; a fervent Christian, he was always a valuable support to the missionary and a faithful guardian. Events soon took place which gave occasion to show his fidelity, skill and devotedness.

When we consider the vengeful character of these natives, it would be very surprising if, at some time or another, the missionary did not incur their fury, even in the exercise of his own rights.

Towards the end of October 1904, a difficult situation arose. Natives, sent home from Queensland, were landed at Avuavu; the chief of the village of Longu, to which Avuavu formerly belonged, claimed right of toll, as he had been accustomed to do in the past. But the Father thought it his duty to oppose this, because these natives had landed in Mission territory. The black chief was deeply vexed at this action, which deprived him of a gain which he looked on as a right. He went off, hate in his heart, swearing to take revenge on the missionary.

He had not enough courage to carry out any attack himself, but secretly sought helpers to murder the Father. These he easily got by promising them a large share in the plunder of the Mission station.

A few days later, a great crowd of natives from the bush came to the station and behaved very suspiciously. The faithful Aloisio, well acquainted with native ways, warned the missionary, but the latter would not suspect any treachery; he was well accustomed to natives
Poitakotsa, bush village in Guadalcanal.
coming and going. So he went off to the plantation with a few of his boys. This should have made the work of the bush natives an easy matter. Still there was no attack made and, not long after, the visitors left the station and went back to the bush.

What had happened was this: the murderers, afraid of this Malaita man, determined to get his head first. Once rid of him, the little business of the missionary and the few boys would be easily settled. But while the Father went off to the plantation, Aloisio made no appearance; he remained shut up in his house, watching, gun in hand, the movements of the enemy. From his lookout post, nothing escaped his eye. The retainers of the Longu chief, not seeing Aloisio anywhere about, felt themselves menaced by this man, who refused to appear; they became alarmed and at last made off, full of shame at their failure. The plot had failed, thanks to the catechist, and the life of the missionary was saved. Later on it got about that these bush people had not much enthusiasm for their errand, because their deities had not given a favourable answer to their appeals and no great success had been promised to them. However it was thought prudent to inform the Government of what had happened and not long after a police force landed at Avuavu. The chief of Longu, was arrested and sent to prison for a year, along with his brother, who was concerned in the plot. To prevent any new attempt, some of the Longu children were sent as hostages to Rua Sura, during the period of detention of the two criminals. The result of this act of justice was that for some time the position of the missionary among these vengeful people seemed critical.
The time of trial for Avuavu was far from being ended. In April 1905, the whaleboat of the station, when returning from a trip to Sura foundered at sea, some miles off the coast of Moli. Two boys of the crew, natives from villages in the interior, perished in the waves, probably seized by sharks. The others, after a long swim of three hours, reached land, quite exhausted, but their lives were saved. The deaths angered the natives of the interior who so far had been the only ones to show any sympathy to the missionary. They insisted on being paid for the loss of the two victims and seemed to accuse the new religion of having caused this misfortune.

After these unhappy incidents, the missionary, worn out, had to leave his post and seek a more temperate climate to recover his shattered health.
* * *

Again the station became a body without a soul; but to give it an appearance of life, Aloisio remained there, sole but faithful guardian, during six long months. It was not till the following December (1905), that a new missionary came along. He had the hard task of soothing the minds of the natives and of giving a renewal of life to the unlucky station. He went to visit distant villages on the west coast; the people gave him a good reception and, in one, the chief promised to accept the religion. But alas! a passing visit of the Father can only produce good results if there are trained catechists to develop the fruits gained by this visit. The Protestants profited by our state of inferiority in this respect to install one of their teachers in a place where the Father had got an excellent reception. Later on when the chief saw the Catholic religion taking root in the neighbouring villages, he regretted his failure to keep his promise. But he had not enough strength of character to drive out the religion which he had himself admitted of his own will. However he was always very friendly towards the Fathers and God had pity on him; for when he felt death drawing near he had the courage to reject the Protestant catechist and to summon a Catholic one from a neighbouring village to his death bed.

To promote the faith, the missionary must visit his people often, get them to know him and show that he takes an interest in them. These are natural means which he must employ to spread the Gospel. But God’s views are not man’s views. The measure of trial had not yet been filled for Avuavu, for hardly three
months after his arrival, the new Father fell sick and in a few days was reduced to a helpless condition. This state lasted fifteen months, long months of physical suffering, added to the distress of seeing the work of God waiting to be done, with no means of doing it. However, a confrère was sent to take charge of the station and keep the poor invalid company; but in his turn, sickness laid him low and Avuavu became a hospital. Finally both were obliged to leave, one in April, the other in July. Once more Avuavu was without a missionary (1907).

At Moli the state of affairs was very little better; the want of missionaries caused the temporary giving up of this post in April 1907.

***

In January 1908, a missionary was again sent to Avuavu and, in the following August, another was sent to help him. A new era began for this station which for ten years had suffered so many trials. From this time two missionaries were in permanent residence and the days of neglect and solitude which it had gone through were over. The station of Moli was attached to that of Avuavu.

The newcomers had a lot of work to do to put things in order. The bush had encroached on the plantation and white ants had done their work of destruction in the buildings; these were ruins which they had to repair the best way they could. On the religious side things were still worse; everything had to be done over again.

The chief work at the start of a mission station is the school. Up to this time Avuavu had not possessed a regular one. The missionary had many difficulties to
overcome in order to attract the children and keep them: the opposition of the parents, the difficulty of procuring food for the boys, and also the attraction of recruiting vessels, which during the calm season came along this coast looking for labourers.

Another unfortunate incident took place in the year 1909, which led to the intervention of the Government;

this was the pillage of the station of Moli and the profanation of sacred linen. Some penalty was necessary, but the missionaries asked that it should be light, so as to leave no bitterness behind it; it should even show these heathens how generous the missionaries were. All that was required from them was to send some of their children to the school. After much hesitation, the bush natives brought two along; these were taught and baptised at Rua Sura. The coast natives gave six, who remained at Avuavu; these were the first boys of the station school. One fine day, it is true, they ran
off home, starting a game which for a long time was a speciality of Avuavu. But anyhow the end was obtained, the school was founded and carried on. During the years following, it continued to function and there was always a certain number of children at the station, a number which varied between ten and twenty. Every month new faces appeared while old ones vanished and the work had to be begun again and again. Steadfastness of purpose is unknown among our heathens and the opposition of the parents was not calculated to make the children esteem school life. Every means was taken by the natives to dissuade the children from coming; so that, when, in certain cases, constancy was shown, it could be regarded as an act of heroism.

School work was not the only duty of the missionary; he had to go and visit those who could not or would not come to him. The villages of the coast were visited in turn. At Bagerau, a village not far from the station, a chief was converted and his conversion was sincere and edifying. As it was his privilege among the heathens to offer sacrifice to the spirits, he had to give up profitable functions; he did so with remarkable self-denial. One day he came to the Father to say that he wanted to give up all his possessions in order to be more free to practise his religion; a neophyte's fervour, which the missionary felt bound to moderate. While he was a catechumen, he was found one day at the foot of the altar complaining out loud to the Master about the delay there was in giving him baptism. Once baptised, to the end of his life he kept a deep faith and a great respect for the priest. When he paid a visit to the station his first word was, « I am going at once to the church to salute the Master. » At home he was often
entreated to resume his old time heathen duties. « You know that I am a Christian and still you ask for my services; I am going to oblige you, follow me ». And then, over the field of yams or first fruits, he would, as a good Christian, make a big sign of the Cross, adding, « This is my new method of invoking the blessing of heaven. »

From the year 1910, the movement towards conversion became more marked. Parents brought their newly born children to be baptised; humble chapels were put up in the villages. The Protestants were by no means idle on their side and this double pressure had some good in it; the people were in a way forced to make a choice.

We have already mentioned the populous centre of the Malageti. The Catholic religion began to take root and grow there during the year 1911. Two Protestant bodies were already installed; so that it was not without difficulty and much up hill work that the true faith was enabled to penetrate. The missionary went there after the feast of Easter. To help in the good work he brought with him a young native who was full of faith and especially full of good will; but humanly speaking there was but little that he could do, for he was blind. Here was renewed a story not unusual in many foundations: that it is with means apparently weak and insignificant that God accomplishes His work. This blind man was the apostle of Malageti. Some years later he was crushed by a falling tree; while dying he managed to say to those who rushed to his aid, « I am dying, my end has come, I have pointed out the way to you, follow my example. » A small chapel was built in the district and when it was blessed over sixty people were received into the Church.
Church of Avuavu, after Mass.
During the year 1912, an important event took place at Avuavu: the founding of a convent. As long as nothing is done for the conversion of the heathen women, there can be no serious progress in the faith. With them, nuns alone can exert a real and lasting influence. It was in the month of May that the first three Sisters landed at Avuavu. Two girls, only, were waiting for them to form the first germ of a school. This school too was to pass through a period of trial.

From the time of the arrival of the Sisters the influence of the faith grew more and more in the hearts of the people. They began to understand the duties which it imposes and to submit to them.

Malageti first gave the impulse to the movement of conversions on a large scale. In 1915 the Catholics there numbered a hundred; the old chapel was too small and a new one was built. The missionary himself went over to direct the work. When finished, it was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception: it was large enough to hold all the people of the neighbourhood, even those who did not belong to the faith. The Immaculate Conception was to be victorious over the demon and bring about the triumph of the reign of Christ. This result was accomplished more rapidly than one would have foreseen.

By chance, as it would seem, the chief of a Protestant village, a Protestant himself, was visiting the station of Tangarare, by this time thoroughly Catholic. It happened to be Christmas Eve and he was present at the religious celebrations. He was, one might say,
thunderstruck by the edifying spectacle of the crowds of people at Holy Communion during this mysterious night which recalls the birth of the Saviour of the world. Constrained to admit to himself, « This is the true religion », he went back to his village, an apostle of the religion which he had formerly learned to detest. With his usual enthusiasm, he spread his belief among his people and before very long a small chapel was built beside the Protestant one, which soon lay idle, an empty temple. Under these conditions conversions were rapidly made. At each of his visits the missionary was delighted to find his large chapel of the Immaculate Conception quite filled.

This village of Malageti is situated at the extreme west of the district of Avuavu. The other coast villages which had been wavering till then, were brought over by the sight of the crowds of Catholics going to the station to celebrate their feast days.

Although the natives of the interior had sent children to the mission school, they were slow in answering the call of the missionaries, remaining for a long time deaf to all appeals. But in 1918 a great forward step was taken; chapels sprang up here and there in the mountains; from the villages scattered on the slopes came calls for baptism. In 1919 a good number of this mountain folk was admitted to it and they became children of God and of our Holy Mother Church. To this day they have remained fervent Christians and there is every hope that they will be among our best and most fervent Catholics.

In 1923, the station of Avuavu celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation. The harvest which it has produced during these years is not perhaps extremely
rich in apparent fruits, but those which it has given are very consoling and are the more highly valued on account of the sacrifices which they have cost. After twelve years of existence, the station could only count 200 baptisms. But in 1927, the number was 2040, and more than 350 children had passed through the schools.

---

2. TANGARARE

In the order of foundation of mission stations, Tangarare takes second place, for Avuavu began two months before. Yet it was destined in a few years to become the most important of the island of Guadalcanal. From Tangarare, as we have seen, there arrived at Sura, a short time after its foundation, the first twelve boys, who, recruited as labourers, became the first children of the school and the first catechumens of the Mission. Thus it came about that the language of Tangarare was the first one learnt by the missionaries; gradually it became known in most of the island. In it were printed the first Catholic books of the Solomon tongue and, in spite of the diversity of dialects spoken in the various parts of the Vicariate, it has, in a way, become our official language.

It was on May 26, 1899, exactly a year after the arrival of the missionaries in the Solomons, that land was bought at Tangarare. Situated on the west coast of Guadalcanal, it lies about the centre of this part of the coast, which, starting at Cape Hunter, goes slanting towards the north to reach the most western point, Cape Nagle. This part of the island has a character of its
own. We do not find, as on the north coast, vast plains starting from the foot of the mountains and ending at the sea in long lines of monotonous sandy shore, with wide and shallow bays, scarcely separated from one another here and there by low lying points; nor again is it the steep, abrupt shore of the south coast, where the mountains overhang and tower above the sea, giving it a stern, austere character. This west coast is full of deep narrow channels, opening out into graceful bays, deep harbours, with high reefs as borders and narrow points, each jutting out to the sea like the prow of a ship. All these bays give excellent anchorage during the season of the southeast winds; but when the northwest winds blow, this coast is exposed to the full force of the sea and all the fury of the gale.

The station of Tangarare is on one of these points of land; its true name, «Sunana», bears this meaning, since in the language of the place it signifies, extremity, point of land. Tangarare is the name of the river which, coming from far inland, runs through the mission property, fertilising the plain and giving the school boys a splendid place for bathing in fresh water.

Though the land was bought in May 1899, the missionaries did not take possession at once; two natives of Fiji were left to look after the property and make acquaintance with the folk around. It was not till June 1900 that two missionaries arrived, Fathers Guitet and Guilloux; the first remained only a few months; his health mined by fever, he had to return to Fiji, where he died not long afterwards. Father Guilloux took charge and endured all the privations and sufferings incidental to the beginning of a new station; he showed himself fully equal to the task and worked wonders.
He was indeed a fine type of missionary. Endowed with a strong constitution, full of life and energy, amiable and bright by nature he soon succeeded in winning the sympathy of this heathen people by his tact, courtesy and devotedness. He had only been a few months at the station and had hardly had time to learn the language when there were already forty boys gathered round him; they were labourers, it is true, but the Father looked on them rather as his children and his first catechumens and he was not far wrong. His bright temper, his good humour and infectious high spirits led him to be with them as much as possible; he went with them to the bush, armed with an axe or a knife, and joined in the work of clearing the ground. He was fond too of taking part in their games and their fishing expeditions. Of these, one of the most interesting to the Father was turtle fishing by night. Gathered in groups on the sandy shore, the boys waited patiently, often for many hours, for the physicalological
moment, when the turtle, rising from the depths of the sea, would come to the shore to make a hole in the sand and lay its eggs. As soon as it made its appearance, it was surrounded, energetically seized by its fins and turned over on its back. This left it helpless, unable to move and ready to be cut up and cooked. Then the boys yelled and howled savagely, performing, at the same time, the wildest antics of joy at their victory. Father Guilloux, needless to say, shared in the common jubilation; he was glad at the joy of his children. Not that a missionary can have personally much pleasure to be in the company of unmannered, uneducated folks. But by living with them, he becomes better acquainted with the native mind, and the sad condition of these poor creatures only increases his affection for them. Under the rough hide of the savage, he discovers sympathetic souls whom he longs to lead to God. By his never failing kindness and unbounded devotedness he quickly becomes their friend.

Such qualities in a young missionary make for great things in the future; but here we have another example that the ways of God are not the ways of man. This valiant missionary, whose sole aim was to devote himself to his people, met with a tragic end, when everyone looked for a long and fruitful career. He fell a victim to that ocean which in the history of our Missions in Oceanica has claimed so many.

The story we are about to tell is one of the most sorrowful in the records of the South Solomons. We give it in a letter, written by Father Pellion, who at the time was Father Guilloux's companion at Tangarare. The letter was published in the «Annals of the Propagation of the Faith» for March 1903.
In 1902, the mission schooner «Eclipse», after having been refitted at Sydney, was back in the Solomons. Everything seemed to promise that the Mission was going to develop and make rapid progress. Then it was that God allowed it to be overwhelmed with new misfortunes.

«Grievous trials,» writes Father Pellion, June 10, 1902, «have just fallen on our Mission. We were living quietly in our dear station of Tangarare; the boys were docile and the elder people almost amiable. There were still some clouds; but if there had been no clouds, the sun would have been too hot. On the evening of April 29, a piece of good news reached us; the sail of the «Eclipse» had been seen afar, shining in the setting sun. Our boys shouted with joy; though we were more reserved, we were by no means less pleased; a visitor was coming — Father Rouillac. The wind was not favourable. «Not till to-morrow,» we said, «when we get up, shall we see the «Eclipse» at anchor in our small bay.» We little thought that our misfortunes were just about to begin.

«The next day there was no sign of the «Eclipse». We thought that she had stopped somewhere to pick up boys. On May 1st, we were still scanning the horizon, when, towards nine o'clock, some natives arrived, out of breath with running; they cried out, «The Eclipse has gone down, the schooner is wrecked.» We speedily summoned our best men and launched our boats. Six miles from here we came on the poor boat, high on a reef, while Father Rouillac, up to his waist in the water, was trying, with the help of his confrère, to float her. By this time about 150 or 200 natives had gathered on the shore and the reef, yelling shrilly,
but absolutely refusing to give any help to the missionaries, and stealing all they could. »

The « Eclipse », on the evening of April 29, had cast anchor in the bay of Kopau. The wind was blowing strong from the southeast and the waves were breaking in heavy surf on the reefs to the north of the harbour.

The channel between the sea and the bay is narrow; to get out with such a strong wind blowing was a difficult manoeuvre. On the 30th, in the morning, the « Eclipse » tried to leave the bay. Just at the critical moment, when she was in the channel, a fierce gust of wind swept along; an attempt was made to steer on another tack, but unluckily the schooner did not answer the helm and soon drifted into the waters close to the reef. They cast anchor, but the chain broke at once.
Nothing more could be done, and the vessel was soon flung up on the reef.

The poor schooner was in a desperate position, it seemed impossible to salve her. For many weeks the missionaries tried to get her afloat, but it was no use. Her loss was now certain. However, it was only a material loss about which we should not have worried beyond measure, when other trials came which wounded the mission more severely.

« On May 12, one of our boys died suddenly. The strange circumstances of his death made us suspect that he had been poisoned; still we had no means of being sure about the fact. But our boys and the natives of the neighbourhood had only one word on their tongues, « The vele! it is the vele which has killed Gabriel. » Now the vele is a sacred stone over which diabolic invocations have been made, and it has power, think the natives, to kill rapidly and without any illness, indeed, in circumstances exactly resembling the case of our lad. You see the consequences: « The vele », said our savages, « has power even over those who have been baptised; therefore it is more powerful than the God of the missionaries; so they are wrong when they say that Satan has no power over those who have embraced their religion; therefore, they are telling lies and a person is not safe with them. »

« This death grieved Father Guilloux very much. He liked the boy and furthermore he was afraid that the fear of the vele might make the others run away or might prevent parents from allowing any other children to come to our school. Alas! the poor Father never dreamt that he himself was going to cause a far greater sorrow to the Mission.
« On May 27, Father Guilloux, with another confrère who had come on the schooner, got into a boat, along with a Fijian and two Solomon boys, to go to the place of the shipwreck. The sea was rough and I drew his attention to it, but he assured me that he would remain inside the line of reefs most of the time and would go ashore for the most dangerous part of the trip; I made no further objection and they went on their way.

« Towards eight o’clock I was in the garden, when a boy came rushing along, « The boat sank, » he cried, « Father Guilloux is dead (e maté). » I hesitated at first, for the word « maté » is very common in native
talk. However I started at once for Kokomuruka, where the boy told me the accident had occurred. Alas! when I met the other Father there could no longer be any doubt.

"As far as Ndumu", he told me, "about three miles from the station, all went well. There the waves were high and we thought of stopping. But as we were only about a hundred yards from our landing place, we went on. We had almost reached the shore, when, in the middle of the last channel, an immense wave broke over us and swamped the boat. Thrown into the water, we struck out for the shore, but the current was very strong and Father Guilloux was soon exhausted and carried out to sea. I strove to help him but my strength was gone; I called to the Fijian, Benedito, who was trying to right the boat. In two seconds he took my place with Father Guilloux, while I, at the risk of getting smashed on the coral, made frantic efforts to reach the shore, and at last managed to touch ground. When I turned round, to my great grief, I saw Father Guilloux and the boys floating away from the shore instead of making towards it. Giving them up for lost, I gave absolution in extremis, and called on the people of Ndumu for help. They came at once but it was too late. Benedito, though he had risked death, had been unable to bring back the Father. Exhausted as he was, he could only let himself float; the current caught him and flung him almost lifeless on the coral reef; with the help of a native, he managed to drag himself ashore. To-day he is in a pitiful condition, but we hope to save his life. Father Guilloux had disappeared, but a few hours later a wave flung up on the shore his body all battered by the coral.
"Restraining our tears we proceeded to the sad duty of his funeral and burial. At the request of the boys we dug his grave before our house, "in order," as they said, "that we might see him oftener." The Fijians put up a small monument with stones and earth, and every evening, to this day, the boys go by themselves, after chapel, to pray at the grave of him whom they call, "the good chief."

"This accident is a grievous trial for us," wrote the Superior of the Mission to the V. Rev. Superior General. "Father Guilloux was the real missionary of the Solomons. His remarkable devotedness reached the point of heroism and his constant gentleness made him dear to everyone, especially to the boys. Their dismay was dreadful when they heard the terrible news. "Oh, why has he died?" they cried, "such a good man! If one of us had died it would not have mattered much;
but for him to die! He is safe with God, all is well for him, but what is going to become of us? »

« I heard these exclamations all around me; there was but one voice to proclaim his goodness. Remember us, O Father, and pray for us. We thought that things were going so well for our work! But do not imagine that we are discouraged. In the cross is salvation. »

***

Such was the death of the first missionary of Tanganare. His funeral oration, as we have seen, is summed in a word: he was good. « Happy are the meek », says Our Lord, « for they shall possess the earth ». By his kindness and gentleness, Father Guilloux had gained the esteem and affection of all; he had won the hearts of his boys, most of them still heathens. So it is easy to understand this concert of praise which followed him beyond the tomb. Father Guilloux spent only two years on the mission; they were two years of trial and suffering; but they realised all the dreams of his youth. For him, to be a missionary meant to give himself without stint, to give his time, his youth, his health, his strength, his life even, for these people whom he wished to give to God; and already on the eve of his supreme sacrifice, it was granted him to see the dawn of the day of harvest. These two years had been a strenuous time of work; he was ripe for the reward. God loves to choose such victims; He sets to nought the plans of men, but often thus does He make His work succeed.

The death of Father Guilloux, however dreadful it might appear to those with whom he had worked, was,
A Chapel in the district of Visulé.
we may assert, the starting point of the conversion of
the whole district of Tangarare. While he lived, he
had managed to gather round him forty boys. They
were, for him, the hope of the future. He saw in these
youths apostles who would soon help him to reach the
people of the surrounding villages. One day, it must
be admitted, all these small folk, alarmed by the threats
of the people of the bush, had taken to flight and gone
home to their villages; all, except two, who would not
abandon their Father. But it was only a passing
moment of weakness on their part, for they nearly all
came back and were steadily faithful ever after.

Father Guilloux had now and then visited some of
the villages of his district, but without much success;
the hour was not yet come. But on the death of the
missionary, the movement began which in a few years
made Tangarare the finest station of the Mission.
During the two years that followed, seven or eight
villages asked for instruction and built chapels. In
December 1902, took place the baptism of the first two
married adults of the station, first even of the whole
mission; and the man asked to take as his name the
Christian name of the missionary whom death had
taken from their affection. From that date there was
no halting till the whole district was converted.

In October 1904, the first two Sisters of the Third
Order Regular of Mary came to Tangarare to begin the
first girls’ school in the Mission. For several months
they remained absolutely alone. But soon the ice was
broken and little by little the girls came along. Very
few at first, they quickly rose to thirty and after a few
years went up to nearly a hundred.

In spite of many obstacles, Catholicism continued to
Mataniko village, near Port Cruz, Guadalcanal.
make progress. Our schools were gradually filled, the villages accepted the faith and, four or five months after the death of its missionary, the station presented the spectacle of a flourishing Christian community in the full fervour of its early days. In 1906, a fine wooden church replaced the old hut built with palm leaves. The solemn blessing of the new building gathered round the Father Prefect Apostolic and his few missionaries a Christian population of seven or eight hundred souls. This church, large as it was, soon proved too small to hold all the people on big feast days; six years later it had to be enlarged. Progress was so rapid that in 1912 there were 1300 converts. Yet the difficulties of evangelisation were not less here than elsewhere. The district extends along the west coast of Guadalcanal on a length of about fifty miles. The coast villages are scattered and still have to be visited frequently. As the sea is sometimes very rough, the missionary is often exposed to great danger. Besides the boat in which he goes from one village to another is far from comfortable; his crew, chosen by chance from the boys of good will in his school, do not always inspire the fullest confidence. He goes ahead all the same, trusting in the care of Providence.

The district includes also villages in the interior. Prudence constrained the missionary to wait a few years before going to preach the Gospel to them. The «bush men» were credited with a reputation which they were far from deserving. They were despised by the «salt water men»; they were hill men and, so, good for nothing. They had no pirogues; they never went fishing; consequently, they must be an inferior race. Nevertheless the greatest consolation of the missionary
eventually came from these people of the bush. Simple folk, artless in their ways, hard workers, fond of the good mountain land which they cultivate with zeal, for it gives them food in abundance, they have not as yet been corrupted by our pretended civilisation; in consequence they are far from having the arrogance of the coast natives. The mountain villages are those where the missionary gets the best reception. There at least he can carry out his ministry in all tranquillity; no possible disturbance, no foreign boats bringing importunate visitors; no shoals of fish having the unlucky idea of appearing just when the missionary is making his visit, offering as you may easily imagine, many more attractions than his sermon. In the interior, there is nothing of that sort. When the missionary arrives,
the wooden bells are struck with the clubs; the sea shells, relics of a coast visit, resound afar and all the people, scattered in the bush, leave their yams or their taros and start for the village; the Father is there, it is a holiday. All the people meet and wish him welcome. Then, while getting ready for the church services, they do not forget to honour their guests. They know the laws of hospitality and are keenly set on observing them. There is a great stir in all the huts, on all sides is heard the noise of the breaking of almonds; these almonds, cooked in a native oven along with taros or yams, produce an appetising cake, which is much liked by everyone, but especially by the boys who accompany the Father. In the calm of the hills, on these heights from which the furthest islands of the archipelago are sometimes visible, the missionary feels a very natural pleasure at seeing the result of his visit to these souls, who are so full of good will. Sometimes these villages of the interior lie along the crest of a hill, two or three hours walk from one to the other. When the missionary leaves one village and goes on to the next, it is not uncommon to see a big procession of men and women following him and accompanying him to the next village. These people mean to profit by the visit right to the end, right to the last village from which he will take once more the road to the coast.

It is easy to understand that these consolations more than make up for the weariness of the voyage. Seeing these crowds eager to listen to his words, and to profit by his presence among them, the missionary cannot but feel happy in their midst. He sees that his efforts have not been wasted and that the grace of God is acting strongly on these well disposed souls.
When not visiting the villages, the missionary is busy with his schools. All the children of the district attend and, while learning the elements of reading and writing, are trained by steady and serious instruction for the combats of the future. This is not done without trouble; to feed and clothe these youngsters, boys and girls, is sometimes beyond the resources of the missionary. However he tries to keep the work going, trusting in Providence. Sometimes he is obliged through want of food to send his children on vacation. But, at the end of a few weeks, when the banana plantations give a fresh supply of fruit, these young people come back and take up again the instruction which has been interrupted for a brief period. If the generous souls of the Old World knew all the good that can be done in the Missions with the money which is sometimes scattered without heed and what treasures of merits they might thus gather up for the life to come, how eager they would be to give us that help, which would put it in our power to save these souls entrusted to our care! By saving the soul of his brother, has not a man the assurance of saving his own? In the Solomons many souls are lost because the missionary has not the necessary means to reach them.

At the present time there are few heathens left in the district. The Protestant natives, formerly rather arrogant and full of contempt for the Catholic religion, now keep quiet and begin to have doubts about their own belief; some conversions take place among them; they are isolated cases certainly, but still significant. The
day is not far off perhaps when the full light will shine upon them and lead them into the right path.

The station of Tangarare was severely tried in its beginnings. Suffering has been for it a pledge of success and prosperity.

From 1900 to the end of 1927, the number of natives baptised was 3010; of this number, 1420 are still living; there are about 100 catechumens being prepared for baptism, while the heathens hardly amount to 50. The figure of our communions for the year is between 30,000 and 35,000. The schools of the station have given instruction to nearly 800 boys 'and girls.

Such is the work accomplished by the missionaries; and what higher reward could they desire than an abundant harvest of souls, destined to sing for ever in Heaven the glory of their Creator?

3. VISALE

At the extreme northwesterly point of Guadalcanal a cape runs out facing the north, bearing a French name: Cape Espérance. In days now long past, French war vessels sailed these seas and flew the French colours in regions then still unknown and unexplored. In 1791, Admiral d'Entrecasteaux was given by the French Government the sad but glorious mission of seeking for what might remain of the fleet of La Pérouse, about whom there had been no news for three years. His two ships bore the names, « Recherche » and « Espérance ». 
Thus it happened that about 1793, the name of one of them was given to this important landmark of the Solomon Islands. It runs up in a peak more than a thousand feet above the level of the sea; conical in shape, standing out clearly from the higher summits which continue the chain into the interior of the island, it is indeed a valuable landmark for ships coming along from the open sea; the peak is called Puraka and is well known all over the district.

From its summit there is a wonderful view, showing in a southeasterly direction all the north coast of Guadalcanal for a distance of fifty or sixty miles, with the calm sea, the long shallow bays, the vast plains, stretching out of sight, up to the range of lofty mountains, which cover the centre and southern part of the island. Towards the east appears the large island of Malaita, lost in the mist of the ocean. Nearer, a little more to the north, is the island of Florida, the headquarters of the Government, and its many satellites, La Galera, Buena Vista, San Dimas, San German and Guadalupe. Below us, a few miles only to the north, the island of Savo rises majestically from the bosom of the waters; it possesses hot springs and its volcanoes are only just dying out. To the left of Savo, further out to sea, stretching to the northwest, appear the mountains of Ysabel, the shores of which were watered of old with the blood of a martyr. Finally to the northwest, stands out on the grey background of the horizon the group of the Russell or Cape Marsh Islands. A considerable number of islands and islets, rising hardly a few feet above the water, form a verdant crown round the two central islands, the highest peaks of which rise to two thousand feet.
Lessa Bay : Viala station, with Savo in the distance. View taken from the Bishop's house.
In the same direction, just below us, a graceful little bay appears among the indentations of the coast. Blocks of reef jut out to the sea on the east and west and give it a splendid shelter, leaving only a channel towards the north and northwest. This is the bay of Leosa, where the station of Visale, taking its name from the district, is situated.

In this snug corner then, one of the most attractive and most picturesque of the island, was founded, in the year of grace 1904, the station of Visale.

**

"For a long time Visale seemed marked out to be the site of a station. In consequence, at the very beginning of the Mission, in 1899, a piece of land between Tanago and Peru had been bought by the Fathers. Unfortunately this place was too near the Protestant station of Maravovo and the Resident refused his sanction. We had to look elsewhere." Thus begins the journal of the priest who was the founder and the apostle of Visale, Father Pellion, whose career, full of promise for the future, ended too early.

Tangarare had been founded in 1900 and was beginning to prosper. In 1903, new reinforcements arrived and made it possible to start a new station. Tangarare was to supply the missionary. In March 1904, Father Pellion was ordered by Father Bertreux to seek out a suitable spot in the northwest part of the island and found there a station under the patronage of the Sacred Heart. The population appeared to be dense; the villages, close to one another, seemed to promise an easy evangelisation. The chief of the district, the
famous Kokobi, was a warrior of high degree; although strongly attached to his heathen rites, he nevertheless showed much sympathy to the missionaries. He had already allowed the building of a chapel in the bay of Leosa and two boys from his district had gone to Sura to be taught and to be prepared for baptism. We must note the name of this old chief; he played a great part in the foundation of this station. No doubt his influence was not all powerful; the Solomon natives are fond of liberty and it is only under the threat of being clubbed that they consent to obey. Nevertheless the conversion of this chief was for the people of Visale a strong example. Following him, all were disposed to ask for instruction and baptism. But we are anticipating events. Before we get thus far, the foundation must first be marked by the seals of God: trial and suffering.

Towards the middle of March 1904, Father Pellion arrived from Rua Sura with the four boys, who were to
help him in the starting of the station. While on his way he tried to buy some land on the coast east of Visale. But his attempt failed and he proceeded as far as the little bay of Leosa. There he and his small company landed with no means of beginning a station, except an old boat which had survived the wreck of the « Eclipse » and some scanty provisions, but no land. Humanly speaking it was foolish to begin work under such conditions. Providence sometimes delights in these follies, which show how far may go the confidence of a missionary and his obedience to orders. He was told to found a station at Visale; he would found one; how? he did not know, but God would provide.

He began by building a small chapel in this bay of Leosa. Not finding anything better, the missionary settled there for the time being and tried to buy a piece of land. But a sort of superstitious fear made the natives hesitate; they raised difficulties. The mind of the chief seemed favourably inclined, but what could he do against the will of the owners? the ground did not belong to him; he could not oblige them to sell. After some days of worry and anxiety, the missionary, seeing that nothing could be gained by waiting, presented an ultimatum to the chief: « Since you refuse to allow me to settle here, it is a proof that you do not want me. I am going to try my fortune elsewhere. »

The old chief was moved by these words; in reality he liked the missionary, if not on account of his religion, at all events on account of the sundry little presents which he received from him. He plucked up courage and taking the big voice of a fighting warrior, he strove to frighten the recalcitrant owners. They gave way finally, but with very bad grace, as may well be imagined;
Loosa Bay (Visale), Bishop's house in centre and native village on the right.
they yielded, at the end of the bay, a piece of ground which was hardly big enough to hold a small house for the missionary and his four boys. It was not much, but it was something; it was a foothold gained on the Visale territory. Little by little, this land was to be extended, but time and patience were wanted to bring this about. Only after eight years of struggle was the station able to get possession of the land which it now owns, though its dimensions remain very modest.

Thus the station of Visale was founded. The district extends from the Protestant station of Maravovo on the west to the point of Lunga on the east, not far from Port Cruz, visited of old by the Spaniards; the islands of Savo and Cape Marsh are under its jurisdiction.

The foundation was small and modest. It brings to mind the grain of mustard seed of the Gospel, the smallest of seeds; when it grew up it was a large tree and the birds of the air came to shelter in its foliage. Such is the story of Visale. Small in its beginning, it was not long before it spread out and extended its beneficent shade to the most distant villages, out in the islands, along the coast and in the mountains.

Father Pellion quickly got a small hut built, which served as a chapel, a dormitory and a presbytery. Then he began his apostolate among his new parishioners. Difficulties and suffering were not wanting; Satan was lord of all in these islands; only after a desperate resistance did he yield the place to one stronger than himself.

The views of Providence are not always those of men. We want to go ahead rapidly and accomplish great things. God moderates our ardour; His ways are
often slow for us and we do not understand them; but we are forced thereby to pay with patience and suffering part of the ransom of these benighted people.

For six months the missionary was left to himself, with his four boys; no other visitors came to his little

Port Cruz. Visale Point in the distance.

chapels. As the people would not come to him, he went to them and visited their villages. The women fled from his approach as from a malevolent divinity. The men, less fearful, were willing to listen to him, but their evasive replies seemed to show that these house to house visits were useless. «Let Kokobi go to the church first.» This was their habitual answer. The chief was not opposed to their being Catholics, but his holding aloof himself was an easy pretext for their keeping aloof too and for continuing to cling to their
heathen customs. Thus the apostle was brought to concentrate his efforts on the chief.

From the material point of view the missionary could do nothing, since he had no land to till. What was he to do then in his poor hut roofed with leaves? He did what all founders of new stations do: he prayed and he suffered. He suffered especially from his very zeal condemned to inaction; he suffered from the poverty which limited his influence; he suffered from his loneliness, from the emptiness of his little chapel; he suffered from seeing the people running away at his approach.

However, after a long time, some children of the neighbourhood, attracted by their fellows already baptised, began to come to the station. The Father could not keep them with him all the time; but he was able to begin to teach them. Besides, the four Christian boys took a share in the apostolate after their own fashion. They were valiant youngsters, not a bit afraid to run risks in order to change the ideas of their countrymen. They attacked the local divinities and strove to drive them away; they cut off the leaves of a sacred palm tree and decked their chapel with the spoils. They plucked flowers which no one dared touch under pain of death. They ate certain oysters, which were «tabu», forbidden to all mortals. All this, as we can imagine, produced great excitement in the region and even provoked the fury of some natives. But minds gradually grew more calm, when it was evident that the boys were not a whit the worse for their daring. Doubt began to shake settled convictions; could it possibly be true that their divinities had no power over the followers of the new religion? On July 31, 1904, great joy came to the missionary. The old chief Kokobi
Visale Station, on Leosa Bay, with Mount Puraka in the background.
entered the chapel and for the first time assisted at Holy Mass with two of his companions. However, this action, important though it was, did not entail the immediate conversion of all the people of Visale, though they looked upon Kokobi as their real chief. A chief in the Solomons has only just as much authority as it pleases his people to give him; in matters of religion, he has only the authority of his example.

In January 1905, six months after the conversion of the chief, only a score of people had their names entered as catechumens. The following Christmas there were 75; during 1906 the number went to 100, and in 1907, to 150. As can be seen, the progress was very slow, but steady. The Solomon native does not accept the faith till after long reflection; it seems to him a very important act and he does it seriously.

**

Behind the station of Visale, at a little distance, rises the mountain of which we have already spoken. On its summit are a few lonely trees; cocoanut palms, iron trees and others. This mountain was a sacred place, because it was the dwelling place of the most powerful deity of the country: Puraka. Did the mountain get its name from the divinity or the divinity from the mountain? No one knows; all we are aware of is that both had the same name. The god Puraka was for many years, for many centuries perhaps, the great protector of the district; nothing was done without consulting him; to gain his favour, offerings were made to him; in his honour fruit or other food was burnt at the foot of the sacred mountain. Every year
in the month of February, Puraka had his solemn festival. It would take too long to describe in detail what was done on this occasion. It is enough to say that a month was not too much to prepare for this celebration. The chief allotted to each one his duty for every day of this month; to gather and store a quantity of food, of wood, of flowers, of everything necessary for a great festival. The pig held a high place as he was the favourite animal, not only of the natives, but also of the deity in question.

On the day of the feast, the chief was the great master of ceremonies. First came the sacrifice; parts of a pig, or of several pigs, were solemnly consumed by fire in honour of the great spirit. Then the revels began; the natives sang, they danced, they ate, above all they made a great deal of noise. The great delight of the children was to sound the sea shells at a signal from

Musicians and others, in the Guadalcanal bush.
the chief. The festivities wound up with a procession. It is impossible to describe the attraction of these festivals for these poor heathens; indeed feasting and dancing and other pleasures have much fascination for poor human nature, black or white.

February 1905 arrived. Old Kokobi had already given in his name to the missionary; for more than six months he had worn the medal; he was a catechumen and assisted at the prayers. What was he going to do about Puraka? A terrible struggle took place in the heart of the old chief. All the memories of the past rose again and passed before his mind. He felt that he had betrayed his god, foresworn his own past and all the most sacred traditions of his country. The heathen of old awoke once more in his soul and stilled the voice of the catechumen. He decided, in spite of all the reproofs of the Father, to hold the great feast of Puraka once again.

Alas, the festival was a complete failure, at least from Puraka's point of view. The chief no longer had the high spirits, or the enthusiasm of former times. The fervent followers of the Visale god gave themselves a lot of trouble and put forth all their zeal, but it was all in vain; the feast was a fiasco. It was the funeral knell of old Puraka, his last official celebration. Some continued for a while to worship him in private, but there was no longer much conviction. The only thing for Puraka to do was to clear out. And apparently this is what he did in 1910. On the morning of the glorious festival of Easter, the foot of the mountain, where the sacrifices used to be offered, slid into the sea with a tremendous rumbling and uproar. Puraka, said the natives, was saying good bye and leaving the place.
It had taken Puraka a long time to depart. But he saw some strange things before bidding adieu for ever to his old haunts. In 1905 a splendid church, though in the native style, was built at Visale; there was room for all the people of the neighbourhood; in this church Kokobi was baptised in February 1906. This month which had always been for him the one sacred above all, the month of his god, now became that of his regeneration, of his birth to the life of grace and his definite admission to Holy Church. Henceforth Joseph Kokobi brought to the God of his baptism all the affection which he had shown of old to the god of his country, without any of the fear. Proud of his title of Christian he became an apostle; he brought consolation to the heart of the missionary.

***

Still, superstition had not shot its last bolt. Four little children were baptised in 1904, six in 1905; they all died soon after their baptism. Our natives concluded that baptism killed little children. So that for more than a year no children were brought for baptism. Not till 1907 did the people return to better feelings, and from this moment too began the regular movement of conversion. The Superior of the Mission considered it a good time to found a convent; this was built in 1907 and in October 1908, the girls' school was opened.

The schools of Visale made very slow progress at the beginning, on account of the want of land and, in consequence, the want of food. Till October 1908, the number in the boys' school never went beyond 17; the girls' school began with seven; a month later there were 13, and 28 boys. These figures steadily increased during
succeeding years till they reached 110 for the boys and 100 for the girls. The question of food and upkeep was always an anxious matter. Happily Providence always sent the help necessary to continue the work. Sometimes, it is true, the children had to be let off school, because there was no food, but they were never all sent away and, as a rule, a few weeks later, the school folk were brought back to the station and set to work gaily once more.

While the missionary gave to his school children all the attention they claimed, he did not neglect the other sheep of his flock. He visited them, made their acquaintance and little by little the Faith was planted everywhere. The island of Savo, situated about ten miles from Visale, had been early visited by the missionaries. In fact this was the very first island of the group in which they were enabled to enter into relations with the natives and speak to them about religion. From Rua Sura
voyages were made in September and October 1898, and again in March of the following year. Every time the missionary was well received. Consequently when Visale was founded the evangelisation of Savo could be begun at once. Like everywhere else, progress was slow. There, more perhaps than in other places, the natives found it hard to give up their heathen dances, feasts and divinities.

In 1907 a Father remained on the island several months and his presence did a considerable amount of good. In three villages, the natives assisted at prayer and catechism, but nobody seemed yet fit to be admitted to baptism.

Then, children would not come to the Visale school; for them the mainland was still a hostile country. The revengeful feelings of old days had not yet died away. In 1909 a missionary stayed for two years and a half. This time he was able to instruct and baptise a good number of catechumens. There were four chapels; soon a fifth, given by the Protestants to the Catholics, marked a great advance in the true Faith and increased the influence of Catholicism in the island; a sixth was opened in 1916.

Nor was the north coast of Guadalcanal forgotten. As early as 1904, the big village of Kakabona received the Faith and a chapel was built. The other villages, more or less imbued with Protestantism, still remained aloof.

In the interior, things went more slowly still. It was difficult to reach and visit often villages perched on the crest of the mountains, more than five hours walk from the sea shore. However, as early as 1907, a small movement of conversion began, which went on increas-
ing year by year till the complete conversion in 1921.

In the distant islands of Cape Marsh (Russell Island), the Faith could not be implanted till about 1911 and then it was brought in thanks to the Protestants. A local chief, dissatisfied with their services, came one fine day to the missionary at Visale and asked him for a catechist. The request was gladly granted; these good people received their catechist and built a chapel. In spite of the distance and the stormy state of the sea at times, the Father did not hesitate to go as often as possible to visit this little portion of his flock.

During many years, in all the distant villages, only the little children were baptised. The adults could not be instructed in their own districts and they found it too hard to leave their own villages and come to the station to finish their preparation for baptism. It was not until 1914 that the impulse was seriously given; and afterwards, each year, for the festivals of Easter and Christmas, large groups of men and women came to spend a full month at Visale to complete their instruction and receive baptism.

**

At Visale itself things went more quickly. As we have said, religion seems to have taken a deeper root there from 1907; the chief having been baptised, the people no longer hesitated to have their names put down as catechumens, to get instructed and baptised. Prejudices had passed away; superstitions too were gradually disappearing. The station had then two missionaries; and two Sisters looked after the girls.

From the geographical point of view, as we have seen,
The stone Church of Visale, destroyed by an earthquake in 1926.
this northwest point of Guadalcanal seems to possess a certain importance; it is a strategical site commanding the islands of the neighbourhood. Visale is a wonderful lookout point from which a considerable part of the Solomons can be seen; this privileged position gives the station a special part to play in the spread of religion to the neighbouring regions: its influence eventually reached not only the distant islands of Cape Marsh and Savo, but also those of Ysabel and Florida, with the two mountain slopes of Guadalcanal.

During the course of the year 1908, Father Bertreux, the Prefect Apostolic, determined to do at Visale what no one had ever dreamt of till then: to raise a fine church in stone to the glory of the Sacred Heart. At Christmas of this year, the first stone was laid and solemnly blessed. This church in spite of its small size and relative poverty was for many a day one of the wonders of the Solomons. It gave the death blow to heathenism and was an object of envy for the Protestants natives and a cause of exaltation for the Catholic religion. But a church in stone is not easily built. An architect is needed, then workmen and materials. All these had to be found on the spot. The missionary was in turn architect, contractor, mason, carpenter and roof maker. The materials, stones, lime, sand, were scattered about and the difficulty was to get them to the spot. Here we can admire the wonderful influence of the missionary over this people but yesterday withdrawn from cannibalism. It was no less than a small miracle; pagans came, each village in its turn; some carried on their shoulders or on their heads the large stones for building the walls, or enormous trunks of trees for burning the lime, while others went along the shore looking for the
coral stones, destined to be turned into lime by the action of the fire. This miracle lasted a whole year. The chief, Joseph Kokobi, was the prime mover in the enterprise; under his orders men and women divided the labour, and not a single able-bodied individual failed to answer the call. Even the children were keen to do their share; they were proud to be able to
take part in the game, by carrying stones suitable to their age and strength.

They were building their own church; they wanted it to be fine and solid, especially solid. Some hostile natives might come along and try to carry out their not infrequent threat of burning down our churches. But the new church was not to be like one of those huts made of leaves, that a spark might set on fire and rapidly reduce to ashes; the stones would defy such attacks.

The church was finished in 1909. The solemn benediction was fixed for October 19; to produce a deep and lasting impression on the people, the missionaries made it as splendid as possible. It was indeed a real triumph; after this the enemies of the Church were fain to keep quiet and to respect the Catholics.

Father Forestier, the Prefect Apostolic of the North Solomons, the English Resident, Mr Woodford, and all
Boats in Leosa Bay, for the blessing of the new Visale Church. The « Jean-of-Arc » furthest out.
the whites of the neighbourhood were invited to the celebration. On the morning of the 19th, the « Jeanne d'Arc », with all its bunting displayed, was at anchor in the small bay of Leosa. The Government steamer, the « Belama », came along to keep her company, with all flags flying too. On the shore, the decorations, the banners, the green palms, gave a festal air to the little station of Visale. At about nine o'clock, the Prefect Apostolic Father Bertreux, began the blessing of the edifice according to the sacred rites. Then he celebrated a solemn High Mass, at which the Resident, his suite and the other whites, nearly all Protestants, assisted with the Catholics. The crowd of natives was remarkable; they numbered 1200; delegates came from almost all the districts of Guadalcanal and from the near islands. Never had Visale seen such a gathering and it was religion itself which had brought it about. The feasting was quite up to the great occasion. Fifty porkers were roasted and, with immense piles of other food, were distributed to all the visitors, till everyone was satisfied. The people of Visale had done things in style; they were proud of their church and of their work in building it. They could say with truth, « This is our own church; no other people have anything as good. » The missionaries were naturally greatly pleased with this important event, which could not fail to bring about a number of conversions. The Resident when congratulating the Prefect Apostolic on the excellent work carried out by the Mission, used these words of encouragement, « I do not ask you to do better, but to continue. »

The evening of this great day ended off with sports, native dances and boat races. Then late in the night
the bay re-echoed with loud reports, followed by a shower of many coloured lights. These were the rockets, which the government boat sent up to celebrate the feast. Some of the enemies of our faith may have thought that what they had so much desired had at last taken place, the bombardment of one of our stations by an English war vessel!

This stone church resisted the winds and the storms for eighteen years, but in 1927 it was totally destroyed by an earthquake.

* * *

To carry out His work on earth, God makes use of the men of His choice and leads them as He wills, while allowing them, at times, to think that they are capable of doing all by themselves. God sends these human instruments and withdraws them at His will, to show that they are in no way necessary. To judge by human standards, the work seems to be on the verge of ruin. But it is not so; it is nought but a trial in accordance with the regular designs of Providence, the purpose of which is to convince man that he is nothing by himself and counts but little in the plans of God.

The one who was the founder, organiser, and, we may say, the apostle of the Visale station, Father Pellion, was only allowed to see the dawn of religion in this corner of the Solomons, which had been entrusted to his care. God called him to Himself on Sept. 1st, 1913, when he was only 35 years of age and had spent only eleven years in Mission life. He died a holy death after several weeks of severe illness. He was wept over and long regretted by his people for whom he had sacrificed his life. Visale was soon again in mourning for the
loss of another missionary. On Sept. 2, 1916, Father Teytard died piously, after a few days illness, carried off by the dreaded black-water fever. He was only 31 years of age and had been but four years on the mission. On Jan. 23, 1919, nineteen days after the death of Bishop Bertreux, the angel of death passed for the third time over Visale station. A young nun, Sister Mary Peter, was, in her turn, struck down by black-water fever and went joyfully and holily to a better world; she had hardly been three years on the mission. All these sad events were great trials; but they were at least a proof to our Christians of the disinterested affection of the missionaries who had no other desire than to live and die in their midst.

**

For many years now the natives of Visale have been the consolation of our missionaries; may they continue to love and practise their holy faith! These people are fickle and we have to be ever vigilant to keep them good Christians; but, thanks to the careful training they got in the beginning, they are, we may say, much attached to their religion. All attend the Sacraments frequently and this is a guarantee of their fidelity. It is rare that any one lets a month pass by without going to confession and communion. In the more distant villages, they are visited every two months at least and all go to their duty during this visit.

In 1927 the annual communions amounted to 35,000. This is consoling in a population of only 1435 Catholics.

At the death of Father Pellion in 1913 Visale had a total of 300 baptisms; now the total is 2460. From
the foundation of the mission, 1035 died with the grace of baptism. As in Tangárare, so in Visale, the heathens are diminishing rapidly. There are, in 1927, 100 catechumens and 80 pagans.

In 1919 and following years, the influenza made extensive ravages in the population and greatly lessened
the number of Catholics. May these souls, who were the earliest to profit by the benefits of the true faith, watch from on high over the whole district of Visale and pray for the salvation of those who still carry on the struggle here below!

4. MARAU

At the present day, Marau is no longer a Mission station with a resident priest. Still we must not pass over in silence what was done there during ten years. If suffering is half the life of an apostle, it has been, at Marau, his constant companion; nowhere else perhaps have there been as many trials, as many sacrifices and less consolation.

The group of the Marau Islands is at the southwest extremity of Guadalcanal. Separated from the large island by a narrow strait, it is made up of four islands of some importance and thirty islets, for the most part uninhabited. In its greatest length, it measures about ten miles. The traveller who passes near this small corner of the Solomons cannot but be agreeably struck by the scene from fairyland which unrolls itself before him. In the midst of this labyrinth of islands, picturesquely placed on a plateau of coral, the sea is perfectly calm. You would think yourself in the middle of a vast harbour, with only a few narrow channels giving access to the high seas. For the navigator who enters there, after having been tossed on the swell of the open sea, it is a place of delightful rest. The anchorages are safe; captains may moor their ships without worry,
as they are sheltered from all the winds that blow. These green islands with their wonderful decoration of palm trees of all kinds seem to invite the traveller to take rest after the anxiety of his ocean voyage. But alas! this verdure, so agreeable to the eyes of those who pass by, only serves to hide the fearful marshes which cover most of these islands. Very rare are the spots which are really healthy and habitable.

Nevertheless in olden days the population there was rather dense. It is hard to explain how people can come to live on such unhealthy islands. The people of Marau have nothing in common with those of Guadalcanal. Their language is completely different; their faces, their manners mark a race apart. They were formerly a warrior nation, sons indeed of that island of Malaita, where war was long regarded as a sport, and from which cannibalism has not yet entirely disappeared. It is very probable that these were tribes driven from their country by war; obliged to flee from their own land, they came here to seek a new home on isles then uninhabited.

Marau is only 25 miles from Rua Sura. Naturally the idea of founding a station there arose early; if these people were converted, would it not be a means of reaching their countrymen of Malaita? Marau would serve also as an occasional halting place on the way to Avuavu.

The station of Marau was founded in 1904. The people there were very superstitious and utterly refused to give hospitality to the missionary. An old savage, known by the name of Bishop, was the only one to show some sympathy to the missionary and sold him a small piece of ground. It was a wretched bit of land,
full of rocks and unfit for cultivation; nothing could grow there except brushwood; but the Father put up with it and lived there for more than a year. Then he managed to get, at a short distance away, another piece of ground, which was free from rocks; but when the brushwood was cleared away, it turned into a marsh. He had to make the best of it and our confrères lived there for ten years; they did not live alone; fever and other illnesses made themselves at home with them.

Here is what Father Bertheux wrote, not long before...
he died, a victim of his zeal and affection for his dear savages: «The mission of Marau is, I think, the most wretched in the world. It has been in existence six years and there are only nine neophytes. The catechumens — and such catechumens! — are scarcely a dozen. I am the only priest here; I have with me a lay brother, who is trying to fill up the marsh in which we paddle about. When I came I did not know a word of the language, which is different from the one I learned at Sura. I do not dwell on our material installation; it is grim misery. Our chapel is a hideous hut. In spite of this, Our Lord is willing to dwell there. What should we do without him? Our own home is worse than the chapel. Nevertheless I am happier here than I can say. Let us give souls to the Lord; let us work without ceasing for this end. If we do not gather the harvest, others will do it for us. I found the climate extremely trying at first; during several months I had sores from head to foot, but sores are the usual lot of Solomon missionaries. That does not prevent their being jolly.»

These words are a fair summing up of the history of this station of Marau. For more than ten years several missionaries came, one after the other, and worked with but little result on this thankless field. The people did not seem ill disposed, but they would not listen to any word about religion. They refused baptism, they even refused to go into the chapel. Had not the great priest of their devil told them that whosoever would first set foot in the chapel would die the following night? There were few in Marau who did not believe this oracle. Who indeed would have the courage to disobey the will of the gods and expose himself, out of mere wantonness, to their dreadful vengeance? In such unfavourable
surroundings the missionary watched and prayed; perhaps better days would come, that would put an end to his isolation. Now and then a few young men called to visit him; they found him very friendly. Would they accept a medal and take the decisive step? Humanly speaking the thing seemed impossible. They also, believed that to infringe the order of the gods was to doom themselves to certain death; of this they were quite sure. Two young men, however, felt in their hearts an ardent wish to follow the religion of the Father. Fear alone held them back; they hesitated for a long time. At last one of them thought that he had found a way to escape the fate threatened by the high priest of the evil spirits. "The first person who enters the church is doomed to death," said he to his companion, "but, look here, this is what we shall do; let us walk together arm in arm and go into the chapel at the
same time; then there will be no first and neither of us will die!» The other agreed and they carried out their plan that very day; but in spite of their reasoning, they had a terrible night of it, fearing the worst; this was the devil's only revenge. Happily the night passed like the others; they had no sleep, but no harm came to them; dawn found them safe and sound and they came at once again to the chapel. The old heathen priest saw his threats come to nought; his devils lost caste even in his own esteem, and he gave up, for a while at least, the business of being a prophet.

Soon after, one of the young men received baptism and became a zealous apostle, always ready to be of service to the missionary; not afraid of work, he devoted himself entirely to the conversion of his countrymen. Gentle and kind by disposition, he had the gift of making friends; with a few words, he managed to smooth away the most intricate difficulties and restore calm to the rather vengeful souls of these old cannibals. He did much for Marau and later on for Malaita, as he gladly accepted the invitation to accompany the missionary when the work of evangelising was begun there.

These conversions, were, alas, only isolated happenings; the bulk of the people did not wish for religion. This is not to be wondered at when we know the depth of degradation in which they were plunged. Murders were common and infanticide a matter of course.

The same missionary, whom we have already quoted, also wrote this: «A heathen had a quarrel with his wife about some trifle; he took his hatchet and killed the poor creature; and as his little girl, only a few years old, was sobbing at the sight of this tragedy, the father, in a fury, again crashed down the axe and slew the child.
You see that in the Solomons human life is of no more value than a bird's. Infanticide too makes fearful ravages here. Poor women! they have none of the tender feelings which God inspires in the hearts of all mothers, and they crush without pity the head of their infant between two stones and then throw the body to the pigs! Others twist their children's necks, others drown them! Let us draw a veil over such horrible deeds."

In such a state of affairs, in a country from every point of view inhospitable, the missionary suffered dreadfully; with cheerfulness, it is true, but this does not lessen the suffering. It merely hides it from the notice of men to make it more meritorious in the sight
of God. Consolations came only at rare intervals to throw a little sunshine on a life of sacrifice. A few old pagans regenerated at the last hour; a few children, doomed to death, providentially rescued when visiting in the villages; a few young men, too few, alas, agreeing to come and receive instruction and baptism; this was all that the missionaries were able to do at Marau during the course of ten years.

About 1914 a new piece of land was bought on the mainland of Guadalcanal, right in front of the Marau group; this land seemed less unhealthy than the first site. Father Bertheux settled down there; this time, he thought, he would be able to go ahead, organise a school, gather a few children around him, and in this way extend his influence to the villages of his district. He devoted himself body and soul to his dear natives, not always heeding the counsels of human prudence, particularly when there was question of visiting a sick person or of saving a soul. His body was weakened by fever, sores and other infirmities, the inevitable consequences of this unhealthy climate, but his courage did not weaken. He was convinced that the time had at last come when his people would be converted. His soul was filled with joy and hope for the future. But God had other views for him; He judged that he had suffered enough and that he had done sufficient work on the portion of the vineyard confided to his care; soon He would call him to Himself. While carrying out an act of heroic charity, nursing one of his boys attacked by dysentery, he fell a victim of the same disease. To be able to look after his patient more carefully he had gone so far as to bring him into his own hut. Gradually getting worse, he was forced to
lie down on the mat beside the child whom he wished to save, but who in reality was the cause of his own death. What was to become of him, all alone, in the state of weakness to which he was reduced? Providentially a passing boat called and, taking him on board, brought him to Sura. Assisted there by a confrère, Father Bertheux ended his career of suffering on Jan 2, 1915. He was just thirty years of age and had been three years and a half on the mission.

A few weeks later, a new missionary, Father Allet took his place; he was young, full of health and strength. It was hoped that he would be able to hold and continue the work which had been begun. Alas! six months later, he followed his confrère to the tomb, carried off by the same disease. They now lie side by side in the cemetery at Rua Sura.

From the foundation of Marau up to 1923, there were only 203 baptisms, counting adults and children, and hardly forty of these remain. Since 1915 Marau has had no resident missionary. The few Christians who survived were looked after by passing Fathers; the place is now under the jurisdiction of Avuavu. Since it was given up, a sort of curse seems to have fallen on the unfortunate people. Decimated by all sorts of maladies they are disappearing with frightful rapidity. In 1923 the total population was hardly more than 200.

5. RUAVATU

Once again taking a look at the map of Guadalcanal, you will see on the north side, facing Florida and Malaita, an immense territory, stretching between the
station of Visale and the group of Marau islands. Ruavatu is placed about the centre. Here has sprung up, under the name and protection of Our Blessed Lady, the latest born of our Solomon stations.

This new district runs along the coast a distance of forty to fifty miles. Towards the interior, the line of high mountains forms a natural limit, and separates it from the Avuavu district. Thus there are two distinct sections at Ruavatu; a vast, low lying plain, with long rivers, infested with crocodiles and breeding millions of mosquitoes; then further back, the mountain slopes, hard to reach and to visit.

Of all the districts of this island that of Ruavatu seems the most thickly peopled. Fine large villages are found in the mountains as well as along the coast. On the coast the Protestant element is strong; in the mountains the population is still wholly heathen.

All this north coast, being the nearest to Rua Sura, should have been, one would think, the first to receive the benefit of the Faith; it was the last to be converted. The station of Avuavu was founded during the early years and developed fairly rapidly; the station of Ruavatu was not begun till twenty years later. Up to 1920, this district had no fixed missionary; it was visited by the Fathers of Sura. But the work went slowly and for many years met with very little success; difficulties of all sorts hindered progress.

In the very beginning, in the villages of the coast, the natives, as we have already said, would not even condescend to receive a visit from the missionaries; they simply told him that they had no need of his services. Such a want of sympathy in their manners was only too natural, because they did not look with favour
on the presence of the Fathers at Sura. These little islands belonged to them formerly; bought by a sea captain in exchange for some small presents, they had soon after been acquired by the Mission. The natives claimed that, not having been sufficiently paid, they still held partial rights over these islands, especially over certain cocoanut palms, the fruit of which they were accustomed to gather when they made fishing expeditions to Rua Sura. The Fathers were obliged on several occasions to insist on their rights of ownership on the island and all that it held. The claim, as can easily be guessed, was not at all to the taste of the former owners and for many a year they were not among our best friends.

A second difficulty was the language. The missionaries, rebuffed on this side of Guadalcanal, had gone elsewhere to look for more friendly people. They found them at Tangarare and engaged some of them as labourers. As these were the first with whom the missionaries lived, their language was adopted and it became practically the official language of the mission. But it differs greatly from that of Ruavatu, which the Sura Fathers could not understand and had no practical means of learning, since they had no dealings with the people of this section.

Again, although this coast, as we have said, was visited from Sura now and then, the missionary, to get there, had to cross an arm of the sea, three or four miles only in width, but, on account of the currents, difficult and dangerous on most days; hence he could not go as often as he wished. Besides he had much work to do at home; visits to the coast were in consequence rare and irregular.
Finally, before the establishment of the Catholic Mission in the South Solomons, the Protestants had come into this region and worked there. They occupied a good many villages along the coast and, to find the pagans, the missionaries had to go further and be satisfied with less favourable positions.
Not till 1904, six years after the establishing of Sura, did the action of the missionary make itself felt in this part of Guadalcanal.

About this time there arrived from Fiji two Catholic families, natives of the district of Aola, which is about seven miles away from Sura. They had gone away formerly, like so many thousands of Solomon natives recruited to work in the plantations of the whites in Fiji, Samoa and Queensland. In Fiji they found the grace of conversion and, after having spent several years there, came back to the Solomons and settled down again in their native place, Aola.

The presence of these Catholics in a heathen district gave the missionary of Sura the opportunity of visiting villages, until then closed to him. He even ventured, accompanied by these Catholics, to visit Ruavatu and penetrate a few miles into the interior, following the course of a broad, navigable river. But everywhere he saw scowling or even threatening faces. However it mattered little; in spite of themselves they had met this stranger from afar. And this stranger had not come amongst them to buy or to sell; he had come to wage war on all they held most sacred, their traditions and their divinities. This war, it was true, was essentially peaceful and only deadly for the invisible spirits which dwelt in their forests and haunted their villages; but it was to be a long and a difficult one, for its aim was to wear down the enemy and in such a war the victory will go to the side which holds out the longer. Helped by the grace of God, the missionary can keep on the campaign. The first seed of the divine planting had been sown in these new districts; when it would grow, was the secret of God.
After the blessing of a new Chapel, in Guadalcanal.
In 1905, Father Bertreux, then Prefect Apostolic, acquired a small piece of ground in Aola Bay, in the hope that a station might be formed later and enable the Mission to take up seriously the evangelisation of this district. A missionary was sent there in 1905 and spent a year in the place, but without any apparent result. The people remained indifferent and did not seem ready for conversion. The want of priests and the pressing needs of other stations led to the giving up of this post.

In 1907, a Fijian catechist was sent to one of the villages in Ruavatu Bay. He soon had the consolation of gathering round him a score of catechumens. In the following years several other catechists were sent to different parts of the coast. The missionary of Sura continued his visits and had the satisfaction of baptising some children and even some adults. He also tried to extend his influence to a wider sphere, but met with many difficulties; almost everywhere he had to contend with strong opposition.

Ruavatu was the centre of this new group of Catholics, which seemed to give well grounded hopes for the future. In 1911 the Mission bought some land; at Christmas a missionary came to spend a few days there and celebrated midnight Mass with all possible pomp in the poor humble chapel of the village. The congregation showed by its attention and its piety how much it was moved by the ceremonies of this ever memorable night, which reminds us of the depth and extent of the love of God for His creatures.

In the first days of December 1913, Bishop Bertreux, along with two of his missionaries, paid his first episcopal visit to Ruavatu. The reception was very simple, but for our natives it was something magnificent. It pro-
duced a deep impression on the minds of these heathens, now more sympathetic. The flags and the decorations, set off by the greenery of the Solomons, made a great appeal to these savage minds and the feast which followed the reception «made their stomachs merry», to use their own expression. These ceremonial visits cannot but produce good results; in spite of themselves, the natives are attracted by a religion in which such fine ceremonies are to be witnessed. So, a few weeks later, for the feast of Christmas, a large deputation of the people of this district decided to cross the strait and visit Rua Sura. There things were carried out even in more solemn fashion. They assisted at a Pontifical High Mass. We shall not attempt to describe the thoughts that passed in the minds of these poor people.
at the sight of these beautiful religious ceremonies. They were so amazed that they could not find words in their language capable of expressing their admiration. They went back home full of enthusiasm and more convinced than ever of the truth of our holy religion. Their visit to Sura produced one excellent result; they brought along with them two catechists to take charge of new villages along the coast.

**

As Ruavatu was not a regular station, it had no school. Efforts were made to get the children over to Sura, but the parents made all sorts of difficulties; how, for instance, could they ever visit their children in such a far distant island? Yet Sura is only fifteen miles away from Ruavatu.

Still we determined to try. Two of the Sisters of Sura went to spend ten days at Ruavatu. The missionary profited by their presence to gather the people together and give them a sort of retreat. Every evening there was catechism for the men, women and children; the meeting ended with night prayers and the singing of a hymn. These meetings had a good effect; on the day of departure twelve boys were ready to follow the Father and join the school at Sura. The Sisters would have liked to bring some girls also, but the time had not yet come. However the result aimed at was achieved: these twelve boys, once instructed and baptised, would, we hoped, help in the conversion of their villages.

Towards the end of 1919, circumstances permitted one of the missionaries of Sura to devote himself more fully to the evangelisation of this district. Having less
work at the station, he was able to cross over more frequently.

**

In July 1920, Bishop Raucaz, just appointed Vicar Apostolic, decided on the definite foundation of a station at Ruavatu. The number of missionaries was small, it is true; but it was essential, in order not to be outstripped by Protestant teachers, to settle at once on this coast.

There was only one missionary and in the beginning he had to live in an old native hut. Luckily it was not long before it was replaced by a small wooden house. His church was just the primitive village chapel, fairly large, but already decayed by time and threatening to tumble to pieces.

On August 15, 1921, Bishop Raucaz gave confirmation to forty six people of the district. Very many Catholics came from the different villages along the coast to assist at the festival and greet their Bishop, who remained with them for three days.

In February 1922, the missionary profited by the visit of one of his confrères to make an expedition with him to the mountain region of the interior. In all parts, they met with villages, which seemed to be densely peopled. The day could not be far distant when these natives would decide, like their brethren on the coast, to accept a religion. But which religion? With a missionary who could visit them often and show his interest in them, there was not the least doubt but that they would all become fervent Catholics. It was evident that the Father at Ruavatu, alone for his vast district, with the work of the station, of the boys' school, the
care of all the villages scattered along the coast, could not give much of his time to these tribes of the interior. Our Lady, patron and protector of this region, has at last taken pity on these poor souls and has sent them a second missionary to show them the way of salvation.

Furthermore, Ruavatu has now two Sisters; the foundation of a girls' school was urgent, for the number of young girls baptised during the last fifteen years was already considerable. Then the arrival of the second missionary has made it possible to organise a better boys' school.

Since the start of the station, there have been 504 baptisms at Ruavatu. There are 350 baptised Christians and the number of catechumens is 300.

Although this station is yet young, there is every reason to hope that it will rapidly grow and that it will have nothing to envy in the other stations, though these started before it and are already flourishing.
CHAPTER VI

SAN CRISTOVAL

WANONI BAY

The island of San Cristoval was, of all the islands of the Solomons, the most favoured by Providence. Before the others and more than they, it had its missionaries, it had the privilege of hearing the word of God and was offered the grace of conversion to the true faith. But it knew not how to profit by its good fortune. More than the other islands it showed itself ungrateful and cruel towards its apostles, three of whom, as we have seen, watered its soil with their blood (1).

The land of Ysabel too was watered by the blood of an apostle, of one who by order of the Roman Pontiff

(1) During a journey into the interior of San Cristoval, in Oct. 1902, the exact place of the massacre of 1847 was ascertained, thanks to information given by a native. It is called Manuporo and is nearly in the centre of the island, at an equal distance from Makira and from Wango Bay, where the Fathers were going. The natives of twelve or thirteen villages gathered together on that occasion and took part in the massacre. To-day this mountainous part of the island is entirely deserted.
had come to these islands to guide and direct, as Bishop, a band of missionaries. But there the murderers were at least ignorant of the mission and the dignity of their victim, and this lessened to a certain extent their guilt. At San Cristoval the situation was quite different; the missionaries were already known. They had lived among these people for nearly two years, and had shown by their kindness, devotedness and heroic charity, that they had come from their far-away land, only to do them good, to convert them and show them the path to heaven. They were known to all and their reputation had spread far beyond the limits of the bay where they had fixed their tent. The murderers had no excuse, but followed their savage instincts, their desire of vengeance for imaginary wrongs, and their craving for human flesh.

Long since, in 1563, Mendana and his Spaniards had spent over six weeks at San Cristoval, and more than once the Sacrifice of the Mass had been offered up on this land where martyrs were to follow the Divine Victim.

After the murder of a Bishop at Ysabel, two priests and one lay brother had been massacred at San Cristoval; a young priest had died of fever and two others had been obliged to seek a healthier climate. There were left only three priests and a young Bishop, when, in 1847, they abandoned this ungrateful land and set sail for Woodlark.

When the second Mission came, in 1898, to take up the work again, the first foundation, as we have seen, was made at Rua Sura. From the beginning there was naturally a great longing to see the spot sanctified by the first heroic missionaries and to found a station there when circumstances would permit. But the right
time had not yet come; it was important for the missionaries not to scatter their forces and they began by solid foundations at Guadalcanal. They had to be satisfied with occasional visits to San Cristoval, first on the south and then on the north coast.

In 1909, Providence furnished the means to attempt the foundation of a station on this island. About this time, among the labourers who had returned from Fiji, was a young girl named Selina. Born in the Solomons, she had been instructed and baptised in the Catholic Mission at Fiji, and had returned with her parents to their native island, San Cristoval. Hearing this, the Prefect Apostolic, Father Bertreux, hastened to San Cristoval and met Selina at the village of Kahua, situated on the north side of the island in Wanoni Bay. On her return Selina had become a catechist; having gathered round her more than a dozen girls, she had taught them how to pray and to sing the praises of God. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated in Selina’s village.
on Sept. 5, the first time in San Cristoval since the days of the early missionaries. A hut had been turned into a chapel; the sermon, the prayers and the hymns were in the language of Fiji. It was a joyful and consoling hour for the missionary. Thinking of the past, of the superhuman efforts made by a body of courageous priests to plant the standard of religion on this land, he rejoiced to be the instrument of Providence to resume the work given up sixty two years before; this time the future seemed full of promise; he felt that the sacrifices, the sufferings, the blood and the prayers of the first victims had obtained from God for these people the grace of having apostles amongst them once again.

Land was bought in the bay, near the village of Kahua. On Dec. 5 following, a missionary arrived bringing with him four young Christians from Guadalcanal and the foundations were laid of a new station under the title of Our Lady of the Martyrs. The little band, full of confidence in God, began the labour of converting this large island of San Cristoval.

***

The station of Wanoni Bay is pleasantly placed on the north shore of a fine harbour, broad and deep and affording shelter from the southeast winds. High mountains rise abruptly behind the station; thanks to the frequent rains, the ground is wonderfully fertile and supplies food for the school children. Numerous torrents coming down from these mountains give fresh water in abundance and in several places form superb waterfalls, which make this little corner one of the most picturesque in the island.

--- 194 ---
Satisfied with a rough and ready installation the pioneers at once set to work. They soon managed to learn the language, a very important point in a new foundation. Thanks to Selina it was not long before the village of Kahua became Catholic. From the beginning it gave a small band of catechumens; through them the good news spread among the neighbouring villages.

But it was not without many a clash that the struggle went on between the various Christian bodies and the heathens. A Protestant organisation had settled in these parts fifty years before. Without heeding the villages of the interior, its teachers had concentrated all their efforts on the coast villages and had won over more than half the people of the district.

In 1908, a new group had made its appearance. The
vanguard was formed of a band of labourers who had returned from Queensland. Coming back to their native place of Wanoni Bay, they set to work and gained followers. What these natives taught or believed would be hard to tell; it was a strange sect, with hardly any religious principles, without a definite name; it has borne three different names since its appearance in the Solomons. It was not long before a white minister came along to help out his black teachers. The various religions soon came into hostile contact and a long obstinate struggle began, which lasted for many years. For these natives to whom moderation was unknown, all means were suitable to weaken their adversary.

Towards the end of 1910, nearly a year after the foundation, a second missionary was sent to Wanoni Bay; the movement towards conversion was growing. The
first chapel was too small, a bigger one was built. The school was organised and the number of children rapidly increased; new villages received the Fathers and accepted the Faith. The rivalry between the religious bodies had this advantage that it forced the natives to decide for one or the other. Often, it is true, a village went over to the first comer. Sometimes however whole villages, at first following Protestantism, came over to the Catholic side.

In 1914 it was decided to found a convent; the cooperation of Sisters was necessary that the work of the missionary might have its full value and development. Two Sisters came and opened the girls' school on Sept. 8, with ten pupils.

**

In our small corner of the world, sad events are sometimes permitted by Providence, which produce results we were far from expecting. It was the case with regard to the murder of a white man in Wanoni Bay, during the winter of 1915. Three years before, a recruiting ship had come to anchor in the bay and a small chief from the interior had gone on board. When returning to the shore, the boat, in which he was, upset and the poor native disappeared, probably seized by a shark. The friends of the chief considered the white men responsible for this accident and swore to avenge his death. They must have the head of a white man. They had to wait for a long time to carry out their plan. Three years after, a recruiting ship appeared; it was not the same ship, but that did not trouble the natives; a head for a head, they must have one. The captain
of the ship, quite unaware of the danger, went on shore to try to recruit some labourers; completely off his guard, he was struck dead by the blow of an axe.

The Government, informed of this murder, thought that severe measures were necessary. A police force was sent to the village of the murderers, several houses were burnt and some prisoners led away.

Soon after this expedition, a rumour spread in the villages that the Government was going to compel all the natives to embrace some religion. Was it a false piece of news started by some native teacher to attract converts, or simply the result of the Government expedition? The natives, valiant and overbearing when they think that no one can resist them, become cowards at the least threat from the smallest police force. This expedition was, for these natives, the first manifestation of an authority with which they would have to reckon in the future, and, as a result, they felt impelled to put themselves under the protection of the missionaries. Four or five villages at once declared themselves for the Catholic faith; others unfortunately turned towards the other side. If the Father had happened to have a few catechists at hand, he could have easily taken over several places of importance. But, alas, his station was still too young and could not yet supply any. On the other hand, on account of the great distance, it was almost impossible to count on a number of catechists from the stations of Visale and Tangarare, the only places capable of supplying young men with any instruction; again, there was a new language to learn. Such difficulties might well paralyse the best will in the world. Nevertheless in response to the appeal of the missionary, several of them volunteered
and left their parents and their districts to devote themselves to the heathens of San Cristoval.

The conversion of this island made but slow progress; there were powerful obstacles to face. Much time was necessary to make ourselves known, to dissipate prejudices and sweep away calumnies.

The girls school at Wanoni Bay.

Then too, we must add the isolation of the station in an island almost as big as an average English county. The villages are small, with only twenty or thirty people in each; they are scattered in all directions, along the coast, in the plain, on the mountain side, often at long distances from one another. They must be visited often. The health of the missionary gives out rapidly with these excursions in the bush; steep climbs to rocky heights, dreadful descents to the bottom of
gorges where run dangerous torrents; and this many times in the course of an expedition. Though the missionary feels his strength waning, he goes on, for everywhere he finds souls to save.

San Cristoval is far from the centre of the Mission at Visale. For its people, shut in by the narrow limits of their little continent, the island of Guadalcanal is quite another world. At Visale conversions are numerous, fine churches have been built, quickly filled by crowded congregations. Nothing of this is known at San Cristoval except what may be picked up from an occasional report. These poor far away islanders cannot profit by the force of good example.

However our faith has made some conquests there; the influence of the priest has gone beyond the high summits of the mountains, which look down on Wanoni Bay from the south and has reached the opposite slope. Towards the west the number of Catholic villages has increased, both along the coast and on the mountain side.

A large church in reinforced concrete has been built at Wanoni Bay, in 1923, to hold the large crowd of faithful on festival days. Dedicated like the former one to Our Lady of the Martyrs, it will remind future generations of a memorable date, the 25th anniversary of the founding of the South Solomon Mission.

Starting from Wanoni Bay and going westward, we reach the district evangelised by our predecessors over fifty years ago. The missionary naturally took the deepest interest in this part of his mission field. It was a long distance away, but, in spite of this, he was looking out for a good opportunity to start a Catholic village there. Several times already the Mission boats
had made a pilgrimage to Port St Mary (Makira Bay). The natives had made our acquaintance and learned

that we were the brothers and successors of those who had formerly lived in their midst. This souvenir of the past had not entirely disappeared from their traditions, and some amongst them decided to become

School lasses.
Catholics. From Wanoni, there are two ways of reaching Makira Bay. The all-sea route, the longest, follows the northern coast of the islands for its whole length, then rounds Cape Research and goes down the other coast to the bay which sheltered the first Mission. The distance is eighty miles and it is not safe to attempt it in a small whaleboat. The other, shorter way goes by sea to the bay of Wango, about forty miles from Wanoni; thence it only takes a few hours to make the journey which our first Fathers attempted in the reverse direction on that fatal day of April 20, 1847.

There is now a small band of Catholics in this bay of Makira, so full of memories dear to our hearts. In spite of the distance, the missionary often pays them a visit. He rejoices that the cross is once again erected on that soil, which was so hard, so thankless to the apostles of the first Mission. These too, in Heaven, must rejoice in seeing Catholicism grow in the midst of those they loved so much; and the souls of the little children, baptised by them, join in their joy and thank God for the gift of faith granted to the people of their country.

In 1927, the station of Wanoni began its eighteenth year. The total number of those baptised since the beginning is 869; of this number 450 are still living. The catechumens number over 600. About 300 children, boys and girls, have been baptised at the station.

Like everywhere in the Solomon Islands, the death rate is very heavy in San Cristoval. We must strive then to bring those who still remain to the Catholic religion and open to them the gates of Heaven.
CHAPTER VII

MALAITA

The island of Malaita or, as the natives call it, Mala, is one of the largest of the Solomon archipelago. It stretches for about 120 miles from northwest to southeast; the mean breadth is 15 miles. A narrow strait cuts off a portion in the south. The larger piece to the north is called « Mala paina » or big Mala, the other one, « Mala masike », or little Mala. In several places fine lagoons are found, bordered on the sea side by a chain of low islands, many of which are inhabited; the ports are numerous and safe.

Of all the islands in the archipelago, Malaita has the most inhabitants; the total population is estimated at more than 60,000.

The island was sighted for the first time by the Spaniards on April 11, 1568. They had spent two months at Estrella Bay; having built a brigantine, they set off south on a voyage of discovery. Coasting along Ysabel on Palm Sunday morning, they saw afar off towards the east a long chain of mountains. The interpreter probably answered their inquiry by saying,
« Mala ita », « Mala is there ». The Spaniards took the phrase as the name of the island, but « ita » is merely a demonstrative. However the name Mala is found elsewhere in the Spanish records. Gallego called it the Island of Palms (Isla de Ramos), in memory of the day of its discovery. Although incorrect, the name Malaita was adopted by the admiralty charts and is often used by the whites. The island had only a short visit from the Spaniards. The brigantine left the other ships at Port Cruz in Guadalcanal and steered south. It coasted Guadalcanal, passed Rua Sura on May 23 and then reached the Marau group. Thence they sailed for Malaita and on May 25 entered the lagoon of Rohinari at the south end, at a place now called Uhu. They gave to this harbour, reaching far inland, the name of the Hidden Harbour (Porto escondido). They then went along the coast to the south, noticed in passing the entrance of the strait separating the two islands, which they took for the mouth of a large river. On May 27, they anchored in Ariel Bay, calling this small harbour Port Ascension, as they had found it on this Feast. They made another call at a bay more to the south, at a short distance from Cape Zelee. The visit of the Spaniards to Malaita did not last more than four or five days; it was quite long enough for them to make acquaintance with the fighting temper of the natives. At Ulu, they were attacked by a fleet of twenty five pirogues, from which the savages showered arrows. The Spaniards retorted with a few shots from their arquebuses, killing some and wounding many. At Ariel harbour a crowd of two hundred natives gathered close on the shore, but did not molest them; at the next port however they were again attacked, but the arque-
buses once more replied and put the enemy to flight.

In this way the people of Malaita first came into contact with civilisation. We may conclude that already at that date they were a warlike race, always on the look out for a fight. Mendana tells us also that, from what the natives reported, these men of Malaita were the terror of the other islands and always at war with them.

The evil reputation of these tribes dates then from
far back; and civilisation and religion entered there slowly and with difficulty. Guadalcanal had long since shown hospitality to traders and missionaries, when Malaita was still closed to them. For some years back however, recruiting ships, fully armed, had ventured into their bays and lagoons, seeking labourers to supply the planters of Samoa, Fiji and Queensland. Though most of these ships had the good fortune to collect, with little cost, a fine harvest of workers, there were others, less fortunate, which became victims to the ferocity of the natives, captains and crews massacred and all the goods on board pillaged.

The first white planters settled on the southwest coast of the island about 1910. For many years they were obliged to have an armed guard for the protection of their persons, their houses and their plantations. In spite of this precaution many workers were murdered by the natives of the bush and the whites themselves were far from being in safety.

A Protestant mission had the courage to venture into the same district in 1903. Having gathered together in Queensland a certain number of followers who belonged to Malaita, its ministers went with them when they returned to their native land. This mission soon gained a pitiful experience of the ferocity of the natives; two of its members were murdered, along with some of their converts living at the station. Since then another Protestant body appeared in Malaita; it has already gained ground and possesses to-day several prosperous congregations.

Unfortunately it was only much later that the Catholic Mission was able to begin its work; the island of Guadalcanal absorbed all its available forces. More-
A pirogue race in the Solomons.
over the frequent murders of whites, which took place between the years 1898 and 1912, caused hesitation and it seemed by no means certain that the time had come to attempt a foundation in a country so insecure.

However no occasion was missed of opening relations with these tribes, in spite of their evil reputation. Towards the end of 1899, a pirogue, manned by natives of Malaita, was wrecked between Rua Sura and Guadalcanal. Most of them swam ashore to Sura. What was to become of them? Now that their boat was gone they could not get back to their island. They appealed to the missionaries and begged them to send them home. The missionaries were glad to help; it was an opportunity of making acquaintance with these people and their island. The «Eclipse» brought them back to Wairaha, a village a few miles north of the present station of Rohinari. The Father was well received and the people, to show their gratitude, allowed one of the shipwrecked lads, aged about twelve, to go back to be instructed in the faith. The youngster soon settled down to school life; he seemed intelligent and inclined to learn. In spite of his youth, he was quite ready to go with Father Rouillac, when the «Eclipse» made its famous voyage to Sydney. He was baptised there by Cardinal Moran; this was the first baptism of a Malaita native. Many years passed away before others were ready to be put on the list headed by this privileged youth.

Towards the end of 1901, the «Eclipse» visited the district of Langa-langa and brought back a dozen workers. But they would have nothing to do with religion; still their presence at Sura was not useless; they made acquaintance with the missionaries and later on, when
one would go to their village, he was not a stranger; but these workers did not stay long in Sura; they were homesick for their island and had to be sent back.

**

In 1908, Father Bertreux, Prefect Apostolic, went on a reconnoitering expedition to the part of the Malaita coast which was nearest to Sura and tried to find a place suitable for the foundation of a station. His boat, the « Verdelais », a small schooner with no motor engine, had the greatest difficulty to get into the ports and lagoons. This trip gave no satisfactory result and the undertaking had to be put off till later.

When the « Jeanne d'Arc » came into the service, one of her first trips was to Malaita, in Sept. 1909. On this occasion, the people of Marau were useful as go-betweens with their fellows of Malaita and persuaded them to sell us a piece of land in the lagoon of Langa-langa. There was no possibility of exploring the neighbourhood; even those who sold the land were unwilling to venture on shore. We had to be satisfied with rowing along the coast and fixing the limits of the land by trees visible from the sea. There can be no better anchorage; a fine island, which was included in the bargain, extends in a half circle for some distance out to sea and thus gives protection against all the winds. The purchase was concluded, though the missionary was not to take possession till later.

About the same date, a chief of Malasike, having fallen out with the Protestant body of which he was a member, sent word to the missionaries at Sura, that he would like to see the Catholic religion introduced into
his tribe. Father Bertreux with some of his confrères went to this chief's village, called Tarapaina, situated at the north end of the strait of Mala masike. He was well received; land was offered to the Mission; a bargain was struck and two catechists were left behind to sow the first seeds of the faith.

During the course of the year 1911, the missionary of Marau went over on several occasions to spend a few weeks with these new converts and see if a station could be founded there. He was not long in finding out that no white man could live in such a place. A steep shore, formed of red clay, made slippery by the constant rain and damp of the district, gave access to a few hills, cut with deep ravines; the summits were hardly large enough for the few villages; the idea of settling there had to be given up. While waiting for better days, he began the instruction of his new catechumens and profited by his leisure to look for a suitable piece of ground in the neighbourhood. Along the whole length of the strait there was nothing but marshes and mangrove swamps. At the entry of the strait on the south side, there were some good spots with easy anchorage, but the natives there were already Protestant and nothing could be done.

One fine day the missionary decided to explore the coast of the large island towards the north. The venture was rather risky; he had only a small whaleboat and was entering an unknown country; but, trusting in Providence, he set out. The chief of the village of Tarapaina, Araiasi by name, was his pilot and his guide. He was not a very reliable guide, if one might judge from his record: twelve murders on his conscience, including one of his own children. Nevertheless the
missionary trusted him; but he trusted more in the protection of Heaven, which would not fail him, and in the assistance of the archangel Raphael, whom he chose as special protector of this adventurous voyage.

On the appointed day, the pilot and crew came on board and brought the boat through the strait which separates the two islands of Malaita; when they got into the open sea, they profited by a strong breeze from the southeast, which carried them along rapidly to the lagoon of Rohinari. They entered, by the channel of Uhu, the « Puerto escondido » of the Spaniards, and encamped for the night on a desert island bordered by mangrove trees. Next day they tried to continue the voyage, but the wind was dead; then the rain took a hand in the game, heavy, steady rain, which rapidly wet them through. All on board were shivering; luckily they saw smoke appearing from a point on the shore; the boat was turned in that direction and they all got ready in order to land, to rest and warm them-

A bridge in Malaita.
selves. On reaching the shore, the poor travellers saw three big, strapping natives, coming down, armed with guns, who greeted them with the salute, "Get away from here or you will be shot." The Father tried to parley, but it was of no use; the savages only got more angry and put their muskets to their shoulders, making ready to fire. There was nothing to do but go about and look for shelter further on; fortunately they found a deserted spot, where they could make a fire, warm themselves, enjoy a well deserved meal, and thus regain some strength.

When the meal was over, they took to sea again and at last came to a small island situated near the present station of Rohinari. Here a certain Arisimae, one of the most famous bandits of Malaita, had fixed his residence. The Father requested hospitality from this cannibal, and even offered his services to him as missionary, willing, he said, to come and settle down in his district. The old man-eater had already heard about the missionary, had even met him at Marau; but he wanted details about his generosity, the quantity of tobacco, pipes and matches that he would bring with him, and such like information. Religion was of no account to him; he would not touch it at any price; what would his devils think of such an idea? He therefore cross-examined the boys of the crew and also Araiasi, his rival from the south isle. The report must have been on the whole very favourable, for the old bandit immediately agreed to sell the whole island of Rohinari with a good portion of ground on the mainland.

At length it was time to take the route homeward. The missionary was filled with joy, for the future seemed less gloomy; he would soon have a home on this island
of Malaita. But the devil was not so pleased and he speedily showed it. At the end of the first day's voyage, they landed on an uninhabited island, where

A shark, with remora or clinging-fish.

they hoped to spend the night and recover from their weariness. While the tent was being put up and the fire lighted, a small boy went on guard. He very soon made out in the gloom a large pirogue, with eleven natives on board; they were some distance off and seemed to be hiding in a bay sheltered by mangroves. Seeing they had been discovered, they quickly moved
off; but their intentions did not seem to be friendly and they would surely return that night. The missionary decided that he would run no risks, but would go further on for shelter, in the Protestant village of Uhu. When the boat reached this spot it was black night; the rhythmic beat of the oars reached the ears of the villagers. Always on the alert for war, they thought it was an attack. There was a deafening uproar, the women fled shrieking horribly; the men sounded the signal for battle and took up posts along the shore, brandishing their weapons. The boat stopped and the missionary tried to parley, to explain who he was. But it was altogether useless; his voice was lost in the uproar and the natives shouted, «Fire on the boat». They had to move on again; Uhu being at the south end of the lagoon, it meant getting out to the open through a narrow and dangerous channel. The missionary ordered the boat to be steered as far away as possible from the village, where the uproar still continued. The boy at the helm was rather frightened by all this warlike display; his hand was trembling, he hardly knew what he was doing, the boat grazed the reef! The Father gave a quick order, the right direction was hit upon and they were soon out of danger. All this time those on board recited the rosary with all their hearts; fervent Hail Marys rose up to heaven and drew down the protection of Our Lady. On the open sea the wind was against them and the water rough, the boat made slow headway; they had to row all night long in complete darkness, in spite of hunger, thirst and weariness. At dawn they at last reached their own channel of Malamasike; after a short rest they continued their voyage to Tarapaina. On the way they met, floating adrift,
the body of an unfortunate woman, murdered and flung into the sea by her husband.

**

Everywhere in Malaita, especially in this southern part, stories of murder and reports and threats of war were commonplace. The head-hunters carried on their ghastly sport in cold blood, with all the ferocity of wild beasts. They massacred one another on the least pretext, and the blood of a victim to be avenged urged them on continually to fresh deeds of murder.

The whites were not overlooked in this war of vendetta. The recruiting ships were well received, because they brought along coveted objects, axes, tobacco, pipes, matches and other good things; there was a time when even traffic in fire arms was extensively practised, the sole aim of the white men being to get labourers. For this reason the native of Malaita was not averse to their visits. But of all the young natives who went far away to the country of the whites, there were many who never came back; death had overtaken them far from their native villages. According to native custom these deaths had to be avenged and could only be avenged by the blood of the white men. Thus in all directions a price was, so to speak, put upon their heads; they had to redouble their precautions in order not to be surprised by these bandits, past masters in the art of striking down their victims.

The missionary at his post in Tarapaina heard all these reports of death dealing. He was in danger himself too without doubt; it is true, he lived under the protection of a chief who inspired a wholesome fear in the hearts
of hostile tribes; but he counted more on the protection of Heaven and he was on his guard.

One day a recruiting ship called at a harbour not far off. The missionary warned the captain that in this region they wanted the head of a white man. Three days later the schooner was attacked by night; the aggressors were young men who had feigned to join up as labourers the day before in order to carry out their plot. That evening they asked to be allowed to keep watch and when everyone else was asleep they made their way into the cabin and killed the chief mate; the captain was startled out of his sleep by a blow on the shoulder from an axe; luckily a beam in the cabin turned the blow aside and the wound was not mortal. Seizing his revolver he shot the attacker dead. During that time, a battle was raging between the crew and the pretended recruits. Finally the sailors won the victory; several of the assailants were captured, two were killed; three jumped into the water and tried to reach the shore; they were caught and bound. Some time after, six of the guilty ones were tried and condemned to be hanged.

Such was the situation at Malaita at the time when these efforts were made to introduce the Catholic religion. Humanly speaking there was very little chance of success.

In Feb 1912, a visit of the Mission boat to Rohinari resulted in the definite purchase of the land. Everything was ready for the missionary, at least as to the place of his residence; as to souls, they were far from ready for conversion; his presence among them however did more than anything else to win them over. However before reaping the fruit of success he had to sow and
plant in sufferings and privations of all sorts, in complete isolation, living in the neighbourhood of creatures sunk to the lowest degree of degradation and barbarity, exposed to continual threats of death from these pitiless cannibals.

1. ROHINARI

On July 2, 1912, the missionary, brought by the «Jeanne d'Arc», arrived to take possession of his post at Rohinari. Eight baptised boys of Guadalcanal had come along with him to help in clearing the ground and carrying out the installation. They set to work right away, cut down the bush, rapidly erected a small hut, measuring about sixteen feet in length. In it, for several months, lived the Father, with his boys, in the midst of their belongings. The hut was hardly ready when the «Jeanne d'Arc» prepared to leave; our confrère's emotion must have been deep, when he saw himself all alone in this cannibal country. More than ever he felt the need of appealing to Our Lady's maternal protection for himself, for his new station and his new people; on land and sea, those leaving and those remaining united their voices and sang with full hearts the Salve Regina.

The «Jeanne d'Arc» moved off and sailed for Sura. The missionary was alone with his eight boys. Could he count on the protection of the chief who had sold him the land and by so doing had agreed to receive and guard him? He had no other protector on earth. Arisimae had very little to recommend him; he was a first class bandit and had a gloomy record of more than
a hundred and fifty deaths. Surely, if he had no hostile intentions, he was most certainly the best of guardians, for his name was known and feared for more than sixty miles around and his gun and club inspired terror in all those who knew him, even by hearsay. But could he be trusted?

Left to themselves, the missionary and his boys hastened to complete the building of their hut. They filled up the unfinished walls with branches as well as they were able, said their prayers in common, as was their custom, and when night fell barricaded themselves within the hut.

How terrifying were those first nights in such a wild lonely spot! The least strange noise, the cry of a bird shrieking in the night, the merest trifle startled and alarmed them. It might be an attack! Happily little by little they grew accustomed to danger, and, after some time, seeing that nothing extraordinary happened, they began to sleep in peace and even to laugh at their former fears.

The hut was very small for nine people; in consequence Mass could not be said every day. On Sunday all the belongings were piled in a corner; the altar was erected at the other end of the hut and the poor missionary tried on that day to get spiritual strength for the rest of the week. A second hut was soon built as a dormitory for the boys. The Father was able to have his hut all to himself; though it was still rather small, the altar remained always in its place and every morning the Holy Sacrifice was offered. However for a long time the missionary had not the privilege and consolation of his Divine Master's continual presence.

The missionary was naturally puzzled at first to
know what to do with such degenerate people. There was no use talking religion to them at the beginning. For a long time he had to be content with just living amongst them, talking to them about the rain and the fine weather, taking an interest in their pigs and their plantations, looking after their sick, when they allowed him, now and again making them small presents of tobacco, pipes, and so forth. Thus gradually these natives grew more tame and thus also the good seed could be sown, even if it would not spring up at once on this arid soil.

Arisimae appointed himself protector of the station. He insisted on showing his zeal by paying visits from time to time and he never failed to put the generosity of the missionary to the proof. Indeed in his visits he was rather free and easy, not to say impertinent. He thought he could behave as he liked; he walked into the hut without "by your leave" and, if the only folding chair was vacant, he took possession of it. This insolent pride of a heartless and pitiless brute was a source of much annoyance to the missionary, but he had to put up patiently with it all; the slightest affront would have turned this savage into a ruthless enemy.

One Sunday morning he came along to the station when the boys were all gathered in the hut and the Father was celebrating Mass. Arisimae in his usual easy going style walked in and asked a boy for a light for his pipe. The lad, not wishing to break the silence, pointed to the Father at the altar. The chief looked where the boy pointed, saw the lighted candles and went up to light his pipe. When Mass was over, his mistake was pointed out to him; but he very probably never took in the explanation.
While the first work of clearing was being carried on, the missionary could not forget that there was already a Catholic village about fifty miles south of his new station. To pay a visit there he had only his little whaleboat and, for rowers, the boys whom he had brought from Guadalcanal. Yet, one morning, leaving three or four boys to look after the station, he started on his long journey. In the calm waters of the lagoon, rowing was easy. To right and left were large forests of mangrove where one would not imagine that a human being could exist. But, behind that apparently impenetrable curtain, were hidden villages, the abodes of the head-hunters. Consequently travelling in these parts had its incidents and its alarms. One night, as they were rowing in the channel of Mala masike, the measured beat of other oars was heard a little distance off. They were probably bandits on a night excursion. The crew got alarmed and hastened to take refuge among the mangroves. They hid the boat with branches and dark cloths to mask its appearance and avoid attracting the attention of the robbers. Luckily these robbers were seized with the same panic and thought they were going to be attacked; veering around, they hastened back to their covert. Everybody got off with the fright.

Arrived at Tarapaina, the missionary cheered and encouraged the young Christians; in spite of their isolation they had remained faithful. The chief Arisai had his children baptised; he consented, later on, in his turn to receive instruction and became a good Christian, after having been for so long the terror of his neighbours.
At the main station things went along quietly; little by little the Father made the acquaintance of his people; they were savages no doubt, but for this reason there was all the greater good to be done. Some young boys ventured to come and stop with the Father and the Guadalcanal lads. But, threatened with death by their parents, they ran back to their villages. Young men offered their services as workers to help in clearing the land; these were accepted; living near the missionary, they learned to know him better and, later on, when minds calmed down, they had no difficulty in accepting the faith.

In the beginning of 1914, the missionary left the island
hut of Rohinari to go and live on the mainland, on the other side of the channel, in a new house built of boards. Part of the dwelling was set aside as a chapel. The Divine Master was thus under the same roof with His disciple; He kept him company and gave him courage in his struggle day by day; two years later, a separate chapel was built. Among these savages, the ministry of the priest mainly consisted in being able to wait with patience for the hour of Providence and in holding hopefully and bravely the place where obedience had called him. By kindness and devotedness, he strove to win the sympathy of the natives; he looked after their sick; by taking care of their bodies he hoped to reach their souls. He also bought or picked up children condemned to death; these new arrivals increased little by little his list of Christians.

Towards the end of 1914, he added to his congregation a little girl about ten days old. The child was born under the shelter of some old tree according to the custom of the country. The mother had scarcely got back to the village at the end of the fixed time, when she was clubbed to death by her fond relations. The father had no use for the baby, but a young girl of the village was glad to get her as a kind of doll. She brought her home and tried to feed her with cocoanut milk; but this was not exactly what the baby wanted and being hungry she cried persistently. A young man, annoyed by the squalling, seized her by the leg and was going to brain her against a tree. The young girl began to cry and asked to get her doll back; it was returned to her all right, but after a few days, having found out that looking after a live doll gave more work than play, she brought the baby to the station and offered her to the
missionary. He hesitated at first; it was quite easy to take over the child, but how was he to feed her? In the end he accepted the offer; he had just thought of a means of saving the little one’s life; he had an old she-goat at the station who would take over the business; there was no baby feeding bottle to be had, but necessity makes a person ingenious; the goat was brought along, laid out on the ground, while its legs were tightly held. The baby was put beside the goat and seizing the situation helped herself naturally to the milk of her adopted mother. The foster mother rather annoyed at first, as she had not been consulted, soon became used to the situation and grew quite fond of the bush child; it answered when the infant cried and the baby seemed to be interested in the bleating of her nurse. The child, cared for since those days by the Sisters, is now a big girl. When she was six, she could read quite easily; the old goat however is no more, having died on the field of glory, massacred by the savages.

**

In so strange a country many happenings come along to enliven the monotony of the missionary’s life. Though knowing more about his parishioners, he was far from having entered into the mysteries of their private life. Still he knew enough to be aware that their qualities were far from out-numbering their defects. He had not the least doubt about their being cannibals: again and again the sound of the wooden bells resounded through the forest to announce the death of a human victim. They were thieves too, very naturally; and many a theft was committed on the Mission prem-
ises. One night a band of these robbers made their way into the dormitory of the boys. They seized one of them, a small child from the Malaita bush, and carried him off, having gagged him to prevent his crying for help. The missionary sent his boat in quest of the boy, but to no avail. The robbers had stolen a pirogue and gone off to the north. In this difficulty the Father decided to put the matter in the hands of the Government. Happily the old chief Arisimae was about at the time. He had always declared that he was the protector of the missionary: he would show that he was, for once anyway; all this talk about the Government and the police did not appeal to him; with his record, he was not at all anxious for such people to be coming around interfering. He swore that he would go himself and bring back the boy. He went off indeed to the robbers' den and claimed the boy, but was met with a firm refusal. Not a whit upset, he invented an exciting story, declaring that the missionary had already seized and bound the great chief of the village, from which the pirogue had been taken, and that he was going to hand him over to the police; the missionary was only waiting for the return of Arisimae. This brazen lie saved the situation: the robbers were greatly alarmed and gave up the boy, whom Arisimae brought back in triumph to the station.

As has been seen, Arisimae was far from being an honest man. Very tall, well built, he gave one the idea of brutal strength put at the service of a heartless and pitiless wretch. He was a scoundrel who could not look anyone straight in the face. He was too much afraid that the secrets of his criminal record could be read in his eyes; the many murders that he had committed
were far from having disappeared from his memory. The Government police had on many occasions tried to arrest him, but had failed. He was always alert enough to escape in time and reach a safe hiding place in the bush. His fellow natives detested him, but they would never dream of betrayal. In 1918, the Government,
weary of the chase, sent word that they would accept his submission without any penalty, if he would give up his career as robber chief. The old fellow naturally distrustful, judging other folks by himself, hesitated to appear before the Government official. Finally he took courage and came and promised to do all that was asked of him. But it was hard to say that he was really converted; however the old thief has been careful; he does not seem to practise his old trade any longer, at least not openly. But how could a man be a chief in Malaita and behave like an ordinary mortal, limiting himself to a lazy life on a lonely islet? It is not unlikely that in some underhand way he manages now and then to indulge in the pleasure of head-hunting.

Arisimae pretended to be the great doctor of the countryside, capable of making rain and sunshine and of curing any sickness. Since he was fully able to kill any one, why should he not be able to save life, provided, always, that money was put down in time to prevent death?

He had a son, four years old, with a bad sore on his leg. Arisimae was certain that he could cure him; he used an ointment, consisting simply of chewed betel, which he spat on the sore, while making many invocations to his spirit. The sore, he said, was not to be washed! water would destroy the effect of his medicine. After a few days the sore got worse; Arisimae blamed his devils and left his village to settle elsewhere for a while. Matters had not improved by the time he returned: the child was still very bad. By chance the missionary heard about the child's illness and went to see him; the wound was dreadful to look at; the leg was literally eaten into, and worms were swarming in the
A pirogue among the mangroves.
prurient matter. The old "doctor" was standing over the child trying to remove the worms with bamboo pin-
cers. The missionary offered to bring the boy to the station to give him some care; the old man was most unwilling but he finally consented, because he saw that the child was doomed. As to baptism, Arisimae would have none of it; if baptised, the child would die and he himself would die afterwards, as a counter stroke. When they reached the house, the missionary took his syringe and washed the wound thoroughly with a solution and destroyed the worms. Then with the same instrument, unknown to the old bandit who was looking on, he poured the waters of baptism over the child, while pronouncing the sacramental words. Three days later the soul of the little child went to its heavenly home. From on high the little angel prays for his father and his prayers will perhaps gain for him one day the grace of conversion.

***

When the year 1918 came, the apostle of Christ had been living six years in the midst of these people. Very little had been done apparently, and yet they were advancing along the path of conversion. The quiet life of the station made a deep impression on those whose existence was a continual succession of alarms and battles; they were wearied of always being at war and killing one another; gradually their prejudices lessened. In certain villages of the coast, they asked for catechists. The missionary had very few; he had with him only the boys of Guadalcanal long since baptised. He decided to send them to these difficult missions in
which they would become acquainted with misery and hunger. Some of them worked wonders; the example

![The two Fathers Coicaud.](image)

of their priest, who took such a large share in suffering and privation, was a great stimulus to them. Armed with an axe and a large working knife, they had to wring from the earth their daily bread; they knew that they could not put too much trust in the generosity of
the poor heathens amongst whom they lived. The cru­
cifix they wore as catechists reminded them of the path
they had to tread and of the duty they had to fulfil.
One of them, placed in charge of a large village, had
for shelter, in the beginning, only a wretched hut open
to every wind. For many months, while waiting for
his own plantation to produce vegetables, he had to
hunt for sweet potatoes in the old abandoned planta-
tions. By his kindness and gentleness he won the affec-
tion of all and succeeded in grouping round him more
than fifty catechumens. When he is reminded of the
sufferings of the early days, he simply says, « I have
forgotten all that », and he at once begins to speak
about the the sufferings of the missionary, which, he
declares, were far more severe than his own.

Good is being done, slowly, it is true, but surely.
The natives are growing more and more disgusted with
their barbarous customs; murders are becoming more
rare; the Government is acting with energy. Many of
the head-hunters have been arrested, tried, convicted
and hanged. In spite of them civilisation is spreading
by degrees in their island; it is not perfect peace yet;
many years must pass before the tribes of the interior
become less savage and warlike and before the doctrine
of the Gospel can penetrate into these fastnesses.

The condition of native women in Malaita, as in most
of the Solomons before the coming of the missionaries,
was really pitiable. The poor creatures were of no
account in the eyes of their savage masters. A girl was
never consulted about the choice of a husband; she was
given to the highest bidder and became the property of
the purchaser. She had to do all the heavy work in the
plantations. When the time came for her to give birth
Main Street, in a Solomon village.
to a child, she had to leave the village, go into the depths of the forest, build herself a small hut with leaves, or crouch in the hollow of a big tree and there, exposed to the rain and cold, bring forth her child. Only at the end of the period fixed by the customs of the village was she allowed to return to her husband’s house. The child would live if the father and the mother consented; otherwise it was slain. Or else, if after some time the father was in want of money, the poor little thing was sold to the first purchaser that offered. When the husband died the wife was often strangled and burnt; she was resigned to her fate, because she knew that in any case she was doomed to death.

This part of the Solomons is then a very difficult ground in which to sow the good seed; the missionary’s strength wears out, but not his courage. He knows that he can count on the grace of God; through it, he holds the hope that from these degenerate monsters, he will form creatures worthy to enter Paradise. At the present time, the villages along the coast are nearly all at peace; but there are still many portions of the interior that cannot be approached; there, cannibalism still exists. Children now at the mission school have often been present at banquets of human flesh and are not ashamed to admit that they took part in them. Quite lately, not far from this station, a young man was killed, roasted and eaten; the wooden bells were heard resounding in token of rejoicing. «What harm is there,» said one native, «in eating one’s enemy? For my part I see no difference between the flesh of a pig and the flesh of a man.» Still, they do not really eat human flesh because they like it; they want to play the braggart or to show hatred of the tribe to which the victim be-
longed. The names of some unfortunates are given who were cut to pieces while yet alive. This happened on one occasion on the very site of our station. In a village of the southern part of the island are still to be seen, hanging on the sides of a hut, more than 150 full sets of jaws of men formerly killed and eaten. It is unnecessary to multiply proofs; these facts are enough to show to what depths human beings can descend, when left entirely to their baser instincts.

It is now more than fifteen years since the faith has begun to be planted in Malaita. In spite of the countless difficulties met with by our apostles, they had the consolation of baptising 378 natives, of whom 286 are still alive. The hour seems to have come when we will be able to scatter the seed of the word of God in full measure. Unfortunately missionaries rapidly get worn out and grow old before their time. "Ask the Lord of the harvest that He may send workers into His harvest." Prayers are wanted too that the work of the apostolic workers may be fruitful, that this large island of Malaita may soon be converted. "Orate ut insula Mala fiat bona!"

2. LANGA-LANGA

The foundation of the station of Langa-langa took place soon after that of Rohinari. These two stations, the first founded on Malaita, are, we may say, twins, which have many points of resemblance; begun about the same time, they experienced the same sufferings and the same dangers.
As we have seen, the land was bought on Sept. 1, 1909. During the three following years, it was not thought advisable to occupy it. Rohinari was begun on July 2, 1912. Bishop Bertreux, recently appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Solomons, arranged for the starting of Langa-langa two or three months later. As a missionary happened to be available just then it was thought well to attack this large island from two different points at once; these two places are on the coast nearest to Rua Sura.

The first missionary of Langa-langa reached his post on Jan. 1, 1913. He had for his own service a schooner of seven or eight tons, fitted with a small motor engine, the «Hambia» (Morning Star). Its chief duty was to bring supplies to the two stations; from time to time also it was to go on exploring expeditions around the island.

On the appointed day, the «Jeanne d'Arc» and the «Hambia» met in the lagoon of Langa-langa. This was a solemn taking possession of this heathen land. Stories of murders were rife in the district; quite recently a white man had been killed by a blow of a hatchet at a place not far away. The missionary was not at all disturbed in mind; the natives were again at war, no doubt, but he had come to bring peace.

In 1909, the ground bought at Langa-langa and called Buma, was uninhabited. Three years later, on coming to take possession, we discovered that some strangers had established their quarters in our territory. We were informed that these natives formerly lived at a short distance to the south of Buma; they had been obliged to leave their district on account of murders in which they were concerned. Fleeing to the north, they
had built temporary villages in different spots, living as well as they could with the various tribes; then by short stages they had come back south in the direction of their own district; thus they had come across this vacant piece of land, bought by the Mission, and had settled down there. The arrival of the missionaries upset them considerably. But they were not long worried; they set up a pretence that they were the owners and were insolent enough to insist on staying or being paid for the land. They pointed out that they had already built several huts, and cleared a certain amount of ground for their plantations; this showed their ownership; payment must be made or they would oppose any landing, by force if necessary. The Mission people took no notice of their protest and went on with their landing; but it was easy to see that these usurpers might cause a lot of trouble later. The real former owners happened to be on the spot and they were notified that it was their business to come to an arrangement with these claimants and make them behave reasonably. They readily undertook to do this and thanks to them matters were soon settled: with a few strings of pearls, the current coin of the country, the dispute was amicably arranged, the quarreling died away and cries of anger gave place to a joy and satisfaction that they had great difficulty in concealing. « Their belly was turned, » as they elegantly expressed it, and from this moment they declared themselves the friends and protectors of the station.

On the morning of Jan. 3, the « Jeanne d’Arc » raised anchor and sped away back to Sura. The missionary was left alone with his twelve boys, relying on the protection of God, rather than on that of his neighbours.
The station of Langa-langa like that of Rohinari is situated at the end of a lagoon. There the sea is always calm and the anchorage is excellent. The first island which forms the exterior barrier of this lagoon, on the south side, belongs to the Mission. It extends in a semi-circle for about a mile and a half and helps to protect the land of Buma, from which it is separated by a deep, narrow channel. It was at Buma, on the mainland, that the first clearing was begun and the house of the station built.

For several days the missionary lived on board the « Hambia » with his boys. They had very little room, for the luggage and provisions filled up the hold; happily our natives sleep anywhere and anyhow, and do not mind much where they have their quarters; besides, everyone expects to have to rough it a bit when starting a station. During the day the boys worked on the land; they first cleared the spot where the hut was to be built. At the end of ten days, the hut was finished and they took possession. The Father still used the schooner for his sleeping quarters.

Building a station in the bush is always a hard job. The thick brushwood has to be cut down and burnt and it is only after this first work that the house or the plantation can be started. The boys who come to help know that they will have to work hard, but they accept quite willingly the invitation to join the expedition. They like a change and must have some novelty from time to time; in a new station they get it to the full. We have only to congratulate ourselves on the good
will, the endurance and the good spirit of all the old boys of our schools of Guadalcanal, who took their share in the starting of our new stations.

In addition to the usual difficulties, at Malaita there was the danger of living too close to ill-intentioned natives, savages in whom we could not place the least trust. Threats of death from men in the bush often reached the ears of our boys. They wanted the head of a white; but if they could not get that, then any head would do. The boys knew that they ran great risk of being attacked and they knew too that they had to protect their missionary and that a good look-out must be continually kept.

In the daytime there was little or no danger. Going to work in groups, they had nothing to fear; for the Solomon natives never attack any one stronger than themselves. Still as a matter of prudence the boys brought guns along with them. At night the risks were greater, for it is the time usually chosen by the savages for an attack. To guard against surprise they had a picket on duty all night. For several months the spot looked more like a war camp than a mission station. Always on the alert, the sentinel paced up and down near the house, while the others slept. The house dog too, though he took a doze now and then, did his share. He sometimes got wind of danger and his barking re-echoed ominously in the night. Everybody would awaken and try to find out if there was an enemy in the neighbouring bush. But this was enough to put a stop to any attempt at attack.

At times however there was a lighter side to things. During the month of March in the first year, when the building of the house was just beginning, they had fixed
up during the day the posts which were to make the framework of the house. That night the sentinel going his rounds saw something unusual in the darkness, something that he had never noticed before. Evidently it could only be a savage on some mischief bent. He challenged, but got no reply. A second

challenge and still silence. Angered by this refusal to speak, the sentinel challenged a third time, "Answer or I fire." As there was no reply the boy raised his gun and fired. The report of the shot in the silence of the night roused the other boys. They seized anything they could lay their hands on in the guise of a weapon, guns, axes, knives, lances, and rushed outside, fully persuaded that a serious attack was being made. The sentinel, after the emotion of actually firing his gun, kept staring at the figure at which he had fired. What he had seen was there still, quite motionless. He
explained to his comrades. They advanced very cautiously in the direction in which he pointed and found merely one of the large posts which had been erected that afternoon. There was a tremendous roar of laughter; the poor sentry humbly handed over his weapon to another boy and rushed off to hide his shame under the shelter of a tree overhanging the shore. Next day he had to be dragged out of his retreat and brought back, looking very shamefaced among his smiling comrades. It was a long time before the incident was forgotten and it produced a good result. It gave courage to the boys who found that the danger was often in their own imagination and it warned the bush folk that it would not be prudent to attack a place where such a careful watch was kept.

Happily this period of anxiety, fear and alarm did not last very long. The pioneers quickly grew accustomed to the place and discovered that, with these warlike people, very brave when there was nothing to fear and cowards when they were menaced, the best plan was to laugh at their threats. One day a young man from the other side of the island paid a visit to the station. He had come a two days march, to get the head of a white man. At first no suspicion was aroused; it was only after a few days that his roaming around attracted attention. He was armed with an axe which he kept with him night and day. He came to the missionary’s house, got into conversation with him, showed him the axe, wanted him to admire it, gave full details as to where and from what white man he had bought it. He asked to be engaged as a worker just for a week. The Father replied that he had no need of his services. But the savage did not give up his plan.
He asked to be inscribed on the school list; he was told that he was past the age, that he would not suit school life. It was quite evident that this persevering stranger had an evil design in his mind. His failure to carry it out during the week spent at the station was due to the experience gained by our people to trust no stranger and to watch any outsider's movements carefully; face your enemy, never lose sight of him, was the only policy. The savages of Malaita always profit by the moment a man turns his back to give the death blow. Our visitor, carefully followed, had not yet found the propitious moment. The missionary, now fully convinced of his murderous designs, said to him, straight out: «You asked for eight days work at the station; it does not take eight days to do what you are after; you want my head, I know; here it is, come and take it!» The astounded savage, quite alarmed at having been found out, took to his heels as fast as he could, thinking that he was lucky to get home with his own head safe on his shoulders. Judging others by himself and his own people, he was fully convinced that once his murderous intent was known, the Catholic boys would treat him as he meant to treat the Father.

**

This state of affairs did not seem to inspire much confidence that the bush natives could ever become Christians. The missionary however was always full of hope for the future; even if the time had not yet come, he was there to watch and pray, ready to seize the moment when better times should come. He hoped that, by degrees, through the people of the nearer vil-
lages, the mission would eventually become known in the very depths of the bush. The news was bound to spread that the white man who was living at Langa-langa was not like the whites whom they had seen on board the recruiting boats or on the plantations. In fact the day would soon come when he would be for them «tabu», that is sacred, and when these superstitious creatures would think it ill-omened to attack him. Then he could come and go without any risk and the bushmen would even pay him visits and make his acquaintance.

But for the present the missionary cannot reach these tribes of the interior. Fortunately he is able to get acquainted with a more peaceably inclined group; these are the dwellers of the small isles. In this lagoon of Langa-langa, as in the others along the north and northeast coast, there lives a curious but peaceful people, who having had many a broil with the inland tribes is less hostile to the whites. In many cases the islets on which these natives live have been enlarged artificially with coral and stones taken from the sea; from afar they look like fortresses. These piles of stones, which form a wall all round each islet are intersected here and there by narrow channels through which the pirogues wind in and out. The isles are thickly inhabited; outside the huts there is hardly any other free space, except a passage, two or three feet wide, between the rows of huts.

These people are very clever at fishing and make their living chiefly from it; but the great occupation of the women and girls, and of the men too when they are not fishing, is the manufacture of native money. For this work, they use a rather rare shell, gathered at sea
on the reefs at a certain depth. The shells are broken into small pieces, then the pieces are perforated, filed and rounded to the required size. All the operations are carried out with native tools; these are of course very primitive. A sharp flint tool, fixed on a drill, not unlike a watchmaker's trepanning tool, is used to bore a hole in the shell. When these holes have been made, the bits of shell are strung to the length of five or six feet; for the string, they use the fibres of a strong bindweed, divided into small thongs. Then the polishing begins, a work of patience, usually done by the men: the loaded string is laid on a plank or along the flat trunk of a tree and stretched taut. Finally, with a special kind of stone, in which a small round groove has been cut, they file and smooth the edges of the
shell pieces. Some fine sand spread on the plank helps to give a better polish to the shells. Our Solomon natives are acquainted, it would seem, with the methods of marble polishers of civilised countries. Once well polished and brought to the right size, the money is ready to be put into circulation. Its value is in proportion to the length of the string; usually it is in six feet lengths, single or double; it is not unusual to see four or five or even twenty of these lengths tied up together; there are two kinds of this money, red and white; the red alone has real value and circulates in all the islands of the archipelago. It is used for all kinds of purchases, pirogues, pigs, food, girls, women to marry and slaves. The makers of the money form a class apart and there has been no attempt elsewhere to enter into competition with them.

The islanders, having no room for plantations on their land, use their money to buy yams, taros, bananas and other articles from the people of the coast. These exchanges formerly gave rise to disputes, which ended in murder; nowadays matters proceed quite peaceably; the natives know that the Government official is not very far off.

In the lagoon of Langa-langa, which is about fifteen miles long, there are about seven or eight inhabited islets and their population must amount to over a thousand people.

From the very beginning the missionary was well received in most of these small islands; not that the people are less attached to heathen worship, perhaps they are even more so than the others. But for a long time they have had dealings with the whites and are rather pleased to see one settle down near their place.
Besides, some amongst them have spent a while in Rua Sura, so that the priest is no stranger. During the first year he had the consolation of baptising some sick children: these got better and the natives concluded that there must be something really good in this reli-

![Malaita boys.](image)

gion. The Father visited them often and on their part they were not afraid to come to the station. The fear of the mountain tribes did not stop them as it did formerly; they knew that they would be under the protection of the missionary.

The Father then was not so lonely in his station at Buma; by degrees he built his nest; in 1913, a wooden house was put up. For several months he had no other chapel than his own house and Our Lord lived there
with His missionary; in 1914, a separate chapel was built. Meanwhile the clearing of the bush went on and, with the bush, much of the panic of the early days disappeared too. The Solomon bandits do not like to work in the open; they want the thick forest to hide in, while waiting for their victim. So the station became a safer place to live in.

Some children from the islands timidly ventured to come to try what the school was like. But these folk are not easily accustomed to living in the open air. They prefer their low, smoky huts, their narrow lanes, where all sorts of beings, men, women, children, pigs and other animals, more or less domestic, knock up against one another all day long and share the same existence and the same home. The children at school got homesick, and the passing of a pirogue, returning home from marketing, always gave them a chance of leaving. The parents made no objection to their remaining at school; it was the children who wanted to go home and there was nothing to do but let them go. Everyone follows his own fancy in the Solomons, more than elsewhere. The missionary had to possess his soul in patience. However once the movement was well started and the habit taken, school life became more pleasant, and the children could be instructed and baptised.

From time to time the schooner raised anchor and went off to work in its fashion for the spreading of the kingdom of God. In addition to bringing supplies to the two stations at Malaita and some trips to Guadalcanal and San Cristoval, it went away now and then on trips of exploration round Malaita itself. To plant religion in this heathen island the missionary must
first make himself known; the «Hambia» undertook the task of carrying him in every direction along the various coasts; to the north particularly, for this was the most populous region. His reception at the beginning was not always cordial, far from it; however as soon as the schooner dropped anchor in a port there were always crowds of visitors. They quickly became aware that the «Hambia» was not one of the recruiting boats, often found visiting these parts; it took on recruits, it is true, but they were for the faith and for the school; however, as it offered no salary, the candidates were few; more than one visit was necessary to win over some. But the missionary profited by these trips to make acquaintances among the natives, to make friends even by giving small presents. Thus the «Hambia»
spread the good news from one shore to another and sowed the first seeds of the faith. It is clear that the ministry of a wandering missionary cannot produce the same fruits as that of one living in a fixed place; his field of action is too vast. But it was all that could be done while the workers were so few. These repeated visits had a good effect in the long run; through seeing the priest often, the people became friendly and were no longer afraid to trust him with their children. Thus in the district of Suava, on the north side of the island, more than sixty miles away from Langa-langa, there are already a good number of catechumens and a small chapel has been built; some of the children consented to come to the station school and were baptised.

At the station, things, of late years, have changed for the better. The neighbouring bush people seem to be losing their warlike and aggressive habits; thinking less about fighting and murdering, they begin to accept religion. A certain number of the lagoon children are already at the school; some of them have been instructed and baptised; their elders offer a more difficult problem. But at Langa-langa, as elsewhere, they will not hold out for ever against the enthusiasm of the young folk and we trust that their hour will soon come too. There have been 480 baptisms since the foundation of the mission, mostly of children; there are 326 baptised now living.

***

The Catholic Mission of Malaita has only been in existence for 15 years. For a long period it had only one missionary in each of its stations. Under these
conditions, it was not an easy task to keep going at the same time the work of the station and that of visiting the villages; one could only be done at the loss of the other. There are now two missionaries in each station and we may hope for rich harvests before long, but still many more are wanted for this populous island of Malaita.

The Protestant missions too are gaining ground, and they have plenty of money at their disposal; but their workers are rare also and few remain long in this unhealthy country.

The Catholic missionary comes to live and die in the Solomons, as in all missions of the world. Hence, in this struggle between different religions, he has at least the hope that he will hold out longer and consequently will, sooner or later, become master of the situation. But he cannot go beyond the limits of his strength and, in these regions, strength is rapidly exhausted and is not quickly restored. To bring our enterprise to a successful issue we have to rely on fresh troops, young priests in the flower of their age, capable of relieving those who fall by the way. We have every confidence that our hopes will not be disappointed.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS

During these thirty years, from 1898 to 1928, the number of baptisms in the South Solomon Vicariate has reached 10,712, divided as follows: from 1898 to 1912, 1883; from 1912 to 1922, 5381; from 1922 to 1927, 2948.

At the present time, there are 5429 Catholics and 1068 Catechumens.

At first sight these figures seem small, particularly if we consider the length of time spent, the efforts made and the money employed in the work of evangelising. Still, if all the difficulties are borne in mind, we can be well satisfied with the result obtained and thank God for having blessed our efforts.

When the missionaries first came, the people of the
Solomons, as we have seen, were in a deplorable state of degradation; their barbarous manners, their natural indifference to anything requiring an effort, their attachment to superstition, had not prepared them for receiving the Gospel law. Only by degrees were we able to reach them, to convince them of the silliness of their heathen practices, to instruct them and convert them to the true faith.

Here the absence of real chiefs, although it was in our favour in some ways, prevented our obtaining mass conversions, such as have taken place in other vicariates, where the chiefs, when converted, bring all their people along with them. In the Solomons those who might be looked upon as chiefs and held indeed a certain amount of authority were often the very last to be converted. The first were the children and the young men who came to our schools. The others came freely, individually, we may say, to be inscribed as catechumens. In some villages conversions took place quickly; but in others the conversion of a whole village took ten or even fifteen years. We have thus gained in quality what we may have lost in quantity. These free conversions were always sincere and during our thirty years we have hardly had a dozen apostates.

Another obstacle to rapid evangelisation is that the population is very scattered, living in small villages, often thirty or forty miles distant from the missionary's residence. There is no use in trying to gather the people into central settlements. So many ties link them to the place in which they were born; their divinities first of all, then their plantations, fruit trees and other possessions. So many reasons, too, prevent their joining up together. Add to this the great number of
islands, their distance, their dialects, the difficulty or non-existence of means of communication. Hence the missionary must travel about and go far afield to devote his care to these poor scattered sheep.

Moreover the missionary, already tried by the climate and the fever, is quickly worn out by these voyages by sea and excursions in the bush; in this hostile climate the white man has not half the strength and energy which he would have in a healthier region. The difficulty arising from the number of languages must also be taken into account; starting a new station, passing from one to another often means for the missionary learning a new language.

Material organisation too absorbs sometimes a great part of the time which the missionary could employ more usefully in the service of his flock; by the nature of things he is obliged to practise all sorts of trades. Happily lay brothers have come, so far, alas, in small number, to relieve us to a great extent from these material cares. Modestly, like St Joseph at Nazareth, they are devoted to their work; building, repairing, printing and at times teaching, is their share of the apostolate. They give themselves to their duties with courage, knowing that their labour and toil count also in the conversion of souls.

**

In the Solomons as in the most part of the Pacific Islands, the Protestants have arrived before us. The white ministers are usually courteous to us, helpful at times as between man and man. But some of the natives are prone, owing to the superiority of Protestants in material means, to be contemptuous of Catho-
lics. They see the fine boats of some of the non-Catholic organisations, particularly the large steamer of one of these, which twice a year cleaves the waters of the group and brings their bishop from station to station, and they naturally look on our poor little sailing boats with disdain; it is clear these cannot hold a candle to their steamer. This has been at times an obstacle to the rapid development of the true faith.

In the islands where Catholicism is not yet solidly established, the difficulties are greater still. The Protestants feel that this is the decisive hour and that the moment has come when these tribes, still heathen, are about to decide to give up their deities and turn to the one or the other of the Christian religions they find around them. Apostolic workers are urgently needed, for those on the field are hardly able to attend to the existing stations. The island of Malaita has a population, it is said, of over sixty thousand natives, and we can only dispose of four missionaries for this immense field. May the Lord of the harvest deign to take pity on our small number and send us as soon as possible helpers and substitutes!

***

We wish to express our gratitude here to all those, who, in many various ways, have contributed materially to the success of our Mission. The centenary of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, its re-organisation under Pontifical direction, and the rapid strides it has made since then have aroused all over the world a concert of praise, which shows how faithfully it has fulfilled its mission. We can only add our voice to that of so many others. The Vicariate of the South
Solomons has had a large share in the distribution of gifts and alms, which Christian generosity never refuses when the extension of the reign of Christ is in question.

Money is more than ever the sinews of war; it is necessary, and will long be so, for the conversion of souls in these heathen worlds. We cannot count on the generosity of our converts to help us in our apostolate. The native is poor and lives and dies in poverty. Careless of the future, he lives from day to day with no thought of the morrow. For years to come, we have to depend
on the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and on the charity of the good souls of our civilised countries to help us to continue and develop our work of evangelisation.

What becomes of the money which is sent to us? Why are so many appeals addressed by our missionaries to the generous souls of far away Christian countries? The object of this book is not to solicit alms, but to enlighten the friends of all missions and these questions should be answered; every contributor to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, as well as every personal benefactor, has a right to know how these gifts are spent.

Our islands, as everyone knows, are at the antipodes of France. At the present day, it takes a missionary two months' travel to reach the scene of his apostolate. The fares of the Fathers, Sisters and lay brothers absorb a large portion of the grant.

In the Missions, like everywhere else, we need food, clothes and housing. The missionary must have a certain independence in order to discharge worthily the duties of his ministry and hence needs a home. As for his dwelling place, a native hut can only serve for a time; it is too unhealthy for a white man. The wooden houses that we build have no luxuries about them and just shelter us from the rain and sun. Then in each station, beside the presbytery, we must have a church, a convent, class rooms, dormitories for the children and outhouses.

We must have food. The soldier of Christ needs all his strength to do his work. With such an unhealthy climate, he cannot, exhausted by fever, limit himself to native food, at least habitually. He must have at
times such of the food products of civilisation as the monthly service of the packet boats can now supply. We naturally try to provide ourselves on the spot with everything that is available; eventually each station has a fowl yard, a small farm, the products of which are a great help. But they are not always enough;

we have to purchase tinned food and other preserved eatables.

The upkeep of the school absorbs a large portion of the mission fund. School rooms and dormitories must be built for boys and girls; all these little people must be fed and clothed. Then all the school supplies must be bought. All this is at the missionary’s expense. In the beginning we had in our schools grown up boys mostly, who were being prepared for baptism. They
were able to labour; they cleared the bush, started their own plantations and provided nearly all their own food. At the present time, in the old stations, the big boys have left school, and young children, baptised when infants, have taken their place. They enter usually at the age of seven or eight and are kept as long as possible. We cannot evidently impose any hard work upon them, and they have to be supported at our expense.

These schools, however costly they are, form the main work of the missionary. The children that we are bringing up will be the men and women of the next generation. The old heathens, converted late in life, will gradually disappear and give place to this youth now at school. Our future Christians then will be what we train them into now. Unfortunately, owing to the want of money, we are not able to develop this important work as fully as we should like. Sometimes the want of food obliges us to shut up our schools for several weeks. We deeply regret having to do so, for the sole means of rearing and training the native children as Christians is to keep them away, at least for a certain number of years, from their heathen surroundings and the corrupting influence of the older people, even Catholics, who just know enough catechism to save their souls.

The upkeep of a child costs us on average five or six dollars a year, about a pound sterling! For any one at all well off, this is not much assuredly, but for a missionary, who has to depend on alms, it is a great deal; when this sum is multiplied by a hundred, two hundred or more, the total is quite beyond the means of the missionary. From the beginning, more than 3,000
children, boys and girls, have received instruction in our station schools.

Add to these expenses the care of the sick. Fever, sores, skin diseases and other maladies make the natives haunt our dispensaries. The good that we can do by this means is enormous; by taking care of the body, we win over the soul. How greatly our spiritual gains would be increased if we had at our disposal the remedies necessary for the care of so many sick people!

Special mention must also be made of our catechists; they are our most precious helpers; they keep alive Christian life in the villages already converted; they open the way for the apostle in villages still heathen. Having the advantage of a more accurate knowledge of the native tongue and of the manners and customs of their fellows, they are able to succeed where the missionary might easily fail. They too are kept at our expense; they are satisfied with little; but we must again count an average of five dollars, per month and per catechist, either in the special school or on the field of action.

**

The missionary has received from his Divine Master the special mission of going forth to the end of the world to teach all nations and to baptise them. His life is in consequence a life of activity, of movement. His field of action is as wide as the universe; on the great continents, as on the islands lost in the welter of the ocean waves, wherever is to be found a soul, wherever there beats a human heart, he must go; everywhere he is at home, by the order of the Master of the world. The various methods of travel for missionaries
have often been discussed; they evidently vary with the time, the place and the latitude. The great Apostle, after the prophet Isaias, has sung the beauty of those moving forth on foot to bring the tidings of the Gospel. «How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace; of him that sheweth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion: Thy God shall reign.» (Isaias, LII, 7.) The missionary in the Solomons has often felt his feet bruised by the fatigue of long journeys through the bush or over the mountains; but this method of travelling, practical under certain circumstances, as a rule economical and by the very fact apostolic, is not the most frequent in our regions. Oceanica is at the antipodes of the great continents. Whether it is called Polynesia, Micronesia or Melanesia (numerous islands, little islands, black islands), it is always a country of islands and to get from one to the other, the sea is the only link. The missionary in these regions must then be a sailor, must have his boat, large or small, according to his needs; he has to learn to rig it out, see to its upkeep, repair it. Then, accompanied by a few boys, who form his crew, he sets sail or rows away out on the waters, wherever his ministry may summon him. All this costs money: the boat must be kept infitting order, all the details of its construction, rigging and outfit must be carefully attended to, if a man does not want to expose himself to accidents which might have serious consequences.

During these later years progress has crossed the seas and brought us the motor engine; the missionary gave it a warm reception and has now become an engineer. The extension of the kingdom of God has been made
easier; visiting the various coast villages has become more rapid, more frequent and less wearisome. But it is a fresh cause of expense.

In addition to the small boats wanted for each station, we must have, in a country where there are no regular services, a boat of larger tonnage, capable of making longer voyages, of visiting and supplying even the most distant islands of the mission. Our schooner, the « Jeanne d'Arc », rendered us invaluable services during more than fifteen years; the number of miles it covered each year ran to an average of two thousand. A round trip to all the stations of the Mission reaches the figure of five hundred miles. The « Hambia », which does the service now, has even a higher average. To keep such a vessel in good order means much expenditure; but it is indispensable for the working of the mission.

**

What has been done up to the present is very little compared with what remains to be done. Looking at the map of the Vicariate, we see that the Catholic religion has a footing only in the islands of Guadalcanal, San Cristoval and Malaita. Still awaiting their missionaries are, in the west, New Georgia, with the many islands around it, and Ysabel, scene of the martyrdom of the first Catholic Bishop of Melanesia. The population of these islands is very scattered and Protestantism has invaded them long since. When will the islands of Santa Cruz, far away to the southeast of the Solomon archipelago, see the ministers of the Gospel? Intercourse at this distance is very difficult. The Anglicans, with the help of their steamer, the « Southern Cross »,
have long since landed in these parts and founded Christian settlements. One of their first bishops, Bishop Patteson, was murdered by the natives at Nakapu, in the Santa Cruz group, in 1871.

Before the war, the number of our missionaries was eighteen; we are now only sixteen and the Catholic population has doubled since then. There are about twenty thousand people in Guadalcanal; the Catholics number over four thousand; the Protestants come near to three thousand; the remainder are heathen. With the help of two or three more Fathers it would be easy for us to win over the greater part of the heathen element. San Cristoval has only two missionaries for a population of seven or eight thousand people; one or two more would powerfully aid the conversion of this part of the Vicariate. Malaita is
the island which seems to offer the most brilliant future on account of its population; with its sixty thousand people, it presents, lying open before us, an immense field for the apostolate.

**

Up to 1923 the central station, which was the residence of the Vicar Apostolic, with the supply stores and printing office, was at Rua Sura. As we have already seen, Sura had its hour of glory; it rendered the greatest service in the beginning by receiving from different parts of the Mission boys and girls who were trained to be good Christians. Things have changed; different stations have been organised with their schools for boys and girls. Hence it was natural to leave Rua Sura and establish the central station in a more suitable spot, nearer the natives, where, too, it would be easier to get the help needed for the different services: transport, printing, industrial school. This plan was carried out and the Vicar Apostolic transferred his household to Visale, in the midst of the Christians of Guadalcanal. Naturally it was with great regret that we said good bye to Rua Sura, the cradle of the Mission, the witness of much anxiety, suffering and hope, in the early days! It will always remain dear to the hearts of the Solomon missionaries.

This Mission now enters on a new era. A fresh impetus has been given to the missionary movement by our Pontiff, Pius XI, now gloriously reigning, the Pope of the Missions. May it be a fresh starting point for a greater Christian life among our Catholics, for a more rapid development of our works and more numerous
conversions amongst the heathen peoples, especially in the island of Malaita! Help from on high will not fail us, I am sure, new missionaries will come out to relieve the older ones who are ending their career and the charity of our benefactors, of the members of the Propagation of the Faith, of the Holy Childhood, will continue to bestow on us the help of its gifts and the alms of its prayers, as it has done so nobly in the past.

FINIS

Smile! please, this is the end.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mgr L.-M. RAUCAZ, S. M. — *Vingt-cinq Années d’Apostolat aux Iles Salomon Méridionales.* Lyon, 1925. *(The present book is mainly a translation of this work.)*


id. — *Grand Archipel des Iles Salomon.* Marseille, 1883.

A. MONFAT, S. M. — *Dix Années en Mélanesie.* Lyon, 1891.


Annales de Marie, 1924-1928. Lyon.


C.-M. WOODFORD. — *A Naturalist among the Head-hunters.* Sydney, 1890.


Cléa Rodolphe DE TOLNA. — *Chez les Cannibales.* Paris, 1903.


Clifford W. COLLINSON. — *Life and Laughter midst the Cannibals.* London, 1926.


id. — *In the Islands of King Solomon.* London, 1928.
INDEX

Albatross, ship, 82.
Allet, Father, 100, 179.
Aloisio, catechist, 110-112.
Amiranta, ship, 12.
Aola, district, 83, 184.
Araiasa, chief, 210.
Arche d’Alliance, ship, 42.
Ariel Harbour, 204.
Arisimae, chief, 212, 226.
Aristides, lay brother, 32.
Artificial islets, 242.
Astrolabe, ship, 29; bay, 33.
Austrians massacred, 82.
Avuavu, mission station, 102-121.

Bagerau, village, 117.
Balade, New Caledonia, 46.
Barretto Ysabel, wife of Mendana, 26.
 Barthélemy, Sister M. 101.
Belama, ship, 163.
Benedito, catechist, 130.
Bertheux, Father, 173-179.
Bertrand, lay brother, 32.
Bertheux, Bishop, 94-100.
Bilebanara, chief, 19.
Birds, 76.
Blaise, Brother (Marmoiton), 46.
Blemmy, mate, 34.
Books in Solomon tongue, 98.
Boussole, ship, 29.
Bougainville, explorer, 28.
Buache, French savant, 28.
Buena Vista, island, 142.
Buma, mission station, 234-245.

Bush villages, 136-138.
Butchard, planter, 82.

Callao, in Peru, 12.
Cannibalism, 41, 50-62.
Cape Marsh or Russell Isds, 142, 160.
Capitana, ship, 12.
Carteret, explorer, 28.
Catechists, 105, 186, 223.
Catoira, Spanish purser, 60.
Chanel, Blessed Peter, 104.
Character of natives, 66-72.
Charles, lay brother, 32.
Chaurain, Father, 32, 36.
Chiefs, position of, 145, 251.
Chinese in Solomons, 56.
Chittoor, ship, 83.
Civilisation, dangers of, 57.
Climate, 76, 78.
Collomb, Bishop, 42, 46.
Colour of natives, 58.
Crey, Father, 42, 43, 90.
Crocodiles, 74.
Cruz, Port, 16.

Dhura, see Sura, 80.
Douarre, Bishop, 42.
Drums, village, 223.
Dumont d’Urville, explorer, 29.

Eclipse, ship, 90, 127.
Entrecasteaux, explorer, 29.
Epalle, Bishop, 32-38, 90.
Esperance, ship, 29, cape, 140.
Estrella Bay, 16.
Fauna, 74.
Feast days, 71, 72.
Fever, 76, 78.
Fiji, 110, 184, 193.
Fijians, 82, 105, 131, 183.
Flora, 74.
Florida, islands, 52.
Food of school children, 258.
Forestier, Father J., 164.
Franciscan Fathers, 15, 16.
Frémont, Father, 32, 36.
Futuna, island, 32.

Gallego, Spanish pilot, 24, 204.
Gavutu, village, 81, 86.
Gennade, lay brother, 32.
Gilbert Islands, 32.
Guadalcanal, island, 102–139.
Guadeloupe, island, 142.
Guilloux, Father, 123–134.
Guittet, Father, 123.

Hambia, mission ship, 234–7, 247.
Head-hunters, 240, 241.
Hell, in the Solomons, 65.
Hyacinth, lay brother, 32, 44.

Infanticide, 176, 177, 232.
Isabella or Ysabel, island, 15, 33.

Jacquet, Father, 32, 44.
Jeanne d’Arc, mission schooner, 96, 234.

Kahua, village, 193.
Kakabona, village, 158.
Keating, ship captain, 83.
Kokobi, Joseph, chief, 145–156.
Kubara, Island, 80.

La Galera, island, 142.
Langalanga, mission station, 233.
Language difficulty, 122, 183.
La Pérouse, explorer, 29.
Latitude of Solomons, 30, 52.
Leopard, ship, 82.
Leosa Bay, Visale, 144–147
Longitude of Solomons, 30, 52.
Longu district, 104, 110.
Los Reyos, Lima, Peru, 25.
Lunga cape, 148.

Malageti, district, 109, 118.
Malaita or Malal Island, 203–217.
Mala paina, Malas maseke, 203.
Makira Bay, 24, 40, 89, 191, 201.

Mangroves, 74, 210.
Manuporo, district, 191.
Maps, see after Table of Contents, 6.
Marau, station, 32, 104, 170–179.
Maravovo, Anglican station, 144.
Marceau, Captain, 42.
Marian Watson, ship, 32.
Marmoiton, Brother Blaise, 46.
Marshall Islands, 32.
Marsh fever, 76, 78.
Massacres, 22, 82.
Maté, death, 44, 129.
Mazzucconi, Father, of Milan, 48.
Melanesia, group of islands, 30, 58, 260.

Mendra, Spanish explorer, 12, 26.
Micronesia, group of islands, 30, 260.

Milan, Foreign Missions of, 48.
Mission, First, 30.
Mission, Second, 50.
Mission expenses, 256.
Mitre Island, 52.
Moli, district, 104, 109, 115.
Monfat, Père, author, 31.
Montrouzier, Father, 32, 40, 44.
Moran, Cardinal, 91, 92, 96.
Mountains, people of the, 102, 136–138.

Myrtle, schooner, 88.

Nagle, Cape, 122.
Names given by Spaniards, 16, 18.

Natives brought to Peru, 24.
Nduma, village, 130.
New Caledonia, 46.
New Georgia, 52, 73.
New Guinea, 11, 32.
New Hebrides, 28.
New Zealand, 46.

Nielsen, planter, 82.

Olea, in Sura, 84.
Oné, village, 40.

Ophir of King Solomon, 26.
Orimau, native, 41.
Ouango, village, 44.

Paget, Father, 32, 44.
Pagari, island, 80.
Paradise in the Solomons, 65.
Patteson, Anglican Bishop, murdered, 262.
Pellion, Father, 125, 145, 148.
Peru, 12, 25.
Peter, Sister Mary, 163.
Philip II of Spain, 16.
Polynesia, group of islands, 58, 260.
Population of S. Solomons, 54;
of Malaita, 56; Spanish ideas,
55; Guadalcanal, 56; San Cristo-
val, 56; decline, 56.
POuèbo, village, 46.
Printing books in native tongue,
98.
Prosper, lay brother, 32-36.
Protestant missions, 114, 118, 139,
249.
Puerto Escondido, Uhu channel,
204.
Puraka, native god, hill, 141, 152-
156.

Queensland, 184, 203.
Quiros, Spanish explorer, 28, 28.

Raballand, commandant, 46.
Races, Polynesian, Melanesian,
58.
Ramos Isla de, Malaita, 204.
Raucaz, Bishop, 101, 189.
Recherche, ship, 29, cape, 202.
Recruiting vessels, 215.
Religion, native, 63-65.
Resident Commissioner, 82, 164.
Richard, Captain, 32-36.
Robinari, mission station, 217-
233.
Rook Island, 48.
Rouillac, Father, 125, 203.
Rua Sura, mission station, 80-
104.
Ruavatu, mission station, 179-
190.
Russell, see Cape Marsh Islands,

St George Island, 38.
Salome, Sister Mary, 100.
Samoa Islands, 184, 203.
San Dimas, 142.
Sandy Cape, 92.
San German, 142.
Santa Cruz, 26, 52.
Savo island, 142, 157.
Scenery, 73, 142, 170.
Schools, 91, 96, 108, 139, 246.
Selina, catechist, 193, 195.
Shortland, explorer, 28.
Simone, Sister Mary, 100.
Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Mary, 51, 70, 101, 131,
197.
Solomons, discovery, 12, name, 26;
Solomons South, Vicariate, ex-
tent, 52: compared with Europe,
52.
Spanish explorers, 12, 26.
Spirits, living, dead, offerings, 63-
65.
Stone church, 162.
Suava district, 248.
Sunana, see Tangarare,
Sura station, 80-101.
Sura sule, kiki, 81.
Survile, explorer, 28.
Sydney, 32, 91.

Tabu, sacred, 242.
Tahiti, 42.
Tangarare, mission station, 122-
140.
Tatuve, hill, 82.
Tarapaina, village, 210, 220.
Teachers, Protestant, 195, 206,
249.
Teyard, Father, 168.
Third Order Regular of Mary, see
Sisters.
Thomassin, Father, 32.
Titus, ship, 61.
Toros, tribe, 44.
Torres, explorer, 28.
Travel, difficulty of, 259.
Tukopia, island, 52, 58.
Turtle, sea, 124.
Turupatu, newspaper, 100.
Uhu, district, 204-211
Utupua Island, 52.

Vanikoro island, 29, 52.
Vegetation, 74, 170.
Vele, magic stone, 128.
Verdelais, mission schooner, 94, 209.
Verguet, Canon, 31, 32, 41, 90.
Viard, Bishop, 46.
Vicariate of S. Solomons, 52.
Vidal, Bishop, 84, 94.
Villien, Father, 48.
Visale, mission station, 140-170.
Vulelua, island, 80.

Wairaha, 208.

Wallis Island, 32.
Wango Bay, 191.
Whites in the S. Solomons, 50.
Wife murder, 176, 215, 232.
Women, native, position formerly, 69, 230; and now, 69-72.
Woodford, Resident Commissioner, 82, 164.
Woodlark Island, 48.

Ysabel Island or Bugotu, 16, 33, 162.

Zelee, Cape, 204.

"Left behind by a Student Victim trough a False Judgment."