

THE NEW BRITAIN MASSACRE.

THE MURDERERS' FATE.

The Sydney 'Daily Telegraph' told, in a recent issue, the sequel of the cruel massacre of Catholic missionaries in New Britain by some wild hill-natives, led on by a convert named Tomaria, whom the Fathers would not permit to put away his lawful wife in favor of another. The account of the punishment of the murderers is from the special correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph' and is dated from Herbertshoe, New Britain. It runs as follows:—

Since the massacre of Pater Rascher and his community at St. Paul's, Beining, a strong police force under the direction of Police-master Schaper has been scouring the fastnesses of the Beining Mountains, and has inflicted a fearful punishment on the natives for their crime. Up to the present 85 natives have been shot, and 35 sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The Repentance.

The first of the murderers to be captured alive was Togmakam, who had struck down Brother Shellekens. He was taken by his own people, and delivered up to the police. He was brought on to Herbertshoe, and was tried by the Imperial Judge, Herr Kornmeyer, and a special jury of three. He confessed his crime, and when questioned as to why he committed the deed, he replied, 'Tomaria told me to do so.' He was found guilty and sentenced to be shot the next morning. At the appointed time he was brought out to the place of execution, and allowed himself to be bound to the post without a murmur. He was attended by Father Dick till the last moment. Unfortunately, the native police bungled the shooting, and two volleys had to be fired into the miserable man before he was killed.

On September 12 Tokapie was captured, tried, and shot at Herbertshoe, Father Dick again attending the doomed man. Tirowas, the murderer of Sister Agatha, was captured and executed at Beining. Just before his execution he expressed a wish to be baptised into the Catholic faith, and the Government officials, in compliance with his wish, secured the attendance of Father Van der Aa, who baptised him. At the conclusion of the ceremony he was shot. Toyule, who was captured with Tirowas, was also sentenced to death, but his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life on account of this youth, he being only 16 years of age.

How Tomaria Planned the Murders.

From the confessions of the executed men it seems that Tomaria was planning the Beining massacre for a long time, and got many of the natives to join in by means of a trick. Tomaria was accustomed to go to the villages of the natives and buy pigs, saying that they were for the use of the missionaries, and that Pater Rascher would eventually pay for them. He would take the pigs to his friends and they would feast. After many pigs had been secured in this way, he told the natives to go to Pater Rascher for their pay. Naturally the priest was surprised, as he had never seen one of the pigs, he told the natives, and refused to pay for what he had not received.

The natives left full of anger against Tomaria. He was waiting for them, and inquired if they had received payment. The natives accused him of trickery, but in great indignation he told them that Pater Rascher had lied to them, as the missionaries had eaten all the pigs. He wound up his accusation with the words: 'That is what your missionary does for you. He is no true missionary, and we will kill him.' Exasperated at the idea that the missionaries had cheated them, they agreed, and the massacre was arranged to take place next morning, as Tomaria had now no fear of opposition from any of the natives. He also secured the services of Pater Rascher's personal attendant and another village boy to act as spies. It was arranged that the massacre was to take place in the morning, whilst the community were attending Mass, and that the signal was to be given by Tomaria shooting Pater Rascher at the altar. Just as Tomaria was about to give the signal by shooting the Pater, the priest turned towards his congregation saying the words, 'Dominus Vobiscum,' and his eye by accident fell on Tomaria, who hurried from the church, thinking that he was discovered. Finding that such was not the case, he hurriedly arranged for the massacre to take place after the community had breakfasted, and it was carried out.

How the Murderers were Caught.

During the campaign against the murderers they showed great ingenuity in defending themselves. The chiefs, hearing of the approach of the police, retired to the Kara mountains and dug deep trenches, heaping up the ground in front. When the police appeared they made a determined resistance, but owing to their want

of firearms as opposed to the magazine rifles of the police, they were routed, many of them being killed. Tomos, the chief, was wounded, and afterwards died. Many other engagements took place, but during the whole time the ringleader, Tomaria, was not seen or heard of. The Governor, Dr. Hahl, had offered large rewards to the natives for the capture of the murderers, dead or alive, and eventually several heads were brought in by the natives, but Tomaria was not among them.

Death of the Arch-Murderer, Tomaria.

The Government, recognising the seriousness of allowing Tomaria to remain at large, two men who were under sentence of death were offered life and liberty if they would guide the police force to the retreat of their leader. They agreed, and, chained together, they were told to lead, and were told that at the first sign of treachery they would be shot. The march was a fearful one, and reflects the greatest credit on Police-master Schaper, who, with his black police, undertook the dangerous duty. After a considerable distance of rough country had been traversed, the party came across a newly-cut track, beautifully clean and fresh-looking, leading up into the mountains. Schaper, tired out with his long climb, would have readily turned into the track, but the two guides objected, and insisted on ascending the mountain by another route. It was well for the party that Schaper listened to their advice, for it was afterwards discovered that the track had been cut by Tomaria as a trap, and had the party taken it, they would have been killed to a man.

Stealthily ascending, the party at last came in sight of Tomaria's camp, which was in the form of a ring surrounded by deep trenches. The approach of the police was observed, and Tomaria, leaping over his trenches, stood waiting, rifle in hand. As soon as Schaper came in sight a ball whistled past his ear, and he fell. Tomaria was not sure that the shot had taken effect, and called out derisively for the white man to 'Come on.' He then sent another shot, which tore up the grass at Schaper's side. A third shot quickly followed, and then Tomaria got behind a coconut tree to reload. This was the policeman's chance; he covered the tree with his rifle and fired, and Tomaria fell dead, shot through the throat, the ball having first passed through the tree. The natives made a most determined resistance, but were driven out, many of them being killed. Tomaria's head was cut from the body and placed on a stake, to act as a warning to others. Pater Rascher's gun was recovered, together with a considerable amount of ammunition of Tomaria's own manufacture.

The Last Chapter.

On September 29, Tokangal was captured at Vuna Maria, and afterwards executed at Herbertshoe. It was he who gave Sister Sophie her death stroke. He was attended by Father Dick. Tolalama, who was implicated in the sacking of the Trappist station, gained his reprieve by bringing in the heads of three of the murderers named Tonieknek, Topakum, and Toyusira. The three natives defended themselves with spears, but were overcome by Tolalama's people.

St. Paul's Again.

It is now considered that sufficient punishment has been dealt out to the natives, and the mission stations will be again started. Pater Stehlin, two Brothers, and three Sisters will soon take up the work at St. Paul's. The heads of the natives who were executed were cut off, and put in spirits, and sent to Berlin.

CATHOLICS AND CRIME.

ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF STATISTICS.

Under the above heading Mr. Benjamin Hoare, the veteran Melbourne journalist, contributed a very interesting and informative paper to the Catholic Congress. Some years ago (says Mr. Hoare), when the Victorian Statist used to present his crime tables in a manner which distinguished the religions of persons arrested for crime, it used to be made a subject of reproach against Irish Catholics in this State that they had a bad pre-eminence in the crime tables.

The law statistics are not treated now in the same way. The Victorian Year Book for 1903 does not give any record of the religions of the offenders, or alleged offenders. But a table in it, supplying the birth-places of arrested persons, seems to bear out a statement made nearly twenty years ago by Mr. Hayter that 'of places outside Victoria, the country which supplied the largest number of arrested persons is Ireland.'

It used to be further said, by way of disparaging Catholics, that, 'in proportion to their numbers in the community, the Roman Catholics supplied nearly two and a half times as many arrested persons as the Protestants.'