

Port Moresby

Gilbert J. Otto

Perched high on the side of a lush, green, tropical hillside nestled the almost forgotten town of Port Moresby. As our lugger, Sea Spirit glided swiftly toward the island, I found my curiosity concerning the town rising to a feverish pitch. From the time I was a little boy I had heard stories of the gold island, and in each story some of the magic of Port Moresby had filtered in and set my imagination on fire. Little did the old traveler who used to stop at our house realize how much the words that rolled so easily from his lips were to mean someday to me. And now, at last, after years of dreaming and planning, I was actually going to see, and hear, and feel—yes, even taste Port Moresby.

Standing on the battered teakwood deck of the lugger, I watched my dream town come closer. While we were still beyond hailing distance, I could see the old mission standing on the top of the hill like an old but still serviceable hat on one of its monks. How many head-hunters and cannibals had been converted here? How many white men came here to their last church service of this world? Down from the church garden a few rods the old Hotel Kongrow beckoned with an air of invitation to welcome the weary traveler. While we

were still out in the harbor, the proprietor could be seen hustling about to make things a little more comfortable for the expected guest. In fact, everywhere one looked one could see the sleepy town slowly rouse itself and come to the dock.

A visitor to this tropical paradise is a novelty. No one missed the occasion. Off to the left, the rows of stately coconut-palms raised their green tasseled heads to the blue sky. Here was the life blood of Port Moresby. Here was the gold. Here was the only reason Port Moresby existed.

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Prophecy

When I die,
I shall lie with the Earth
And from us shall spring
Some new green thing,

To say,
"I am life,
She has sent me to remind you of the love she
found."

And the body of the Earth shall be sweet
to me,

Even as a lover's;
But, perhaps, after centuries,
I shall tire of the same kiss,
Tire of the same dark arm.
So shall I rise, in other form?

A tree top seeing the sun
Or a vine of ivy fingering
The cool marble of an ancient pillar?
Or shall I remain dust, and wait
To welcome those who join me?

—M. M. Quinnell