

TEN DECADES

The Australasian Centenary History of the London Missionary Society

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PREFACE

THE writer of this historical sketch left England for the Mission field in his early manhood, and after ten years' service in Samoa was compelled through the health of his family to give up Foreign Mission work for ministerial service in Victoria. For twenty years Australia has been his home; fifteen years of this period having been spent in two pastorates and five years in advocating the claims of Missions and in promoting the Branch Organisations of the London Missionary Society throughout the seven colonies. Lengthened residence in Australia has not relaxed the ties which bind him to the Mother-land, where in a Christian home and an active Christian Church the determination to be a Missionary was formed; but the Missionary life which received its first inspiration in England has found a new sphere. Australian aspirations are not confined to the native born. The writer has become so far an Australian as to have a very strong faith in the Missionary destiny of the Churches of this new land, and to feel the kindlings of a patriotic desire to fulfil the great task which the Providence of God has assigned to us.

The expansion of Anglo-Saxon influence must be used for the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and every fresh centre occupied by English-speaking people must be used as a new base for Missionary work. For this we have been permitted to occupy this Southern Island Continent, and the following pages will illustrate the growth of our Missionary life in connection with the one Society alone – the London Missionary Society.

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CHAPTER I

FIRST DECADE 1795-1804

TWENTY-FIVE years before the date at which our narrative begins, the coast of Australia was sighted from the deck of the little vessel of which Captain Cook was the commander. Leaving behind him the newly discovered islands of the Pacific, including New Zealand, like Columbus he sailed to the West and was rewarded by a discovery which history will yet prove to have been almost as important as that of the Spanish explorer. The spot which was first seen by Lieutenant Hicks, and named after him Point Hicks, is situated within the territory of Victoria. Taking a northerly direction from this point, Cook followed the coast until he reached a bay, which he entered, and to which he gave the name of Botany Bay.

Resuming his voyage, he kept the land in sight, and for nearly 2,000 miles the coastline continued to unfold. He had skirted the east coast of New Holland, and of this vast territory he took possession in the name of King George III. of England. This was in 1770. On January 18, 1788, vessels arrived in Botany Bay from England, having on board 212 soldiers, 558 male prisoners, 228 female prisoners, 28 free married women, and 17 children. Botany Bay and Port Jackson are only a few miles apart, and the latter harbour was selected for the final settlement, which received the name of Sydney after Viscount Sydney of the Admiralty. "The spot chosen for the settlement," Collins says, "was at the head of the cove, near the run of fresh water, which stole silently along through a very thick wood, the stillness of which had then, for the first time since the creation, been interrupted with the rude sound of the labourer's axe or the downfall of its ancient trees: a stillness and tranquillity which from that day was to give place to the voice of labour, the confusion of camp and town, and the busy hum of its new possessors."

Standing on the Circular Quay of modern Sydney to-day, with its long line of colossal mail steamers, British, French, and German, its palatial warehouses, its ceaseless procession of handsome ferry boats bringing the citizens to business or taking them to their picturesque villas, or filled with excursionists on pleasure bent, it is difficult to believe that ten or twelve decades ago the whole land was covered with primeval forest or desert scrub. Scarcely four generations have passed since Sydney was the hunting-ground of a degraded primitive race, whose only literature was the figures they drew on their gum trees, those

 "... gnarl'd, knotted trunks Eucalyptian,"

in whose branches the opossum slept and the laughing jackass made merry: -

 "The Stoic bird,

 That winged philosopher who laughs at change

 And all things else with weird and mocking laugh."

When the British Government decide to send convicts to Botany Bay, neither philosopher nor prophet could foresee the change which was to pass over the unknown land. The start was not prophetic of good or suggestive of great achievements.

In 1796, Collins speaks of the need of "respectable settlers." "Should such arrive," he says, "the administration of justice might assume a less military appearance, and the trial by jury, ever dear and most congenial to Englishmen, be seen in New South Wales." When the first day of this century dawned, and its light fell upon our eastern coast, Sydney was still, after an occupation of twelve years, little more than a convict depot under severe military rule.

During the latter half of last century, while brave British sailors like Cook were surveying unknown seas and adding newly discovered territory to the British realm, changes were simultaneously taking place within the British Isles, which were preparing us as a people for the larger responsibilities which were opening before us. The Evangelical revival which gave to Wesley and Whitefield and others the conviction that they had a mission to the people – a message from God which they were under solemn obligation to deliver, a message the purpose of which was to revive moral earnestness and to bring men in penitence and faith to the cross of the world's Redeemer – led, in its last result, to a baptism of missionary zeal. The aggressive enterprise at the close of last century, of which Carey and Fuller, Haweis and Bogue were leaders, was not a new movement or an abrupt departure; it was the putting forth of a strength which had been gathering in secret. We honour these leaders, and the first-

named most; but they were not the originators or founders of modern missions, they were simply the first to give practical and self-sacrificing effect to the wider evangelical spirit by which so many in British churches at this period were moved to attempt the wider work. British missions at the end of last century originated in the wider spiritual enlightenment and in the more definite faith which gave so many a new sense of the efficacy and preciousness of the Gospel of Divine Grace; and so it came about that when Carey spoke out of the fulness of his heart, and in the strength of a faith which dared to attempt the larger task, he spoke for many kindred minds who were prepared to follow his lead.

The first definite step which led to the formation of the London Missionary Society was the writing of a letter by the Rev. David Bogue, A.M., of Gosport, which was printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* for September, 1794; and the first words of the letter are these: "God has favoured us with the knowledge of the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer." By this truth he takes his stand, and proceeds to enforce his appeal to the churches. A few met privately to consider the appeal. "At length, on the memorable 4th November, 1794; the first concerted meeting with a view to this Society took place. It was a small but glowing and harmonious circle of ministers of various connections and denominations." In January, 1795, the little band issued a circular, addressed to ministers in the Metropolis and its neighbourhood, and with the circular the following letter was sent: -

"REV. SIR< -

"By appointment of several ministers who have repeatedly met together with a serious design of forwarding the great object which the prefixed printed address recommends, I take the liberty to acquaint you that another meeting for the same purpose is proposed to be held on Thursday, the 15th inst., at 11 o'clock precisely. The place of the meeting is the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldersgate Street. It is also intended that the hour immediately before, viz. from 10 to 11, shall be employed in prayer at the same place.

* * * * *

"Trusting that your sentiments of zeal and compassion are congenial with ours, we solicit in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ your kind co-operation by your counsel, influence, and prayers, and request that you will favour us with your presence at the time of prayer and consultation above mentioned.

"I am, rev. sir, with great respect,

"Your most obedient humble servant

"In Gospel bonds,

"Jan. 9, 1795."

"JOHN LOVE."

The meetings was held, and it was "unanimously decided that all party names and inferior distinctions should, in the prosecution of this vast design, be absorbed in the great Christian name and cause."

Meetings were after this held fortnightly, and at an early meeting the following short form of Association was adopted: "We whose names are here subscribed (34 in number) declare our earnest desire to exert ourselves for promoting the great work of introducing the Gospel and its ordinances to heathen and other unenlightened countries, and unite together, purposing to use our best endeavours that we may bring forward the formation of an extensive and regularly organised Society, to consist of evangelical ministers and lay brethren of all denominations, the object of which Society shall be to concert and pursue the most effectual measures for accomplishing this important and glorious design."

The Provisional Committee of Correspondence opened communication with brethren in all parts of the country, and were astonished to find so many prepared for the enterprise. "There was no need to suggest new ideas on the subject; the Spirit of the Lord had happily anticipated our endeavours, enlarging the hearts of ministers and their people towards the unknown inhabitants of distant lands." One minister wrote: "Your kind letter I look upon as an answer from above. It has long been my wish, my prayer, and my hope also, that God would send forth His light and truth among the poor heathen. To promote the cause, I will plead, preach, and spare no exertion." Another: "We have blessed ourselves in the possession of Gospel privileges, and almost forgotten our fellow-men in other parts of the world, sunk in sin, and perishing in horrible darkness. Verily, we have sinner! Let us rise up to the work of God." A third wrote thus: "Immediately on hearing the good news, I called the members of our little church together to pray for a blessing on it. All rejoiced in the prospect of seeing many come from the east and west, the north and south, to sit down in the kingdom of their common Father; and all signified their readiness to put their mite into your treasury."

On the 21st September, 1795, much preparatory work having been done, the friends of the movement gathered in London to give effect to the proposal which had been so warmly received. Four days were given up to services and meetings. On Tuesday morning, September 22, the Rev. Dr. Haweis preached at Spa Fields Chapel on "The Apostolic Commission"; in the evening to the Rev. George Burder preached at Crown Court on "Jonah's Mission to Nineveh." On Wednesday morning the Rev. S. Greathead delivered a discourse at Haberdashers' Hall on "A Mission to the Heathen founded upon the Moral Law"; in the evening the Rev. John Hey preached at the Tabernacle on "The Fulness of Time." On Thursday morning, at Surrey Chapel, the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M., preached on "Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace," and at Tottenham Court Road Chapel, in the evening, the Rev. David Bogue preached upon "Objections against a Mission to the Heathen." A writer who was present says: "All the above places were crowded, and great numbers of persons were unable to gain admission." It was on Monday evening, and in the interval between the services, that the business of the week was done. At the Monday evening meeting Sir Egerton Leigh, Bart., was voted to the chair. Letters from various parts of the country were read. A report was given of the steps which had been previously taken. The meeting by a unanimous lifting up of hands declared their warm approbation of the design to establish a Society; a "Plan" to be submitted to the more public meeting of the following day was read and approved; and Rowland Hill concluded the meeting with prayer, and the historian says: "The assembly broke up with a gladness which the combinations of sensuality, avarice, ambition, or party zeal cannot inspire."

During Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at different meetings the constitution of "The Missionary Society" was adopted. Directors were appointed, and the following officers elected: Joseph Hardcastle, Esq., treasurer; the Rev. John Love and Mr. William Shrubsole, secretaries. Reviewing the memorable meetings of that week, Mr. Shrubsole says: "Something, we are sensible, is to be imputed to the charm of novelty. But, after making all reasonable allowances of this kind, we appeal to every candid and intelligent Christian who attended on these occasions, whether there did not appear tokens of a Presence infinitely more august than that of a mere multitude of mortal sinful beings. The animated solemnity, unity, and zeal of these great assemblies, the spirit with which they were enlivened to the last, and the solid effects in overflowing liberality for the advancement of the work in view, make it apparent that God Himself hath been the primary Author of these movements."

The Society being formed, the first consideration was to select a field for its first mission. For subsequent efforts mention was made at the very beginning of Africa, Tartary, Malabar, Bangal, Sumatra, and the Pelew Islands. But Otaheite, as it was then called, was to be the destination of the first missionaries appointed, and upon the Mission to the Pacific the Society concentrated most of its attention during the first four years of its existence. Before the completion of its first decade the Society had established missions in North America, South Africa, India, and Ceylon, but its chief interest during this period centred in Polynesia.

Missionary volunteers presented themselves for appointment before the Society was properly formed, and by the time the directors' plans were matured, a large staff was ready to enter upon the work. Thirty men, five of them being married, were accepted. Four only were ordained before leaving England. The *Duff* was purchased, and Captain James Wilson – a man who in varied kinds of service, in India and America, had shown the spirit and grit of a true hero, and who in more recent years had manifested the still higher and self-sacrificing heroism born of Christian faith – was appointed her commander. On Thursday, July 28th, 1796, at Zion Chapel, the missionaries were solemnly set apart for their work. At this service an Episcopalian, a Scotch seceder, a Presbyterian, an Independent, and a Methodist, united in the designation of the missionaries, addressing them severally in the following words: -

“Go, our beloved brother, and live agreeably to this Holy Word (putting a Bible into his hand), and publish the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the heathen, according to your calling, gifts, and abilities, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”; to which each replied, “I will, God being my Helper.”

When they were urged to publish the Gospel according to their “calling, gifts, and abilities,” the fact was recognised that they were not all alike designated to a ministry of teaching. The first Tahitian staff was selected to establish a mission which was intended to supply a Christian object lesson; and one of the principal means of embodying the salutary truths of the Gospel, and presenting them to the people, was to be the introduction of the industrial pursuits of Christian civilization. In their instructions to Captain Wilson the directors used the following words: -

“When you consider the qualifications of the missionaries, you will perhaps be inclined to think that remaining in one or two bodies, they may form models of civilized society, small indeed, but tolerably complete. There are some among them who are adapted to be useful by the improved state of their minds and their fitness for taking the lead in religious services; there are others who are necessary on account of the skilfulness of their hands and their knowledge of the useful arts; thus, there would be among them that mutual dependence and usefulness which is the cement of the social order.”

In selecting the men who were to be its first missionaries, the Society, having regard to the condition of the South Sea Islanders, gave preference to those volunteers who were practical men, and who would be able to encourage, by their example, habits of industry and the adoption of useful arts. Four only of the missionaries were ordained, but all were designated to the work of publishing the Gospel. Care had been exercised to accept for the work none but those who had given good evidence of a personal knowledge of the Gospel, and evidence of some ability to make that Gospel known. Those who were only artisans were sent as artisan missionaries; and in order to equip them as fully as the time and circumstances would permit, some of the candidates were placed under the tuition of ministers in London, during the months which elapsed

between the formation of the Society and the departure of the *Duff*. Dr. Haweis, who accompanied the vessel down Channel and was constantly on board while she was detained at Portsmouth, speaks thus of his intercourse with the missionaries: "I can only say, every day brought fresh evidence of the devotedness and fidelity of our brethren, and their eagerness to proceed to their places of destination. During the whole time I have been with them I have not heard a fainting word or an expression of fear, but all of one heart and one mind, and growing every day more cemented in love. They are all willing to meet hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." The hardships which were awaiting some of them were to tax their endurance more than any then knew.

The embarkation took place at London on August the 10th, but it was September 22nd before the vessel left the coast of England. Sighting Madeira and Palma, they reached St. Jago on October 14, and remained there until the 18th. On November 11 they were off Rio Janeiro. From this place the missionaries sent a joint letter to the directors, from which we extract the following words: "Harmony and concord continue among us as a body engaged in one common cause. The whole body of missionaries as the heart of one man present their Christian love to the body of directors, the Society, and all true lovers of Christ and His Gospel. We pray the continuance of an interest in your fervent prayers for us and for our undertaking, that we may acquit ourselves as men, faithful to the cause in which we are engaged, and be rendered mighty instruments in the hands of God for the conversion of the heathen of the South Seas." Captain Wilson intended to proceed to Tahiti by way of Cape Horn; but leaving Rio Janeiro, after a stay there of a few days, he sailed eastward, passed the meridian of the South Cape of New Holland on January 29, 1797, and on February 14 was within 32 leagues of the South Cape of New Zealand, and on March 4 sighted Tahiti. The story of the experiences and occupation of the missionary band on board the *Duff* would greatly interest our readers had we space to tell it. During the long and monotonous voyage the little vessel was used alternately as schoolhouse, theological hall, workshop, committee room, laboratory and medical classroom, in which the surgeon, who was on board, demonstrated to interested pupils; and it was a house of prayer, a temple from which the incense of daily worship arose. Captain Wilson's own story of the voyage, published nearly a hundred years ago, is most interesting reading.

For the history of the Tahitian Mission we must also refer our readers to books which specially deal with it. Only in an incidental way can we touch upon it. Our field of observation in this little volume is Australia, not Polynesia. We want to show how early in the history of Australia the London Missionary Society was brought into contact with the official, social, and religious life of the Colonies. The earliest Australian historians, Collins, Barrington, and others, speak of the Society's missionaries. The connection is older and closer than is generally known; while, as we proceed with our historical sketch, it will be seen that, at a very early date, the Society found in Australia a new base or central outpost for its aggressive work.

Amongst the historical days of the Southern Hemisphere, therefore, Sunday, March 5, 1797, will always be entitled to a place. On that day the first Christian missionaries from far-off Britain reached Tahiti. While the vessel was still thronged with the wondering natives, who had gone on board, the missionaries assembled on the deck for their usual Sunday service. They sang, "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," "Blow ye the trumpet, blow!" and after a sermon from the Rev. James Fleet Cover on 1 John iv. 16, "God is Love," they sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." It was the first time such strains and truths had been heard beneath the lofty mountains of that tropical isle!

Captain Wilson left at Tahiti the following missionaries: the Reverends J. F. Cover, J. Eyre, J. Jefferson, and T. Lewis, and Messrs. H. Bicknell, B. Broomhall, J. Cock, S. Clode, W. Henry, P. Hodges, R. Hassell, E. Main, H. Nott, F. Oakes, J. Puckey, W. Puckey, and W. Smith, with five women and two children. Proceeding to the Friendly Islands, he left at Tongatabu the following missionaries: the Rev. S. Kelso, Messrs. D. Bowell, J. Buchanan, J. Cooper, S. Harper, I. Nobbs, W. Shelly, G. Veeson, J. Wilkinson, and S. Gaulton. Returning to the east, at the Marquesas, amongst its degraded inhabitants, he left a solitary missionary, William Pascoe Crook.

To several of these names we shall have occasion to refer again. At the three centres in Polynesia, enumerated above, Christian work was simultaneously begun. It was work such as had never been attempted before. All the conditions in which the missionaries found themselves were new. The atmosphere of the social life around was as unlike what they had been accustomed to, as the climate of those tropical lands was unlike the northern skies of their native Britain. The months which succeeded their landing were full of strange and trying experiences. The strong hope of immediate results, which had animated them, was not realized. They had not expected a long night of fruitless toil. They found that the savages were interested enough in their presents, which were foolishly lavished upon them, but that when the presents were exhausted, they not only did not take the interest which was expected in their message of grace and spiritual life, but showed an hostility which in some cases threatened their safety and even life itself. To those with wives and children the position was exceptionally trying. Their troubles were partly the result of their own inexperience and a mistaken policy, which they conscientiously pursued. Finally, after a year's residence on the island, the animosity of some of the people resulted in an attack which showed the temper of the people in relation to them. A vessel was at anchor in the harbour, bound for port Jackson, and eleven out of the eighteen missionaries decided to avail themselves of the opportunity of leaving the island for a time. The decision was as hasty as the proposal had been sudden. The circumstances did not admit of lengthened deliberation. The seven brethren and one lady who remained at their post we must leave for the present to follow the fugitives to Port Jackson.

With their arrival there the connection of the London Missionary Society with Australia began. As no newspaper had yet appeared in the British settlement, and did not until five years later, no file will give us the shipping news of May 14, 1798; but the historian supplies us with the information. In an old history of New South Wales, published in London in 1802, the following paragraphs appear: -

“On the 14th, the *Nautilus* brig arrived from the island of Otaheite in great distress. This little vessel had lost her passage to the north-west coast of America and had been at Kamscatka (*sic*), the Sandwich Islands and Otaheite. Being infirm and nearly worn out, the master found it impossible to repair his vessel at either of those places, and had touched at Otaheite for the refreshment they required, and then endeavoured to reach this port, where they hoped to receive that assistance which would enable them to proceed to India. At Otaheite they found that the missionaries sent from England to propagate the Christian religion were not on such a footing as they expected to be with the natives, being nearly shut up within their little fortress. The natives had used threats and made known an intention of taking off their women. The arrival of this vessel in some degree relieved them from the anxiety they had for some time been under, and they determined to leave the island in her. Mr. Bishop, her commander, paid them all the attention the shattered state of the brig permitted, taking on board in all 19 men, women, and children, and with great difficulty brought them

safe to Sydney, the vessel being so leaky as to require the labour of all the company to keep her afloat. She was unable to bring them all, leaving six or seven on the island. Those arrived were treated with attention, and all possible relief afforded to their distresses.”

For “perils by the heathen” they evidently, as passengers in this shattered and leaking brig, exchanged “perils in the sea.” The voyage occupied forty-four days. The historian seems to imply that, had there been sufficient room in the vessel, Captain Bishop would have brought away all the missionaries. From other sources, which were not available to him, we know that in this he was mistaken.

Lieutenant-Colonel Collins, in his valuable history of the period, also refers to the arrival of the missionaries, and gives the following interesting account of an effort which was made by Governor Hunter to settle them on the land: “The 4th of June (1798) was as usual observed with all the respect and attention so peculiarly its due; and on the 6th the Governor went up to Paramatta in order to travel into the northern district in search of a proper place for settling as farmers such of the missionaries lately arrived from Otaheite as were disposed to continue in the settlement. He also proposed to fix there some free settlers who had been sent out by Government, if he could find a sufficiency of good ground. On a minute examination of the country he had every reason to pronounce it superior to any that had yet been seen, and in quantity equal to the settlement of several families. The land was not only good and well watered, but everywhere easily cleared, and at the convenient distance of five or six miles from Paramatta. Being satisfied with the situation, he recommended it to the missionaries, but the most of them declined it. To the few who consented, a proportion of tools, grain, and such assistance as could be spared was given.”

Thus it happened that some of the artisan agents of the London Missionary Society were almost, is not the first, selectors of farm land in Australasia; and it will be seen from the above record that in their straitened circumstances they were treated by the representative of the British Government with a liberality which anticipated the idealistic legislation which the unemployed of more recent years have so earnestly advocated.

The next referent to the missionaries by Australian historians is tragic. On the 2nd of July, 1799, rather more than a year after landing at Port Jackson, Mr. Clode was murdered by a British soldier and two accomplices. He had escaped perils by the heathen and perils in the sea to fall a victim to perils by his own countrymen. Both Barrington and Collins describe the murder, but we have an account from another source which for several reasons is of peculiar interest and value. The first clergyman to land on the shores of Australia was the Rev. Richard Johnson. He came with the first ships as chaplain to the Penal Settlement. The story of the services he held, at first beneath the shade of a tree, and then, after long waiting, in a rude building set apart for public worship, is a story which has not yet had a worthy historian. On August 26, 1799, Mr. Johnson wrote a long letter to the directors of the London Missionary Society, giving an account of the death of Clode and of the execution of his murderers. The letter is of great historical interest from the light it incidentally throws upon the conditions of society, the administration of justice, and the home life and personal characteristics of Australia’s first Christian minister. The letter was addressed to Joseph Hardcastle, Esquire the treasurer of the London Missionary Society.

“SYDNEY, *August 26, 1799.*”

“DEAR SIR, -

“Though I have not the pleasure of knowing you in person you will, I hope, excuse my freedom in transmitting to you a letter from this distant part of world – I am sorry to add, upon so unpleasant and painful an occasion.

“By this time, I suppose, you have heard that part of the missionaries set first to Otaheite have left that island, and have come to Port Jackson. These gentlemen arrived here on the 14th of May, 1798, at a time when I was confined to my room through a long and severe sickness. Upon their first arrival, Messrs. Cover and Henry, with their families, spent a few days with us, after which they removed up to Paramatta, about fifteen miles from Sydney, where they still reside.

“Owing to my indisposition, it was some time before I became any way acquainted with any other of the missionaries; and with one or two I did not feel disposed to claim any acquaintance, and fear the Society have been deceived in them; but I wish to be excused in saying more upon that subject. A consciousness of my own infirmities makes me delicate in exposing those of others. To their own Maker they must stand or fall. The Apostle’s motto I wish on all occasions to make my own: ‘Be not high-minded, but fear.’

“During the time of my illness Mr. Samuel Clode frequently called upon me, and I believe was pretty well acquainted with the nature of my indisposition; and soon after I recovered a friendly intimacy was formed between us, and I confess the more I came to know of him the more I esteemed him. But it has pleased God to remove my friend away from me, to meet him no more till it pleases Him to remove me likewise from this vale of sin and misery. I will now, sir, give a short account of this painful, melancholy event.

“Mr. Clode, some weeks previous to this, had signified to me his intention of returning to England, and at that time was preparing things necessary for the voyage. He had spoken to Captain Wilkinson of the *Indispensable*, and had so far agreed with him that Captain Wilkinson had begun to provide a cabin for him; but, alas! a cabin of a different kind was preparing for him at the same time. A soldier of the name of Jones had for some time owed Mr. Clode a sum of money. Mr. Clode now thought it necessary to ask for it, and after some altercation Jones desired him to call on Tuesday, the 2nd of July, in the afternoon, and he would settle with him.

“My friend had dined with me on the Sunday and Monday preceding, and was likewise in the camp on the Tuesday; dined at Dr. Harris’s, surgeon to the corps, a gentlemen who had, from Mr. Clode’s first arrival, been very kind and friendly towards him, providing him with a hut to live in, with plenty of vegetables, and giving him free access to his own barracks at all times.

“About four o’clock he called upon us, sat a few minutes, and then took his leave for the night, promising to call the next morning and to bring with him something for my little boy, who was at that time indisposed. But truly it may be said we know not what a day may bring forth; for the next morning, instead of seeing my friend, tidings were brought me that he was murdered – was found in a saw-pit under water; his skull was fractured in different parts, and his throat cut. Judge, sir, what was my surprise and horror upon receiving this information! A kind of stupor seized me – I could not believe it; it appeared as a dream; but recollecting myself, I immediately went and acquainted his Excellency the Governor with the melancholy news. The Governor, with several other officers, went with me to the place, where we found everything as was represented: a scene so shocking as I never shall forget, but too painful and distressing for me fully to relate.

“It pleased God, however, that this horrid murder did not lie long concealed; Divine justice and vengeance soon pursued and overtook his cruel and bloodthirsty

murderers. News of this shocking event soon spread in all directions. Numbers of all descriptions of persons ran to the spot, Jones, the man above mentioned, among the rest, and was the first to lay the murder upon an innocent person who had found my friend in this melancholy state. But this wretch's crime in the murder was soon discovered. Suspicion falling upon Jones, the path leading from the pit to his house was closely examined, and blood traced to the very door. These and other circumstances fully confirmed the suspicion of the guilt. Jones, his wife, and two other men who lived in Jones' house were immediately apprehended; and the next day, Thursday, a criminal court was convened purposely to try them, when three, viz., Jones, his wife, and Elbray, were convicted upon the clearest evidence, and I fear the fourth (Trotman), though acquitted, was a party in some way concerned. After their conviction I officially visited these three horrid monsters, who, for the purpose of obtaining a more full confession of this murder and others it was conjectured that Jones had committed, were put into separate places. Jones continued hardened to the last, his wife little better; but Elbray made a full confession of the whole transaction, first to a sergeant in the corps, and afterwards to myself, which I took down in writing, and was to the following purpose: -

“The scheme was first planned by Jones and his wife on the Sunday; Elbray was asked to assist in it, but at first refused; to gain him over, Jones gave him several drams of spirits, when at length, on the morning of Tuesday, he consented.

* * * * *

“Mr. Clode by this time was come to the door, was asked in, and a chair was set for him by the table to settle his accounts with Jones. The axe I have already mentioned was placed in the corner of the room; with this Elbray, coming behind him, was to knock him down. He took it up in his hand, but his heart failing him, he laid it down again, and went out of doors, where he stayed a little while; returning again, he heard the first blow given by Jones.

* * * * *

“The window shutters were put in, the tea-things set against the company's return; after tea, liquor was set upon the table; several songs were sung by Jones, his wife, and others. About nine Jones and Elbray went out, when they dragged their prey through a hole in the skilling, carried him to the pit, threw him in, covered him over with green boughs, and then returned to their company and kept up their jovial mirth till after midnight. The providence of God appears singularly in bringing this horrid murder to light. A man had been at work hoeing for several days upon the ground round this pit, and in the evening used to leave his hoe in the pit. Going to his work the next morning, and looking for his hoe, he was surprised to see so many green boughs laid over the pit. Suspecting something was there *planted* (*i.e.*, some property that had been stolen was concealed), he put in his hoe and removed the boughs, when he immediately saw the hand of the dead man.

* * * * *

“By an order from the Governor, the house in which the murder was committed was on the Saturday pulled down and burnt to ashes; a temporary gallows was erected on the same spot, and at twelve o'clock these three inhuman wretches were taken out and conveyed in a cart to the place, when, having discharged my duty as chaplain, they were launched into eternity to appear at the tribunal of a righteous, sin-avenging God, and rather execrated than pitied by a numerous multitude of spectators.

“In the interim I gave directions to have the body of my deceased friend brought into the town to a small hut of my own, and ordered a decent coffin and shroud to be made. Numbers came to see him, and many with tears lamented his untimely end. On Friday his body was committed to the silent grave; the pall was borne by five surgeons and Captain Wilkinson. His Excellency the Governor walked with me before the corpse; Messrs. Cover, Henry, Hassell, Smith, Oakes, and the two Puckeys

(missionaries) behind the corpse, and after them several officers and others. After having read the Burial Service a hymn was sung, given out by Mr. Cover. I then spoke a little upon the melancholy occasion, many being in tears, and myself so much affected that I could indeed say but little, but gave notice that I intended to preach a discourse on the Sunday but one next following.

“The ensuing week I composed two discourses, and on the 14th of July preached in the morning from 2 Samuel xvi. 17, ‘Is this thy kindness to thy friend?’ Spoke to the general character of the deceased, the aggravating circumstances attending his death, and concluded my sermon with an exhortation to different descriptions of persons. In the afternoon I preached from Jeremiah vi. 10, ‘To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear?’ which was intended as a solemn warning and exhortation to the living, and particularly to those guilty of drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, etc., the reigning vices committed in the colony, the fatal consequences attending which, my dear sir, I have long seen and lamented; but, alas! I fear all to little or no purpose.

“The missionaries attended church, hymns were sung, and the lines given out by Mr. Cover. In the evening Mr. Cover gave an exhortation at my house to his brethren of the mission, to my family, and some others upon the same occasion.

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“I cannot conclude my letter without saying that Mr. Clode’s conduct as a Christian was both humble and exemplary; as a surgeon, humane and attentive; and as a missionary he spent much of his time amongst the natives, by whom, as well as by persons of every description belonging to the colony, he lived beloved and died lamented.

“My friend Henry appears anxious to return to Otaheite. He is a studious, serious young man, and appears well adapted for the work upon which he was sent out; and I hope ere long a door in Providence may open for his return.

“Mr. Cover does not appear so anxious to return, unless a stronger body of people were upon the island to defeat any evil intentions of the natives. He is, I trust, a person of solid piety, and possessed of good ministerial abilities; and he, together with Messrs. Henry and Hassell, have, almost from their first arrival at Port Jackson, gone to the settlements established in different parts of the colony to preach and to exhort the settlers. I sincerely wish them success in their attempts and endeavours.

“His Excellency the Governor has been, and still continues to be, very kind and attentive to the missionaries.

“That God may bless and prosper the missions sent out to the heathen in every place is the fervent prayer of, dear sir, your sincere well-wisher and humble servant,

“RICHARD JOHNSON,
“Sydney.”

“J. HARDCASTLE, ESQ.”

The wife of Jones said to Mr. Johnson, while she was awaiting her execution: “Oh, sir, that dear man was the saving both of my life and the life of my husband. His attention to Trotman was such as I never saw in any other person in my life; three times a day he came to visit him, washing and cleansing his sores; and had it not been for his attention, he would have surely lost his hand.” These facts, and the generous loan of money to Jones in his need, led Mr. Johnson to select for his sermon on the occasion the text, “Is this thy kindness to thy friend?”

At the end of October, 1799, Mr. Henry returned to Tahiti. From a second letter sent by the Rev. Richard Johnson to the directors on October 18, 1799, we quote the following references to Mr. Henry’s departure: “I believe him to be a sincere, pious, zealous young man, whose heart is much engaged in the arduous work of a missionary,

and trust his absence from his post for a time and what he has seen in this colony have been blessed to him in teaching more than perhaps he knew before of mankind; and from the scenes of surrounding iniquity and infidelity, which increase and spread in this colony, he will return to his post and his friends with a fresh relish for religious conversation, and renewed vigour to that work to which he has been called, gratefully acknowledging the mercy and grace of God for making him to differ, not only from the world in general, but also from some who professedly came out upon the same important expedition.

“I believe Mr. Cover has no intention of returning to Otaheite; having taken a farm, he means, I understand, to remain some time longer in this country. He constantly preaches and exhorts every Sabbath in different places. His labours are greatly wanted, and I pray God they may be rendered useful. Mr. Hassell occasionally assists him, as Mr. Henry has done hitherto.”

Of the actual Christian work done by these men we have fuller information from their own report to the directors.

On the 25th of August, 1799, Messrs. Cover, Henry, and Hassell, in a joint letter from Paramatta to the directors, after a melancholy sketch of the condition of the colony, say: “Here it may be proper to observe that, in one of our letters above alluded to, we informed you that we had commenced preaching in different parts of the district situated in the northern boundary, and opened an evening lecture in Paramatta; the latter, in the month of December, we were under the necessity of discontinuing, as the person who favoured us with the use of his house removed to his farm, and no other place could be procured. We, however, continued to preach in the northern boundary; but our hearers beginning to decline in their attendance, add to this the distance and excessive heat of the summer, filled us with discouragement, and the enemy took occasion from these circumstances to suggest the improbability of success; but in perseverance the prospect brightened, then numbers increased, and our preaching has produced the following effect, which we are induced to look upon as the harbinger of good, viz., twenty-two of the settlers in the district called Kissing Point voluntarily offered to build a place for public worship, requesting us to continue amongst them, and use our interest with the Governor to appoint them a schoolmaster to instruct their children. This request was made in consequence of a rumour that we were about to leave the colony. We accordingly applied to Governor Hunter, who immediately appointed them a schoolmaster of our recommendation (a person whom we believe to be a sincere convert). His Excellency also gave them some materials towards erecting the building, which we expect will be finished in the month of November, when the Revs. Messrs. Johnson and Marsden have promised to open it. We have also recommenced the Sunday evening lecture at Paramatta, which is well attended, and likewise opened a place for preaching at Toon Tabbe, where we have about a hundred hearers. These favourable appearances, we hope, will not be ‘like the morning cloud or early dew,’ but prove the dawn of a bright and glorious Gospel day to these poor bewildered souls, who are lying as outcasts in a forlorn condition; but at present we cannot communicate any further information respecting them that would prove satisfactory, but shall seize the earliest (and every) opportunity of transmitting such accounts as relate to the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom in this colony of Corinthian degeneracy.”

Thus early in the history of Australia the Christian work of the official chaplains of the settlement at Port Jackson was supplemented by the voluntary labours of men,

some of whom were simply sojourners, while others had decided to make the new land their home; and to the credit of the chaplains, it should be recorded that they showed a commendable Christian spirit towards the brethren who had come from Tahiti, and gladly recognised them as fellow-workers. The Revs. Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden in manifold ways, as our narrative will show, gave proof of their hearty sympathy with the London Missionary Society; and when some of the earliest agents became, through providential circumstances, residents in Australia, they received them as ministers of the same Word, and rejoiced in their efforts to evangelize and educate the people.

The year 1800 brought more fugitives from the South Sea Islands, not from Tahiti, but from the Friendly Islands group. The first attempts to evangelize Tongatabu ended in disaster. For more than two years and a half the missionaries persevered in the face of great difficulties, and did not finally abandon the work until three of their number had been slain and one had turned traitor.

“They remained at their stations without receiving any material injury from the natives, until the breaking out of a civil war in April, 1799. On the 24th of that month the king was secretly assassinated by his nephew. The king’s brother and many of the chiefs immediately united to revenge this outrage. The assassin was also supported by a powerful faction, who repaired to his standard to decide the fate of the parties by a great battle. The missionaries had, from their entrance on the island, separated themselves to prevent jealousies, and promote the object of their mission, and had settled under the patronage of different chiefs; some under persons who sided with the king’s brother, and others under chiefs who united with the usurper. In the first battle the Royalists were victorious, and in pursuing the fugitives came to the house of the missionaries *Bowell*, *Gaulton*, and *Harper*, whom they murdered, and, collecting their property, set fire to their house. The next battle proved fatal to the adherents of the king, many of whom fell in the conflict, and most of the chiefs were afterwards put to death. The other missionaries fled to the rocks, after being plundered of all their property; but the usurper promising not to kill them, they returned to their dwelling, where they remained nine months, sometimes distressed for provisions, and receiving none but what was given for converting the iron the native had taken into knives and other implements.

“Here, however, they determined to stay till the return of the *Duff*, when they should know the further pleasure of the Society concerning them. The last seven months the usurper had been amongst the circumjacent islands, receiving the submission of their inhabitants, and the missionaries, knowing him to be very deceitful and cruel, dreaded his return, as both his friends and enemies united in opinion that it was very probable he would kill them. At this juncture the *Betsy* arrived with a Spanish prize, last from *Otaheite*, which *Mr. Harris*, one of the missionaries, undertook to navigate to *Port Jackson*, on condition that *Captain Clarke* would call at *Tongatabu* and see the brethren. Finding, on their arrival, the perilous position of the missionaries, and the little prospect of success which presented itself in their circumstances, they advised them to quit the island, and *Captain Clarke* very humanely offered them a free passage to *Port Jackson*. *Messrs. Cooper*, *Shelly*, *Buchanan*, *Kelso*, and *Wilkinson* accepted his offer and went with him, the two former of whom chose to continue in the colony; and *Mr. Harris*, after taking in the prize, refused to return home, or accept of a lucrative office tendered to him by *Governor Hunter*, choosing rather to return to his station at *Otaheite* by the first conveyance that might offer.”

The Rev. S. Kelso and Messrs. Buchanan and Wilkinson, after a very short stay in Sydney, proceeded to England, and Mr. Cooper shortly after followed in another vessel, leaving Mr Shelly as the sole representative in the colony of the Tongan staff. Of him we shall have occasion to speak again.

On December 21, 1798, the *Duff* started on her second voyage from London, with a reinforcement of thirty missionaries, ten of whom were married. On February 19, 1799, the vessel was captured by the French and taken into Monte Video. By way of Lisbon the missionaries got back to London on November 12, 1799. The Society having thus lost its own vessel, the directors had to consider what means should be employed for conveying such reinforcements as might still be sent. The three alternatives which were originally considered before the *Duff* was purchased were available: another vessel might be purchased; or the missionaries might travel by a convict ship bound for Port Jackson, which by contract might afterwards convey the missionaries to Tahiti; or a ship engaged in the southern fisheries might be found to convey them. The second alternative was adopted, and on the 5th of May, 1800, twelve missionaries left Portsmouth in the *Royal Admiral*, bound for Port Jackson with convicts. The first missionaries, therefore, to call at Australia *en route* to the South Seas came to our shores in a floating prison.

“Scarcely had they left their native land than they discovered that the prisoners had brought with them, not only impaired constitutions, but the seeds of various diseases; and now, when so great a number as three hundred were crowded together, the prison became the nursery of those disorders. Besides flux and scurvy, a malignant putrid fever broke out among them, and spread most alarmingly, especially while they sailed through the torrid zone. During the voyage to Rio Janeiro more than one-half of the convicts, besides many of the sailors, were taken ill of this and other disorders; and no fewer than forty died, among whom was Mr. Turner the surgeon. During the voyage the missionaries were not idle, but laboured with great assiduity in communicating religious instruction to the crew, and particularly to the unfortunate convicts. For some time they daily went down to the orlop deck, the place where the miserable creatures were confined, and read and explained the Scriptures, conversed and prayed with them, and though they were a body of ignorant, hardened wretches, yet some of them appeared anxious for instruction, and two prayer meetings were established among them.”

The *Royal Admiral* reached Sydney on November 20, 1800 with eleven missionaries on board, the twelfth, James Shepherd having been left behind at the Isle of Wight through illness. Three days after anchoring in Port Jackson Stephen Morrice died of fever, while James Mitchell relinquished the work, and settled in the colony. After a lengthened stay the vessel resumed her voyage, and on the 10th of July, 1801, landed the following missionaries at Tahiti: James Hayward, Charles Wilson, John Youl, William Waters, William Read, John Davies, James Elder, William Scott, and Samuel Tessier.

In 1802 the Mission was further strengthened by the arrival from Sydney of Mr. Shelly, formerly of the Tongan Mission, who after nearly two years' residence in the colony volunteered for Tahiti. During the succeeding two years persistent efforts were made by the faithful workers at Tahiti to establish schools, and to induce the people to attend the preaching of the Gospel, but these efforts were all but fruitless. The time of harvest had not come.