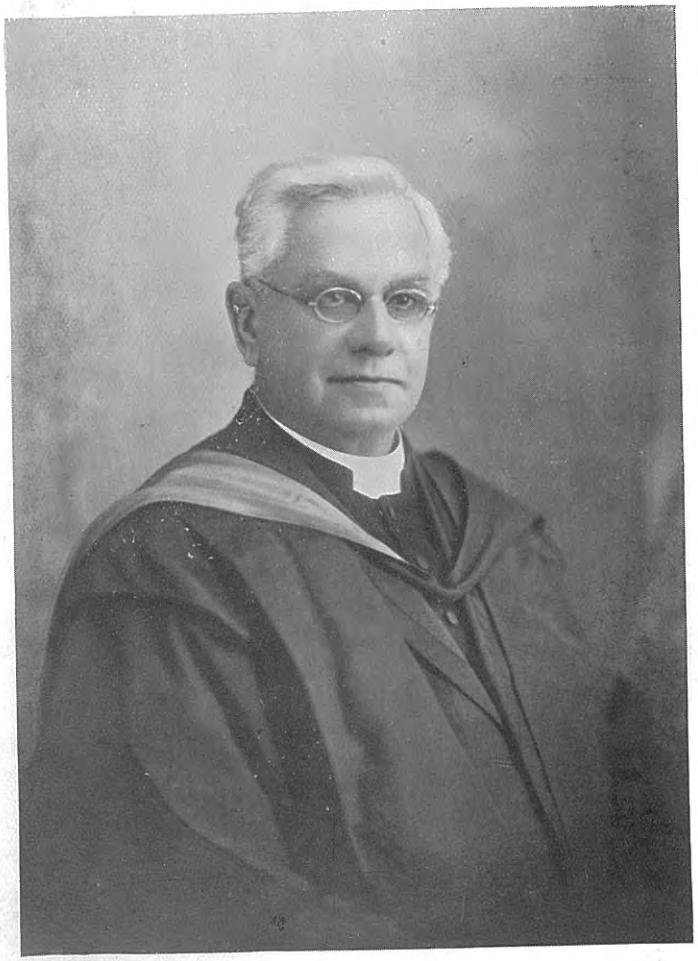
MEMORIES OF AN AUSTRALIAN MINISTRY



REV. J. E. CARRUTHERS, D.D. (1920). [*Frontispiece.*

Memories of an Australian Ministry

1868 to 1921

By

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To

MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Loyal children and useful citizens
of Australia

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PART I

PERSONAL AND PASTORAL

FOREWORD

On the 26th of January, 1788, British settlement began in Australia. On that day Governor Phillip hoisted the flag and founded the Colony of New South Wales. Sixty years later, viz. on January 26, 1848, the writer of the present pages first saw the light. Sydney was then, as now, the principal centre of population in Australia; but, whereas it now contains 900,000 people, and is rapidly approaching the million, its total population in 1848 would not exceed 60,000 all told. Most of its present suburbs were non-existent. Central streets such as Pitt, Castlereagh, York and Clarence Streets—to name only a few of the principal—now occupied by business places of more or less magnitude, including immense warehouses that any city might be proud of, and huge twelve-storey suites of offices—were residential areas, with considerable gaps breaking the continuity of cottages and terraces in which the citizens dwelt. Brickfield Hill was regarded as almost out of the city, and Newtown, Paddington, and Waverley were looked on as in the country, only reachable by an occasional 'bus that ran infrequently and irregularly.

It was in Clarence Street, City, that I first saw the light. My father was a sturdy Scotsman, endowed with quite an average proportion—if not more than the average—of the qualities which have made the sons of Caledonia so valuable in the colonization and development of the outposts of the Empire. My mother was an English woman of frugal habits, excelling in the domestic virtues, counting it her chief duty to look well after the affairs of her household, and to see to the health, happiness, and welfare of the children God had given her. Father and mother were of the type of colonists who believe in industry and order as the chief conditions of progress and development. In the exercise of these qualities they won for themselves a position that carried the respect of all

who knew them; they contributed their quota also to the increase of the population and wealth and progress of the land of their adoption and of the birth of their children. There were in all nine of us, of whom five have at the time of this writing passed into the great beyond. Four of us remain. My father attained the goodly age of eighty-one; my mother predeceased him by seven years, having reached her sixty-eighth year. They sleep together in peace in the old Camperdown cemetery, about three miles out of Sydney.

From 1848 to 1921 covers a span of seventy-three years. In that period Australia has developed in a wonderful degree. The first sixty years of its history were the years of its infancy; the latter seventy-three mark the period of its adolescence and its merging into manhood. To have lived in such a period, and to have been engaged in the ministry of a Christian Church for over fifty years of it, has been at once a great opportunity and a great responsibility. In 1848 the entire population of Australia was little more than 300,000. To-day, according to the census recently taken, it is 5,500,000. In 1848 the whole of Australia was under direct Crown administration, the Colonies (now States) of Victoria and Queensland were unformed, and the areas comprised in them were portions of the mother Colony of New South Wales. South Australia was a struggling Province, Western Australia and Tasmania were convict settlements, and the British Government was claiming its right to regard New South Wales also as a convict colony, and to dump its undesirables into Port Jackson. The agitation against this procedure was daily gathering strength and determination in Sydney; and a year or two later saw the end of the chapter so far as transportation was concerned. Other names were more prominent in that patriotic agitation than that of my father; but he did no small amount of spade work under William Charles Wentworth and Dr. John Dunmore Lang; and his name was honourably mentioned in Parliament as having materially contributed to bring about the result the Colony rejoiced at in 1850.

A few more facts may be given as indicating the wonderful transformation Australia has passed through during the period covered by the ensuing reminiscences.

In 1848 no portion of Australia enjoyed the blessings—or reputed blessings—of representative institutions and responsible government. New South Wales was a Crown colony, with a nominee Legislative Council. There were great men in the public life of the land in those days, who fought hard and long and with eventual success to win the popular rights to which they believed a British community was entitled. William Charles Wentworth, Robert Lowe, John Dunmore Lang, Dr. Bland—among others—were men to whom Australia will be indebted for all time to come. By contrast with the lack of popular representation in those days, there are not a few who think that nowadays we have too many Parliaments and parliamentarians; that the machinery of government is altogether too costly for the benefits it gives in return. In 1848 there was not a mile of railway in the whole area of the continent—the first sod remained to be turned on which to lay down a running track. Telegraphs were equally unknown. Such modern conveniences as motor cars and telephones were, of course, quite undreamt of. The Sydney University had not been founded. Not only was there no such seat of learning in the parent colony or elsewhere in Australia; the system of education in vogue at the time scarcely provided for instruction in anything but very elementary knowledge. There were grants in aid to denominational schools in addition to a weak system of so-called national schools. The Sydney Grammar School almost held the monopoly in higher education, and the country districts were without the benefit of education in advance of the three R's stage. In New South Wales settlement hardly extended beyond 150 miles from Sydney; in the other colonies it had not reached that stage. Cattle and sheep runs were being formed for a hundred miles or possibly two hundred miles further out. But the great beyond was a terra incognita. Roads—such as there were—were atrociously bad; and water communication along the coast was mainly by ketches and schooners and slow sailing craft of that order.

Ecclesiastically, things were in what might be called the embryotic stage in 1848. In the Church of England, Bishop Broughton (the first Bishop) was Metropolitan of Australia, with diocesan bishops at Newcastle (N.S.W.),

Melbourne, Tasmania, and Adelaide—each with a very small body of clergy under him, the bishopric being founded in each case almost wholly by endowments from some English society or by Government grants. State aid to religion obtained in the shape of stipend grants from the public treasury. Roman Catholicism was presided over by Archbishop Polding, a man of venerable appearance and of gracious spirit. Presbyterianism was divided into two or three sections, each militant against the other; and yet withal commanding a good deal of public attention and influence by reason of the outstanding ability of its principal ministers and the social position and wealth of its parishioners. Methodism had not attained local self-government. It was vigorous and aggressive, but numerically not strong, and labouring under the disadvantage of being governed by a Conference 16,000 miles away, and dependent largely upon funds from the Missionary Society in London to meet the meagre allowances enjoyed by its ministers and probationers. Withal, it was a live spiritual force, with any amount of room for the expenditure of its evangelistic zeal in providing for the back blocks as they opened up, and for the missions to Tonga and Fiji which then commanded a large amount of attention and enjoyed unwonted popularity. Congregationalism was well represented in Sydney by two or three ministers of exceptional ability. Pitt Street Church was even then a centre of what may be called cultured and intellectual Christianity.

In 1848 gold had not been discovered in Australia—in any event not with such certainty or in such quantities as to attract widespread attention or to cause a rush of gold seekers to Australia. A few years later—in 1851—the magic find was made, and Australia practically leapt into the world's arena. But that is a story in itself. The foregoing facts are scarcely pertinent to the reminiscences that are to be told in these pages, except as they provide a starting point to begin with and a background against which to bring out and vivify the experiences that will be herein related.

II

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

In a characteristic sentence Goethe says, 'It always makes a pleasant impression on us when we open again at the spring-tide pages of the Book of Life, its most charming chapter.' As I open this story in the days of my teens, in the picturesquely situated town of Kiama, at the southern end of the district of Illawarra, I am conscious of the pleasant impression of which the poet speaks. Kiama has not undergone many changes, so far as its physical features are concerned, since the days of my boyhood there in the early and middle sixties of last century. There are still the hills and dales, the meandering streams, the picturesque mountain range forming a background in which the artist and the tourist may find unending delight; and 'the ever-restless sea' gently lapping the rocks and beaches that bound it on its eastern side, or dashing in all the majesty of storm and tempest on the crags and cliffs that have withstood the elemental strife of centuries past. What district is there in all Australia that can rival Illawarra for variety and affluence of natural beauty? And what part of that picturesque district has so much within its borders to interest and attract as the portion comprised within the bounds of the Kiama Methodist circuit? As I write, some of the scenes on which I have gazed from various coigns of vantage in that district rise before me. They are pictures indelibly impressed upon my mind, visions of beauty never to be effaced, and appeals to whatever of poetry there is in me to burst into song as the only fitting medium of setting forth the glories thereof.

But, from another point of view, great changes have occurred within that circuit since the days of which I speak. The veterans have passed away, and with them the heroic chapters in South Coast Methodism appear to

be closed. The sanctuaries are larger, more substantial, and more comfortable, than those of which I have recollections in Kiama, Jamberoo, Gerringong, Shellharbour, and Foxground. The roads throughout the district are now good; in those days they were proverbial for their roughness and discomfort. Schools are in evidence in all the centres of population, at which education of an excellent order can be obtained. My recollection goes back to the days prior to the Public Instruction Act, when such schools as existed were denominational apologies for the same. Now, the train carries its passengers in ease and comfort from Sydney to Kiama, or vice-versa. Then, it was a case of taking the steamer on one of her tri-weekly trips, and travelling amid such noisome smells as exuded from pigs, calves, cheese, bacon, butter, and the other *olla podrida* that a dairying district yielded up to the Metropolitan market. But there were compensations. The district was more self-contained. It was out of the whirl and swirl of things. The church and its services counted for more in daily life. Existence was more simple; it was more patriarchal—more pious. What a sight it was on Sundays to see the roads lined with horsemen and horsewomen, with an occasional gig or spring-cart to vary the scene, all wending their way to the churches and chapels; and at the hour of service to note the grounds surrounding the places of worship filled with horses and vehicles! The people were a church-going sort in those days. What prayer-meetings there used to be! Eighty or a hundred or more would regularly assemble on Monday evening in the Kiama (old) chapel; and class-meetings were an inspiration and a joy. Similarly, cottage services were regularly held on Sunday evening at Fountaindale, Old Place, and Gerringong House, and the trouble was to find room for all who wished to get in, and not infrequently doors and windows had to be left open to permit those who were crowded out to get the benefit, although compelled to remain in the open air.

To what an extent a minister makes a circuit was abundantly shown during the terms of the Revs. J. G. Turner and Thomas Angwin in the years 1861–4 and 1864–5 respectively. Mr. Turner was then a young man, full of business ideas and projects for the church, and

bringing a mind and spirit of that type to bear upon his administration of circuit affairs. I do not recollect much of him as a preacher; and as a pastor I did not feel that his jurisdiction extended to me. I was only a Sunday-school lad, and not a member of the church. But some kindly words of his and a gentle placing of his hand upon my head have never been forgotten—so immortal is the influence and impression of what we call little things. It remains to be said, however, that Josiah George Turner did service for the Kiama circuit that was of permanent and incalculable value. He erected the Kiama church—then the finest structure of its kind on the South Coast. He also collected for, and put up, the Shellharbour church, a substantial stone structure; and he purchased a parsonage in Kiama that for years served as an admirable home for successive superintendents and their families. I say that Mr. Turner did these things; because it was almost entirely due to his initiative and energy that the circuit went in for these forward movements. Moreover, his persistence as a canvasser for subscriptions led to his being known as 'the best beggar the circuit ever had.'

It was a great day when the Kiama church was opened. It was in the month of December, 1862. The preacher on the opening day (a Wednesday) was the Rev. John Allan Manton, then of Newington College. The morning service was followed by a luncheon, that by a public meeting at half-past two; and the day concluded with a service in the evening, conducted by the Rev. James Watkin. To my boyish mind it was the greatest celebration at which I had ever been present. Around that sanctuary, what recollections cluster! There was its indefatigable church steward, Mr. Thomas Surfleet Kendall, J.P., one of the leading residents, and most highly-respected magistrates of the district, who personally attended to the opening and lighting of the church, collected the pew rents, and bestowed an exemplary solicitude upon the care of the building and upon its financial interests. The Sunday school superintendent was another identity, although in quite a different line. Illiterate, and yet earnest—dealing grimly and frequently with such themes as death, hell, and judgement—we boys respected and feared the old man even if we did not particularly love

him. Some of his quaint solecisms still afford amusement as one thinks of them. For instance, in announcing that a young teacher was about to 'say a few words,' he requested the scholars to pass the books, 'Then,' said he, 'Master so-and-so will 'dress you and afterwards clothe (close) the school.' The youthful aspirant doubtless felt appalled at this large order being entrusted to him.

Some of the local preachers and prayer-leaders were also characters in their way. There was good old John Vidler, whose favourite text was, 'O satisfy us early with Thy mercy,' &c.; Thomas Boxsell, whose 'taxt,' as he called it, sometimes 'wouldn't go,' and who would change it in the pulpit until he found one that would 'go'; Adam Boyd, simple, devout, unassuming, whose modesty never permitted him to get above the rank of 'an exhorter'; John Cullen, a man of ability but of ambition, who found Methodism too small for him and seceded to establish a 'Free Gospel Church' of his own; Donald Finlayson, originally a Presbyterian, but as good and true a Methodist as ever lived, and useful and acceptable as local preacher, class-leader, and I know not what else. Then of John Crooks, what shall I say? He was a Sunday school teacher of a rare type. Fond of 'his boys'—proud of them if they gave him any occasion; ever thinking of his work, reading up for it, storing his mind with Biblical knowledge that he might impart it to his pupils; and who had the joy of seeing seven of his 'boys' in quick succession offer for the Christian ministry—a record which enabled the old man at last to say with holy satisfaction, 'Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'

It was in the month of April, 1864, that the Rev. Thomas Angwin landed in Kiama, having been appointed by the Conference of that year to succeed the Rev. J. G. Turner. The steamer had from some cause been delayed and did not arrive till the Sunday morning, and hence the new minister opened his commission by preaching at the evening service on the dark night of not too favourable a day. Needless to say, there was not a particularly encouraging congregation. But we youths took stock of our new minister. A tall and somewhat gaunt figure, with a slight stoop; a thoughtful face which later on we discovered to be the index of a deeply spiritual soul; eyes

that could twinkle with humour and flash with holy fire; a manner that was at first quiet, but never unimpressive, and rose until there was in it an intensity of sacred passion; and a voice that was capable of tender cadence and of majestic denunciation, as the mood or the subject demanded. Needless to say, all this did not come out in that first service. It was a quiet time. The preacher was physically not at his best. His surroundings were new and strange, and he was still on the 'tumult's wheels' of moving. But the text of that sermon remains with me. One of the illustrations I still vividly remember. The text was: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' &c., and the illustration was that of a lady anxious about her soul, who in a dream learned the secret of so coming to Christ as to find rest in Him. She dreamt she was hanging by a rope in a pit, and was in consequence in great distress. Presently, she heard a voice below saying, 'Let go the rope.' But, as she looked at the depth beneath she felt she could not trust herself to release her hold. But again the voice was heard, and this time with ineffable tenderness, saying, 'If you do not let go the rope neither can I save you.' She recognized in the voice that of her Saviour, and let go the rope—to wake up and find that in simply and absolutely trusting Christ she had found rest to her soul.

For about eighteen months the Kiama Circuit rejoiced in the ministry of this saintly man, whose name is still as ointment poured forth in the sweetness of the recollections connected with it. He was a man of weak physique, marked already by consumption as its prey, but of apostolic if not seraphic fervour. Presently every interest in the Circuit began to feel the influence of his character and ministry. Congregations increased. The prayer- and class-meetings began to fill up amazingly. When, as often happened, either of the other Protestant churches was closed for the morning or evening, scores of Anglicans or Presbyterians would flock to our church, making up an inspiring congregation. But the 'revival' was still waited for. And it came. Well do I remember it. Shall it ever be forgotten? It was on this wise.

It was on the evening of one of the later Sundays in July, 1864. There was a hush about the service even

before it commenced. Somehow, on entering the chapel (it was always so called in those days), one felt the speechless awe of a Higher Presence, and an irresistible conviction that 'something' was going to happen. The preacher was unusually earnest and searching. His theme was: 'Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God; I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel xxxiii. 11). The arrows were sharp in the hands of the King's messenger that night. They were straightly aimed, and shot with all the intensity of a love baptized with the compassion of the Christ. Nearly all the congregation remained to the prayer-meeting, but although many were pricked in their hearts they did not openly yield. The next night there was almost equally as large a congregation at the prayer-meeting. Then began what the good old people called 'a breaking down.' The communion rail was crowded with seekers. Some hoar-headed men were amongst them; a storekeeper in the town, notorious for his fearful temper and furious conduct when under its influence; some gentle-spirited women; a number of senior lads and girls from the Sunday school. Even now the scene does one good to recall. Methinks I can hear the fervent pleadings of the praying men and women of the church as they entreated that God would give the penitents 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Night after night for the rest of the week and into the middle of the next, the meetings continued. One night a backslider 'found peace' on his way from his home to the chapel, and testified to the joy of all that he was 'as happy as a king.' He looked it, and he lived it from then until his death, a good many years after. How the old folks revelled in it all, and with what joy Sunday school teachers learned that one after another of their scholars had been 'made happy,' as they phrased it! When at last the net was hauled in and the results counted, it was found that if there were not one hundred and fifty and three, there were very substantial gains to the kingdom of God. It was a revival that gave workers to the Church, teachers to the Sunday school, local preachers to the

circuit plan, and ultimately several ministers to the Australasian Methodist Church. Nor did the work cease with the close of the revival services. The spiritual appetite of the people was whetted. Minister and people alike yearned and believed for greater things; and all through the Circuit there was a lively expectation of a sacred baptism on a larger scale than ever before seen—when suddenly the minister collapsed! The Rev. Thomas Angwin's work was done, and a career that seemed as if it were bound to be one of more than ordinary usefulness and power was prematurely cut short.

It may be that boyish impressions are not to be much depended upon, and that one's partiality for his father in the gospel is likely to colour his judgement. But it has always seemed to me that somehow or other Thomas Angwin has never had that place in the estimation of our Church generally that his merits and services entitled him to. He died young, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his ministry. The Conference obituary of him states that 'he laboured with great diligence and acceptance.' If his work in Kiama was a specimen of the rest, the Conference statement might safely be made with more than ordinary emphasis. Some of his sermons were master-pieces of sanctified eloquence. Two of them live not only in my recollection, but in that of others who heard them. One was on: 'Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us'; and the other was from the text: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God,' &c. These sermons revealed a knowledge of the deep things of God, and a personal walking and moving amid the higher experiences of the Christian life, that profoundly and permanently impressed all who heard them. How apposite and prophetic, too, the last text from which he ever discoursed in public! After an interval of rest he essayed to resume his work. The doctor cautioned him, and friends counselled that he should take the service quietly. His text was: 'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory.' While he was musing, the fire burned. The spirit refused to be hampered by the frail frame. The preacher stood before us as of yore, glowing with his theme and exultant with the Christian hope. But it was the swan song before

departure. Never again did Thomas Angwin stand in a pulpit. Months of weakness and suffering intervened. But the sufferer was sustained by the truths he had preached and illustrated in life; and then went home, 'and all the bells of the city rang out a welcome.'

It is significant of the deep and abiding impression made by this saintly man upon those brought under his influence that, after a lapse of fifty years from the time of his decease, a tablet to his memory was placed in the Kiama Church, and by means of the surplus subscribed for that purpose a smaller one was erected in the Mudgee Church. Truly, 'the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.'

III

BEGINNING TO PREACH

METHODISM believes that the best way to teach her youths to preach is by setting them to do it. But she helps them also by her organization, if they live up to it, which is based upon the principle of a work for every one, and every one at work. How does a young man usually graduate into the Ministry? First, by getting converted. Then by praying in the prayer-meeting, speaking in class, teaching in the Sunday school, meanwhile giving attention to reading and the culture of his heart as well as his mind. Presently a watchful brother (usually the minister) detects in him the promise of suitable gifts and graces for a larger sphere, and he is spoken to about 'taking a service or two.' Thus he finds his way into the pulpit, and eventually into the Ministry. And it is the glory of the Methodist Church that it grows its own ministers. It is a tree having its seed in itself, and not only so, but, like Joseph of old, its branches run over the wall into the enclosures of other churches, and drop many a seedling there that also develops into a fruitful tree.

Imagine a beardless youth of seventeen-and-a-half years of age setting forth one fine Sunday morning under authorization from the Superintendent of the Circuit to 'take the service' at the Foxground, about twelve miles distant from the circuit town. Once before I had attempted under pressure to address the Sunday school. The Superintendent insisted on a 'few words,' and how thankful I should have been if the floor had opened to swallow me out of sight, as the consciousness came over me of utter failure in the attempt. But an effort or two in the Mutual Improvement Society, and a few sketches of sermons, written at the request of the Minister, whom I loved with a peculiar affection—and the die was cast. Laying his hand on my shoulder, and speaking to me

with solemn emphasis, the minister insisted that the line of duty was clear, and that I must go on the 'Plan.' An asterisk did duty as a substitute for my name, but everybody knew whom the asterisk stood for. At least I did, and that was sufficient. And the Foxground Chapel was to be the first trysting-place.

There are some scenes and situations that are never forgotten. Surely, such a situation as I was in on that Sunday morning was one of them. A young man—older than myself—kindly volunteered to accompany me, and show me the way to the Foxground. I had never been there before, and the district was not nearly so well supplied with roads as it is now. It was a lovely morning. The views all along from Kiama to Mount Pleasant, and over that picturesque spot to Gerringong, were sufficient to lift one's thoughts to God, and to fill the soul with sublime and elevated feelings. From Gerringong the track ran through the forest, then musical with birds, and turned off into the valley between two spurs of the coast range. Well up this valley stood the simple little wooden chapel in which the service was to be held. A congregation of about twenty-five persons assembled, to whom I preached as best I could from 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Amongst those present was a local preacher, of whom the younger brethren stood in awe. But he spoke a kind word to me when the service was over, and I was not as dismayed as I expected to be.

As a local preacher fairly started, and planned in turn at all the preaching-places in the circuit, I had now the opportunity of gauging the strength of Methodism in the circuit, and also of coming into contact with its people high and low, gentle and simple. There were undoubtedly some elect spirits owning allegiance to the Church. In Kiama, the Kendall family was a tower of strength. Mr. Kendall was a model church steward, Mrs. Kendall a mother in Israel, and a succourer of many, and the Misses Kendall were useful helpers in church and Sunday school. Nothing came amiss to them, either as regards the spiritual or material aspects of the church's work. The Black family was another who were entitled to be looked upon as pillars. The Misses Black—maiden

ladies of fairly ample means—lived at Jenera Vale, but regularly rode in to Kiama Church; and Miss Bessie Black was an indefatigable collector for missions, canvassing all classes, and making her list up to as much as £80 per year. Their nephew, Major Black, was a prominent man in all the public affairs of the district. Another relation, Mr. Thomas Black, lived at Gerringong House. To this family, as a whole, together with their relatives, the Somervilles, Methodism was greatly indebted in the early days in the South Coast district. The Finlayson family, the Vances and Easts, the Armstrongs, and the Dinnings, were also to the fore in the Church's meetings and enterprises. Of course, too, there were some oddities. A typical brother complained in my hearing that there was no life in the prayer-meetings. 'Why,' he said, 'I've been in meetings where half a dozen would be praying at once, and all at the top of their voice.' It was the habit of this brother in prayer to begin low, go slow, rise higher, and take fire, until he was like a tornado and a thunderstorm rolled into one, and quieter folks felt all devotion deadened within them as he raved and shouted to his heart's content. This same brother felt persuaded that he was called to preach; and at last, yielding to his importunities, the minister authorized him to try his hand upon a prayer-meeting regularly held at a farmhouse on the Gerringong-road. Essaying to exhort from the text, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell,' he first looked at the people, then at the ceiling, then anywhere and everywhere, and as no inspiration came he ingloriously turned to a veteran prayer-leader, saying, 'Brother W., will you take the text?' It is needless to say that brother did not find his sphere in Methodism as a preacher.

Jamberoo was next in importance to Kiama as a preaching-place, and services were held at 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m., with evening services at Old Place and Fountaindale at 7 or 7.30 p.m., according as it was winter or summer. Mr. C. Barnes was class-leader, and the Cullen family, the Dudgeons, Nobles, Craigs, Grahams, and Vidlers, formed a good strong Methodist element in that delightfully picturesque part of the circuit. Old Place had about the queerest assortment of good old people that one could possibly imagine. The service was held in

Mr. S. Vidler's dining-room. At one end of it was a large old-fashioned fireplace, with seats around it on which the elderly ladies used to sit. Warm nights as well as cold there was always a good fire going; and it is easy to imagine what the temperature would be on a summer night, with a crowded room and insufficient ventilation, and a roaring fire going all the time. 'It was a caution to snakes,' remarked a young minister, who had been there on a January evening during the latter part of Mr. Angwin's time.

Gerringong, too, had its characters and its characteristics. Warm-hearted and hospitable then, as now, they were as loyal and liberal as any one could desire. 'There's to be a collakshon for the "heddication fund,"' said the steward to me on my first appointment to that chapel—then a tumble-down slab edifice, since replaced by a comfortable and commodious brick church, occupied by a congregation equal to any in the circuit. Near by was Crawley Forest, with a fortnightly morning service; Gerringong House, with a Sunday evening service; and Foxground, with service every other Sunday morning, and occasionally a minister's appointment in the afternoon. At the other end of the circuit was Shellharbour, with a service in the afternoon only; and Terry's Meadows, where a fortnightly service was held in Mr. Rankin's house on Sunday morning. There was thus a full tale of work, and only one minister to do it. But there was a lengthy list of local preachers, and the circuit was a training ground for young divines, as was shown by the goodly extent to which the circuit became represented in the ministry of our Church in N.S. Wales and Queensland. The Catechism was well taught in the Sunday schools, scholars were encouraged to commit large portions of Scripture to memory, and the Sunday school examinations were tournaments for the display of as much knowledge of sacred lore as months of cramming could instil into the minds of the pupils. That system doubtless had its defects; but has the system we are now under any better results to show than the old one has produced?

It does not necessarily follow that one's education for his calling in life is limited to the months spent in the school or college that is supposed to specially teach him

what he requires to know to fit him for his career. The old saying is profoundly true, that 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends'; and oftentimes, quite unperceived by us, a providential environment is giving a bent to the intellectual and spiritual faculties that counts for more than any amount of pedagogy can possibly do. 'I hear you are already a man of letters,' was the remark jocularly made to one about to begin a course of study for the ministry. The young man had served an apprenticeship to the printing profession. He was accustomed to pick up and distribute 'letters,' although they were only leaden ones. But that young man had begun to find out that those 'letters' stood for more than merely so much cold type. The handling of them had initiated him into the art of composition. He had necessarily to practise punctuation, to become proficient in spelling, and to acquire general information so as to enable him to do his work satisfactorily to himself and his employer. Something similar to this, coincidently with a course of Sunday school instruction of a strenuous type, and the stimulus given by two Mutual Improvement Societies—dissimilar and yet complementary in their methods—made up for me a sort of preliminary course that left a mark upon mind and style of a permanently valuable character.

The month of August, 1867, witnessed a removal from the domesticities of life at Kiama to the classic shades and academic groves of old Newington, on the Parramatta River. It was the crossing of the Rubicon. My personal inclination for a commercial or professional life had been over-ruled. My shrinking from the solemn tasks and responsibilities of the Christian ministry had been made to give way in presence of a combination of providential circumstances, together with an irresistible inward persuasion, which simply shut me up to do one of two things. The one was to offer myself as a candidate; or—the other—do violence to my own sense of duty and to what seemed the clear call of God. I chose the former. And, in those inchoate days, one did not need to wait for Conference to send him to Newington. A profession of a desire to enter the ministry, and a recommendation from the circuit minister—these were sufficient. Of course, a candidate who thus went did so at his own risk, and

at his own charges. But the Institution benevolently took him in, and assisted him in preparation for the ordeal of facing the District Meeting and the Conference. And the assistance was undoubtedly very great.

Much as the Institution of to-day leaves to be desired to bring it up to such fully-equipped Colleges as Richmond, Handsworth, and Didsbury, in the old country, the lot of our present-day theological students is far in advance of that obtaining in the years of which I now speak. The Rev. J. H. Fletcher was President of the College, and Principal of the Theological Institution. But it was difficult to say what else he was not. The whole responsibility of managing and governing the institution in all its branches devolved upon him. There was the large boarding-school to be supervised, its business affairs to be looked after, its commissariat to be cared for; an extensive estate connected with the college to be overseen; committees in Sydney, and circuit affairs in Parramatta, making demands upon his time; and in addition to this, the sole instruction, classical, mathematical, and theological, of the 'divinities' to be attended to in person. Is it to be wondered at that Mr. Fletcher found himself overworked and unable to give the measure of time to the students that they desired, and that he felt they ought to have? But he did what he could. And we revered him for his unaffected goodness, his kindly interest in us, and for a sacred scholarship that we felt we were quite unable to gauge the full measure of. Those Sunday morning services in the Lyceum, at which he generally preached, and the evening services in the dining-room, almost invariably conducted by him—what seasons of grace and instruction they were!

In speaking of students in the plural, I must in accuracy explain that, for the greater part of the brief time I was there, I was the only student. K. A. Corner, Adin Parsons, J. S. Austin, Robert Johnston and A. J. Webb had passed through their courses, and were in circuit work before I entered. They had left an honourable record behind them, and had done something towards creating a tradition in connexion with student life and character. Dr. Moulton and Mr. Bickford (Victoria) had been there as tutors, and had departed to enter the ministry; and all these kept more or less in touch with the place. The boys talked about them. The masters heard from them. Mr. Fletcher kept up a more or less frequent communication with them, and the spirit of comradeship was maintained. A young man from Bathurst Circuit—Mr. Samuel Cock—came for a few months, and we studied together. But he did not return after the Christmas vacation. Before April came he had entered another school—he had passed to 'where beyond these voices there is peace.' November brought the District Meeting. It was held in old York Street. The Chairman was the Rev. H. H. Gaud. The only other candidate was Mr. T. B. Rootes. If I may anticipate, I will do so, just far enough to say that, accepted by the Conference, he had a brief but honourable career. A few years of service in Fiji, then broken health, and supernumeraryship for a year or two, terminated by translation to the higher ministry of heaven.

In the years I speak of, Newington was part of the Parramatta Circuit. And a great circuit it was as then constituted. It embraced Parramatta, Ryde, Dundas, Castle Hill, Dural, Baulkham Hills, Smithfield, Liverpool, and sundry smaller places. The Rev. James Watkin—familiarly spoken of as 'Daddy' Watkin—was the superintendent, and the Rev. H. J. Lavers was his colleague, residing at Dundas. There was a fine congregation worshipping in Macquarie Street Church, Parramatta, comprising some of the old historic Methodist families of the State; and at Ryde, Dundas, Castle Hill, and Dural the churches were usually full. A story was current as showing the self-possession and ready wit of Mr. Watkin. On one Sunday evening the back door of the pulpit in Macquarie Street Chapel gave way just as Mr. Watkin was seating himself against it. It opened into the vestry at the rear, into which somewhat ingloriously the preacher found himself precipitated. The stewards ran from the chapel into the vestry to pick up the preacher and to lend assistance. But he had already got to his feet, and declared that under such circumstances a preacher with more wit than piety might have exclaimed: 'Yet a little while and ye shall see me; again a little while and ye shall not see me.' For readiness and kindliness of

humour Mr. Watkin had few compeers. There were times, however, when he could let his wit run into satire, and its edge was very keen. There were some stalwarts in the circuit, too, in those days—stewards and local preachers and other officials—who had minds of their own. Quarterly meetings were not always of the love-feast type, and finance was a source of almost perennial trouble. The ministers thought the people ought to give more; and some of the people—or some of the officers—thought the ministers ought to do with less. But, despite these and other drawbacks, it was a grand circuit. There were many splendid people in it. Hospitality was hearty, congregations were good, and services were inspiring.

During those students' days, also, one had the opportunity of occasionally hearing the great pulpit magnates of the time. J. H. Fletcher occupied quite a niche of his own. Knowledge of his subject and insight into meanings not usually obvious, coupled with a beauty and felicity of expression, and an aptness of illustration, always served to make him interesting and instructive to a rare degree. William Kelynack was at York Street at the time, and William Curnow at Bourke Street. By common consent, these were the pulpit orators of the day. Kelynack, with his classical face and silvery voice, his choice and chaste vocabulary, his poetic imagination and peerless delivery—shall we ever look upon his like again? He was a revivalist, too, of a successful type, and a lecturer whose prelections on *The Poet of Olney, George Stephenson*, and other themes, deserved to rank with Morley Punshon's choicest and best. William Curnow was equally great on other lines. Calm, clear, and philosophical, measured in style, and with a mellifluous voice, he was a royal preacher in the sixties and early seventies. Methodism was very proud of these her distinguished sons. Another pulpit star was rising above the horizon in the person of George Horatio Holmes; but his sun went down while it was yet noon. He died young, but he gave promise of no ordinary power as a preacher during the brief ministry permitted to him. Amongst other denominations, the Rev. Thomas Smith, of St. Barnabas', Glebe (popularly known as Barnabas Smith), was a man of considerable eloquence; the Rev. John Graham, of

Pitt Street Congregational Church, was a minister universally beloved and honoured for his wide learning, his catholicity of spirit, and his readiness to assist in every good work. Militant Protestantism found its hero in Dr. McGibbon—a man of fearless courage, and yet of gentle spirit. All these have gone. How true it is, in one respect at least, 'The path of glory leads but to the grave.'

IV

MAKERS OF METHODISM IN THE PERIOD

SEEING that Methodism celebrated its Centenary in Australia in 1915—although the celebration was properly due in 1912—it is evident that the period from 1868 to 1921 covers considerably more than half of the whole term of its operation in Australia. There were great men in the early days of Methodism in Australia, and it is doubtful if even yet full justice has been done to the character and labours of Samuel Leigh, Walter Lawry, and the early missionaries—men who pioneered the track along which their successors travelled, and who left a tradition of courage, self-denial, and devotion that has ever since been an asset of value to the Church they belonged to. These are the men who laboured, and into whose labours the workers of to-day have entered. But their work was necessarily of a preparatory character. It remained for their successors to develop and extend it as circumstances demanded; and my story takes up the running, as it were, at almost the end of the first half-century, and brings on to the scene men who played an important part as from 1868 to the end of that century.

Foremost among the figures in the Conference at which I was received as a probationer were James Watkin, Stephen Rabone, John Eggleston, Thomas Buddle, James Buller, George Hurst, Thomas Williams, William A. Quick, William L. Binks, John Watsford, Benjamin Chapman, Joseph H. Fletcher, Jabez B. Waterhouse, and Joseph Oram. Concerning each of these, and of the services rendered by them, much might justly be written. The biographies of some of our early Methodist ministers in the Southern world would provide matter almost as racy as the records of the American backwoods preachers, and as spiritually stimulating as those of the helpers of Wesley and Whitefield. A line or two concerning each of the prominent men just named must suffice.

The Rev. James Watkin entered the ministry in 1830, and lived until 1886, when he passed hence at the age of eighty-one years. In his early ministerial years he laboured as a missionary in Tonga, and took part in the stirring scenes of the revival which practically transformed that group of islands. Hearing of the dreadful doings in the adjacent group of Fiji—then spelt 'Feejee'—he wrote the clarion appeal, 'Pity Poor Feejee," with the result that keen interest was aroused in missionary circles in Australia and England, and a mission to Fiji was commenced in 1837. That circumstance alone is sufficient to entitle James Watkin to a place among the outstanding figures of Australasian Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century. His subsequent labours in New South Wales and Victoria stamped him as a man of more than ordinary ability and devotion. Three of his sons entered the ministry. The eldest has been in Tonga for over half a century; William J. Watkin fulfilled a useful course in New Zealand; Edwin Iredale Watkin, known and honoured as Dr. Watkin, became President of his Conference, Principal of Wesley College, Editor of the *Spectator*, Managing Treasurer of the Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund, and one of the recognized Christian leaders of Victoria. James Watkin himself was President of the Australasian Conference in 1862.

Stephen Rabone was another of the stalwarts of his day. Tall and commanding in bearing—'a man of port and presence,' as Walter Lawry described him—a man also of a resonant voice, he impressed his congregations as much by the manner as by the matter of his discourses. He, too, was an ex-Tongan missionary, and a man of affairs, versed in problems of administration and matters of finance. He became General Secretary for Foreign Missions, and while holding that office, fell and died while on his way to conduct a Sunday evening service in Wesley Church, Chippendale, Sydney. He also gave a son to the ministry, and his work was subsequently continued, and is being continued by two or three grandsons. 'Instead of the fathers shall be the children.'

Thomas Buddle and James Buller were prominent figures in the Australasian Conferences they attended.

But their work was done in New Zealand, and it is to that Dominion their biographies belong. They were men of vision and courage; cast in the heroic mould; undaunted by difficulty, unawed by danger; their names and records are closely bound up with the early annals of New Zealand colonization and evangelization.

John Eggleston and George Hurst may also be bracketed, in that they both attained to connexional responsibility and to the Presidency of the Australasian Conference—the former in 1860, and the latter in 1870. Eggleston became General Secretary for Foreign Missions, and Hurst of Home Missions, in New South Wales. They had both the advantage of training in an English Theological College, and both brought to their life work the impact of a strong personality, as well as of a cultivated mind and a wide range of vision. Some of their successors were of the opinion that their enterprise was not always qualified by prudence, and that they were parties to the contracting of connexional debts that proved burdensome to bear. But wisdom is justified of her children; and Methodism of to-day has churches and colleges that less enterprising men would have shrunk from erecting. Similar and yet dissimilar were these men. George Hurst was of the Boanerges type; John Eggleston was, in pulpit manner and personal address, of the Johannine school. A characteristic incident in each case will serve to show the spirit of the men. On one occasion Eggleston was addressing the Conference when a ministerial member interrupted him exclaiming: 'Mr. President, I rise to order.' Whereupon, Eggleston immediately gave up, remarking, 'Very well, Mr. President, I decline to be disorderly.' Very different in debate was George Hurst. Contending in a discussion with another prominent member who was almost equally aggressive, the latter remarked at the conclusion of Hurst's speech, 'I shall not attempt to answer the last speaker, Mr. President; I shall content myself by saying that if there should ever be a difficulty at the Vatican for a successor to the Pio Nono (the then Pope) I think we shall be able to help them by forwarding a nomination from this Conference.'

The brothers Jabez B. Waterhouse and Joseph Waterhouse were sons of the Rev. John Waterhouse, the first

General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in the South Seas. John Waterhouse was a man of wide vision and apostolic fervour. His dying words as he fell on sleep in Hobart, Tasmania, were 'Missionaries, more missionaries.' His sons inherited his spirit and rendered valuable service in Fiji, New South Wales, and Victoria. Jabez B. Waterhouse was a man of statesmanlike mind, and did more than most of the men of his time in shaping the legislation of the Conference from year to year. Benjamin Chapman had also been a missionary in his earlier years. He excelled in administrative work; was enterprising as a Church builder; and at the latter end of his ministry was appointed General Secretary of Foreign Missions. He, too, attained the Presidential chair.

Foremost among the men of that period were John Watsford and Joseph Horner Fletcher. They had much in common in the high aims of their ministry and in the secret springs of their power; and yet they were as dissimilar in their methods as it was possible to be. Fletcher was quiet, scholarly, and undemonstrative; fond of his study and given to deep thought. He could not grow vehement in the pulpit; to play upon the emotions or appeal to the fears of his hearers was entirely foreign to him—in a sense impossible. The headings he announced in a sermon of his on St. Paul's declaration 'This one thing I do,' summed up the characteristics of his own personality and work. 'Simplicity, intensity, persistency.' He was a scholar and a saint; a preacher of rare quality in regard to the clearness of his thought and the beauty of its expression; in a sense both an artist and a poet; with a subtle charm that won out with all with whom he had to do. As theological tutor he was reverenced by his students; as principal of Newington College he was looked up to by a succession of masters who served under his principalship; and respected by generation after generation of schoolboys, who in course of time, found their respect deepening into reverence. These finally showed their affection by placing his portrait in oils upon the wall of the principal schoolroom of Newington College. In the tribute paid to him in the New South Wales Conference Minutes of 1891 (p. 11) it is truly said: 'He was a preacher and speaker of exceptional power.

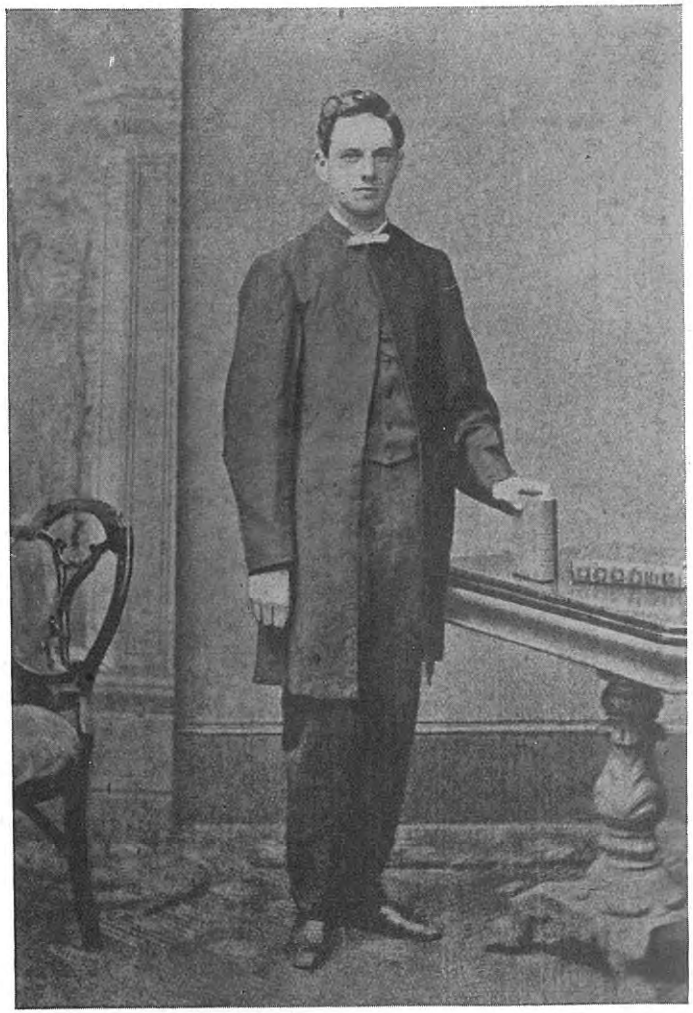
His sermons and addresses were original and suggestive, marked by picturesque language, unusual felicity of illustration, and wealth and beauty of thought, as were also his numerous contributions to our literature. He was a wise and prudent counsellor, and he received the highest honours which his Church has to bestow, being twice President of the New South Wales and Queensland Conference (1874 and 1884), and in the latter year he was elected to the Presidency of the General Conference.' His Retiring Address as President of the General Conference in Melbourne in 1888, left an ineffaceable impression on my mind. It was a deliverance not only worthy of the man, but also worthy of any ecclesiastical assembly at any time. There are few J. H. Fletchers in any generation.

John Watsford was a product of Australasian Methodism, Born in Parramatta, New South Wales, and converted under the Methodist ministry of that town, he became in course of time one of the outstanding personalities in the religious life of the Commonwealth, with a name and a fame extending all over the mission fields of Australasia and even to old England itself. He had a fine presence. Commanding in stature, with an expressive countenance, a piercing eye, a flowing beard, and a voice well timbred and with a tremor in it, he had many of the natural attributes of the orator. But he possessed also a deeply emotional nature and an unusual fervency of spirit. The Apostles' Creed was to him the expression in words of facts and forces that were living and dynamic. He could say, as perhaps few could, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' Like the Apostles, he could not but testify the things he had seen and felt. He was an evangelist from top to toe. He preached repentance, conversion, conscious salvation, and entire sanctification. And wherever he preached there were 'signs following.' Revivals were almost normal under his ministry; they occurred in every circuit he laboured in. And, withal, there was a fair average of human nature in John Watsford. He knew his own mind; he liked his own way; circuit quarterly meetings under his superintendency were not always like heaven below. He was impatient of pettiness, intolerant of formal conservatism; for a Church or a

circuit merely to 'hold its own' was, in his judgement, little less deplorable than actual decadence. And it was given to him very largely to see what he desired to see. His book—an autobiography—*Glorious Gospel Triumphs*—is a record of almost continual success in winning souls to Christ and building up a spiritual and progressive Church. John Watsford was essentially orthodox and conservative. He had no time for the vagaries of the New Theology; he did not believe that the Higher Critics made the Bible more, but less, of a living book; he deprecated the practical surrender of the class-meeting by the General Conferences in 1890 and 1894; and to the end of his prolonged and useful ministry he held that the wisdom and duty of the Methodist pulpit was to call believers to holiness of heart and life at the Sunday morning service, and to summon sinners to salvation at the evening service. Withal, John Watsford was broad-minded. He was heartily in favour of higher education as a policy of the Methodist Church, and as expressed in such institutions as Wesley and Queen's Colleges, Melbourne; Prince Alfred, South Australia; and Newington, New South Wales. He was also a supporter of Dr. Fitchett in establishing the Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne. His relations with other evangelistic Churches were cordial and brotherly; and some of the most appreciative tributes that were paid to him and his work on his death came from Archdeacons and other dignitaries of the Church of England, and from leading representatives of the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist Churches. He belonged to the Commonwealth of Churches. He was a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

Of Joseph Oram and Thomas Williams much also could be written. Thomas Williams was President of the last of the old order of Australasian Conferences, in 1873, at which Conference I was ordained, and of which I have written elsewhere in this volume. He was one of the stalwarts, and did excellent work in the pioneering days in Fiji; also in Victoria on his return to home work. His book on Fiji is still looked upon as a standard work in regard to its special period in the story of Fiji. Joseph Oram was a sweet-spirited man—a man who carried with him an atmosphere of graciousness and goodness. In

his earlier days he did yeoman service in such country circuits as Bathurst, Maitland, and Mudgee. It was his enterprise that projected the building of the fine church in Bathurst; every forward movement found in him a warm sympathizer and a willing helper. But his beautiful spirit—his saintly life—his radiant goodness; these were his best and most influential contribution to the Church he adorned and the community he lived in.



REV. J. E. CARRUTHERS, AGED TWENTY (1868).
[*face* p. 51

V

MY FIRST APPOINTMENT—OUT TO THE BACK BLOCKS

It was in the year 1868. The Conference that year was held in Melbourne. Telegrams were more expensive and less frequent then than now. The course of post was long, and the mails between the capitals were bi-weekly instead of daily. How eagerly and excitedly I awaited the receipt of a 'Station Sheet'! At length it came. For the first time my name appeared on that honourable and important document. What varied feelings surged in my breast!—pride, satisfaction and thankfulness, to find my name amongst the accepted appointees of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church. But a sinking of the heart to find that name opposite to the dreaded appointment—Narrabri and Wee Waa.

What Narrabri and Wee Waa meant away back in the late sixties the men of to-day can scarcely imagine. What it meant to a raw youth who had never been a hundred miles from Sydney, and whose experience of men and things was as limited as that of a fledgeling could possibly be, is known only to himself. The pioneer of the place—the Rev. K. A. Corner—had paid a visit to the college a month or two previously, and had told us some stories of hardship and adventure in what seemed to me to be a wild, distant never-never land. That constituted the whole sum of my knowledge of the so-called circuit.

Narrabri was then the Ultima Thule of New South Wales Methodism. It was remote from Sydney nearly a week's journey. It was distant 110 miles from the nearest Methodist brother, and sixty miles from a clerical brother of any denomination. Standing in either of the (then) diminutive townships that gave the name to the circuit, and looking out upon the open plains and rolling

prairies stretching far away to the illimitable North and West, the appointee of the Methodist Conference might almost feel himself to be an ecclesiastical Selkirk—monarch of all he surveyed, his right undisputed by priest or parson of any denomination. But a very short experience of the actuality soon prompted the asking in another sense of Selkirk's question :—

> Oh ! Solitude ! where are the charms
> That sages have seen in thy face ?

But I am anticipating.

The memories of that long, weary journey have not yet escaped me. The travelling through the weird night within a jolting coach as we crossed the Liverpool Range ; the first sight of Breeza Plain, then charred and blackened by years of successive drought ; the unromantic meal at the ' Pig and Whistle ' public house in Breeza ; the mirage that obscured the outlook and gave the appearance of miles and miles of clear, pellucid water in a drought-stricken waste ; and the dense impalpable heat mist beyond ! The bush has its voices. The great interior plain has its message to those who can hear. But I was not particularly receptive just then. The situation seemed oppressive. The future was vast, unknown, mysterious. And beside me on the coach sat a bronzed, unsympathetic specimen of the purely ovine and bovine stock-dealing class, whose sole encouragement to me when I descanted upon the beautiful scenery of the district from which I had come, was a gruff reminder that ' scenery doesn't pay.'

But all things have an end, and so had that long journey. So, too, had the weary wait of nearly three months before my books and personal effects arrived. The teamsters had camped en route at their selections near the Range to rest their horses. They had got stuck later on at Square Bush ; and besides all this, the carriers of these days never believed in hurrying up. They had a monopoly of the roads ; and if consignees did not like their leisurely ways they had no other remedy than the use of some strong expletives, and then the grudging payment of the high rates of freight the carriers exacted. Arrived at my destination, the first thing to be done was to find

a base of operations in the shape of lodgings. Preaching-places were already provided in the principal townships—the Court-houses did duty in that regard. A circuit horse also there was, if he could only be found. ' Bonaparte ' was the full name of that steed ; but drought and almost daily use had shortened the name and the horse to ' Boney,' and ' Boney ' was as often as not hidden away in a mulga scrub or a myall forest when the common ranger sought to find him, and so escaped earning a good place in the resurrection of Methodist preachers' horses. But the preachers' own domicile ! Draw a veil over the scene. A bush pub. sheltered him. An obliging landlady —kind soul—did the best she could to make him comfortable ; and there for some months he, like one of old, vexed his righteous soul with the sights he could not but see, and the sounds he was forced to hear. Those were the days when shepherds were ' lambed down,' and when shearers were ' shorn,' and the publican would annex cheques ranging in value from £25 to £100 as the price of a week's spree !

Narrabri and Wee Waa were designated a ' circuit.' But throughout its vast extent it did not possess a single church. It needed no circuit plan—there were no local preachers. Quarterly meetings were neither a bugbear nor a joy ; there was not a solitary circuit officer in the whole region. An estimable gentleman—a squatter—did duty as secretary and treasurer ; and in the townships of Gunnedah, Moree, and Bingera, some kindly souls acted as collectors. Taking Narrabri as a centre, once in six weeks a visit was paid to Boggabri, Gulligal, Gunnedah, Carroll, and stations en route. And here there rise up pleasurable remembrances of the hearty and genial hospitality always extended to the preacher at Weetalabah and the Gunnible ; and the spiritual fellowship enjoyed with the aged and saintly mother of the ever-gracious proprietor (who through all the years of his life was a liberal supporter of our Church) was a sort of oasis in what was largely a spiritual and connexional desert. Returning to Narrabri on the opposite bank of the Namoi River from that on which the upward journey had been performed, a brief rest was enjoyed, and some reading done for the dreaded ' exams.' Then with led horse and saddle-bags,

the preacher would again set forth for Moree; preach there on the Sunday; run up the Big River as far as Bingera and Keera; or strike out across the plains to the north to Mungundi, and return by way of the Watercourse to Goonal and Derra, and thence up the Mehi back to Moree. Or, another trip would be to Wee Waa, thence down the Namoi to Pilliga and Walgett; and so on, as weather conditions and general circumstances seemed to render most desirable.

The lights and shades were very pronounced in the life of those parts in the days I am now recalling. But with the notions of a young preacher who had come from a district where there were more churches than public-houses; where Sunday was quietly and reverently observed; where congregations were large and class-meetings and prayer-meetings an inspiration in their spirit and quality—it seemed as if the sombre shades predominated. A common saying was that there was 'no God beyond the Range.' Sunday certainly was very much the same as any other day, except that the bush pubs did more business usually on it than during the rest of the week. 'Sunday is a day for putting on a clean shirt' was the sole distinction a prominent station manager was willing to accord to it. An incident recurs to my mind that goes to show that even the putting on of the clean shirt was not always observed. It was in one of the principal townships, albeit its population would be less than one hundred all told. It was Sunday afternoon. My morning service had been attended by eleven children and two adults. In the afternoon horse racing was openly indulged in on the principal street, encouraged by managers and stockriders from adjoining stations. The constable (the township only possessed one) looked on approvingly. I remonstrated with him on his conduct, and on the proceedings generally. Result: The guardian of law and order carried a tale to the crowd that the parson was interfering with him; suggestions were made that the offending parson should be lynched on the spot; and the leading squatter present, being fairly 'full,' courageously promised to hold the rope while the parson was hung up to the nearest tree. However, the parson lived to hold a service that evening, at which some of those men (but not the constable) were

present, and to hold several services subsequently in that Sabbath-breaking place.

What motley congregations they were in those days! In the townships the congregations were usually very small. Bigotry kept many people away. But indifference was a more potent factor in that regard than even bigotry. Moree was an exception. There the people were nearly all Presbyterians. A hearty Scotch welcome always awaited the minister, and a congregation of from thirty to forty could be relied on at any time. But on the stations and at the shearing sheds the gatherings were of the most variegated description, and the incidents of visits and services alternated from the irresistibly ludicrous to the solemnly pathetic. The bush was in itself a sort of asylum. Shepherding was an occupation to which unfortunates of almost every rank resorted when misfortune, or more frequently misconduct, had driven them from more remunerative avocations. It was no uncommon thing to find sons of good families, graduates of Universities, and relatives of prominent men in Church and State, humping their bluey, or following a flock of sheep, or doing some other menial work. The life was free; conventionality was thrown to the winds; the restraints of home, family and position, were things of the past; and in most cases the desire for better things had ceased to exist. But 'the hands' would nearly all turn up at a service at the station; and at shearing time it was considered the thing to give the parson a hearing whenever he came round to 'read prayers,' as the phrase was. Imagine the scene, if you can. The woolroom the auditorium; an up-ended wool bale the pulpit; a fat lamp or two shedding their fitful flickers; and a little crowd of shearers, pressers, and rouseabouts scattered promiscuously around—some sitting on the floor, others astride the pressed bales, and the legs of yet others dangling from the battens of the sheep pens; while the odour of greasy wool and sweating sheep, intermixed with that of unwashed humanity, formed an atmosphere that was at least strong, if it was not salubrious or sweet.

Hospitality was a law and practice never violated within my experience, however others may have shared. Seldom even would an hotel-keeper accept payment for

accommodation. It seemed to be an unwritten law of the North-west that parsons were to be franked everywhere. Distances were long. Journeys were tedious and wearisome. Population was sparse. The vastness and comparative emptiness of the district were almost oppressive. But one could reckon on being permitted to share the best the people had to give. The shepherd, or the stock-rider on weekly rations, was only too willing to dispense his billy-tea, damper, and stringy-bark, when he was called upon; and at the station homesteads the hospitality, if sometimes rough and ready, was always hearty and unstinting. And yet occasionally one's experiences were of a character to remember. Take those of one particular week as a specimen. It was in the month of December. The heat was terrific. Sunday had been spent in Moree, with an afternoon service at Weebollabolla. Monday evening found the preacher at Pallamallawa, with a service arranged for in the hotel parlour. Shearing was just over, and there was a motley group at the usual rendezvous at such a time. Managers, overseers, station hands, and bush loafers, seemed to be indiscriminately mixed; and some amusing colloquies went on amongst these as they discussed the preacher's sermon and religion generally, under the hotel verandah at the close of the service. They did not take much stock in the Bible as an inspired book. One man of importance amongst them closed the argument by asserting his positive belief that the Bible had been invented by Alfred the Great! Nevertheless, he believed religion was a good thing for 'the men,' and concluded by inviting the preacher to visit his station and preach to his station hands. Tuesday was marked by a call at Mungie Bundie; lunch in Moree; and then on out across the Boogerie Plains to Midkin and Welbon. At the latter place shearing was just closing. The manager was a kindly old bachelor. Service held, the manager's room was at the preacher's disposal for the night. The walls were of slab, the roof of bark, the floor of earth. The bedstead consisted of four uprights driven into the ground; the support was a green hide stretched across, the coverlet a blue blanket; while noisy mosquitoes and lively little insects kept one company all the night through. A ride of fifty miles

next day brought the preacher at nightfall to an outstation on the Watercourse. Here were two families who had lived there eight years; had never seen a minister all that time; and were glad of the opportunity of getting their children baptized. A shakedown on the mud floor was all right, for a sense of being welcome, and a thoroughly tired body, were the best sleep inducers one could have. The following day the tour was resumed. A lonely ride of twenty-five miles brought the preacher to the head station of the Gwydir Pastoral Company. The hands from the out stations on the Narran and Culgoa were gathered there, to assist in the shearing, then drawing to a close. A good muster at service, an interesting talk with the managing proprietor, and a stretch on the bare boards of a wooden sofa on the open verandah. Thus the days went on. The life was almost unique, and the work was a case of 'Beside all waters sow.'

There were compensations and encouragements too. A good old soul, stone blind, who had not seen any thing or any one for forty years, living out at Millie, always greeted one with a hearty 'I'm glad to see you,' and the preacher's visits at least brought a ray of sunshine into her life. Many incidents rise up to remind one even at this distance that the witness and the work were far from being altogether in vain. And with all this there rises up the sense of personal indebtedness to the kind and ever-watchful providence of God. Traversing well-nigh trackless plains and pathless mountains; in a district where distances were measured by the hundreds of miles; amid surroundings that were new and unfamiliar, the retrospect awakens a grateful acknowledgement of the goodness and mercy of the Divine Father and Friend. Never once was I seriously 'bushed'; seldom even did I miss a meal; and on no occasion did I have to camp without a roof over my head. Many were the lessons one learned in such a life. There was little or no time to pursue consecutive study in book lore of any description. But human nature in varied turns and tempers was open to view at first hand, and the whole thing was as a school in which to learn the priceless lesson of a sturdy self-reliance.

VI

AMID THE ENVIRONING HILLS

AFTER the comparative isolation and exile of Narrabri, Murrurundi came as a welcome change. There was an air of homeliness and settledness about it that was a refreshing contrast to the newness and (shall I say) wildness of the great open interior. The town was picturesquely located. It lay in a valley embosomed among the hills and the mountains, buttressed by the Liverpool Range and guarded by the sentinel-like peak of Mount Murulla. The River Page meandered lazily and musically through the valley, except when great rains broke upon the Range, and raised the little stream into a turbulent roaring torrent. Naturally fond of good scenery, the views in some parts of this circuit were a source of continual joy to me; and with the religious and social life that then obtained in it my cup of content was well-nigh full.

Methodistically, Murrurundi was considered a good circuit for a probationer. A neat little church stood in the centre of the township. The congregations were scanty in the morning, but crowded as a rule at night. Forty miles to the south lay Muswellbrook, formerly belonging to the Singleton Circuit, but attached that year to Murrurundi. Here there was a stone church, neither large nor elegant, and a small congregation. Between these two townships lay Scone, where service was held in the Presbyterian church, at that time otherwise unused. To the east of Scone was a preaching-place called Bellevue, on the Upper Hunter River. North of Murrurundi services were held at Quirindi, Wallabadah, and Braefield. Of these Wallabadah was the most important. Not infrequently, a congregation of nearly sixty persons would gather together; and a neat little church sprung up, mainly as the result of my predecessor's labours, and was entirely paid for within a short time of its completion.

The only other preaching-place in the circuit was Boxtree, twelve miles east of Murrurundi, with an occasional visit to the Hulfe Gottes silver and lead mine (since abandoned), and to Kyuga, near Muswellbrook, where the Primitive Methodists had a small cause. With dimensions like these, and duties corresponding thereto, there was enough to do to overtake the work of the circuit; and on the Sunday especially, one had to be on the alert to cover the ground between the preaching-places and fulfil the distant appointments, without which it was impossible to keep the work going. But with a gay and spirited charger under him the appointments were regularly kept by the preacher, and the round of places on the Plan was methodically performed every three weeks.

Murrurundi was not without its Methodist annals. It had been missioned in the early days by Mr. W. Currey, one of the 'home missionaries' of the Upper Hunter District. The Rev. W. Hessel had preached in the Court-house on a visit en route to Armidale in the pioneering days. The Rev. W. T. Mayne had visited it as part of his extensive charge when stationed in New England; and other ministers conducted occasional services, the memory of which had become part of the Methodist history of the place. There, too, the Rev. Jabez Watkin laboured for a few months before going as a missionary to Tonga; and the people cherished kindly memories of the Rev. J. S. Austin, K. A. Corner, W. D. Meiklejohn, and Joseph Monahan, my predecessors in the appointment.

Nor was the church without its characters. Peace to their ashes, for they have nearly all gone. The circuit steward—there was but one during my time—was occasionally impulsive and sharp-spoken; but generous, kindly, and intensely loyal to everything that made for the welfare of the Church and the town; with a wife who was, if anything, the better man of the two, and 'a succourer of many and of myself also.' Then there was old John H———; a village Methodist from England, with a hat that to the moderns seemed a year-oner—a man who never thought the Sunday complete unless there was a prayer-meeting at the close of the evening service, with an opportunity for himself to 'engage.' Harry Thompson, too, who 'vas one of de fust to attend

de chapil' ; and, German though he was, stuck to it as the rheumatism stuck to his wife, until in both cases death brought its relief and promotion. Miss B——— was surely another whom to know was never to forget. Brought up in Scotland, and familiar with the scenes of the great revival of '58, and full of reminiscences of Dr. Macdonald, of Ferintosh, ' the Apostle of the North,' with a wonderful gift in prayer, and an intense passion for souls—a few like her would make the fortune of any Church. Do I not possess, even now, a Bible as her gift, with this inscription : ' Preach Christ, live Christ, and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.' Nor can I forbear mentioning another Scotchwoman—a sturdy Highlander of over fourscore. She spoke Gaelic principally, but knew enough of English to enjoy a sermon in that tongue. And she did enjoy it ! Her home was four miles away from Bellevue. Two rivers and a mountain range intervened between her humble cot and the preaching-place. The rivers had to be forded with bare feet, and the mountain traversed on foot. But regularly as the service was held, the old lady was in her place—an example, and surely a reproof to the effeminates of to-day, who find a ten minutes' walk too much to the House of God.

Mingled with the memory of happy services and of pastoral visits that were a mutual joy, there come other recollections. Here there happened that temptation to which most young preachers in those days were subject, to seek a larger and more lucrative field in the ministry of another Church. But a few cases of conversion to God happening in the circuit just then determined that matter, and made my resolve a life-long one to abide in that sphere wherein I had been called. Once or twice, too, foolhardy attempts to cross a swollen stream and consequent narrow escapes from drowning, gave me a respect for flooded rivers that I have not got over. All the rivers run into the sea ; but that is no reason why they should bear with them to that restless bourne the body or the life of a preacher, who, by learning to wait a few hours or days, can get over them in safety, and then keep on going to his appointments all the allotted days of his life. The advent of the railway to the lower part of the circuit

(Muswellbrook) and its rapid extension in the direction of Murrurundi, caused an improvement in the population and in the conditions of things generally ; and after two years of harmonious and not unfruitful service, I was happy to think the circuit was not unprepared for the distinction and joy that then awaited it, of welcoming in my successor a brother, who, like the other Apostles, had power to lead about a wife. Murrurundi was to become a married man's circuit.

VII

HOW A CHURCH WAS BUILT

'For the people had a mind to work.'—NEHEMIAH.

THE next turn of the Methodist wheel landed the scribe at Tamworth—then a fairly prosperous town of about 1,500 inhabitants. Situated on the Peel River, in the midst of a rich agricultural and pastoral district, with gold-mining centres not far away, and lying at the foot of the hills which form the southern ramparts of the New England tableland, Tamworth certainly held then (as it holds now) the pride of place amongst the towns of mid-northern New South Wales.

Strange as it may seem, Tamworth enjoyed its first direct ministerial supervision from the distant Narrabri and Wee Waa Circuit. By direction of the Conference of 1867, the Rev. K. A. Corner visited it every six weeks; and to this day Mr. Corner is held in affectionate regard by those who remember the early days of Tamworth Methodism. Some earnest and loyal Methodists had recently migrated thither from Maitland and other places; and as the result of the joint labours of minister and people a good congregation had been gathered, a flourishing Sunday-school established, and a Society Class formed. These constituted an excellent nucleus, and under the energetic and capable ministry of Rev. J. Hopkins (appointed to Tamworth in 1868) the circuit became efficiently organized, and Methodist ministrations were established at places as far remote as Barraba on the west, Bendemeer on the north, Nundle on the east, and Somerton and Carrol to the south. The circuit, it will thus be seen, was almost of the proportions of a diocese; but wide as it was, my predecessor travelled it with a regularity and diligence that was difficult to imitate and impossible to surpass.

The story of the building of the church is not without interest or instruction. Ever since the establishment of regular services in Tamworth, the Mechanics' Institute had done duty as a place of meeting, up to the time of my appointment in 1871. A movement for the erection of a church had been initiated a year or two previous to that date; but interest had flagged and the matter was in abeyance. However, the needed fillip was supplied in the action of the Committee of the Mechanics' Institute in raising the rent for the use of the hall; and everyone concerned set to work with renewed energy to carry the movement for church erection to a successful issue. We were in possession of an admirable site, a grant from the Crown, and the building committee was as capable and efficient a body for the purpose as it has ever been my lot to be associated with. Of that committee, one subsequently became parliamentary member for the district, another Mayor of the borough; a third attained a leading position among the legal practitioners of the colony; and a fourth was subsequently for many years a tower of strength to the Methodist interests of Armidale and New England generally. How diligently we canvassed the town and district for subscriptions to the building fund; what excellent concerts our capable choirmaster organized in its behalf; and how great our joy when at last we were able to accept a tender and definitely commence the project! The Revs. Benjamin Chapman and George Hurst, the former Chairmen of the District, had given the project their patronage and benediction; and the foundation-stone was laid by the Rev. W. J. K. Piddington, then Chairman of the Maitland District (which included the whole of the North), and subsequently Anglican Archdeacon of Tamworth and its archdeaconry. How well I remember that drive to Murrurundi to meet the Chairman! With what fear and trembling I contemplated the responsibility of having to entertain that important and dignified functionary. But no sooner was the great man met with, than one felt quite at ease. His genial manner, his brotherly spirit, and his overflowing humour, made his company an unqualified delight. What a glorious drive that was from Murrurundi to Tamworth! The Chairman was a splendid whip. The ponies (a pair

of them) were in excellent fettle; and by six o'clock in the evening the sixty miles had been safely negotiated; and everything bade fair for the ceremony the Chairman had come to figure in. What a treat it was, also, on the Sunday to listen to one, who in his prime, and at his best, was a prince of preachers; and his address at the laying of the foundation stone was an ably-conceived and chastely-expressed exposition of the doctrines and polity of the church the speaker was so soon to leave for another. So built we the church; and the walls were joined together, and the roof was being put on when my brief term of service in the circuit came to an end.

Forty miles east of Tamworth were the Peel River gold diggings. But, as a miner put it to me, there was a good deal more muck-raking than gold-digging. On the whole the field was a poor one. The circuit work involved a monthly trip to these diggings, the round being as follows: Thursday evening, service at Dungowan Creek; Friday, visit en route during the day and service on Mount Misery in the evening; Saturday, visit, and rest at Foley's Folly at night; Sunday, morning service at Hanging Rock; afternoon at Nundle; evening at Bowling Alley Point—returning on Monday to Tamworth. There was one peculiarity about all these services—the singing was exceptionally good. An enthusiast of the Tonic Sol-fa notation had established singing-classes at every little centre on the diggings, and had diffused quite a love for vocalism amongst almost all classes and ages. Moreover, amongst the diggers up about Hanging Rock were a number of Cornishmen with good voices, and these were noted all round the neighbourhood for their hymn-singing proclivities and abilities. In fact, the profane used to say that these fellows would make the taproom of the bush shanty resound with their favourite tune of 'Noyes,' sung to the solemn words, 'And am I born to die.' That I can neither affirm nor contradict; but I know that Tre, Pol, and Pen were always glad to see the minister, to share their best with him, and make his visit as interesting, musically, as it lay in their power to do. The life of the miner is a precarious, and in the main a poverty-stricken one. Taking them for all in all, the diggers up there were as poor a lot of people as I have

ever been amongst. But there was always the hope of something 'turning up,' and when once a man got the yellow fever it was hard to get it out of his blood or brain, or wherever it is it sets itself up in the system.

For the rest, the work of the circuit was without any specially noteworthy features or incidents. The district was in many respects in a formative stage. The selectors had not been long on their lands, and the work of fencing and clearing was absorbing a large proportion of the time and means of the rural population. The soil was undeniably good, and the contest to get hold of it, as between the squatter and selector, was keen always, and sometimes unscrupulous. The growth of the district since that date has justified the anticipations of fifty years ago; and when the gigantic monopoly which blocks progress on the Western bank of the Peel River has been dealt with, and the rich lands of the Peel River company are fully thrown open, the town and district will make yet more marvellous strides and become one of the greatest and richest of the inland settlements of Australia.

VIII

'A LAND OF BROOKS OF WATER'

'The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways.'
WHITTIER.

A SPECIAL value attaches now-a-days to the work of the old masters. Apart from the intrinsic value of those works, they are esteemed for their antiquity and for the fixity and depth of their colourings. Age has had something to do in producing the latter quality. Moreover, the old masters were wise enough not to hand down to posterity their merely fugitive work—the sketches and experiments of what might be called their practising days. Thus it is with the mind as it reviews life. The pictures left upon the memory are mainly those in which there is some depth and richness of colouring—some features that evoke pleasure in the recollection. The faults of diaries generally are that they are too minute in detail, and too introspective in their character. It is a merciful provision of the God of our life that the petty worries and passing trials which form so large a portion of almost daily experience are soon forgotten, and the mind looks back as through a telescope in which only the larger and fairer features of the scenery stand out to admiring and grateful recollection. Those early years of ministry were not without their difficulties and vexations; but at this distance these have receded into the dim and almost forgotten Past.

In some respects the description of the Land of Palestine applies to the next circuit to which the writer was appointed by the Conference. 'Dungog and Stroud' has never taken front rank as a circuit; and yet it is a beautiful and a fertile district: 'a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; . . . a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without

scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it.' Of an old-time circuit it was said that the sustenance of the preacher therein consisted of 'pumpkins and the affections of the people.' Whatever else may be lacking, provisions for the larder ought always to be plentiful in a district watered by so many brooks and rivers as those that beautify and enrich the Dungog and Stroud circuit. Hemmed in by hills and mountains, abounding in fruitful river flats, with appointments involving long and arduous rides, amid scenery that in various forms was ever pleasing to the eye, the circuit was one to interest a young man just free from the grind of probation exams., and with an awakening sense of what has since been described by a leading writer of the day as the 'historic imagination.'

For in entering upon the Dungog and Stroud circuit, one felt that he was treading on historic ground. The pioneers of Methodism in the Hunter River district had very early penetrated to the corn flats and cedar groves of the Williams River. Dungog was one of the first of the distant preaching-places to be established beyond Maitland. On an old 'Plan' of the 'Hunter River Circuit' for 1847, Dungog and Molconda appear as having fortnightly appointments, supplied mainly by Mr. T. Patterson, an 'assistant missionary' then located on the Allyn River. A few years later a resident minister was appointed; and in my time some of the older folk recounted with pride the fact that their first minister was the Rev. William Clarke, and that Dungog was the first colonial home of that zealous little Welshman on his arrival in Australia. Tradition had it that the plain little brick chapel was built in that year of floods, 1857. The same building is doing duty as a schoolroom to-day. In this circuit, too, occurred the Rev. R. W. Vanderkiste's experience which led to the writing of his book, *Lost, but not for ever*. Crossing from the Williams to the Allyn River, darkness set in while he was yet on the mountain range. Heavy rains came on, and the inexperienced bushman lost his head as well as his way, and was bushed on those cheerless tops, amid pitiless, pouring rains, for four days and nights. The consequence of this was the permanent impairment of that good man's health. Who was it that was responsible for changing the form of his

name in some quarters from Vanderkiste to Kister-wankie?

A range of hills definitely separates the two parts of the circuit. Dungog is on the Williams River; and on that side the preaching-places in my time were Bandon Grove, Underbank, Chichester River, Upper and Lower Bendolba, and occasionally Thalaba. At Bandon Grove and Underbank there were Union churches and good congregations. At the other places the services were held on week-nights, mostly in private houses or in school-rooms, and were usually well attended. On the Stroud side the principal services were at Telegaree and Stroud, with visits to, and services at, Monkerai and Booral. The best Methodist interest of the circuit was at Telegaree. The Sunday morning service was well attended; there was a good class held immediately after; and week-night prayer-meetings were regularly conducted in the house of Mr. D. Bishop. In Stroud we had a neat weatherboard church free of debt. A harmonium was put into it in my time, and on each alternate Sunday evening the little sanctuary was well filled with an attentive and interested congregation. Once a month also there was a trip to the Myall River, distant about twenty-five miles—a trip which occasionally extended to the Myall Lakes, a few miles further on; and once a quarter or thereabouts a sort of home missionary tour was taken to the Barrington River and the adjoining stations of Berrico, Kerripit, and Rawson Vale. The Barrington community was almost entirely Scotch. They adhered to the Free Kirk, and the elder folk spoke Gaelic almost exclusively. Occasionally a Free Kirk minister from the Manning visited them; but they declined to have anything to do with the minister of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. But as I was not a Presbyterian of any kind they cordially received me, attended the services, and contributed to the 'steepend' fund in their own approved way, by a quarterly subscription. What a glorious ride that was on the return journey from the Barrington, via Berrico, over the mountains to the Monkerai, and thence by way of the Big Hill to Dungog.

Some of the friendships of those Dungog days have never been forgotten. The names of Wade, Piper, Bishop, and Gorton, will hold an honourable place whenever the

history of Methodism in those parts comes to be written. True, leal-hearted friends and helpers they were, if ever a cause possessed any. Was there not also John Smith, whose modesty prevented him from ever becoming anything more than an exhorter, but whose good sense and sincerity delivered him from being at any time an 'exhauster?' James Cornish, too, ever ready to take appointments in any part of the circuit; Daniel Ratley, zealous above most, and more proud of his musical than of his rhetorical abilities; William McIntyre and his good wife, Methodists to the backbone, although only of the first generation; and good Mrs. Bishop of Telegaree, whose hospitality and heartiness made every preacher in turn feel quite at home on the first visit, and on every succeeding visit, to the last. But for another and even more important reason, Dungog shall never be forgotten. 'He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.' And when that wife proved to be one of the best and choicest and most beloved that ever graced the parsonages of succeeding circuits, one has special reason to cherish kindly and grateful memories of the place that yielded her.

For the rest, the reminiscences of Dungog are of quiet hours spent in that cosy nook known as Crow's Nest, on the hill overlooking the town, drinking in inspiration from the books by which I was surrounded, and which I tried diligently to master. Henry Ward Beecher was a source of perpetual joy, and his sermons and other writings exercised little short of a fascination over me. F. W. Robertson was also frequently with me; and Macaulay and I spent many and many a pleasant hour together. Did I not also attempt lecturing, and produced prelections on 'The Triumphs of Perseverance,' and 'The Life and its Lessons of John B. Gough,' the delivery of which gathered good audiences and helped the Circuit Fund? Duties as a citizen also began to dawn on one. A School of Arts was formed in Dungog, in the establishment of which this scribe took a prominent part, and of which he was elected first President. What great tea-meetings they were in those days, at Dungog on the one side of the circuit, and at Telegaree and Stroud on the other; and of that send-off at the end of the term I may not write,

to the accompaniment of addresses, presentations, and no less than three purses of sovereigns! Was it any wonder that the people of the next place I went to concluded, from the manner of my talking about it, that Dungog must be one of the most important places upon the face of the earth!

IX

MY FIRST CONFERENCE

THE Australasian Conference of 1873 was a very important occasion. Of course it was! Amongst other distinguishing features, it was my first Conference. Some one relates that a juvenile class was recently being examined upon the wonderful events of the nineteenth century, and on being asked at the conclusion of the address if they could tell any of the wonderful things that had happened during the century, one little girl held up her hand. 'Yes,' she replied, 'us have happened.' The century would not have been much to those young folk if they had not been in it, and to them, and for them, at any rate, the most wonderful thing was their 'happening' in connexion with it. The Methodist preacher is not worth much to whom his first District Meeting and first Conference are not life-long memories. But that Conference was noteworthy in itself. It was the last of the old order of Australasian Conferences; it was the first at which the question of lay representation was seriously considered, with a view to giving effect to the proposal; and it was the Conference at which the plan of Annual and General Conferences was formally and finally adopted. It marked the close, then, of what might be called the intermediate period of Australasian Methodist history.

These sketches are not written from the point of view of the historian. Any one who essays to do that must bring to bear a faculty which does not necessarily come into play in papers that are purely reminiscent. He must carefully collect all facts, place them in their proper relation to the past and the future, ascertain the spirit pervading them, and observe in his setting forth the laws of perspective and proportion. But mine just now is a simpler task. How did that Conference affect me, and what are my recollections of it?

The Conference of 1873 was held in old York Street church. It was attended by about one hundred ministers,

nearly half of whom had gathered from New South Wales. The rest had come from Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and New Zealand, with representatives from Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. The Rev. Thomas Williams, of Victoria, was the President, the Rev. John Cope the Secretary, and the Rev. Benjamin Chapman the ex-President. The platform presented an array of men who had graced the chair in preceding years. John Eggleston was there, with his closely-knit brow and his penetrating eyes, indicative of the clear strong brain that lurked behind; Thomas Buddle and James Buller, fathers and founders of Methodism in New Zealand, which began to claim even then to be the Great Britain of the South; John Watsford, ruddy of countenance, ready in debate, and full of unction whenever he spoke on subjects bearing on the spiritual interests of the Church; George Hurst, well informed and emphatic, regarded as an authority on constitutional questions, and conservative of what he held to be the vital principles of Methodism; William A. Quick, quiet, dignified, learned, always listened to with great respect; James Bickford, a master in pastoral theology and in pastoral visitation; and others who have now gone over to the great majority. The leaders on the floor of the Conference were such men as Samuel Wilkinson, Joseph H. Fletcher, Joseph Oram, J. B. Waterhouse, William Kelynack, George Woolnough, George Daniel, Joseph Dare, and W. J. K. Piddington. Young men in those days had not much to say; but Shirley W. Baker, of Tonga, could not be suppressed. He was frequently in evidence, and came off finally with a vote of thanks for the work going on in the Friendly Islands.

The President's official sermon, and the charge of the Rev. W. B. Boyce at the Ordination Service, were deliverances not soon to be forgotten. The President was a man of literary tastes and pretensions. He had written a book on *Fiji and the Fijians*, in collaboration with the Rev. J. Calvert, and as he rightly regarded the occasion of the last of the Australasian Conferences as an historic one, he had specially prepared for the official service. His text was: 'What hath God wrought!' He surveyed the past of Australasian Methodism, descanted upon its present position, and looked out upon the future with the eye of

a prophet and a seer. I do not know if that sermon is in print; but it ought to be somewhere, for future use.

The Ordination Service also had its remarkable features. It was held in Wesley Church, Chippendale, Candidates for ordination were seven in number. They represented men of various years, as ordinations were not held annually in the several colonies at that time. Here is the list: John S. Austin, Robert Johnston, John A. Waddell, James E. Carruthers, James G. Middleton, Robert Allen, and Frederick W. Ward. The service was, as usual, conducted by the President, and the charge should have been delivered by the ex-President, the Rev. B. Chapman. But the Rev. W. B. Boyce was on a visit to Sydney from England, and the ex-President had secured him as a substitute in his especial duty. A feature of the service was the noise to the accompaniment of which it went on. Engines were shrieking and trains were shunting in the railway yard at the rear of the church all the time, and Father Boyce looked unutterable things as every now and again a particularly fiendish shriek would go up from some engine not more than forty or fifty yards off. But the Charge in itself! It was *sui generis*. Never before or since has there been an Ordination Address like it. The ex-President had a particularly good time, and called aloud, 'Hear, hear,' several times during its delivery. The audience laughed frequently, and at times seemed as if they would like to cheer outright. Racy, humorous, and sententious, some of the points stuck. 'Don't feed your people on cabbage,' was one of the thrusts; especially cabbage that was of the 'cauld kail het again' sort. 'Mind whom you marry,' again advised the preacher; 'don't marry a milliner's walking show-stick,' and more of the same sort all through. The pills were sugar-coated, but the intrinsic qualities were there all the same. No one was better qualified out of the abundance of his own experience and wisdom to counsel young preachers than the same venerated William Binnington Boyce.

At that Conference a splendid Missionary Meeting was held, and the Rev. Joseph Dare—the Chrysostom of Victoria—delivered an address which thrilled the audience by its magnetic fervour and sacred eloquence. The Missionary business was not transacted in the Conference

proper, but at a meeting of the General Missionary Committee held during the time of the Conference. There were some good debates in the Conference. There was the usual manoeuvring, or more, over stations. There were one or two laughable incidents. The President was in the act of pronouncing the Benediction. When halfway through he was interrupted by a brother who wanted 'a little matter' settled before adjourning. 'It's time, is it not?' queried the President. But the brother got his little matter through. 'Now, Sir,' put in a member of the Conference, 'Will you give us the rest of the Benediction?'

The Conference had its recreations. It was so in those days. Now-a-days our Annual Conferences are severely let alone in that respect. There was an 'At Home' at Toxteth, tendered by Sir Wigram and Lady Allen, a harbour excursion on the Saturday afternoon, and an all-day railway trip to the Lithgow Valley Zig Zag, specially to give intercolonial visitors an opportunity of seeing the wonders of our Blue Mountain railway line. That trip stands out in memory still, and, not least the glorious hymn-singing by the company in the crowded carriages, as the train was descending from the cool heights above to the hot and sultry plains that intervene between the mountains and Sydney.

The close of the Conference meant the close of the old order. Many who met then could scarcely expect to meet again. The colonies were to go their own several ways with their own Annual Conferences, and the General Conference was thereafter to be composed of a limited number of elected representatives only. Hence it was with more than ordinary significance and feeling that the verses of the closing hymn were sung:

Through Thee we now together came,
  In singleness of heart,
We met, O Jesus, in Thy Name,
  And in Thy Name we part.

Subsists as in us all one soul,
  No power can make us twain;
And mountains rise and oceans roll,
  To sever us in vain.

X

SOME EARLY DISTRICT MEETINGS

YES, they were District Meetings in those days, in more senses than one. The Maitland District comprised all the circuits in the North, and there was no moveability about the place of meeting. Maitland gave its name to the District, and Maitland annually enjoyed the privilege and honour of the gathering of the clergy from remote Tenterfield and far-off Narrabri; from the Clarence, Richmond, Macleay, and Manning Rivers, and from all the circuits between Newcastle and the Never-Never North and West. Going to District Meeting was quite an undertaking. It meant with some of the brethren fully a week's travelling—in some cases even more. Hardly any cleric amongst us in those days had attained to the dignity of a gig or a buggy. We did the journey on horseback, or performed it by coach at no slight expense; and so from the far-out circuits we travelled in by slow stages, with a preaching-service at a station or township at the end of each day's journey. 'As ye go, preach,' was an injunction literally obeyed; and thus hospitality was ensured and good was done.

Then the District Meeting itself! Now-a-days two days or two days and a half are quite sufficient to dispose of all the business. But in the times I am speaking of, the sessions lasted from Wednesday of one week till the Friday afternoon of the following week. Why it was so, it baffles me now to explain, but it remains a fact that it was so. There were no lay representatives—perhaps that accounts for it to some extent. Many a notable debate we had on the advisability of introducing laymen to District Meeting and Conference, and at this date I can remember the vigour and eloquence with which the elder brethren argued for and against that dreaded innovation. Certain it is, District Meetings in those days counted

for a great deal more than District Synods do now. The latter term sounds grander, but the old order had a glory that is not attained to by its modern equivalent. The Annual Conference has completely eclipsed the subordinate court. There is not the same sense of responsibility in connexion with the conduct of the business that used to obtain in the old District Meetings; and the annual gathering in Sydney has taken away the zest with which we used to enjoy the fraternal comradeship of those District reunions.

Well do I remember my first District Meeting. The journey to it was not free from adventure and excitement. The coach got bogged on Breeza Plain; the horse lent me by the driver knocked up in the deep black quagmire caused by a pouring rain; the creeks were running strong, and visions of all sorts of casualties floated before my mind. Arrived in Murrurundi, and retiring to rest in an hotel bedroom, the occupant of one of the two beds in the room hastily jumped up in an alarmed and menacing manner, and demanded to know who I was. In the morning he apologized and explained that he had been robbed on one occasion under similar circumstances, and usually slept with a revolver under his pillow. Comforting; but a lesson to be careful about entering hotel bedrooms after the usual retiring hours. Next afternoon a small party of us—the incumbent of Armidale and probationers from Murrurundi, Tamworth, and Narrabri—joined our forces and travelled on through the night by coach to Singleton. There the Rev. George Lane was in charge, who met us in the morning, billeted us out upon friends for the day, and paraded us at a grand Church Sustentation Meeting in the evening. Two hours' run by train next morning brought us to West Maitland and to the then great ecclesiastical event of the year.

A photo of that illustrious gathering lies before me as I write. The Rev. Benjamin Chapman sits with folded arms in the place of honour, as befits the Chairman of so important a District. Beside him is the Rev. J. A. Nolan, the Secretary, and on his left the Rev. George Martin, each nursing a tall hat, one of which is black and the other white. On the right of the Chairman are Father Davis and the Rev. Joseph Fillingham; and the back

row comprises an illustrious line of juniors, of whom two have since become Presidents of the General Conference, two Annual Conference Presidents, and two other Chairmen of Districts; one has adorned the position of Acting Premier of Queensland, another became Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly of that State, and a third attained high academical and parochial rank amongst the Anglican clergy of New South Wales. Amongst the functions of that District Meeting were a welcome tea-meeting, whereat the brother from the Richmond River told some stories that roused the good Chairman's ire; an official service, with sacrament, a young people's service, and sundry meetings for sundry purposes at East Maitland, Lochinvar, Largs, and other places. At Lochinvar a good local brother—one of the old Methodist identities—took part. Becoming quite impassioned as he proceeded in his own homely way to speak of the religious destitution of the interior, he exclaimed, 'Oh friends, if I only had the fire of these young men'; but my thought arrested him in my own mind at that point, for it seemed to me that the old veteran had more fire than all the young contingent put together.

Maitland Methodism was strong at that time in the possession of a substantial body of church trustees, a noble and earnest band of local preachers, some exemplary and devoted class-leaders, and a vigorous, influential, and spiritual membership. Its hospitable homes were also a joy to the young preachers at District Meeting time; and after the comparative exile of the interior, the warmth of the fraternal and social atmosphere of the occasion was simply delightful. For six years in succession I answered to my name at the roll call of the Maitland District. The Rev. B. Chapman was succeeded as chairman by the Rev. George Hurst; and the latter by the Rev. W. J. K. Piddington. Hence, we had variety. Of the Rev. G. Hurst the younger brethren rather stood in awe. One day he had been telling us at the District table of how in his early days he had mastered French in three months and some other languages in a comparatively short time. Whereupon an Irish brother, who had all the effrontery of his nationality, remarked: 'And there were giants in those days!' Two brethren stood for

examination for full connexion. One was cool and composed—none of these things moved him. The other was trembling like an aspen leaf, and his hair stood on end ' like quills upon the fretful porcupine.' The chairman could not understand why any probationer should be perturbed before him. ' They think you're very stern, sir,' explained his colleague. ' I can't understand,' said the chairman, ' why brethren should think that.' ' But it's true, sir,' declared the colleague, amid the laughter of the meeting. Examinations were not the fearful and wonderful things then that they are now. The proof of that is found in the fact that some of us scraped through and even got through with honour. How different it might be if we had to run the gauntlet of the curriculum of the present! The Rev. W. J. K. Piddington was, in my judgement, an ideal chairman. He was always dignified, and withal genial, fond of fun, and full of kindly pleasantry. He believed in encouraging the younger brethren to take part in the business. It may be that some learned to do so in these days who have become over fond of the exercise since then. Times have changed. District Meetings have become almost severely routine in their scope and spirit; but with all my belief in the principle of progressive adaptation, I confess that as I look back to the brotherly gatherings, the helpful services, and the hearty hospitality of the old-time ' Districts,' I am tempted to exclaim, ' The former times were better than these.'

XI

PIONEERING IN RIVERINA

FROM Dungog to Deniliquin is according to the law of alliteration; but a greater contrast can scarcely be conceived than that then existing between these two places as spheres of service for a young Methodist minister. The remove, too, was a lengthy and costly one. It involved in those days travelling by steamer from Sydney to Melbourne, thence by rail to Echuca, and a coach ride of forty or forty-five miles from Echuca to Deniliquin.

But, somehow, the fathers did not encourage me very much. One of them happened to meet me on board the steamer I was to sail in to Melbourne. ' Hello! ' said he, ' Where are you going? ' He, fortunate fellow, was presently to sail for England on a holiday trip. ' To Deniliquin,' I replied, in answer to his inquiry. ' Well,' rejoined he, shrugging his shoulders, ' I have heard that there is one hotter place in the universe, but it isn't on this side the grave! ' But it did not matter. To Deniliquin I was going. If I may anticipate in this connexion, I may say that eventually I found that Deniliquin could be very hot. Once or twice during my three years of residence, the thermometer got up to 118 deg. in the shade, and 110 deg. was a frequent reading. But on my first arrival in the district, the effect of the clear, balmy, exhilarating air was peculiarly refreshing and grateful. It was in the early autumn. The summer heats were over. The air was cool and crisp; it seemed to possess a quality of exceptional purity; and then, in that wide open country, there was so much of it! My lungs were sound, but they were all the better for being inflated with oxygen so pure; and I was not at all surprised to hear that Riverina was regarded by Melbourne practitioners as a sanatorium for weak-chested patients, and that many of these were sent up there to benefit by its dry pure winter climate.

Deniliquin was at that time the head centre of southern squatterdom. The *Pastoral Times* was published there—price one shilling per copy! Dr. Jones was its editor, and he was the journalistic champion of the squatting interest in that part of New South Wales. The town was the capital of a rich province. Those great plains stretching between the Murray and the Edwards, and between the Edwards and the Murrumbidgee, looked magnificent in the early springtime. Once they had been covered with the nutritious and hardy saltbush. But that had at last been eaten out, and rich fattening herbs and grasses had sprung up in its stead. Intermingled with these there was quite a wealth of native flowers; and in September and October the soil was richly carpeted with verdure, and the air was fragrant with the scents exhaled from Nature's beauties. The river banks were lightly timbered, and here and there were park-like clumps; but the task of clearing was very light in any part of the district. Stones and rocks were unknown. Squatters' boys used to bring their ammunition for 'cock shying' in boxes from Melbourne; and the Municipal Council of Deniliquin had to burn clay into clinker to provide road metal for forming the streets of the town. In a district so wide and so open, with soil of the best description, and handy of access to Melbourne and Bendigo, there were great possibilities. People had recently woke up to that fact. A rush for the land had set in; and a very keen contest was going on between squatters and selectors for possession of the soil. Dummying was in full swing, and every artifice that ingenuity could devise, or money could support, was resorted to on one side or the other to gain a title to the broad acres. It was earth-hunger in the most acute form I had ever witnessed.

Up to the date of my arrival, Methodist ministrations had been confined almost exclusively to the town. In Deniliquin we possessed a neat brick church, capable of holding about 200 or 220 people. The town was important even beyond its size. Its population was probably 1,500, and increasing. A vigorous little Methodist Society had been formed a few years previously, by earnest people, who both prayed and paid. They had built their tabernacle and paid their way; and heretofore their ministers had given all their time and attention to them. My predecessors were the Revs. Charles Jones and Henry Youngman, and they had created quite a reputation for the Methodist pulpit of the town. And those, too, were the days of opportunity for Methodism in Deniliquin. There was no resident Presbyterian minister. The Anglican Church was closed a Sunday and a half in the month; and on those occasions the service in our 'Wesley Church' was the only one in the town. Splendid congregations occasionally gathered. Among the attendants were some who subsequently attained to high positions in the Commonwealth of Australia.

But the district around—was that to be neglected? The Anglican clergyman was a prodigious worker. With his pair of horses he was incessantly travelling, and he practically claimed the incumbency of every station and selection in the country side. To adventure into the field was an experiment. But it was worth trying. Some of the newly arrived selectors from Victoria were known to be Methodists, and there was reason to believe that the squatters would at least accord kindly hospitality. Hence an outfit was procured, and within a month or two of landing in Deniliquin I found myself again in the saddle, and doing duty as a circuit rider. The early trips to Moroco, later on to Tuppal and Tocumwal, and then to Wanganella, Caroonboon, and Bundyulumblah, were sufficiently encouraging to continue; and during the remainder of my three years, there was scarcely a station in the district I did not visit more or less frequently—from Boomanoomana in one direction to Barratta and Cobram in another, and from Mathoura in the south to Warwillah in the north. The selectors were also visited; and regular services were held at centres where three or four families could be gathered together. The experience thus gained was broadening to one's vision of things. The tone of thought prevailing was free. Men declined to be fettered by any old-world views. Intellectually, the squatters of Riverina were a superior class of men. Their wives were ladies who moved in the best circles in Melbourne. Visitors to the stations included leading professional and commercial magnates. The *Argus* and

the *Australasian* were to be found in almost every homestead. The selectors affected the *Age* and the *Leader*. The great work which at the time was supposed to have given Christianity its *quietus*, *Supernatural Religion*, was just published, and was freely and approvingly discussed. Darwin's theories were familiarly talked about, and the hero of the district for some time was an Anglican clergyman, who had been inhibited from preaching on account of the 'free thought' character of the views held and taught by him. In the midst of such surroundings one had to examine his foundations, and no training could be better to teach a man to make his ministry, as far as possible, clear, fresh, and up-to-date.

There were some picturesque incidents, too, in connexion with those three years of 'pastoral' life and work. The shearing-shed services were altogether of a higher type than those described in connexion with the Narrabri and Wee Waa days. Not infrequently they were conducted in the presence of the squatter and his family; sometimes to the accompaniment of a harmonium, and at Cobram, assisted by the station brass band. Lectures too, were highly appreciated; and at several places during the shearing, hearty votes of thanks were accorded my prelections on 'Earnest Toilers and their Triumphs,' and 'The Land we Live in.' Amusing tales might also be told of tramps and their tricks—how they professed to be looking for work, and quickly disappeared when it was found for them. Did not one of them, on one occasion, plead with me for assistance on the ground of 'common nationality' and 'common Christianity'; and did not I see that same 'brother' in the dock a week or two later answering to a serious charge of burglary and arson? If all the truth must be told, too, did I not lay myself open to the charge of becoming a hunting parson? Was it not glorious occasionally to go out to those plains and give chase to a mob of kangaroos; and perchance to single out an 'old man' one and run him down until the said 'old man' would turn round, sit up on his hind legs, and bid you defiantly to come on; in which case he was allowed respectfully to go in peace.

Thus the first full term—three years—of ministerial service was filled up; a three years of important personal

events, for there can be no events of a personal character more important than marriage and parenthood; and a term full of lessons and suggestions for the years of after service in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Riverina of to-day differs in many respects very widely from the Riverina of the seventies of last century. It is of that old-time period I have written as above.

XII

A GRACIOUS REVIVAL, AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT

'Remembrance is a . . . Paradise from which we cannot be driven.'

CHURCH debts have often been responsible for exercising a deadening influence upon the spiritual life of the congregation. It is my pleasure in this chapter to tell how the contrary effect was produced. Not that I would recommend any Church to contract a big debt with the expectation of finding it ultimately work out as a means of grace. Because it did so in one case, and possibly has done so in others, debt is not to be regarded in itself as a desirable thing. Charles Lamb tells how the Chinese discovered the virtue of roast pork by a building being burnt down in which a porker was confined, and the Chinese for some time thought it was necessary to make a votive offering of both pig and palace to obtain the toothsome result; that, as we know, was an unnecessarily expensive process, and not always to be relied upon. Neither can we calculate that great debts will at any time work out as anything other than great difficulties.

Arriving in Wagga Wagga in 1877, I found there a beautiful new church, completing a block of property in the centre of the town that any church might be proud of. A church of a handsome design, a fairly commodious school hall (the old church), and the parsonage—the whole carrying a debt the dimensions of which I confess alarmed me. The issue proved that the enterprise of my predecessor and the people was all right. But on the face of it there was nothing but difficulty writ large, and the way out was certainly not apparent at the time.

Wagga Wagga Methodism dated from 1864, and at the time to which my story relates could point to a fairly prosperous past. The Rev. F. T. Brentnall was the first minister, and under his capable pastorate the first church

was built. He was succeeded by the Rev. Richard Sellors in 1866; and there was scarcely a portion of that extensive district that had not been traversed by that energetic young man, with his pair of splendid goers 'Gladstone' and 'Richmond.' Then in succession had followed the Revs. Henry Wiles and Kirton A. Corner—the latter as the first married minister. A parsonage was built during his term. Then came the Rev. Charles Stead, fresh from his triumphs in Adelong and Gunning, where he had been instrumental in raising new churches, and intent on accomplishing the same service at Wagga Wagga. His monument was there all right in the fine new church which stood at the corner of Fitzmaurice and Tarcutta Streets. The opening services had just been held, and my predecessor departed in a well-earned burst of glory.

But woe was me! The people had invited (or had written to) the silver-tongued William Kelynack—he was not D.D. then;—they thought their circuit and church good enough for the prime orator of Australasia. What a falling off there was between their anticipations and their realizations in that regard! Then, coincidently with my arrival a Presbyterian divine appeared on the scene whose popularity was phenomenal, even if it proved to be ephemeral. Fully a third part of the congregation fell off to him, including some excellent and substantial Presbyterians who had worshipped with us up to the date of his arrival. There was not only a trust debt, but there was a circuit debt; and discouragement magnified the whole thing to me a hundred fold. 'So foolish was I and ignorant.' There were good assets, and up to that point the congregation had done nobly. But the Conference had absolutely declined to give permission to sell any of the valuable land adjacent to the church, and an influential and emphatic member of that body had announced his determination to prevent any relief being obtained in that direction. 'Never a foot of it' should be sold, if he could prevent it. Hence an added difficulty. People who had promised subscriptions refused to pay them, and others buttoned up their pockets and said 'Sell your land.' We were something like the Israelites encamped before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon. But it turned out that

like them also we were to see the salvation of the Lord.

When difficulty of any sort drives us in to God, it is a blessing in disguise. And that was to me personally the effect of the situation I was confronted with. The thought of that difficulty was ever present. It became a sort of incubus. It came between me and my soul's peace, and threatened not only to darken my own mind but to paralyse my usefulness both in the pulpit and out of it. Then the burden of the spiritual interests of the church began to oppress me heavily. Relief must be obtained, or the tension would become unbearable. The burden was taken into the closet, and that secret place was not left until in definite surrender and faith there was the renewal of consecration and the casting of the burden at the Master's feet. With that, there came not only relief, there came a sense of peace and power. Experience was lifted to a higher plane. There was a more definite note in the preaching, and the ministry, both of word and life, took on added qualities of Christian confidence and courage. A series of special services was arranged for. The result of the first week was sufficiently encouraging to warrant a continuance for a second. Help in carrying out these services arrived opportunely and providentially in the person of a local preacher from Victoria, of an intensely evangelistic spirit. During that week a remarkable break-down occurred amongst the members of the Church. The Spirit's winnowing-fan was in operation, and hearts were powerfully searched. One particular meeting of that week lives in memory still. Strong men wept; and class-leaders and local preachers in tremulous tones told of how they had been living at ease, and making an idol of means only, devoid of the real power of God in their souls. The services of the following Sunday were of a character to lead old residents of Wagga to say, 'We never saw it on this fashion!' An early-morning prayer-meeting was pervaded as with the air of the mountain top. Great grace was upon that meeting. But the afternoon and the evening services! In the afternoon a large open-air service was held on the Wharf Reserve, attended by several hundreds of people. At Brucedale, that afternoon also, there were several conversions; and at night after an evangelistic service in

the crowded church at Wagga, the communion rail was filled with seekers. Thus the work went on for four weeks, and the last meeting was one of the best of the series, and was characterized by four conversions. The week-night open-air services on the river bank were remarkable for the motley character of the audience, and for the respect and decorum with which they listened to the message. Six public-houses were within earshot of the stand around which we assembled, and at the first sound of the singing the bar loungers would pour out to hear what the 'Ranters' had to say. In those days we had a good choir in Wagga. I have seldom had to do with a better. The choir had caught the flame, and nearly every member would be present at the open-air service, helping to sing the rousing revival melodies with which we interspersed the proceedings, and attracted the crowd even into the church itself. Fifty converts were gathered in as the result of that effort. We followed no plan; we had none at the beginning. We were simply led on step by step, and as at the conclusion we contemplated the result we could only say, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!'

And the debt? Well, that disappeared. The ensuing Conference softened its tone and gave permission to sell a portion of the land. Legal difficulties cropped up, but in time they were adjusted, and eventually the anxious bank manager was satisfied with the full amount of overdraft due to him. The people themselves paid off the circuit debt and all other obligations; and minister, stewards, trustees, and people were happy; for 'Jehovah had triumphed, His people were free.' And amongst those people, there were some choice ones. I may not particularize beyond saying that in William Riley—circuit steward, local preacher, and trustee—Wagga possessed one of the finest characters I have ever known. Deeply read in theological and general literature, with an insight into the written Word, the result of close and prayerful study, a Methodist of the Methodists, respected throughout the whole circuit, and revered by those who knew him best, it is a mournful pleasure to pay this brief tribute to one to whom Wagga Methodism owes more than mural monument can ever set forth or words repay.

XIII

BEGA THE BEAUTIFUL

'What knolls and lawns!
What lovely spurs and gentle slopes abound,
All circled o'er the river bend—a site too proud for village green:
Refinement marks the landscape: thou art an ideal conception found
That waits the artist brush, to make thy praise resound.'

It was in the year 1879 that, from the comparatively torrid climate of Riverina, I was transferred to the salubrious and beautiful coastal district of Bega. Having had occasion to consult an eminent Sydney doctor before going there, he congratulated me on my appointment to what he designated the finest climate in New South Wales—tempered by the sea breezes from the east and by the cool winds from the Monaro tableland on the west. Concerning the sea trip from Sydney by the slow flat-bottomed steamers that then did duty on that line, little need be said. In due time Tathra was reached, and a family of five (all told) awaited the arrival of the circuit stewards, with their buggies, from Bega, to convey us to our new home. Let the names of those good men—as full of kindness and consideration for their minister as two warm-hearted Irish Methodists could possibly be—be recorded with gratitude by one of a succession of ministers who enjoyed their good offices in the Bega Circuit. Mr. William Ramsey and Mr. William Irwin were 'rare' men, as a Brogo brother described them; loyal-hearted liberal men, who loved their ministers and their Church, and counted no service too great that they could render on behalf of either one or the other.

The drive to Bega, and the entrance to it, will not soon be forgotten. A local bard has sung the praise of the place in the lines at the top of this sketch. The name

Bega is said to be an ancient aboriginal name, signifying beautiful. A recent writer has testified that by whatever route you enter Bega, whether by Tantawanglo, Bembooka, Big Jack Mountain, Tanja, or even coming up from Tathra, a rich unfolding colour scheme of beauty awaits you; grassy meadows along the flowing river; green fields of lucerne; golden crops of ripe corn, with here and there the homestead and dairy farm with their avenues or clumps of dark green fir trees, offering grateful shade in summer, so that the sun may not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. Then, amid the trees you perceive the winding road converging towards the town; with its glinting roof tops bordered with soft tints of green, that mingle with the warm russet tones in the middle distance, which melt away in the background to the purple and azure of the everlasting Australian hills; where the forest stands like an altar screen against the canopy of heaven.

It was to the old parsonage in this picturesquely-set town that the stewards drove us, and where for the next three years we went in and out amid a homely, hospitable and appreciative people.

Methodism in Bega could not, at that time, boast either of an ancient lineage or of a strong position. It had practically been planted by the Rev. James Somerville, when in the Moruya Circuit. At the cost of long and tedious rides and much personal exertion, Mr. Somerville periodically visited Bega and one or two surrounding places, and established a society class. The settlement in the district of Mr. William Latimer and of the Ritchie, Ramsay, Irwin, Rogers, Whyman, and other leading Methodist families, encouraged the appointment of a resident minister. The Rev. Adin Parsons was the first to be so appointed, and he was followed in turn by the Revs. W. C. Hughes, M. Maddern, R. V. Danne, and J. A. Waddell. A stone church had been built in Bega, and a circuit had been formed, extending from Bega as a centre to Brogo, Cobargo, and Bermagui on the north; to Tanja and Nelson on the east; and to Wolumla, Candelo, Tantawanglo, and Numbugga on the south and west. There were fair congregations at most places, and a hospitable reception everywhere. But Methodism, as

such, was by no means strong. The Union Church element and spirit pervaded almost the whole district. Denominational attachments were loosely held. The only piece of property that belonged to Methodism was the small church in Bega. There were no local preachers. The Sunday morning class-meeting in Bega (after service) was the only opportunity of social religious fellowship of that sort in the circuit. Collections were tabooed in some of the Union Churches, and were not liberally responded to in others of them. But the people met their obligations in other ways, especially by quarterly subscriptions and an occasional tea-meeting.

The lapse of forty years has sufficed to erase many things from the tablets of memory. But some scenes and circumstances, as well as the services and characteristics of not a few of the people, still stand out in clear relief, and will ever continue to do so. The home in which we dwelt deserves a sentence or two. It was an old spread-about sort of cottage, built originally of slabs, and in stages, but now enveloped in a respectable suit of weather-board, and with a spacious verandah running the whole length of its extended front, and commanding a splendid view of the river flats, the rising hills, and the Monaro mountains in the background. Surrounding the cottage was an orchard of over three acres in extent, yielding an immense crop of apples and a fair supply of other kinds of fruit. Here, too, was a run for a horse or two and for a cow, and the parsonage larder was consequently always well supplied with milk and butter. An obliging friend sent the cow in from his own dairy herd, and when one cow went dry he took her away and replaced her with another good milker until her turn came to be turned out. Nor was this all. Seldom a week passed but there came, from some of the dairies round about, presents in kind—butter, cheese, bacon, or fruit, vegetables, or other table requisites—such as delighted the heart of the housewife and relieved the strain upon the family purse. These kindnesses cost little, but they meant much.

What rides they were over those hills and dales; what a gallop on Sundays to get from Cobargo after the morning service to Brogo for the afternoon, and from Brogo to Bega for the evening! Verily the circuit horse of such

days deserves a good place in the resurrection of beasts. Each Sunday brought its own tale of three or more services, with distances of twenty-six to thirty miles between the morning and the evening, with an afternoon service always intervening. The roads are good now; they were far from being so in those days. Brogo hill is now avoided by a picturesque deviation and a riverside route. Then the steep ascent had to be laboriously climbed, and the descent as carefully negotiated. But what interesting cottage services we had in those days on week-nights during the moon, at Double Creek, at Spring Vale, at Wandella, and at Bembooka! Sometimes there were not many more present than the 'two or three' of the promise, but there was always Another 'in the midst,' as He said He would be.

During the three years of happy toil in this picturesque circuit, the Bermagui diggings 'broke out,' and some thousands of people rushed to the Montreal field, as it came to be known. While the rush was on, the canvas city was visited and services held. But the gold was limited, and the crowd soon vanished. Pambula and Merimbula were also included in an occasional itinerary. Eden was visited twice and a service held, but whatever may be the case with the heavenly Paradise, the earthly Eden held no Methodists. Trips to the Tableland, to Pambula, and Cooma gave one an opportunity of viewing 'the landscape o'er' from the top of Tantawanglo and Brown Mountains, and of seeing below 'a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills,' a land 'of corn and wine and oil, favoured with God's peculiar smile, with every blessing blest.' Such was Bega the beautiful, as I remember it, and pleasant and grateful are my recollections of it even after the lapse of many years.

XIV

A NEW ENVIRONMENT

'Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.'

AFTER putting in some years at out-back pioneering work, succeeded by appointments in distant country circuits, it was with no small surprise that I received a telegram from the stewards of 'Sydney (St. Leonards),' asking if I would accept an invitation to take charge of that circuit at the ensuing Conference. To every young minister his first invitation to a city circuit is surely an event of his life. But the eagerness with which the welcome invitation was accepted was succeeded by a season of no little anxiety. To face a suburban congregation, and to administer affairs in a circuit in which Sydney business men held office and exerted influence, was a prospect sufficiently disconcerting to one who had hitherto been only a bush parson. But the die was cast. The invitation was confirmed by Conference appointment, and from the land of lowing kine and rural calm one was transferred to the precincts of the city and the thickening responsibilities of a rapidly-expanding suburban circuit. It was an experiment all round. How was it going to work out?

The St. Leonards Circuit of that day was fairly extensive, as metropolitan circuits are now arranged. Nevertheless, it was compactness itself compared with such appointments as I had previously had. St. Leonards (now North Sydney) was the head of the circuit, with an elegant but unfinished church at Walker Street; Willoughby, Gordon, Hornsby, and Pittwater were the other preaching-places, with a church in each. The 'Willoughby' of that period is now Chatswood South; 'Gordon, late Lane Cove' (so it appeared on the plan), is now Pymble; 'Hornsby' is now Normanhurst, or

Hornsby South; and 'Pittwater' is in the Manly Circuit, on Church Point, facing the southern arm of Broken Bay. The St. Leonards minister was the only Wesleyan minister on the north side of the harbour. His circuit covered the areas now included in North Sydney, Willoughby, Chatswood, Lindfield, Gordon and Hornsby circuits, with slices of the Manly and Dural circuits, and with jurisdiction over Mosman and Neutral Bay as well, although the latter places were almost non-existent so far as population was concerned. It was a circuit to tax one's physical energies, by reason of its distances, and to call forth whatever of initiative and executive ability he might possess, in view of the developmental possibilities of a rising district and a growing population. As evidence that the latter appeal was not made in vain, it may suffice to say that before the end of the three years the circuit had engaged a second minister; the churches at North Sydney, Willoughby, and Hornsby had been enlarged and renovated; a school hall had been erected at North Sydney; the debts on the parsonage and on Gordon Church had been considerably reduced; new sites had been acquired at Holterman Street, Parraween, Chatswood and Manly, and negotiations were in progress for obtaining land at Greenwich. Coincidently with all this, the contributions for home and foreign missions increased by nearly 100 per cent. A statement now before me shows that during the last of the three years the goodly sum of £1,524 18*s.* 4*d.* was raised for circuit, connexional and trust purposes for that year alone, and that for the whole three years the receipts from all sources, and for all purposes, totalled £5,513 12*s.* 2*d.* It was for everybody a strenuous time. But it was happy toil. The people had a mind to work, and they had a mind to give. One bazaar and flower show in North Sydney yielded £365 3*s.* 6*d.*, and anniversaries at Willoughby and Gordon generally were good for £80 or £100. And these results were obtained in the days when men had mostly to earn their money by the sweat of their brow, and not by realizing largely on the growth of values in suburban areas.

But there are other and more precious memories connected with the triennium. The pioneer of Methodism in the North Sydney district—inclusive of the great stretch

then known as Lane Cove—was the foremost layman in the circuit. When the history comes to be written, there is no name that will occupy so high or so honourable a place in it as that of Mr. W. H. McKeown. His settlement in the district took place in 1845, and from the first he sought, with unselfish and untiring earnestness, to promote the social, moral, and religious welfare of the neighbourhood. Largely on his own financial responsibility he had built the first church at Lane Cove; subsequently he pioneered South Colah (Hornsby); he secured the erection of a church at North Shore, and also at Willoughby; and it was owing to him that services were established and a church built at Pittwater. The influence of his gracious personality was felt throughout the whole circuit, and everywhere he was held in high esteem and unfeigned affection. To most of the people connected with the circuit, as to the dwellers generally in his own neighbourhood, his word was law. But if so, it was because the Biblical character was exemplified in him: 'He openeth his mouth with wisdom, and in his tongue is the law of kindness.' Who that has enjoyed the sweet and generous hospitality of that home can ever forget it? The debt of obligation to him and to his family is one the several circuits now existing along that line can scarcely ever pay. It is a pleasurable recollection that a public recognition of Mr. McKeown's worth and services (and those also of Mrs. McKeown) was made in a suitable presentation during the triennium—a presentation that is now treasured as a family heirloom.

A good deal might also be written concerning Mr. and Mrs. Bryson, and the Forsyths, and Flemings, of Willoughby; the Terreys, of Gordon; the Hewetts, Wilds, and Osbornes, of Hornsby. But one is afraid to individualize, for fear of omitting many who were useful helpers and good givers in an important era in the circuit's development. Nor did the people forget their earlier ministers, and many and tender were the references made in conversation and in public meetings to the sainted Robert Lamb, the first Wesleyan minister to reside on North Shore; to E. J. Rodd and F. W. Ward, and the men who followed them. Nathaniel Pidgeon and Thomas Roseby were also remembered as pioneers in the early prayer-meeting days, when

revivals and conversions were looked for as the natural and inevitable result of faithful Methodist preaching and earnest personal pleading.

Two gracious seasons of revival stand out as precious memories of a busy and eventful period of ministerial service. One occurred at North Sydney; the other at Gordon and Hornsby. To speak of the latter first: arrangements were made for two of the Divinity students of the day to spend their midwinter vacation in the circuit, and conduct a series of evangelistic services at Gordon (now Pymble) and Hornsby (now Hornsby South). They were young, ardent, and devoted to their work; and for more than a week in each place they visited during the day and conducted meetings at night. Their services grew in interest and power. The young people were interested, and some of them soundly converted. The older members rejoiced, and were uplifted, and a deepened tone of spiritual life was the result in the whole of what we termed the upper part of the circuit. Those two men are still in the ministry, and have given a good account of themselves in their various spheres of labour, the Rev. G. C. Percival in Australia and the Rev. J. Parker in England. Why should not every student receive his 'baptism of fire' in some such way?

The other and more pronounced revival was in North Sydney itself. It was the outcome of united meetings for counsel and prayer on the part of the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Methodist ministers of North Shore. A three weeks' united mission was held, a week being devoted to each church. The Rev. Roger McKinnon was the Presbyterian minister, and the Rev. J. H. Mitchell the Congregational. The local ministers were the missioners, with a little assistance from visiting brethren. Every morning, at seven o'clock, an early prayer-meeting was held, and the attendances grew as the work deepened. They were especially gracious seasons. The evening gatherings had no musical attractions in the shape of soloists or choristers. But the power of the Lord was present to heal. About fifty young people were brought in, and a vigorous young people's class and well-attended fellowship meetings and sacramental services indicated how abiding were the impressions made.

All this is ancient history. North Sydney and the suburbs to the north and the east of it have made wonderful strides since then. The population has enormously increased, and a generation has arisen to whom the era herein referred to is almost ante-diluvian. But the men of that day laid the foundations well and truly, and they deserve to be held in honourable remembrance.

XV

THE COOL BREEZES OF THE TABLELAND

'With spots of sunny openings, and with nooks
To lie and read in, sloping into brooks.'

FROM early years Armidale has been considered a desirable appointment. The salubrity of the climate, the picturesqueness of many parts of the district, and the heartiness and hospitality of its people, have conspired to make it a place to be coveted in the round of Methodist service. One prominent brother graduated there for the Chairmanship of the Queensland District—then all under one Synod. An ex-Fijian missionary testified that the bracing air and the long rides and drives had added years to his life. And a third held that the appointment (including the Chairmanship) had set him on a course which, like that of the morning star, had not dwindled even with his descent from those shining heights. An elevation of 3,300 feet, attaining to 4,500 feet in some parts of the circuit, ensures coolness of temperature and sweetness of atmosphere in the 'dog days' of an Australian summer. But, vice versa, what of the winter? Sleet and snow were the antithesis of the summer sunshine, and overcoat and rug failed to prevent the shiver and the shrug as one rode or drove in the teeth of a biting wind in a temperature nearly down to zero. But it was all in the year's experience, and served to thicken the blood and toughen the muscle for future service. The three years on the tableland may certainly be looked upon as among the happiest and most fruitful in the long course of one's ministerial career.

Armidale was at that time, even more so than at present, the centre of a very extensive circuit. It was a cathedral town, and boasted of two resident bishops, each with a dean or archdeacon as his next-in-command, and with a network of clergy covering the area to be worked single-handed by the Methodist minister. Good old Dr.

Johnstone represented Presbyterianism, as he did for a period, from first to last, of half-a-century. He was the pioneer of his order, and he retained the greater part of his vast geographical charge until he could travel it no longer. His story ought to be written, but it would take a Ralph Connor to do justice to it. Scotsmen had a great deal to do with the settlement of the tableland. It was called New England, in honour of its climate. But it contained a 'Little Scotland'—an Oban, Aberfoyle, Ben Lomond, Bendemeer, Dundee, Glencoe, and other places of Highland nomenclature; even Armidale itself was a mis-spelling of the Scotch name Armadale. So, between aristocratic episcopacy on the one hand, and entrenched Presbyterianism on the other, Methodism in the early years had a severe struggle for existence. It owes not a little to Mr. R. Hargrave, then of Hillgrove; to the Moffit family, of Saumarez; to J. D. Leece, the McCrossins, and the Crapps, of Uralla; to the Hendersons at Arding; and to the Lonsdales, Deans, Seabrooks, Waters, Browns, Horners, and others who worked for it, and gave to it, until it became as a tree planted by the river, and that spread its branches over almost the whole of the tableland, and made its influence felt in all classes of the community. The labours of such men as R. W. Orton, William Wilson, William Moore, R. Sellors, J. Walkden Brown, and B. J. Meek had left a good savour behind. Churches had been built at Armidale, Uralla and Arding, and a parsonage at Armidale; Union Churches were utilized at Saumarez and Lake Mount; services were also held at Guyra, Black Mountain, and Gara; and occasional trips were taken to Chandler's Peak, Hillgrove, and Wollomumbi. There was a total membership in the circuit of sixty. The plan showed ten preaching-places and five local preachers; and the balance-sheet revealed that, with much regular liberality on the part of the people there was a constant necessity for special effort to establish a balance as between both sides of the account. But the people were in good heart. There were some pessimists, it is true; there always are.

During the three years of my residence there, it was my joy to witness expansion and growth on every hand. The breath of revival was in and over the circuit for

almost the whole period, and a number of striking conversions occurred. More than that, the young people came under gracious influence, and scores of them were led to identify themselves with the Church. A three months' visit by that most unassuming of all lay evangelists, Mr. James Graham, was a contributory cause, under the blessing of God, to the happy work. For two or three weeks consecutively, each place was 'missioned' in turn. So the fire was kindled, and then carried further, until practically the whole circuit was alive with the fervour of happy, earnest, Christian evangelism. A little later on, the Salvation Army 'opened fire,' and won many signal victories. This served to keep alive the zeal for God within our own Church. The memory of those seasons is very precious still. Among other remarkable conversions was that of a railway man, an avowed sceptic, and a neglecter of the Sabbath and the sanctuary. But the Lord laid hold of him, and he was won for Christ. He became an earnest local preacher, was made in turn an instrument of much blessing to others, and still lives (I believe) to attest the reality and blessedness of the change he then experienced. Consequent upon this good work, applications poured in for additional services, and for the opening of new preaching-places. A church was built at Maitland Point; a beginning was made to erect one also at Guyra, but it eventuated in another Union Church; a church was erected at Brockley; services were established at Sydney Flat (Rocky River), Ballala, Woodlands, and Kentucky; and Llangothlin and Walcha Road were pioneered. Negotiations were opened up for employing a circuit missionary, but failing in this the services of a student were secured for each mid-winter and mid-summer vacation, and the work was double-banked as far as such an arrangement would permit. An annual camp-meeting was established at Uralla, as a Good Friday fixture. Till very recently, if not till the present time, that meeting has been regularly held, with beneficial results to the spiritual and social life of the whole circuit.

In a review and summary at a valedictory meeting in the Armidale Town Hall, the following facts and figures were given as indicative of progress and as reasons for

thankfulness. In the three years the membership had increased from 60 to 127; five new Sunday schools had been opened, and six new regular preaching-places. Every church in the circuit was entirely free of debt, and the parsonage also, as the result of a special thank-offering effort throughout the whole circuit. During the three years a total of £2,600 had been raised, viz., for circuit fund, £1,565; improvements to property and new erections, £730; missions and connexional funds, £245; Sunday schools, £60. The travelling involved represented 12,000 miles, services held 300 per year, baptisms 200, and marriages 46. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and Thy truth's sake.'

The appointment also carried with it the Chairmanship of the District. For the first time the north-western circuits constituted a separate Synod, and very thankful some of the brethren were that it was so. Previously they had to travel to Grafton every other year, and, any one who knows the country will admit that the journey from, say, Narrabri or Moree to Grafton was altogether too toilsome and exacting to be lightly undertaken. Similarly, the climb up the tableland from Kempsey or from Ballina was an achievement that even a Synod gathering did not compensate for. To me the Chairmanship (my first) was specially interesting, in that it embraced within its jurisdiction the first and last circuits of my probation days, and this afforded the opportunity of traversing again the Liverpool Plains, and of seeing the progress of the towns of Narrabri and Tamworth. Our Synod gatherings were happy and fraternal occasions. They were held alternately in Armidale and Tamworth, and the people of each place showed us much hospitality. We were a young company. The photo group of that first Armidale District Synod still hangs in my study. What changes have happened! There were eleven of us present. Five of the company have 'gone before.' One has crossed the seas and is in America. Another is now in Queensland. But of the eleven, no less than six have attained Presidential honours. We magnified our office and made good use of our opportunity, and possibly no Synod sent up more numerous or more important

recommendations to the Conference. We got a gentle rap or two over the knuckles for some of them. But we survived, and not a few of those recommendations have come to fruition since then. Two of them may specially be mentioned as resulting (1) in the establishment of the Home Mission agency in the Methodist Church of New South Wales, and (2) in the creation of the Removal Expenses' Fund, thus equalizing the burden of 'removal' charges on all the circuits. Finally, if Armidale claims to be no mean city, Methodism grew in it until it came to be recognized as an influential factor in its life and movement, and its minister was cheerfully accorded a position in the various institutions within it that make for social, philanthropic, and intellectual advancement and improvement.

XVI

THE HILLS AND ORANGERIES OF CENTRAL CUMBERLAND

'There is a rapturous movement, a green growing among the hills and valleys once again.'

An invitation to the Ryde Circuit came in time to be balanced in mind with another from an attractive appointment in Queensland. The latter had much in its favour. One felt 'How happy I could be with either, were the other dear charmer away.' The one represented a one-church circuit, and a full and flourishing Church at that; the best climate in Southern Queensland, and a sphere previously occupied with distinction and success by such men as W. G. Taylor and E. J. Rodd. But the former carried the day in the choice I was called upon to make. Ryde was in New South Wales; that counted for much. It was the centre of a picturesque district; it was near Sydney. There were possibilities of development; it contained some personal friends and a number of good, earnest Methodists. Moreover, it seemed to offer the better sphere of the two for such service as I could render. Conference confirmed the appointment, and in due course we arrived at Ryde.

Many years before, in my student days, I had preached in the little old chapel. The particular occasion was a missionary anniversary Sunday, and a wealthy and influential gentleman of another denomination was present. He was interested in our foreign missions, it appeared, and had been asked to preside at the annual public meeting on an ensuing week-evening. I happened, also, to be present at that meeting. The said influential gentleman, in his chairman's speech, openly expressed his disappointment at finding 'a mere boy' in the pulpit on missionary Sunday, and held that on such an occasion only a senior minister or a returned missionary should do duty. But

the years had gone by, and the 'mere boy' returned with a retinue of seven children and a head almost as white as that of his critic of twenty years before. But he was not a returned missionary, unless some periods of back-block service were to be regarded as entitling him to that distinction.

Methodism held a relatively strong position in Ryde in 1888, and also in all the places embraced within its circuit boundaries. There had been a gracious revival during the previous triennium, under the ministry of the Rev. John Clifton. The flood-tide had not continued; on the contrary, the circuit was experiencing what might be described as the back-wash of a protracted season of special services, and not a few of the young people especially were perceptibly shy of any attempt to repeat the efforts they had passed through. But there were substantial and permanent results to show from the season of revival. The classes for fellowship were regularly held and fairly well attended. The members' roll was more than a nominal list of names. The local preachers' plan contained some young and earnest recruits, and the week-night meetings were live and helpful affairs. There were those who thought that bygone times had been better. But distant hills are always green. At any rate, there was no small measure of beauty and gladness in the spiritual landscape at that time.

A district of orangeries and orchards has, from the standpoint of natural scenery, a charm all its own. That is especially the case with the Central Cumberland area. Its hills and dales, its cosy corners, and its outspread valleys; the wide outlook from its hills and its scent-laden air in the time of fruit blossoming; together with the variety and picturesqueness of the colour scheme of orange groves, laden orchards, and well-kept flower gardens—all appealed to one's love of beauty, and ministered to the sense of enjoyment of Nature's prodigal and beneficent gifts. To ride over those hills, to drink in the fresh air, to revel in the fair sights and inhale sweet perfumes, was something more than a mere sensuous delight. It was an inspiration and an uplift, and a continuous reminder of Him of whom it is said: 'How great is His goodness; how great is His beauty!' Some one has said

that if the trees budded and the flowers bloomed only once in a hundred years, everyone would make a pilgrimage to the favoured spot where so fair and divine a sight could be seen. But though Nature is prodigal of her favours every year, they are none the less wonderful and instructive.

> Two worlds are ours; 'tis only sin
> Forbids us to descry
> The mystic heaven and earth within,
> Plain as the sea and sky.

The view from Ryde Parsonage was, and is, a treat in itself, but that is only one of the many coigns of vantage in the circuit from which an outlook is obtained in which

> Embellished villas crown the landscape scene,
> Farms wave with gold and orchards blush between.

A third of a century ago the Ryde Circuit covered a wider area than it does at present, but embraced fewer preaching-places. The railway which runs through the district was only newly opened, and had not developed the line of suburbs extending from Meadowbank to Hornsby. Not many years had elapsed since the separation of Ryde from the Parramatta Circuit, and the former had simply taken over and was working the old Methodist centres of Ryde, Dundas, Castle Hill, and Dural. A fortnightly service had also been established at Galston, and an effort was being made to get a footing in Ermington. During my time services were held at Beecroft, but the opening of an Anglican church crowded us out, as the lady at whose place we met no longer felt free to give us the room. She was an Anglican, and her minister objected to her helping the Methodists any longer, now that they had a church on the spot. Church union is a nice thing to talk about, but somehow it does not work out in practice according to theory. Two or three forward movements, however, did come off with a fair measure of success. A new church was built and nearly paid for at Castle Hill (now Pennant Hills West) at a cost of £1,200. It stands alongside the old stone church, which dates from 1845, and in which some of the stalwarts of early Methodism had preached from time to time. The Ryde church was renovated and re-arranged, and class-rooms were added to the church at Dundas. Let the uninitiated

know that the ornament which surmounts the gable of Dundas church has a history. It is in the form of a Prince of Wales feather, and was paid for out of a donation sent by Her Majesty the Queen as an expression of her appreciation of a sermon preached by Mr. J. Mills, a local preacher, on the occasion of the attempt to assassinate the Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Alfred) in 1868. The sermon was published, and a copy forwarded to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, with the result of evoking a gracious and grateful acknowledgement from her.

This is not the place in which to write the history of Methodism in Ryde. Nor is there space to do justice to the good men and godly women who were connected with it at the time to which these reminiscences refer. Ryde has a history. At one time it was better known as 'Kissing Point.' The Rev. W. Kelynack was the first married Wesleyan minister to reside there, and he used sometimes playfully to remark: 'You know, I brought my bride to Kissing Point—but I think we had reached that point before getting there.' Mr. Amos (Rev. Richard) was the victim of another story. Riding there—not too elegantly—to his first appointment, from Parramatta, he inquired of a young urchin on horseback: 'Is this the way to Ryde?' The young colonial only knew the place as Kissing Point, and interpreted 'Ryde' in the question as 'ride.' With a comical, if condescending tone, he replied, as he put spurs to his own beast: 'No, mister, you turn your toes out too much,' and rode on.

Did ever a circuit possess better or more thoughtful stewards than the two that held office during the whole of my three years—Messrs. George Wicks and G. H. Hunt? both class-leaders and earnest Christians and generous givers. In all their good works they had splendid helpers in their wives. The local preachers were headed by Mr. John Small, whose stalwart figure and resonant voice were always welcome at every preaching-place. He was a veteran even then. Mr. Thomas Hawes was another acceptable occupant of the pulpit, as indeed were Messrs. Swanson, F. and W. Midson, and G. Trevitt. They were all men to be relied on. They never shirked an appointment. They always put their best into their work. Of Mrs. Short and her daughters (one of whom was church

organist and two others devoted Sunday school teachers) it would be impossible to speak too highly. Mr. James Eyles was a patriarchal leader at Dundas; the Pogsons and Harrisons and Thompsons rendered excellent service at Castle Hill; whilst the ever genial hospitality of Mr. J. C. Hunt, at Dural, always made the visit to that distant centre a thing of pleasure and an occasion of social enjoyment.

XVII

IN THE HUNTER VALLEY

When the Official List of Stations for 1891 came out, the first of the two names after the designation 'West Maitland' indicated my appointment for the year. In some respects it was like going home, inasmuch as the first six years of my ministry had been spent in circuits comprised in the (then) Maitland District, and with its Churches and leading people I was fairly well acquainted. But there had been a lack of progressiveness in the place for many years. The extension of the Northern Railway beyond the Liverpool Range to the north, and direct railway connexion with Sydney instead of steamer transhipment at Newcastle, had changed the commercial position of Maitland not to its advantage, and frequent floods had exercised a depressing influence upon local production. Consequently, there was little, if any, expansion of population, and the chronic cry of the business people was of 'bad times.' Church affairs were stationary; congregations had not improved; and the debt on West Maitland Church had increased in the previous ten or twelve years by fully £1,000, and was steadily growing at the rate of about £100 per year. The situation was not too encouraging. But difficulties are not a bad discipline for either pastor or people, if taken in a right way. A Scotch proverb teaches to 'fit a stout heart to a steep brae.' Trust re-organization, the formation of a Ladies' Church Aid Society, and hearty co-operation on the part of the congregation, put an improved aspect upon financial affairs, and steady work all round kept the circuit interests at least on an even keel until the unprecedented flood of 1893 upset our equilibrium and introduced a further period of stress and strain.

West Maitland had, in earlier years, been the head of the Hunter River Circuit, extending from Newcastle

to Murrurundi, and embracing Dungog, Allyn River, and other places on the Williams and Paterson Rivers. It was redolent of the memory and influence of such men as Jonathan Innes, Frederick Lewis, James Tuckfield, William A. Quick, Benjamin Chapman, John Watsford, George Hurst, J. A. Nolan, George Lane, and other giants of the earlier days. It was now circumscribed in area as a circuit, but influential as the recognized head of the Synod District. It was not strong in the country places attached to it. Branxton and Greta were its best outside appointments. The former was a solid and interesting congregation, under the immediate care of the second minister, who resided in Branxton. The erection of a comfortable parsonage was one of the fruits of my colleague's activity and popularity at that end. Greta was under a cloud. The mine was closed, as the result of a prolonged strike, and the population was sorely depleted in consequence. Pokolbin and Glenmore were out in the bush, and were occupied by small farmers and vine-growers. Oswald had sent the Lamberts, Priors, Pankhursts, and others of its once famous families to populate other parts, and was only a skeleton of its former self. Lochinvar had suffered in the exodus of its families to places further up the valley or across the range. Memories lingered of brighter days, of larger congregations, and of happy days of revival in years bygone. But if the churches were depleted, they still contained some interesting people, and the services were regularly sustained and fairly well attended. It was from Colly Camp, Wallalong, Bolwarra, and other places on the Hunter that the Gills, Belfords, Trotters, Northcotts, Dousts, and other families had gone to the Manning, Macleay and Clarence Rivers, and had founded a flourishing Methodism in those parts.

In West Maitland we possessed (as we still do) a spacious and substantial church in High Street, with a parsonage and schoolroom adjoining. The church was a monument of the enterprise and courage of the Rev. B. Chapman. It cost between £7,000 and £8,000 to build, and when it was opened there was a debt of £4,000 or £5,000 upon it. Mr. Chapman subsequently returned for a second term of service, and succeeded in reducing the debt. But it still remained of dangerous proportions, until the Rev.

G. Lane tackled it in an heroic fashion, and succeeded in extinguishing the whole of the interest-bearing portion of it. Subsequently, it was allowed to accumulate again, and stood at £1,750 at the date of my appointment. Our elaborate Connexionalism ought surely to provide safeguards against so discreditable a thing as the non-meeting of current obligations and the accumulation of deficits until they almost equal the original indebtedness, and thus nullify such efforts as George Lane and his contemporaries put forth, when, with herculean toil and no little self-denial, they practically extinguished a big liability. One man labours—and another sleeps on his predecessor's efforts, and says in effect 'Let the next fellow do the worrying.' If I may anticipate, it is now reported that the Maitland debt is at length dead and buried. May it never have a resurrection!

Of the efforts of the Ladies' Church Aid—which was the first of its order in recent Church developments—it would be impossible to speak too highly. There was a splendid band of women workers, with a very splendid secretary and organizer; and as a result the proceeds of their efforts amounted to £420 for the first year, £340 for the second, and £210 for the third. The latter was, perhaps, the biggest achievement of the whole, inasmuch as the amount was realized in the year following the big flood. What a flood that was! The 9th and 10th of March, 1893, will not readily be forgotten on the Hunter. For twenty-four hours it rained solidly, at an average rate of over one inch per hour, for the registration was twenty-five inches for the twenty-four hours. In an incredibly short space of time 'the floods lifted up their voice,' and raging torrents were pouring down the surcharged river, bursting the embankment on either side, inundating the farm lands, invading the towns, and carrying destruction and desolation wherever they flowed. From the base of the hills beyond Woodville right out to the ranges at Sugarloaf was one vast sea of water, with hillocks showing up here and there, and farm houses and barns lifting their roof-poles above the flood. Almost the whole of West Maitland was under water to a depth of from three to twenty feet. Our church and school-room were, for the first time, invaded to a depth of three feet, and the par-

sonage was under water almost to the balcony floor. The younger generation crowed over the old people, telling them it was no use their talking any more about the floods of '57 and '60, for they had now seen the biggest flood of all. The desolation and terror of the night of March 9th will never be effaced from the memory of those who passed through it. But the visitation had its brighter side. It evoked an outburst of sympathy and helpfulness that found expression in Flood Relief Funds aggregating nearly £50,000; and the Methodists of the State readily contributed an amount sufficient to reinstate the Sunday schools at West Maitland, Bolwarra, Hexham and other places in school requisites, libraries, &c., that were injured or destroyed in the submersion. The visitation, too, helped to bring the various sections of society closer together. They were all sharers in a common disaster. It promoted better fellowship also between the Churches for the time being. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.

Methodism in Maitland had owed much in the early days to such families as the Bowdens, Owens, Blairs, Becketts, Wolstenholmes, Falkiners, Bardens, Pullens, and Smiths. There were survivors or successors of most of those families at the time of which I am writing, and for the most part they were worthily maintaining ancestral traditions. Mr. R. A. Young, Mayor of West Maitland, was our most outstanding layman; a man of fine personality, of high character, of great ability, and exercising a dominant influence in civic and public affairs. He was absolutely trusted and universally respected, and his death—most sudden and unexpected—was regarded as a public calamity.

In the last year of the three, the duties of the Chairmanship of the District were added to those of the Superintendency of the Circuit. We held our Synods consecutively at Maitland, Newcastle, and Singleton. We discussed Methodist Union, then becoming a live issue, in our Connexional circles. But there was anything but unanimity upon it amongst us at that time. Nevertheless, we arranged united camp-meetings at Waratah and Tarro, and sought to promote unity of spirit and prepare the way for what everyone felt must come in course of time. As a member of the Union Committee

from the start, committee meetings in Sydney necessitated several visits to the city in that connexion. Membership of the General Conference Committee on Tongan affairs also meant one or two trips to Melbourne, where that committee foregathered. And amid all, one found time to keep up a regular weekly contribution to the connexional journal, and to hold up his end in an active controversy in favour of a Methodist Theological Institution for the direct and specific training of candidates for the ministry of the Methodist Church.

XVIII

SUBURBIA AND THE PRESIDENCY

THE next term brought much of sunshine and of shadow. It included the charge of an important and growing suburban circuit and election to the Presidency of the Annual Conference; it also included the deep and dark domestic sorrow of a bereavement which removed a model wife, a devoted mother, and self-sacrificing helper in every department of Church work. But the sanctities of a sorrow like that are best borne in the seclusion of one's own soul. On it let the blinds be run down and the door be closed, while slow music seems to fill the air. Suffice it to say that the sympathy that flowed in at that time has never been forgotten. The tributes to the memory of the departed—some hundreds of them—are sacredly preserved, and they will be valued in after years by children who revered a mother whose memory has been a life-long benediction to them.

Lewisham was part of Ashfield Circuit up till 1895. In that year it was separated, and a circuit was constituted comprising Lewisham, Summer Hill, Canterbury, Moorfields, and Parkestown. The three last named were old but unprogressive preaching-places, with churches built away back in the '40's or '50's of the century. On an old plan of the 'Sydney Circuit' for 1843, Canterbury appears as the 'Sugar Works.' The works that caused it to be so named still stood, but were long disused and going to ruin. For a good many years the Canterbury 'Chapel' had been shut up; but quite recently it had been re-opened, with a small congregation and an interesting Sunday school. Moorfields, away in the bush, was also an early preaching-place in Sydney Methodism. A solid if plain stone church, with a burial enclosure behind it, was evidence of greater strength in days gone by. Aforetime it was a centre for woodcutters, charcoal

burners, and timber-splitters. A little orcharding was springing up around it. Parkestown had changed its name. It used to be 'Forest Hill.' But the neighbourhood was small, congregations were meagre, and collections did not pay for horse-shoeing. Of quite recent years a new era has arrived, and all these neighbourhoods are feeling the stir and experiencing the benefit of the rapid expansion of the population of our great metropolis.

In contrast to the stagnation at these old places was the life, stir, and progressiveness of Lewisham and Summer Hill. Both were comparatively new causes, and were feeling the quickening influence of the rapid growth of Sydney's suburban population. A splendid site at Lewisham was occupied by a commodious school-church, with class-rooms (two-storied) newly erected at the rear. The corner was left for the new church to stand upon. It still remains to be so utilized. At Summer Hill, the Church had made so much progress that an enlargement was deemed necessary, and was successfully accomplished during my term. There were a number of strong men at each place. The Circuit Stewards were most capable and efficient. The Trust Treasurers diligently kept their eye on trust finances, and formulated plans for the steady and constant reduction of their debts. The local preachers' plan contained the names of a number of effective and acceptable preachers. One of them had been a minister of our own Church; another had seen years of service in Victoria, and had a fine presence and a genial yet dignified bearing that made him a universal favourite. A third had been brought up a Congregationalist, and believed in beaten oil for the sanctuary; two others had been Salvation Army officers, and had a good deal of the 'blood and fire' about them yet. But the prince of the local preachers was the Canadian Trade Commissioner for Australia. Mr. J. S. Larke has gone from us now, and it is not unseemly that a special meed of recognition should be given to him just here. It was Lewisham Methodism that 'discovered' him on his arrival from Canada, and happy were the people who had the opportunity of listening so frequently to the carefully thought-out and choicely expressed sermons he preached, replete with information, ancient and modern, and always loyal to

the great essential and soul-saving doctrines of our holy religion. Stateliness, spirituality and sanity were the outstanding features of his fine addresses.

A word or two deserves to be said about the Sunday schools. They were well organized, efficiently superintended, and staffed by a fine body of consecrated officers and teachers. They each (Lewisham and Summer Hill) included Bible Classes for young men and women. Lewisham was specially fortunate in having Mrs. R. W. Conway as the teacher of its girls' class, and Mr. E. H. O. Smith in charge of its young men's class. How the young women admired and loved Mrs. Conway! The young men were also proud of their preceptor, Mr. Smith. It was during this period, too, that the marvellous cure of the then Superintendent of the Lewisham Sunday school occurred. It is a story worth telling in full, but space does not permit. Suffice to say that, when smitten with cancer in the throat, and his case pronounced hopeless, except at the risk of a most perilous operation—with no favourable result certain even from that—the Church gave itself up to prayer on its stricken brother's behalf. The two special meetings in that connexion will not soon be forgotten. The one, early in the crisis, a service of intercession, when the word seemed to pass through the meeting: 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.' The latter, when, to the surprise of the doctor, a cure had been effected, the cancer had 'sloughed,' and perfect health had been restored—a service of thanksgiving and of renewed consecration. So 'with mercy and with kindness' the web of life is woven,

> And aye the dews of sorrow
> Are lustred with His love.

Connexionally, the term was one of much interest and of important developments. The occupancy of the Presidency for one year, and of the Chairmanship of the Sydney West District for two years, necessarily involved considerable travel and the giving of much attention to Connexional affairs. Methodist Union was then a live question, and opinion in the Church was very much divided upon it. Discussions took place in every Synod

and Conference. Meetings of the Federal Council were frequent, and much work had to be put into the matter to collect full and accurate information, educate opinion, and allay sincere but unnecessary fears. The Adelaide General Conference of 1894, however, determined the matter as one of Connexional policy, and left the working out of local details and the fixing of a date of Union to each Annual Conference. Looking back upon all those prolonged discussions, and recalling the alarmist speeches that were delivered with great frequency, but which subsequent events have shown were unfounded and unnecessary, one is irresistibly reminded of a verse quoted in one of the discussions by a convinced and optimistic friend of Union:

> But timorous mortals start and shrink
> To cross this narrow sea,
> And linger, shivering on the brink,
> And fear to launch away.

How true it is that God is better to us than all our doubts and fears! And that applies to more matters than those of mere Connexional policy.

Other incidents and features of the Presidential year may be mentioned. The right of women (being members) to hold office as Circuit Steward and to sit in District Synod and (if elected) in Conference, was authoritatively ruled from the chair in 1895. A Local Preachers' Association was formed that year. It was the precursor of the present organization of that name. A Lincoln Guild, for the promotion of social and intellectual fellowship among the educated young people of Methodism, was also established. It had a brief but interesting career, but was too early 'nipt by the wind's untimely blast.' The right of the head of the Methodist Church to official recognition, along with the heads of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, was claimed in the proper quarter. The result was seen eventually—a year or two later—in the complete recognition of the claim by the State Governor and other officials. But one decision of the 1895 Conference is remembered with regret to this day. Under the influence of fear, because of Connexional depression, the Conference resolved to accept no candi-

dates for the ministry that year. All the candidates were, consequently, turned away. Some never came back. Next year the mistake was seen, and was not repeated. But we suffered for years, in paucity of candidates and vacant stations, for that regrettable error. A policy of 'believe and conquer' is always the best for any Church.

XIX

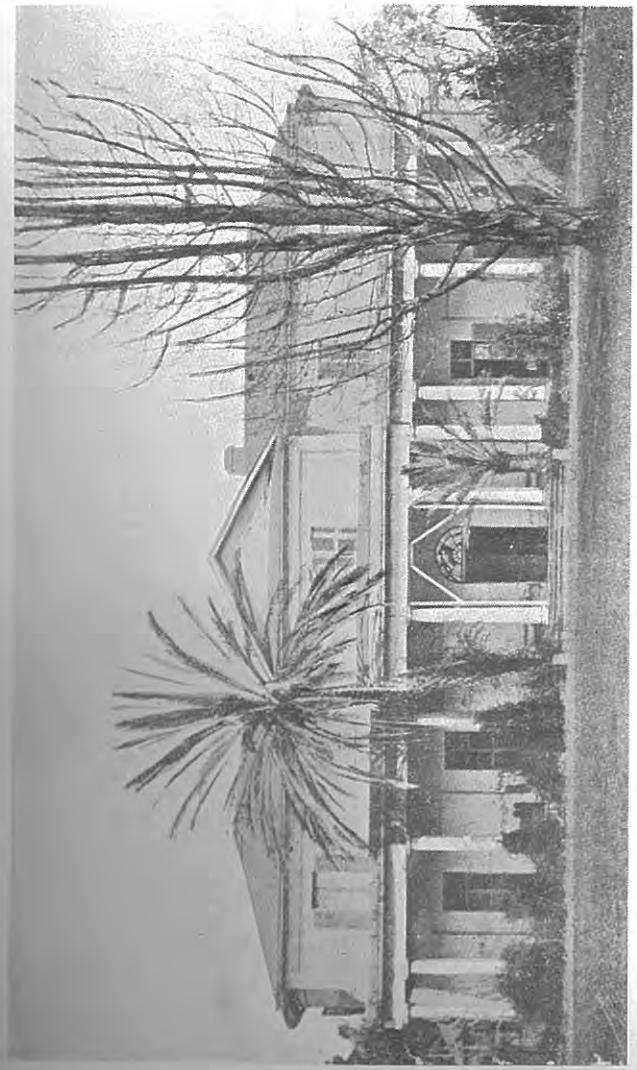
IN THE HISTORIC BOROUGH

'Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers.
Pray for power equal to your tasks.'

PARRAMATTA claims to be 'the historic borough.' It had (perhaps still has) the reputation of being a hard circuit. Its difficulties specially arise from the 'reckless aggression' of the trustees, who, in 1884–5, were fired with an ambition to put up a church that should be a landmark in the surrounding landscape, and who, with splendid audacity (not of the sanctified order) contracted a debt of £6,000 or £7,000 to do so. It is a satire upon our boasted Connexional organization that they were officially permitted and even encouraged to go on. They tied a millstone around the neck of Parramatta Methodism that well-nigh drowned it. And even with the huge debt they did not provide a church that was suitable or satisfactory. High walls, high roof, high galleries, high pulpit, and high steps—with a correspondingly high debt—these things were there. But there was no comfort, either for preacher or people in the high-pitched, ill-proportioned building. It was a monument that no one was proud of. Trustees disclaimed it; ministers said they were not responsible for it; and the architect protested that his plans had been altered. Someone had blundered, and the blunder meant burden and difficulty for each successive minister and his loyal and long-suffering people. Can any words of praise be too high for the noble band of 'women workers' who, year by year, stuck to the task of carrying out their 'market days,' as they do still, and thus provided the interest on the debt, with an occasional success in reducing the same. 'Many daughters have done virtuously' in this connexion. It would be invidious to mention names, but there will be no dissent from the statement that of Miss Marion Byrnes it may truly be said, 'Thou excellest

them all.' She was the originator of the ' women workers ' ; for years, until her health failed, she was the organizing genius and inspiring influence of the annual effort. She worked and gave, up to the limit of her strength and ability; and if to any one more than another the rescue of Parramatta Methodist Church from disaster and insolvency is due, then that one is undoubtedly Miss Marion Byrnes. To the co-operation of the other women of the congregation—specially at that time the Misses Neale and Mrs. Willis—the splendid results achieved were due. From the beginning of the ' market days ' till now it is probably that, by means of them, an aggregate of fully £7,000 has been realized. In the three years of my incumbency, the results were, respectively, £197, £425, and £295. The capital debt was reduced by £650 during the triennium, and the charge for interest was adjusted so as to effect a further saving of £50 or £60 per year.

Almost the first public effort of my term was to organize and carry through the Diamond Anniversary of the Parramatta Wesleyan Sunday school (Methodist union was not then effected). In 1822 a Wesleyan Sunday school was established in Parramatta. Samuel Leigh, Walter Lawry, Ralph Mansfield, and all the early worthies and pioneers had ministered to the congregations in days gone by. Mr. G. T. Hunt well remembered Samuel Leigh, and wrote some interesting reminiscences of him for the Diamond Anniversary Souvenir. A portion of the first church, built in 1820 or thereabouts, still stands at the rear of Macquarie Hall. The foundations of the two churches in Parramatta and Parramatta North were laid by the Hon. Hannibal Macarthur in 1837. The parsonage (formerly known as the ' Mission House ') dated from about the same period. John Watsford was converted in the Macquarie Street Chapel. He pointed out the very spot to some of us. Richard Caldwell and Arthur J. Webb had gone out into the ministry from the old circuit. The dust of Mrs. Leigh, of Walter Lawry, of J. A. Manton, of Richard Amos, and other worthies lay in the cemeteries there. The whole place was redolent of the heroic era of Australian Methodism. The circuit records told some tales with a thrill in them. They also contained some that kindly charity would fain draw a veil over. One



THE OLD THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION, NEWINGTON, PARRAMATTA RIVER. [*face* p. 118.

heard of the Hon. William Byrnes and the Hon. James Byrnes, of the Oakes, the Neales, the Smiths, and the Hunts, of older days; of local preachers like Jonathan Sparkes, and-Sunday school superintendents like Joseph Booth. Moreover, the succession of occupants of the old parsonage included such men as Erskine, Manton, Watkin, Martin, Clifton, and Olden. It was no mean thing to be in such a lineage, to occupy so historic a position, and to carry on a work dignified by the devotion of so many fathers and founders of our Australasian Methodism.

Among the ministers of the various Protestant Churches of Parramatta and District in 1897–1900, there was a kindly spirit of fraternity. Archdeacon Gunther was incumbent of St. John's, a position he had then filled for over thirty years. We saw very little of him, except in connexion with benevolent and other public affairs. But almost all the other ministers belonged to a Parramatta and District Ministers' Association, which met regularly every month. The Rev. Thomas Forsaith was its first President; Rev. John Paterson (Presbyterian) was its efficient Secretary; Revs. E. Hargrave (Anglican), F. R. Becher (Congregational), J. Penman (Primitive Methodist), J. C. Martin (Baptist), R. Jackson (Presbyterian) were active members. We moved unitedly on matters affecting the common welfare of the Churches, and the moral and religious interests of the community; we organized and carried through united demonstrations on a large scale in connection with the Queen's Record Reign celebrations and other public occasions; we held a Christian Convention on the same lines as the well-known Petersham Convention, and we endeavoured to cultivate and exhibit the spirit of unity in the bond of peace. It was a worthy effort to imbue the citizenship of the town with the spirit and influence of a common Christianity.

Parramatta is the home of the charitable institutions of the State. In addition to a large gaol and girls' reformatory, there are two great hospitals for the insane, two asylums for the indigent and infirm, and a number of cottage homes for the aged poor. In the various institutions were people of all denominations, and the services of ministers of the several Churches were in requisition for visits to the sick and dying and other

purposes. Chaplains of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches were subsidized by the Government, but no provision of the sort was made for Methodist or Presbyterian patients or paupers. This immediately struck me as an anomaly and an injustice. If all denominations had been left to provide gratuitously for attention to the institutions, there would have been no cause of complaint. But to differentiate in so invidious a fashion was out of harmony with a democratic and free-church State. We took action with a view to having this anomaly rectified. We interviewed the Government, at first with little result. But eventually our claim was admitted, and so was brought to pass the present satisfactory arrangement for providing religious ordinances to all the principal public charitable institutions in the State. This, of course, augmented the toll of work, by no means easy before. Frequently on Sunday five services had to be conducted, exclusive of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, when they fell due. A gaol service, another at one of the public asylums, a country appointment (Baulkham Hills), and morning and evening service in Macquarie Street Church, made one feel at the close of the day that

> Something attempted, something done,
> Had earned a night's repose.

Chairmanship of the District—for the first time Parramatta was, in 1897, the head of a Synod District—added to one's responsibilities and opportunities, and also to one's pleasure in his work. For it involved visits to Penrith and Camden, where we held profitable District Conventions; to Windsor and the Hawkesbury, as well as to Katoomba. Our Synods were small, but full of the spirit of fraternity; and after the Penrith Synod in 1899 we had a delightful launch trip up the Nepean to the Basin, amid some of the most romantic and majestic of Australian river scenery. The good brother (Edward King) who organized that trip has gone home. He was a kindly soul who delighted to serve his brethren and his Church. He is not forgotten.

Connexional movements during the period were neither few nor unimportant. Methodist Union was winning its way, although now and again it seemed to suffer a reverse.

The Century Commemoration Fund was initiated. Where the scheme was drawn up and the foundations were laid had better be told by someone else. The General Conference of 1897 was held in Auckland, New Zealand. It discussed the membership question, it dealt with 'the imperial cause of foreign missions,' it extended the powers of Annual Conferences, and it looked into the Stygian depths of the Supernumerary Fund, concerning which actuaries were sounding pessimistic notes, and the principles and methods of which very few had taken the trouble to investigate thoroughly.

With the close of my Parramatta term, the century also drew nigh to its end. Who shall fitly write its story? Professor Wallace has truly described it as 'The Wonderful Century.' For Australia, and for Australian Methodism, it had truly been a wonderful era. But if it went out crowned with achievements such as had never before been equalled, a new one came in destined, no doubt, to eclipse its predecessor, and to be the bearer of messages at which the world may well marvel as they are inscribed upon the scroll of time.

XX

A SERIES OF METROPOLITAN CIRCUITS

On leaving Parramatta in 1900 I was appointed to Stanmore; thereafter in succession to Burwood, Paddington, Mosman, and Lindfield. At the latter place I completed forty-six years of continuous active circuit ministry, and then (to use the Methodist phrase) 'sat down,' or in other words became a supernumerary minister without pastoral appointment. The work in all the circuits above-named was of the usual varied order, and might be described in detail with some degree of interest, if space permitted. Suburban appointments are much coveted by Methodist ministers, especially by those in middle life or later, to whom the burden of country travelling is becoming irksome. Family considerations also prevail, and where there are children to be educated and placed out, the advantages of city or suburban life are obvious. From the latter consideration these appointments were much appreciated; but more especially for the opportunity of taking part in things at the Connexional centre, and of helping to shape thought and action in public affairs as they related to the moral and religious welfare of the community. In these regards there was abundant opportunity for service during the years from 1900 to 1914. But this must be dealt with in another chapter.

Stanmore circuit was generally regarded as the blue-ribbon appointment of the Conference. It embraced Marrickville and Leichhardt as it was originally constituted, but it underwent revision when Methodist union was effected. Then Leichhardt was separated, and two small Primitive Methodist causes in Marrickville were put under the fostering care of the mother church at Stanmore. Excellent colleagues were associated with me—the Revs. F. C. Boyer and Elias Crozier—and the work went on with harmony and encouraging success.

Stanmore church is also, in a sense, the college church. Adjacent to it is Newington College, and the boys of that school formed an interesting portion of the congregation from Sunday to Sunday. The Theological Institution was housed at that time in the Hermitage at Newington, and the students were members of the minister's weekly class for fellowship. The President and Headmaster (Rev. C. J. Prescott, M.A., subsequently D.D.) was in many respects a tower of strength to the minister and the Church. Genial, cultured, and devout—withal intensely loyal to the minister and personally concerned in everything that made for the well-being of the Church—he was a brother beloved and one whose counsel and companionship it was a joy to have. Under him the College grew in strength and efficiency from year to year. Its traditions were well maintained, its ideals were raised, and the range of its activities and its popularity increased until it has now taken its place in the front rank of the great public schools of New South Wales.

Some memorable services were held in Stanmore during the three years' term. Foremost among these was the commemorative service in connexion with the Inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth, held on the first Sunday in January, 1901, when a suitably impressive order of service was used, and a sermon of exceptional ability was preached by the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Holder, K.C.M.G., subsequently first Speaker of the Federal Parliament. A year later Methodist union was consummated, and a commemoration was held in the church, in which the leading representatives of the three uniting churches took part. If the term 'dignity' may be used in connexion with any celebrations in the house of God, that quality was certainly not lacking on those historic occasions. It was the custom of the church to make a fitting use of all suitable opportunities for emphasizing the religious significance and claims of national events, and in this way of showing that 'the kingdoms of this world' belong to 'our Lord and His Christ.' Nor was the evangelistic side of the work in any way overlooked. A mission conducted by the venerable John Watsford was much appreciated and was fruitful of good results. The church also threw itself heartily into the Simultaneous Mission

held during this term. All over the city and suburbs a magnificent effort was made to bring the gospel appeal home to the outsiders and to unite the several churches in direct aggressive work. There were two centres in which Stanmore was interested. Petersham district held its mission in the Petersham Town Hall and secured the Rev. Harold Wheen, then of Bathurst, as its missioner; Marrickville organized and carried out a tent mission in a large marquee, and rallied around the Rev. W. M. Dill Macky as its honoured evangelist. Both men rendered excellent service.

Petersham also was fortunate in being the centre of a vigorous Ministers' Association, under the able Secretaryship of the Rev. William Allen, of the Petersham Congregational church. Every year this association organized what was known as the Petersham Annual Christian Conference, held in the month of August in the Petersham Town Hall. The syllabus was drawn up each year by Mr. Allen; speakers were invited from all the Churches, and from all parts; the sessions extended over four afternoons and evenings; the attendance was large, always culminating in crowded gatherings at the closing sessions on the last two evenings. The influence of this Conference was gracious and helpful. There was a beautiful spirit of Christian unity among the churches; joint religious instruction was arranged in the several public schools; and a united Sunday-school teachers' preparation class held regularly on Saturday evening was very helpful to efficiency in the Sunday-school work of the several churches.

Stanmore had also been the chosen resting-place for venerable supernumeraries, and some of these still survived. The Rev. Joseph Oram was a man of a sweet and saintly disposition—a man in whom the cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and charity were beautifully exemplified, and the greatest of these was charity. Joseph H. Fletcher had recently finished his career there, his last words characteristically being 'Light, life, love!" John Bowes had exhaled the fragrance of a serene eventide in the neighbourhood for several years; Samuel Wilkinson had shed the benison of an old man's blessing upon the congregation; William Moore had rested there, too, before

slowing into the terminus. And the influence of these good men tarried, as in most cases their widows and families remained as perpetuators of their names and work. Yes, Stanmore was a choice field. A brief tribute must also be paid to one of the best and most useful laymen the Methodist Church ever possessed in the neighbourhood. In Mr. T. H. England, B.A., the minister had a friend of unshakeable constancy; the congregation possessed a worker who never spared either his time, energy, or money to promote its interests and carry its enterprises to a successful conclusion; and the church had a member who in his blameless life and his incorruptible integrity adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.

The term at Burwood had not many special features. There also was in a sense a collegiate atmosphere. The Methodist Ladies' College is situated at Burwood, and the girls in residence regularly attend the Burwood Methodist Church. The Rev. E. J. Rodd was President of the college, with a Head Mistress in charge of the educational arrangements. Of Mr. Rodd what shall be said? In some respects he is a man who stands apart in the Methodist ministry. Cultured above most, with a literary finish about all his deliverances, whether oral or written, lofty in his ideals, gracious and genial in his spirit, with the law of kindness ever ruling in his heart and governing his actions,—he is an asset to the Church and to any community in which he dwells. It was one of the privileges of the Burwood term to be brought into closer fellowship than ever with him. There, too, dwelt the Rev. W. J. Davis, a retired missionary, a veteran in the fourscores of his years. Mr. Davis had spent a long period of his life in the Friendly Islands, now more generally called Tonga, and the name was so indelibly inscribed upon his heart that he designated his home thereby—it was 'Friendly Islands Cottage.' He was a good man who always seemed to live

> in an ampler, purer air,
> Above the stir of toil and care.

Hard by, also, was another veteran. 'Old Boomerang' was quite a literary celebrity in the '60's and '70's of last century, and wielded a prolific pen. But the keepers

of the house had been trembling with him for some years, and those that look out of the windows were darkened; and John Richard Houlding was no longer capable of sustained literary work or indeed of any other kind. But his heart was still that of a child in its simplicity and gentleness, and his interest was keen in the wide circle of his family relationships and the still wider circle of his affectionate acquaintanceship. It was a joy to write a commendation of the re-publication of one of his early literary productions, '*Christopher Cockle; or, the Adventures of an Australian Immigrant.*'

There were some choice people in the congregations at Burwood and Enfield, and better workers in the Sunday schools were not to be found anywhere. Of these I may, without being invidious, make special mention of the Somerville family—the widow and son and daughters of the Rev. James Somerville. Mr. Somerville had done much for the church of his residence there, and his family were worthily carrying on the work of a saintly and self-sacrificing man of God. But I must not further particularize, for in so doing the danger of unintentional omission is great.

But just to the extent that these reminiscences are personal, one is obliged to refer to an incident that brought me into a closer acquaintance with some members of the medical profession and a deeper experience of the physical sufferings of life. In the first year of my work in Burwood I suffered from a severe attack of what proved to be appendicitis. Threatened with a second attack, Dr. Cecil Purser said to me, 'We must patch you up, and get you off to Melbourne,' viz., to the General Conference at which the big discussion on the Supernumerary Fund question was to come off; 'but,' added he, 'if there is any return of the trouble, there'll be nothing for it but an operation!" To Melbourne accordingly I went, and got through the work there. But a month or two after, another attack supervened. To the surgical skill of Dr. Hinder, who performed the operation, and the unremitting care of Dr. Purser also, I owe it that my life was preserved. The trouble had become so acute that the delay of another day would probably have been fatal. And this surely is a fitting opportunity of acknowledging

the debt I have been under almost all my life to medical men for professional services rendered cheerfully and gratuitously to myself and my family. It seems to be an honourable tradition in the medical profession to treat ministers of religion in a generous way. The latter minister to the souls of men, while the former treat their bodies. But surely no little of the rewards that will hereafter be accorded to those who minister spiritual benefit will have in fairness to be passed on to the doctors who have helped to preserve the vigour and prolong the day of the ministers of religion. Many doctors have been kind and helpful to me; but for the long period of thirty years Dr. Cecil Purser has been a friend whose counsel and help I have never sought in vain.

From Burwood to Paddington was a change nearer in to the heart of the city. It was a one-church appointment, seeing that the 'circuit' comprised only the one church at Paddington. Having taken on the editorship of *The Methodist*, and having other Connexional work to do, it was exceedingly convenient to be so near to the city and to have one's direct pastoral energies compressed within so comparatively narrow a sphere. Pastoral work is surely one of the most important and necessary parts of a minister's vocation. And to that I have always tried to give attention. It may be a business-like way of looking at things, but I have always felt that as the minister's living is provided by the people of his charge, his first duty is to look well to the work of his church and the welfare of the congregation. Other work, even that of a Connexional character, must not be allowed to interfere with his fidelity in that regard. It is possible that in some quarters I may have been regarded as having a good many irons in the fire, in the attention given by me to journalistic work, Connexional affairs, and public matters generally. But I can conscientiously say that I never allowed any of these to come between me and the duty I owed to the church or circuit of which I was the minister. And if the tributes paid to me on leaving my circuits and on other occasions were genuine—and I have no reason to think that they were not—that fact was generally recognized. During all my time in Paddington, my senior circuit steward was Mr. George

Smith. He had occupied that office for probably a quarter of a century; he was church organist for an even longer period; and it was fitting that after his decease (which occurred after my removal from the circuit) a 'George Smith Memorial Hall' should be erected to supersede the old school hall which had become musty and malodorous through age and from climatic causes.

During my first year in Paddington I was appointed by the Board of Missions a member of a Special Commission of Enquiry to visit Fiji. During the third year a breakdown in health necessitated a prolonged rest. Drs. H. Walton Smith and H. R. Nolan in consultation suggested a six months' spell from preaching and such-like vocal strain. Hence ensued a trip to England in company with my friend and neighbour Rev. T. F. Potts, then of Bondi. It would be easy to write at length of that trip, including as it did a brief tour of Italy, Switzerland, and France, and a visit to Palestine and Egypt. But the reader must look elsewhere for what I have to say concerning that interesting tour. On my return I found that the circuit quarterly meeting had resolved to 'invite' me to remain for the fourth year. Their confidence was appreciated and reciprocated, and the fourth year was spent in happy toil amid undiminished tokens of mutual regard and esteem. Ministerial neighbours of other Churches included Rev. John Fordyce, M.A., D.D., of the Woollahra Congregational church, and Rev. R. G. Macintyre, M.A., B.D., of Woollahra Presbyterian church. It was an honour and a privilege to be associated with them in matters of common concern; and not less so with the humble but earnest agent of the City Mission, who had charge of the Paddington Branch, and who was beloved by the poorer sections of the community and respected by all.

Of Mosman and Lindfield I may not write at length. Mosman was a comparatively new cause and was housed (so to speak) in what is now the School-hall. When first I knew the area now covered by Mosman, Cremorne, and Neutral Bay, it was almost uninhabited. A low scrub covered the hills and slopes, and there was no sign of the approaching popularity of those picturesque heights. But the population of Sydney has so overflowed during

the past thirty years as to effect transformations undreamt of at the beginning of that period. Mosman is a case in point. Lindfield is another. When I was minister of the St. Leonards Circuit (then so called) in 1882-5, Mosman was unopened and Lindfield was unknown. Now Mosman has a population of 20,000, and Lindfield is one of the most populous and popular of the beautiful and attractive suburbs along what is known as the North Shore line. Both are beautiful for situation and are increasingly popular because of their scenic charms and salubrious air. What is more to the point in this story is that both places now have Methodist churches that are both commodious and ornate, a credit to the congregation and an asset to the neighbourhood.

And here may I say that in all the places mentioned in this chapter I have had the joy and help of the presence and companionship of an excellent wife whose birthplace and home until her marriage was not far removed from the scene of our last active ministry. The daughter of the grand old pioneer of North Shore Methodism, the late William Henry McKeown, and from her childhood interested in a whole-hearted way in the service and cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, my good wife (who became such in 1898) has been a help-meet indeed to me in my home and in my work for whom I daily thank God. That she has won the absolute confidence and love of all my children—her step-children—is in itself a tribute to her and to them; and that she has lived in the affection and admiration of the people of our respective circuits hardly needs to be mentioned,—it is patent to all.

XXI

SOME OF MY CONTEMPORARIES

Of contemporaries I have had many during the long course of my ministry; of colleagues I have had few. Although engaged in circuit work for forty-six years, my appointments were mostly such as did not carry a colleague. Even while Chairman of such important Districts as Armidale, Sydney West, and Parramatta, I was alone in the circuit I was in charge of. Maitland District was an exception. There I had the advantage of a colleague. During part of the period it was my happiness to be associated with the Rev. C. E. James—a brother of versatile parts, of unusual ability and affability, and a colleague who enjoyed exceptional popularity in all parts of the circuit. Preacher, lecturer, journalist, artist, musician, mechanic, sportsman—what was there he could not do and do well? At an earlier period it was my happiness to have the Rev. Joseph Bryant as a colleague in the North Sydney circuit, a genial, gracious soul, whose influence was always as that of 'the sweet presence of a good diffused and in diffusion ever more intense.' Both of these brethren possessed literary gifts which in later life they used much to the interest and advantage of the public. At a later period I was favoured with the colleagueship of Frederick C. Boyer and Elias Crozier—Boyer, a white-souled man, a conscientious worker, a careful student, and a brother beloved; Crozier the soul of honour, of innate refinement, and of exemplary fidelity and diligence.

But of contemporaries, whom shall I write?

On my entrance into the ministry in 1868, there were some brethren a few years my senior who made more or less of a mark upon the life and work of the Church and of the community in general. Of some of these—such as Revs. Dr. Kelynack, Dr. Brown, and J. H. Fletcher—

I have spoken in other parts of this story. The pen-photos of a few others may not be without interest.

In the foreground stands the rugged and picturesque figure of William Clarke—rugged in speech, arising mainly from the fact that his native tongue was Welsh, and he seemed as if unable to overcome the Welsh peculiarities in pronunciation and intonation. Tradition had it that in the earlier days of his Australian ministry his English would not come to him with sufficient readiness to express the volume of thought and feeling with which his earnest soul was charged, and involuntarily he would break out into Welsh! He had a long and useful course in circuit life and work, and was recognized as an authority on Methodist law and procedure. He stood by the old standards and walked in the old paths. He was strenuously opposed to Methodist Union, but no one worked more loyally and earnestly to make that union a success when it was resolved upon. He was twice elected to the Presidency of the New South Wales Conference. It could not be said that he achieved popularity in the usual sense of that term; he lacked the glitter and suavity necessary to such a result. But no minister of his time commanded the esteem and confidence of his people and his Church to a greater extent than William Clarke. He toiled in the active ministry for nearly fifty years, then rested at eventide, and passed away in his eighty-first year.

Of James Egan Moulton, D.D., a volume might be written.* His journals and correspondence, and especially the public annals of Tonga, supply abundant material. On his decease he was spoken and written of as 'Moulton of Tonga.' His brothers, W. F. Moulton, M.A., D.D., of Cambridge; Lord Justice Moulton, of England; and Professor R. G. Moulton, of America, had all won distinction in the realms of scholarship and service. James Egan Moulton was no unworthy member of that illustrious family. Divine providence directed his steps in his early ministerial life to Tonga, and he lived and suffered and served for the uplift and well-being of the people of those islands in quite an exceptional and heroic manner. He

* Since writing this the Life of *Moulton of Tonga*, by his son, has been published.

gave them a literature, he translated hymns and anthems for them, he taught them a notation, he founded a college and trained thousands of students in it; withal, he lived amongst them the Gospel that he preached. Tall and soldier-like in bearing, pleasing and impressive in manner, original and sometimes unorthodox in preaching, he filled a place all his own. Tonga loved him, Australia respected him, and his Church honoured him by placing him at the head of Newington College for several years and by calling him to the Presidential Chair in 1892.

Richard Sellors and Charles Stead came to Australia from England in 1864, and ran a useful course for over fifty years, serving both in New South Wales and Queensland. They were 'good Methodist preachers,' both of them. They occupied in turn the best circuits; they served as Chairmen of Districts; both of them enjoyed a second term as President of Conference, and they wore to old age the white flower of a blameless life. Of both of them it might truly be said in quite an exceptional way that they had in their later days 'that which doth accompany old age: love, honour, reverence, and troops of friends.'

James Adams Nolan was another who won consular rank. Frail in physique and studious by disposition, he put exceptional energy into every department of his work. More than almost any other man of my knowledge he literally observed the first of Wesley's 'Rules of a Helper': 'Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never while away time, nor spend more time at any place than is absolutely necessary.' The range of his reading was wide. He sought that his knowledge should be exact; his attention to detail was as conscientious as his ideals were high. He was a good preacher, an exemplary pastor, and a careful administrator. He filled the Presidential Chair in 1887, and subsequently did good service in Brisbane, Queensland. Worn out in the work, he died within six weeks of his becoming a supernumerary in 1904.

Of George Martin I may repeat what I have written in another place: 'There were circumstances connected with his conversion that made the great facts and experiences of the Christian life especially clear in his thought and prominent in his ministry. He came to the knowledge of truth—in whatever department he sought it—through processes that gave depth to his convictions, and a note of passionate earnestness to his ministry. Throughout his whole career he was a systematic and earnest student, and his acquaintance with sacred and general literature was extensive and accurate. For many years he was a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales, and took a special interest in its astronomical and microscopical sections. His work in these departments was recognized as being of considerable value, and furnished matter for many highly popular lectures. He possessed also literary gifts of a high order and for a long time was editor of our Connexional organ. In the year 1882 he was elected President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. But he was pre-eminently a preacher. The pulpit was his throne. He revelled in the great themes of revelation. His sermons were masterpieces of sacred eloquence; and out of the treasures of his knowledge and experience of the deep things of God he brought forth teachings new and old. His personal religious life was marked by deep and constant communion with God. He walked in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus; and for several years prior to his passing he seemed to live in constant view of the shining hill-tops of the celestial city.'

But of all the men of that period the most conspicuous for general ability, for wide and continued popularity, and for sustained Connexional usefulness was George Lane. He was another whose life ought also to have been written. One is reminded of the story of a discontented Church member who summed up the last three appointments to his circuit in a querulous fashion. 'The first of the three,' said he, 'was a good man, but he wasn't much of a minister; the second was a good minister, but he was no man; but this last,' he went on, 'is neither a man nor a minister.' But of George Lane the testimony was that he was both a man and a minister—a man of wide knowledge of men and things and broad human sympathies; a man, withal, quite at home in accounts and administration. And he was none the less efficient as a minister, but more so on that account. He gave attention to reading, and jealously guarded his hours for study. He prepared beaten oil for the sanctuary, and his sermons and addresses

were as carefully prepared as they were impressively delivered. He had a good presence, a resonant voice, a pleasing manner; with a touch of emotion, and the eye of a seer. He was never tedious; he was always interesting; at times impressive and captivating. Good in the pulpit, he excelled on the platform. As a missionary advocate—especially on the Home Mission platform—he found a sphere in which his powers of exposition and appeal revelled on high religious and patriotic grounds. None before his time attained to such a plethora of high Connexional honours and responsibilities, and his record has not been surpassed in that particular since his time. General Secretary of the Sustentation and Home Mission Society for six years; Custodian of Deeds, and Property Secretary for a subsequent period; Secretary of the Special Committee on Tongan affairs; member of a commission to visit Fiji; twice President of the New South Wales Conference, after a lengthy novitiate as its Secretary; Secretary for three years and subsequently President of the General Conference—there was no honour the Church had to bestow, and scarcely any responsibility it could confer, that it did not lay on the shoulders of one who never spared himself to do well the task entrusted to him. Apart from his ministerial qualifications, his business abilities won for him the respect of Government officials and professional and commercial men with whom his multiform duties brought him into association. His sudden death while on deputation work in the Newcastle district came as a shock to the whole community, and evoked at his funeral such a manifestation of wide-spread sympathy and personal affection as rarely falls to the lot of 'an humble Methodist preacher.'

Other two names may in a sense be bracketted together—those of William G. Taylor and Edward J. Rodd. These men were fellow-students at Richmond College, England; they came out together in 1871; they soon commanded attention by their special ability, although that ability lay in very different directions. They both served with distinction in Queensland as well as in New South Wales, and they attained the Presidential Chair almost in succession one to the other—Taylor in 1896 and Rodd in 1898. In other respects they have figured as twins, as it were.

It is difficult to say which commands the greater amount of Connexional respect and affection. But it is safe to say at the time of this writing there are no two men more loved and trusted in New South Wales Methodism than W. G. Taylor and E. J. Rodd. And yet how dissimilar these men in their physique and personality! W. G. Taylor is tall in stature, with a physiognomy not unlike that of William Booth, the illustrious General of the Salvation Army. And Taylor and Booth had this in common, that they both believed in evangelism, militant and aggressive; they had a passion for souls; to them the Church raised no monuments where it saved no souls. William Booth founded the Salvation Army; W. G. Taylor established the Central Methodist Mission, the forerunner of a whole series of similar evangelistic and philanthropic institutions in all the capitals of Australia and New Zealand, and in advance even of similar institutions in the mother church of Methodism in England. Mr. Taylor has told his own story well and graphically in *The Life-Story of an Australian Evangelist.* Now an old man, the fire still burns brightly in his soul. He is as much at home as ever in scenes of revival and salvation. If not 'the old man eloquent,' he is certainly the old man fervent.

There has possibly been no greater admirer of W. G. Taylor's work than his college chum and fellow-traveller, E. J. Rodd; and yet Rodd's tastes and aptitudes and work have all been in quite dissimilar directions. He has found his delight in his study and in the college class-room, among his books and his theological students; in preparing sermons and preaching them; in doing the work of a preacher and pastor and of a theological tutor. He has not written impassioned appeals such as his college chum could not but write—necessity was laid upon him. Rodd found employment for his literary gifts in exquisite spiritual meditations; in 'Musings in the Saddle and Study' by 'Rusticus' in his earlier days; in 'Musings of a Supernumerary' by E.J.R. in his later days. His people in every circuit have esteemed him; his theological students reverence him, his brethren love and trust him. He has shrunk from what may be called the wider Connexional responsibilities. And hence his voice has not been heard nor his presence felt as often in the General

Conference as it would have been to the advantage of that body had he been more frequently a member of it.

On its educational side, no greater service has been rendered to Methodism in New South Wales than that given by the Rev. C. J. Prescott, M.A., D.D. Dr. Prescott arrived in Australia in 1882, and was appointed to Parramatta as colleague to Rev. John Clifton, then superintendent of Parramatta circuit. But he had not been there more than a year and a half when he was designated to establish the 'Wesleyan Ladies' College' at Burwood. Taking charge in 1884 he remained there till 1900, when he was transferred to the Presidency and Head Mastership of Newington College. In both positions he has served his Church well; he did so in moulding and shaping hundreds of young lives in wholesome and useful directions. His work as an educationalist is recognized in all Churches in the State as well as in scholastic circles generally and in the University. But the range of his attainments and the quality of his scholastic work is surpassed by the beauty of his character and the gracious influence of his personality. His brethren often differ from him on matters of judgement and policy. Some of them think that he is frequently more optimistic than the facts warrant. But they cannot resist the personal charm and intrinsic goodness that are always in evidence, and that have won for him the personal affection of the hundreds of girls who passed under his hand at Burwood and the larger number of boys who have been his care at Newington. Criticism has never soured his spirit, and the financial burdens of the institutions under his control have not abated the ardour or dimmed the radiance of his ever cheery optimism.

A score or more of others might also be mentioned. James G. Middleton and Charles Jones entered the ministry in the same year as myself—1868. Neither of them reached the Chair, but both deserved to do so by the value of the work they did and the length of the period of their service. Jones had an exceptional record as Chairman of country districts; Middleton gave preliminary training to two or three score of young men who subsequently entered the ministry. John Clifton was a church-builder and revivalist; Henry W. T. Pincombe

witnessed works of grace on a considerable scale in the early days of his ministry, and for forty years did useful consolidating work in country, suburban, and city circuits. His enterprises were all sanely conceived, and were carried out in such a way as to avoid friction and difficulty to his successors—the latter a result only too frequently achieved.

In 1871 three men were received, all of whom attained front rank and held it—William H. Beale, James Woolnough, and Henry Youngman. W. H. Beale was a classmate of my own in the Kiama Sunday school in the early and middle sixties. He came to be recognized as one of the keenest critics and ablest debaters in the Conference—alert in seeing points of order and in elucidating disputed meanings of laws and rules. He rendered special service in the compilation of the new Book of Laws, and later on as the Convener of the Committee on Church Union as between the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches of Australia. James Woolnough was a man of enterprise and courage in both circuit and Connexional administration. He won his spurs especially as the General Secretary of the Home Mission and Sustentation Society, which office he filled for twenty years. He reorganized the finances of the Church during his régime and developed many useful schemes of relief and aggression. The present sound position of the Connexional finances of the Methodist Church of New South Wales is largely due to his enterprise and sagacity. Henry Youngman, the third of the trio, possessed to some extent a combination of the qualities of the other two. Of a legal mind and prudent in administrative work, he attained a leading position in Queensland Methodism, where for over thirty-three years he has been recognized as a sagacious counsellor and trusted leader. All three were honoured in being called to the Presidency, the latter holding the record of three terms of office in his own Annual Conference, in addition to a full term as President of the General Conference.

This chapter is headed 'Some of my Contemporaries.' It is obviously impossible that it should include mention of all with whom I have had personal or Connexional relationships during so extended a ministry. In the

galaxy of Presidents of the Conference before the consummation of Methodist Union, in addition to those already referred to, may be mentioned the venerable Samuel Wilkinson, the ex-Fijian Missionary William Moore; and brethren such as Richard Caldwell, Joseph Spence, and John Gardiner,—Gardiner ever racy, and at times exuberantly eloquent; Spence, always sagacious and rippling with quiet and genial humour; Caldwell, methodical and kindly and true as steel. Among the Presidents who succeeded one another after Methodist Union were Rainsford Bavin, W. Halse Rogers, J. G. Morris Taylor, John Penman, Benjamin Danks, Joseph Beale, W. E. Bromilow, D.D., B. J. Meek, F. Colwell, J. Woodhouse, W. Pearson, P. J. Stephen, J. Green, C.M.G., T. B. Holmes, and W. H. Howard, interspersed with two or three others whose names have already been mentioned or will be mentioned in subsequent pages. Rainsford Bavin had rendered good service in New Zealand, and successfully established the Newcastle Central Mission, after filling a term as Superintendent of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission. John Penman was one of the leaders in Primitive Methodism before Union, and with others of his colleagues in that ministry—such as J. W. Holden, M. Reavley, J. W. Leadley and J. E. Metcalfe—won a good degree in the ministry of the united Church. Dr. Bromilow was an ardent missionary, the pioneer Chairman of the New Guinea (Papua) district, and in the home work was singularly successful in his pastorates, only retiring from them to return to his much-loved work in Papua. J. G. M. Taylor attained front rank in the Connexional sphere, after thirty-eight years of successful circuit work—a forceful preacher, a prudent administrator, and eventually the unanimously chosen successor to the great office of General Secretary of the Home Mission and Sustentation Society. Joseph Woodhouse early achieved popularity and maintained it by the quality of his sermons, the geniality of his disposition, and the thoroughness of his work. Frederick Colwell crowned an active year as President by enlisting for chaplaincy service during the great war. In the same arena James Green distinguished himself and was awarded the imperial honour of C.M.G. Patrick John Stephen

has been an outstanding figure in Connexional and public life almost ever since his arrival in Australia in 1886, and served successfully in the Central Methodist mission. William Pearson and Thomas B. Holmes had well earned the presidential chair by the diligence with which they had served the Church in suburban and country charges, and in various spheres of Connexional activity. It was somewhat noteworthy also that of this galaxy of Presidents quite a number of them had graduated for the honour by pioneering service in their early days in the adjoining State of Queensland.

Speaking of Queensland, mention must also be made of two prominent men there with whom my association has been close and brotherly, and a source of mutual pleasure and profit. The Rev. G. E. Rowe, V.D., D.D., and the Rev. R. Stewart, D.D., are men whose names will not soon be forgotten in Queensland. Dr. Rowe was the founder of the Central Methodist Mission in Perth, W.A., and later of the Methodist Central Mission in Brisbane, Queensland. His unique qualifications for leadership in social and moral questions were fully recognized in Perth during his residence there. There is no question in Brisbane in regard to the same matter. In some respects he is a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them who do well. Robert Stewart was cast (the past tense is used, for he entered into life before this was written) in a different mould. But his energy was tireless; he was of the stuff that martyrs are made of. He toiled to secure King's College for the Methodism of Queensland. He succeeded in this, and then 'the weary wheels at last stood still'; and Robert Stewart was not, for God had taken him.

With a wreath laid upon the grave of another trusty and well-beloved friend this chapter must close. William Woolls Rutledge was one of the choicest souls that God had called of recent years into the ministry of the Methodist Church. His abilities were above the average, and his range was unusually comprehensive. He was an evangelist, and had wonderful success in soul-winning in Newton, Lithgow, Tamworth, and other places in his early ministry; he was an organizer and administrator, as was shown in his successful superintendency of the

Central Methodist Mission for three years. He was skilled in Conference debate and was foremost for many years in its discussions; he was an effective platform speaker, whose services were never sought in vain for social reform propaganda, for Protestant defence and aggression, and for Connexional and patriotic purposes. He was of the order of ecclesiastical statesmen, as was shown by his successful piloting of the Methodist Union movement in New South Wales. The last service he rendered—and rendered well—was in connection with the Centenary Thanksgiving Fund of 1910–15, the outstanding memorials of which are the two colleges specially benefitted by that Fund—Wesley College within the University, and Leigh College for the training of our theological students. But above all, the personal qualities of W. W. Rutledge were those in which his true greatness lay. Chivalrous to an unusual degree, charitable ever in his judgements, constant with the constancy of steel to his friendships, devout in his spirit, beautifully submissive in affliction and suffering, and supremely loyal to the Lord and Saviour of us all, W. W. Rutledge was one of whom it may truly be said that being dead he yet speaketh.

PART II

HISTORICAL AND GENERAL

XXII

THE EVOLUTION OF METHODISM IN AUSTRALASIA

In the interval under treatment in these 'Reminiscences'—especially in the period covered by my own personal connexion with the ministry—there has been a noteworthy development in every aspect of Methodist church life and organization in Australia. In 1868—the year of my reception as a probationer—there were four or five competing forms or types of Methodism in operation. Wesleyan, Primitive, Free Methodist, Bible Christian, and New Connexion Methodism were existent in one or other of the colonies. The last-named, if I mistake not, was represented by only two congregations in Victoria. But Primitive Methodism was a virile force in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. The Bible Christian form of Methodism was specially vigorous in South Australia and Victoria, and United Free Methodism was a small but aggressive factor in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. Wesleyan Methodism was, in all the colonies, the preponderating organization. But it was represented connexionally by but one Conference for all Australasia. Year by year the representatives of the ministry of the Church, including New Zealand and the Islands, met in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide or Hobart, and transacted all the affairs of the Church; made the ministerial appointments for the year for all the circuits in Australasia; and generally exercised a pastoral and economic supervision over the affairs of the Church in all parts of this area of the Southern world. It began to be felt that this was an impossible condition of things in view of the growth of the Church and the long and frequent absence from their work of the delegates annually assembling in the principal Australian cities. Not infrequently the number would be small, owing to cost and conditions

of travel, and the responsibility was too onerous to continue to be borne.

To whom the suggestion is due of an Annual Conference for each State (called Colony then), and of a General Conference with legislative powers meeting triennially, does not appear on the records. It seems to have originated at a Melbourne District Meeting as early as 1858, and to have then been dropped. But at two or three successive Conferences from 1868 onwards the plan was discussed and re-discussed. In 1868 a ' plan for Annual and General Conferences ' was remitted for consideration to the several District Meetings. The reports from these were presented to the Conference of 1869, held in Sydney. That Conference resolved ' that the time had not yet come for further action in this matter.' This resolution was re-affirmed two years later, in the Conference held in Hobart Town (then thus called) in 1871. In 1872 definite action was resolved upon, and a resolution was agreed to : ' That the time has arrived when a plan for Annual and General Conferences should be adopted by the Conference.' It was resolved that, for the present, four Annual Conferences should be formed, viz. : (1) New South Wales and Queensland Conference, to include the South Sea Missions ; (2) Victoria and Tasmania Conference ; (3) South Australia Conference ; (4) New Zealand Conference. A plan was provisionally adopted, and it was resolved that if the plan were approved by the British Conference it should be brought into speedy operation. It was at that Conference (1872) that I was received into ' full connexion ' ; hence the new order practically synchronizes with my full-fledged ministerial career. At the ensuing Conference (1873) it was recorded : ' The Conference of 1872 having resolved in favour of the plan of Annual and General Conferences, and the English Conference having assented to the same, it is resolved that the joint plan come into operation forthwith.' Arrangements were accordingly made for the several Annual Conferences to meet the following year respectively at Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Christchurch (N.Z.) ; also for the first General Conference on an elective basis to meet in Melbourne in May, 1875.

It is certainly a tribute to the ecclesiastical statesmanship of the men of those early years that they were able to draw

up a plan that proved so workable at the time, and that has not undergone any material amendment since then. It has frequently been said that Methodism anticipated Australian federation by thirty-five years, and practically showed the way in which the latter could be effected. State rights are carefully preserved, and autonomy within the local sphere is effectually guarded ; whilst provision is made for a governing body supreme in all matters that pertain to the realm of general legislation and of projects common to all concerned.

With the General Conferences prior to 1888 this story is not specially concerned. They dealt mainly with affairs internal to the Church and of local interest. The first, held in Melbourne in 1875, was largely occupied with problems connected with the Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund, concerning which the Rev. John Cope was regarded as an authority, and on which he and the professional actuaries held different views. But that Conference also, for the first time, made a bold and clear pronouncement on the subject of lay representation in the Conferences, both Annual and General ; and resolved that by and with the consent of the English Wesleyan Methodist Conference the constitution previously agreed to should be amended so as to provide for equal lay representation in both the Annual and General Conferences, with certain reservations of pastoral business in the Annual Conferences to be transacted only by the ministerial members. This was a great step forward, and entitles the 1875 General Conference to an honourable place in the annals of Australasian Methodism.

In 1878 the General Conference met in Sydney, in York Street church, and was graced with the presence of the Rev. Dr. Gervase Smith, of London, as the representative of British Wesleyan Methodism. For the first time, laymen were present in equal numbers with ministers. The Rev. John Watsford was elected President, and occupied the position with singular dignity, self-restraint, and courtesy. During the sessions a long and animated debate took place on the conditions or tests of church membership. It was known that Mr. Watsford held clear and strong views on this subject ; but never once during the discussion did his restraint and courtesy fail

him. Moreover, his presence and spirit secured a gracious atmosphere that was felt very sensibly throughout all the proceedings of the Conference. It was at this Conference that for the first time the doors were thrown open to visitors, and the proceedings conducted in the presence of all who chose to be present. It was resolved to adhere to the class-meeting as the test of membership, and to institute a communicants' roll in every Church. Again foreign missionary matters occupied a large amount of attention. The Connexional funds, especially the Supernumerary Fund, underwent minute and critical examination; and mention was made of the necessity of special organization and effort to cope with the spiritual needs of far Northern Queensland. At the ensuing General Conference, held in Adelaide, in 1881, the Rev. James S. Waugh, D.D., was elected President. That Conference was shadowed by the tragic incident of the wreck of the *Tararua* and the drowning of five members of the New Zealand Conference who were travelling to be present at it.

In 1884 the General Conference met for the first time in New Zealand. Christchurch, in the province of Canterbury, was the appointed place of meeting. The Rev. Joseph H. Fletcher was called to the chair by an almost unanimous vote. It was fitting that this should be; for, in addition to his eminent personal qualities and his record of service in Australia, he had served with distinction in New Zealand in the early days of his ministry; and as President and Head Master of Wesley College, Auckland, had earned distinction for himself and his Church in the early days of colonization and in the heroic period of the native wars in New Zealand. The 1884 Conference was noteworthy in that the first official intimation of impending trouble in Tonga was given. Unhappily, the Conference declined to treat the intimation seriously. It was largely occupied with affairs nearer home. It had problems and responsibilities in Australia and New Zealand to deal with. The reports from all the mission fields told of harmony and progress. Tonga was disturbed, so it was said. But surely this was a local and personal squabble that might be trusted to blow over. The loyalty and fidelity of all the brethren concerned might be relied upon. The threat

of secession was so much hot air. Nothing serious would come of it. Thus the Conference mused. In any event it was near closing time, and nothing could be done. Unhappily, things were left to shape their own course—a course that led to disunion and disaster. It is always easy to be wise after the event; but a little more time and thought and decision might have saved months of agony in one of the fairest of our South Sea mission fields. In passing, it may be said that the lesson has not been entirely lost. The circumstance has been remembered with profit when trouble has loomed on the horizon in Fiji and Samoa and even nearer home.

With the General Conference of 1888 I became more closely connected with the legislative body of the Church. The Conference convened in Wesley Church, Melbourne, and was presided over by the Rev. J. C. Symons of Victoria. It held several memorable sessions, and its public meetings—now called 'demonstrations'—attracted large and enthusiastic audiences. The condition of the Church's membership again gave occasion for serious and prayerful consideration. But the burning questions of the Conference were the disruption of Tonga and the request of New Zealand for separation and independence. The discussion on the latter subject was long and able. New Zealand was earnest in its request, and its delegation presented its case in a series of very able speeches. Some of its delegates—notably the Revs. Joseph Berry, W. J. Williams, and J. J. Lewis—were among the ablest debaters in the Conference. But Australia was loth to part with its daughter across the Tasman Sea, and the proposition failed. Be it remarked that I was the only member of the New South Wales delegation to vote with the New Zealanders. At a General Conference sixteen years later I was personally thankful that New Zealand was still in the Australasian Connexion.

But I shall not anticipate.

The other subject of importance at the Conference was the Tongan secession—a secession that was regarded with poignant regret by every member and practically by every Methodist in Australia. Four-fifths of the members and adherents of our church in Tonga had followed the King and Premier in the establishment of what was designated

the Methodist Free Church of Tonga; and the Rev. J. B. Watkin had also gone over with the secessionists. To do justice to Mr. Watkin it should be stated that he claimed still to be a loyal Methodist and that his action was dictated by a sincere desire to save the Church of his fathers while serving it for the time being in a separate organization. Unhappily, persecution had followed the secession. Some of the faithful remnant who adhered to the old loyalty had been deported, and the condition of the remainder had been made very trying and perplexing. The Rev. James Egan Moulton (subsequently D.D.) had stood to his post, and with singular devotion and self-denial was shepherding the decimated flock and guarding them as far as possible from official oppression. This is not the time or place to enter upon a judicial consideration of an episode in island missionary history that one would fain allow to sink into oblivion. But it was a very live question at the Conference of 1888 and at many subsequent Conferences; and even yet (in 1921) the breach has not been healed.

In 1888 the Conference was eager for peace at almost any price. In some quarters Mr. Moulton was regarded as a provocative party to the quarrel, and his presence in Tonga was held to be a barrier to reunion. He had done a magnificent work in that group, and was still engaged in tutorial and translation work from which all parties in and all parts of Tonga were deriving benefit. For the establishment of Tubou College and for the volume of translation work he had done for the Tongan people he deserved the best the General Conference could do for him, as well as the lasting and practical gratitude of the Tongans of all creeds. But with wonderful self-abnegation Mr. Moulton expressed to the General Conference his willingness to leave Tonga in the interests of peace and of the reconciliation it was desired to effect. In a wave of optimistic gratitude the Conference regarded this as the solution of the whole problem, and rose at the call of the President and sang the Doxology! It was suddenly done and, as the issue proved, all too soon. The Rev. Dr. George Brown was appointed Special Commissioner to Tonga, Chairman of the District, and practically general plenipotentiary. It was hoped that his geniality and

tact, together with his wide experience in dealing with native races and with missionary affairs in general, would soon end the difficulty and weld the broken pieces into one compact Tongan Methodism. The Conference meant well. Dr. Brown went down and stayed a year or more. But the breach remained unhealed and continues so to this day. The beginning of strife is much easier than the pacification of it.

With the view of facilitating the reunion so ardently desired—and so confidently expected as the result of its action as above related—the General Conference resolved to meet in two years' time; hence it again assembled in 1890, Sydney being the place of meeting. The Rev. William Kelynack, D.D., was elected to the chair. The Tongan question again came up; but the action of the previous Conference had proved practically fruitless, save and except that persecution had ceased and kindlier relations had been established between the members of the two Churches in the group. The Government there had also resolved on a policy of non-interference and of absolute religious liberty. This, in itself, was a matter for gratitude.

Again the membership question gave rise to long discussion. It was freely stated that the class-meeting test was practically obsolete; nevertheless the Conference was desirous of maintaining fellowship in some form as the determining condition of recognition in regard to the membership of the Church. The Rev. John Watsford, on the one part, and the Rev. Dr. Fitchett on the other, were earnestly intent on reaching some agreement whereby the conscientious scruples of many good people could be reconciled with the requirement for personal confession of salvation and social Christian fellowship as expressed in the class-meeting. Many suggestions and proposals were submitted and discussed. At length it was agreed that attendance at a monthly meeting of all members in a given church or society should be reckoned as meeting in class. Provision was made for pastoral oversight, and insistence was placed upon regular participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Thus effort was made to maintain spirituality in the membership of the Church and to provide for regular fellowship within its fold. How

far these efforts were successful must be left an open question.

At this Conference some important constitutional amendments were made, principally at the instance of a committee of the New South Wales Conference of which I had been the convener. Possibly the most important was a regulation giving power to the Annual Conferences to legislate within certain constitutional limits on a variety of matters, such as election of President and Secretary by the Ministerial or Representative Conference; the constitution, powers and functions of the Stationing Committee; Sunday-school government; and control of local Conference funds. A big burning question was that of Inter-conferential exchanges. The General Conference of 1888 had asserted its right and power to direct the transfer of ministers from one Conference to another without regard to the personal willingness or convenience of the ministers concerned. It held that all ministers of the Church were subject to appointment in any part of the area under the jurisdiction of the General Conference, and that at all costs the principle of the free interchange between one Annual Conference and another must be maintained; this, it held, was but another way of providing for the healthy flow of the life-blood of the Church. Hence in a heroic mood and almost at its last moment, it directed the transfer of two prominent ministers from Australia to New Zealand in exchange for two from that Dominion to Australia. Similarly, four or five ministers were to shift willy nilly from New South Wales to South Australia or from Victoria to Queensland and vice versa. But the result of that heroic action was so unhappy that the General Conference of 1890 did not attempt to repeat the performance. Some prominent members, secure in their own positions, were in favour of forcing the issue at all costs. But much talk ended in little result, except in yielding the important principle that, as far as possible, these changes must only be made with the knowledge and consent of the parties concerned. It is certainly to the interest of the smaller Conferences, such as Queensland and Western Australia, that interchanges should be made from time to time. But it can hardly be denied that the general benefit is not promoted by pushing an academic

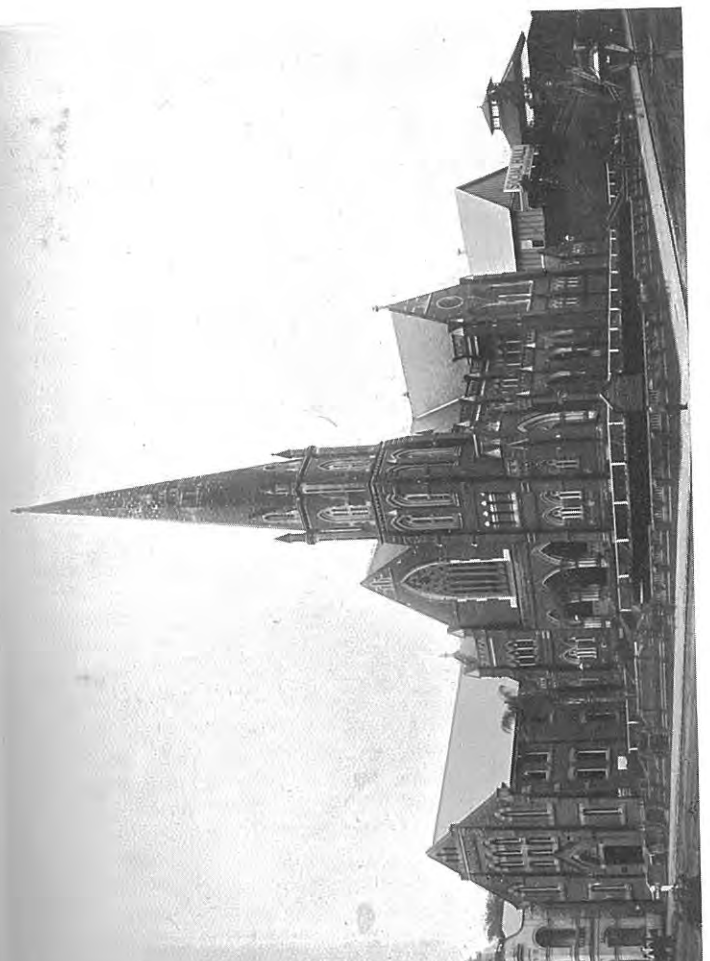
principle to the length adopted by the 1888 Conference, and advocated in some quarters at almost every succeeding session.

It is to the credit of the 1890 Conference that it gave sanction to the establishment of the new mission to Papua, British New Guinea.

XXIII

GENERAL CONFERENCES 1894 to 1901

Before the General Conference of 1894 assembled in Adelaide in the month of May that year, the Rev. Dr. Kelynack (President in 1890) had passed away. The quadrennium had exacted a heavy toll in the ranks of the senior ministers, and specially of those who had played a prominent part in the deliberations of previous General Conferences. William Kelynack, the gifted and eloquent preacher; John C. Symons, also a former President, a man of affairs and a wise and sagacious counsellor; Joseph H. Fletcher, with his unique personality and rare culture; William L. Binks, a tower of strength in the early days of Victoria and South Australian Methodism; Thomas Williams and William Moore, pioneer missionaries in Fiji and subsequently Presidents of the Conferences they belonged to; Jabez B. Waterhouse, who had filled with distinction the office of Secretary of the early General Conferences; John Harcourt and W. G. Stephinson—men of consular rank in Victoria and New South Wales respectively—all these honoured names, with others, were inscribed on the 'In Memoriam' roll of the 1894 Conference. It was singular that no less than three of the immediate ex-Presidents were removed in one short interval. There was thus no ex-President present; and the opening exercises devolved upon the Rev. J. B. Stephenson, the President for that year of the South Australia Conference. It is bare justice to say that the address he delivered was one of the choicest and most impressive of the whole series of such deliverances over a long period of years. To fill the place of so rare an orator as William Kelynack was no easy matter; but J. B. Stephenson amply sustained the traditions of the occasion both in the quality of his address and the spirit in which it was delivered. The Rev. W. Morley, D.D., of New Zealand, was elected to the



METHODIST CHURCH, ALBERT STREET, BRISBANE, WHERE THE GENERAL CONFERENCES OF 1901 AND 1913 WERE HELD.

[*facc* p 153

chair, with the Rev. H. T. Burgess, LL.D., of South Australia, as Secretary. Under these two capable men the business of the Conference was well guided. It may also be said that the hospitalities extended to the Conference by the people of Adelaide exceeded anything before realised in that connexion, and made the Conference a pleasant memory in the minds of all who were privileged to attend it.

The outstanding feature of the General Conference of 1894 was the decision arrived at with regard to Methodist Union. Ever since 1890 the subject had been actively discussed in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland; and it was generally felt that the time for definite action had arrived. But the keen difference of opinion expressed in those States was reflected in the long and able debate which preceded the taking of the vote. The Revs. W. Williams, of Victoria; J. B. Stephenson and R. M. Hunter, of South Australia; W. Clarke, G. Lane, and R. Sellors, of New South Wales, were among the foremost and ablest of the debaters against the proposed union. But they were outdone in argument and appeal by such masters in debate as Dr. Fitchett and Dr. Watkin, of Victoria; W. W. Rutledge and Mr. W. Robson, of New South Wales; Henry Youngman, of Queensland; Dr. Burgess and C. T. Newman, of South Australia; and a galaxy of stars from New Zealand, including Joseph Berry, W. J. Williams, J. J. Lewis and Paul Fairclough. The result was an overwhelming vote in favour of the principle of union and a declaration that it would be 'for the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.' The Conference went further, and adopted provisionally a basis of union, and empowered and authorized each Annual Conference 'to carry into effect, within its own bounds, at the earliest period found practicable, and on the constitutional basis thus defined, union with any or all of the other Methodist Churches.' It also declared in favour of the creation of a Federal Council of Methodist Churches in each State as a piece of machinery to foster the spirit of union and to prepare for its consummation. But it went further so as to safeguard the rights of the minority, and directed that the final vote by which union was to be consummated in any Annual Conference should

be carried by a majority of two-thirds of those present and voting on the occasion. Thus Adelaide 1894 made momentous Methodist history.

A change of venue transpired in connexion with the holding of the next ensuing General Conference. Auckland, New Zealand, was the appointed trysting-place, and thither the tribes went up in the month of November, 1897. The Rev. Dr. Morley, as retiring President, opened the proceedings in a characteristic speech in which he struck a clear and almost dominant note on behalf of 'the imperial cause of foreign missions.' The Rev. Dr. Burgess succeeded him in the occupancy of the chair. It is needless to say that he amply sustained the high traditions of the office. The Rev. G. Lane, D.D., was elected Secretary. Methodist Union was again under consideration. The negotiations in most of the Annual Conferences were still going on, but in none of them had finality been reached. The affairs of the Supernumerary Fund were the subject of prolonged and anxious consideration. The actuaries had sounded a disquieting note, and annuities and benefits were again cut down. Many alterations were made in the laws and regulations of the Church. The creation of a new Conference in Western Australia was sanctioned. In preparation for a conversation on the work of God I was requested to draw up a paper showing the progress of Methodism in Australasia since the holding of the last New Zealand General Conference—an interval of thirteen years. The paper thus prepared and read is too long to be given here in extenso. It appeared subsequently in most of the Connexional papers in Australia and New Zealand. The concluding paragraph ran thus:

'Within the colonies of Australasia then, I find that since last assembling in New Zealand, the ministry of our Church has increased by 170, or 33 per cent.; the membership by 21,064, or 62 per cent.;—viz. from 34,047 to 55,111, and attendants upon its ministry by 108,131—or 40 per cent.—viz. from 250,500 to 358,430. But the census always discloses more Wesleyans than our returns account for, and brings out the satisfactory result of a proportionate increase greater even than that of the population as a whole.

'These returns are encouraging. They should inspire gratitude and excite hope; they suggest possibilities that lie still before us, and should bring home to every member of the Conference the conviction: "The best of all is, God is with us."'

Events of great consequence intervened between the close of the 1897 Conference and the opening of the ensuing one in Brisbane in 1901. The Federation of the Australian colonies had become an actual fact, and the Commonwealth of Australia was inaugurated with befitting ceremony on the first of January, 1901. Their Royal Highnesses the (then) Duke and Duchess of York—now the King and Queen of Great Britain—visited Australia a few months later, to officially open the Federal Parliament, and while in Australia they paid special visits to the several States, receiving in each place a tumultuous welcome. Their visit to Brisbane synchronized with the meeting of the General Conference in that city; and to a considerable extent the Conference was overshadowed by the ceremonies attendant on the Royal visit. This, from the Methodist point of view, was the more to be regretted from the fact that this was the first occasion of the holding of a General Conference in Brisbane. The good folk of that city had strained every nerve to show hospitality to the delegates and to make the occasion one to serve the best interests of Queensland Methodism. But the shifting of the seat of meeting to one of the suburban churches (West End) instead of the central and well-appointed church in Albert Street, did not help the purpose for which the General Conference appointed itself to meet in Brisbane; and no little disappointment, not unmixed with indignation, was expressed on that account. In most other respects Brisbane rose to the occasion and honoured itself in honouring the Conference.

By a very decisive vote the Presidency was accorded to the Rev. George Lane, D.D., who at the time—and for the second time—was President of the New South Wales Conference. The retiring address of the ex-President (Rev. Dr. Burgess) was characterized in the vote of thanks accorded to him as 'eloquent, statesmanlike and practical.' It may be said in passing that while Dr. Burgess in his prolonged ministry never aimed at being 'eloquent' in the

usual sense of that term, he seldom, if ever, failed in being practical, and usually rose in his outlook and administration to the level of statesmanship. In an unusually long term of service he has been a tower of strength to Australasian Methodism in general and to South Australian Methodism in particular. His volume of Studies on the Lord's Prayer entitled *Our Father*, is a chaste and devout exposition that has brought comfort and help to many pulpits and many hearts in Australia.

The establishment of the Australian Commonwealth was duly recognized by the Conference in a resolution recording 'its devout and grateful recognition of the good hand of God in so ordering the course of national affairs as to bring about the establishment, under the Crown of Great Britain, of the Commonwealth of Australia.' It reflected some current controversies in its declaration 'that no alteration in the form of the Coronation Oath and Declaration will be acceptable that shall relax in any degree the safeguards which ensure the Protestant succession to the Throne of Great Britain and its Dependencies.' The Conference also claimed: 'That in all matters in which special recognition is extended to the Churches or their representatives the principles of religious equality shall be observed, and precedence be accorded solely on the ground of the numerical position of the Churches, apart altogether from any titles or designation by which the heads thereof may be known.' The latter part of this resolution was suggested by the claims that were set up in certain quarters by or on behalf of Cardinal Moran in virtue of his cardinalship or princedom of the R. C. Church. Sanction was also given for an appeal throughout Australia at the proper time on behalf of the adequate establishment of Methodism in the Federal Capital wheresoever the capital should be established.

It goes without saying that the various enterprises and responsibilities of the Methodist Church in Australasia again underwent review and treatment. Significance also attached to the Conference in that prior to it Methodist Union had been effected in South Australia and Queensland and some new elements were thus introduced into its membership. The vexed question of interconferential exchanges again gave rise to lively discussion. But the big question

before the Conference was the condition and prospects of the Supernumerary Fund. An alarming report had been presented by Mr. Actuary Graham, and some members were disposed to accept his gloomy view and drastic recommendations. A committee of the Conference (of which committee I was Secretary) gave patient and prolonged consideration to the matter, and made a series of recommendations. The subject is treated more fully in another part of this volume. Suffice it to say that the Conference resolved to appoint a Special Committee, comprised of representatives from most of the States of Australia and also from New Zealand, to institute a thorough inquiry, confer with the Actuary, and take such steps as it might deem wise or necessary. The Conference also appointed the Rev. Dr. Morley to be the Managing Treasurer of the fund as from the following year. Up to that time Dr. Morley had been a member of the New Zealand Conference, and for many years its most prominent member. His severance from New Zealand was regarded by his confreres of that Dominion with deep concern and regret. One of the leading representatives protested almost tearfully: 'You are taking away our statesman.' It was a tribute that confirmed the Conference in the choice it had made.

If, thus far, the names and services of prominent laymen have not been mentioned, it is not that there has not been an adequate appreciation of the place they fill and the work they do in Australian Methodism. In every General Conference since the first, and in every Annual Conference since 1876, lay representatives have sat side by side and in equal numbers with the ministers. They have brought much practical knowledge and sound judgement to bear upon the several matters under discussion from time to time; and in their loyalty to the constitutional polity and doctrinal basis of the Church they have been, if anything, more absolute than the ministers. Withal there has been a commendable spirit of progress, and every forward movement of value has secured their enthusiastic support. Prominent among the names that recur in the retrospect of the period under review are those of the Hon. (subsequently Sir) F. W. Holder of South Australia; Hon. James Campbell, Victoria; Hon. W. Robson, New South Wales;

Sir Arthur Rutledge and Hon. F. T. Brentnall, of Queensland. It is significant that three of these—Robson, Rutledge, and Brentnall—had in their early years been in the ministry of the Church. But although for good and sufficient reasons they had entered into commercial or professional spheres, they maintained their connexion with, and loyalty to, the Church in unabated strength. Possibly they served it all the more usefully as laymen. The Hon. E. Vickery would never accept nomination to the General Conference, and scarcely ever attended an Annual Conference. But he rendered service in the Connexional and financial and evangelistic spheres that will never be forgotten. His outstanding monument is in the Vickery Settlement buildings in Sydney, and in the endowments of the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies. His sons—Mr. Ebenezer Vickery and Mr. Joseph Vickery—have endeavoured worthily to fill their father's place since his decease; and his daughters have not only inherited their share of his wealth, but in unabated measure have exemplified his spirit in a generous support of the missionary, philanthropic, and evangelistic agencies of their father's Church. Another most useful layman was Mr. T. H. England, B.A.—a city lawyer who gave unstintingly of his time, strength, and ability to every enterprise of the denomination in his own neighbourhood and in the larger sphere of Connexional life and work. His early demise, as also that of Mr. E. Vickery, Junr., was a loss of no small magnitude to his Church. In earlier years laymen like Hon. E. Webb, Mr. T. P. Reeve, Mr. W. Davies, Messrs. J. and E. Dawson, and Mr. P. P. Fletcher were useful workers, prudent counsellors, and generous givers. In the same category, or a little later, Mr. W. H. McClelland, Mr. G. Crawshaw and Hon. Jacob Garrard ought to be included; whilst a younger generation is well represented by such laymen as G. J. Waterhouse, B. H. Chapman, R. S. Callaghan, P. N. Slade, H. M. Hawkins, Dr. McClelland, and F. Cull. In the wider sphere of General Conference representation, Methodism has been rich in the possession of laymen of the character and devotion of F. J. Gato, J. W. Eggleston, R. Beckett, W. B. McCutcheon, Drs. Wilkinson and Gault of Victoria; J. Ashton, A. Langsford, D. Nock, and Hon. A. Catt, of

South Australia; Hon. A. Gibson, Hon. W. H. Barnes, Mr. G. I. Bourne of Queensland; Hon. W. M. Williams and Mr. B. Archer of Tasmania; Mr. J. P. Walton and J. W. Langsford of Western Australia. This list is by no means exclusive. Many more ought to be mentioned. It is sufficient to say that the foregoing have been among the most prominent and useful in the Connexional councils and general work as it strikes the public eye of the Methodist Church of Australasia.

XXIV

A WIDE-SPREAD CONTROVERSY

WHEN the General Conference closed in Brisbane in May, 1901, there were few, if any, who anticipated the stormy period that would intervene between the one Conference and the next. The Special Committee on the Supernumerary Fund had been appointed with a view of settling all matters in doubt concerning that Fund, and ensuring an era of quiet for years to come so far as Conference discussions were concerned. In view of what followed it may be well to give the names of the members of that Special Committee. They were: Rev. W. Morley, D.D., New Zealand; Revs. E. W. Nye, W. Williams, F.L.S., J. G. Wheen, and Messrs. J. W. Eggleston, F. J. Cato, Victoria; Revs. J. E. Carruthers, J. Woolnough, Hon. W. Robson, M.L.C., Mr. T. H. England, B.A., New South Wales; Revs. C. T. Newman and C. Martin, South Australia; Rev. J. G. Wheen, Secretary. To write in full the history of the doings of that Committee and of the Committee of Enquiry that followed it under appointment by the General Conference of 1904, would require a volume. The correspondence that passed, and the pamphlets and reports, would run into over a thousand pages. The matter at stake was found to be one of almost vital importance, especially in relation to the Church's duty to the ministers who had grown old in its service, and to the widows of those who had passed away. As the result of over forty years of the operations of the Fund created by the Church for that purpose, all obligations up to date had been met, and a fund of over £230,000 accumulated. But the actuary engaged to give a report had reported that the Fund was practically insolvent; that there existed a deficiency of over £100,000; that annuities must be again reduced, this time by 20 per cent; that second wives must be eliminated from the operations

of the Fund; that furniture grants on superannuation must be abolished; that there must in the future be fewer superannuations; that contributions and subscriptions to the Fund must be increased by 20 per cent; and that a special fund must be raised of £50,000. To one at least, if not to more, of the members of the Committee the actuary declared that even if all these requirements of his were carried out there would be no improvement in the allowances of the Fund for twenty-five or possibly even fifty years! That was the problem the Committee was set to solve.

To one member at least of that Committee it was evident there were considerations and factors the professional actuary had omitted from his view of the case. Here was a fund the creation and care of a living and continuing entity—the Church. Up to the present that fund had done more than fulfil its immediate responsibilities. It had met all claims upon it and had increased its capital annually by proportions of from 30 to 45 per cent. of its income. During the dark days—so called—over which the actuary especially extended his investigations it had grown at the rate of from £9,000 to £10,000 per year. How long was this to go on? When were these accumulations to cease? On what sound Connexional or commercial basis could such a fund be deemed to be insolvent? If the actuary was bound by the strict actuarial principle, then we held that that principle was inapplicable to the provision made by a living Church, and out of harmony with its financial provision for all its other enterprises and obligations. The actuarial formula is: 'The fund so formed (i.e. by annual contributions and accrued interest) will meet all the obligations as they fall due, and when the last life fails the fund too will be exhausted.' But the Church (we held) has no 'last life' to provide for. It is a living institution—a continuing entity. The actuarial basis, if applied to it, would require a constant accumulation as the years went by, until it would run into a million or more, and create a menace of another kind by the insecurity of capital and the growing antipathy to millionarism.

As the onus of this controversy fell, especially in the early stages, almost entirely on myself, it will become

necessary to use the first personal pronoun more frequently than one cares for. In anticipation of the meeting of the Committee in Melbourne, I gave such attention to the problem as I was able to do in the midst of many other and pressing duties. At the start of this I projected two or three tentative proposals, and eventually published an article in *The Methodist* (Sydney) entitled 'The Supernumerary Fund: The Way Out.' The basic principle of this was the division of the fund into two branches, after the pattern of the provision made by the English Wesleyan Methodist Church; the personal subscription of the ministers to be treated actuarially, and the annual contribution of the circuits to be treated as 'an annual and perpetual provision by the living Church,' and to be regarded as an annual, rather than an actuarial fund. These proposals or suggestions were accompanied by a series of calculations extending over a period of years, and showing how the existing provision could be maintained on the existing annual income, without any abatement of benefits or any diminution in the realized capital. On the contrary it was shown that there would be a gradual increase in proportion to the growth of the Church. It is scarcely necessary to say that the proposal did not receive the endorsement of the actuary, and it was rejected by the committee with a unanimity only broken by the vote of its propounder. An earnest effort was made to secure absolute unanimity. The one dissentient was appealed to in the committee and outside of it not to mar the concord. But with clear conviction of the soundness of his premises and absolute faith in the reliability and continuity of the Church, the dissentient declined to cancel his dissent. Hence the report went forth; the allowances were reduced, the subscriptions were increased. The benefits to supernumeraries and widows were taken from; the burdens placed upon ministers and circuits were added to.

Thereupon ensued a controversy that, to be effective, required to be as wide as Australia and as far reaching as New Zealand and the mission fields. It will be seen at once how unequal were the conditions of this contest. The committee had official appointment and backing. The appliances of the office were at its disposal; any

expense incurred could be charged to expenses' account. On the other hand, I stood alone. Correspondence had to be carried out on my personal responsibility. Any expense incurred I had to bear, or to look to personal friends to supply. In this connexion it may be recorded that eventually—after some years and when the day was practically won—that expense was made good by the kindness of supporters. But the work had to be done, and the money found for printing, pamphleteering, postage, and visits to other States in explanation and advocacy. Before me as I write stands a bulky volume of 820 pages of printed matter, labelled 'Supernumerary Fund controversy 1901–7.' It contains leaflets, pamphlets, reports, issued by one side or the other during the controversy; and even at that does not include a mass of matter that found publication in the Connexional journals and in reprints therefrom. Nor does it contain—it could not—the private correspondence not only over Australasia, but with Church authorities and Connexional papers in England, America, Canada, and South Africa. As wholly responsible, in those early years, for the one side in the discussion, everything possible was done by me to secure the fullest and widest information bearing on the subject of Church and other schemes for superannuation. Nor did I confine my attention to Methodist Church authorities; I was in communication with leaders in other Churches, and with experts in banking and commercial institutions, and in that way made acquaintances and formed friendships of life-long interest and value.

The discussions begun in the committee room were thus carried out into the wider arena of the Church courts and Conferences of Australasian Methodism, and came to a head, as it were, in the Annual Conferences of 1904. By large majorities the principles of my proposals were approved in the New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, and New Zealand Conferences; Victoria and South Australia disapproved and gave allegiance to the committee's report and recommendations. It was therefore evident that a big battle would ensue at the General Conference in Melbourne in 1904.

Over that Conference the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, B.A., LL.D., was elected to preside. Melbourne treated its

visitors to one of its chilliest spells of wintry weather, and at one or other period of the Conference more than half its members were down with influenza colds. Overcoats and mufflers were in requisition all through the sessions, and gas heaters were installed to make the atmosphere of the church endurable. But—confining attention just now to the debate on the Supernumerary Fund—this did not in any way cool the ardour of the Conference. Notices of motion with regard to the policy to be adopted were given in embarrassing if not with humorous abundance. But all these were relegated to a committee to decide the order and place of them; and eventually it was agreed to take the whole issue upon a motion to be submitted by Rev. Dr. Morley, and an amendment to be proposed by myself, equal rights as to reply being accorded to the mover of both motion and amendment.

In moving his resolution Dr. Morley spoke for an hour, advocating the retention of the actuarial basis and confirming the action of the actuary and the committee. My amendment was practically for an alteration of policy and the division of the fund into annuitant and auxiliary branches on respectively an actuarial and Connexional basis. My address in support of this taxed the patience of the Conference for two hours, but was listened to with interest all through. The debate that followed lasted for four days, and brought out the full debating strength of the Conference. At length, the division showed a majority of nine in favour of the amendment, thus putting the seal of Conference approval on the prolonged effort to secure some amount of freedom from rigid professionalism in the policy of the fund. But no sooner was the result of the voting announced than an effort was made to secure a compromise and to arrive at a *via media* that should satisfy all parties. A committee of conciliation was appointed, the members being respectively nominated by Dr. Morley and myself. That committee met in a delightful spirit. 'It was like a love-feast,' some one said. Provision was made for the restoration of the benefits that had been reduced, and for other adjustments; and it was recommended that a Committee of Enquiry be appointed to go fully into

the whole matter in the interval prior to the next General Conference, and the personnel of that committee was agreed upon. As originally thus agreed there were eleven in favour of the view the Conference majority had voted for, and nine of the other view. 'But,' said some one, 'there are no sides now. We are all of one mind.' Under this delightful view of the case I was induced to surrender one of my supporters in favour of a strong advocate of the other side. It was not long, unhappily, before we found that 'sides' were as pronounced as before. The Committee of Enquiry was appointed. Its members fought for their respective views with tenacity and ability during the ensuing three years. At length they brought up two different sets of recommendations, for each of which ten voted; embodying these in a report of eighty pages—a report which will be found *in extenso* in the Minutes of the General Conference of 1907. Unhappily the controversy was still unsettled. But some valuable practical results came out of it. The 1907 Conference was wearied with the prolonged discussion. Gladly it accepted the terms of a compromise agreed upon by the members of the Committee of Enquiry, providing for the restoration of amounts deducted in 1902, an increase in furniture grants, and a provision for orphan children; also for a book-keeping account of the operation of the two branches of the Fund as if they were already separated. Nominally the Fund is continued on an actuarial basis; but the General Conference has exercised its own discretion as to the extent to which it has followed actuarial recommendations. It may, indeed, be safely asserted that the thraldom of actuarialism in relation to the Fund has been broken, and the Conference has learned that there are other factors in the constitution of the Church and the operation of its funds that do not appertain to any voluntary organization, such as a secular life insurance association.

The latest instances of this were given in the 1913 and 1920 Conferences. To both of these an actuarial report and balance sheet of the fund was presented—each, it may be said, couched in a different spirit from the gloomy and drastic report of 1901. The fund had immensely improved, despite the prognostication of 1901

that there could be no improvement for twenty-five or even fifty years. It had improved notwithstanding that annuities had not been reduced and other benefits cut out as directed, and that no special fund had been raised. The actuary even went so far in 1913 as to say that there might be a slight improvement in the allowances, but that great care would still have to be taken. But the Conference of 1913 went boldly for substantial increases such as, according to one member versed in actuarial science, would land it in disaster. Nevertheless, to the great relief and comfort of annuitants and the great satisfaction of the circuits, the Conference did the heroic thing. And so completely did results justify its action, and so remarkably did the fund thrive despite these dismal forebodings, that the Conference of 1920 went more than one better than any of its predecessors, and (contrary to actuarial advice, and despite the strong opposition of the conservative but most estimable treasurers) increased annuities by 25 per cent. and furniture grants by 50 per cent.—thus bringing up the benefits of the Methodist Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund of Australasia to a higher level than ever before obtained, and possibly to a higher level than any other Church in Australasia. One instance will suffice to show the measure of improvement as the result of this long and (in the early days) painful discussion. An annuity of say £120 may be taken as an example. According to the actuary's report in 1901 this had to be reduced by 20 per cent., or £24, thus bringing it down to £96. But in 1904 the 20 per cent. was restored; in 1913, 15 per cent. was added to the £120; in 1920, a further 25 per cent. was added; thus bringing the £96 of Mr. Actuary Graham in 1901 up to £172 10*s.* 0*d.* in 1920—a total increment of 80 per cent. And notwithstanding all these increases the fund has more than steadily increased in amount! It has added to its capital year by year by from 30 to 40 per cent. of its income, and now stands at the imposing figure of £525,000. Had New Zealand remained with us in the Australasian Connexion the amount of its fund would also have been in ours, viz., £111,000, making in all a total of £635,000. When it is remembered that at the end of 1900 the aggregate capital

was £236,000, and that this in the short space of twenty years has increased to (as above) £635,000, or practically by £400,000, it seems incredible that any man versed in figures and having any knowledge of the living principle of a living Church should have declared a Church fund to be in need of such drastic treatment as the 1901–4 recommendations contemplated. It is even now a matter worthy of serious consideration whether the Fund needs such large annual increments as it is receiving from its revenue account; also, whether the benefits ought not to be increased so as to include a funeral allowance (a very necessary provision), and greater help to young widows with young children whose lot is often very pitiful. But—at any rate—for having had any share in combating the situation in 1901 and in making the lot of supernumeraries and widows somewhat easier and brighter I am thankful.

Among the heirlooms I shall hand down to my family are addresses of appreciation and gratitude from the supernumeraries and widows on the Fund in Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales. And it is only fitting that ample recognition should be made of the splendid assistance given in the middle and later stages of the controversy by Sir Samuel J. Way, Bart. (Chief Justice) and Dr. H. T. Burgess, of South Australia; Dr. W. H. Fitchett, Mr. W. B. McCutcheon and Mr. E. Harcourt of Victoria; Rev. Dr. Rowe and Dr. Stewart, of Queensland; and Rev. S. Lawry and Mr. A. C. Caughey of New Zealand. I was also indebted to many helpful conversations with ex-Senator J. T. Walker, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the A.M.P. Society, and Sir. J. Russell French, General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales. But of all these the assistance of Mr. W. B. McCutcheon of Melbourne, was the most continuous and the most valuable.

And it may be permissible to conclude this part of the narrative by referring with grateful appreciation to the action of friends and supporters at the close of the General Conference of 1904. To the number of nearly one hundred they gathered—representatives of all the States—at a complimentary dinner, presided over by the President of the General Conference; and after several short

addresses of appreciation and affection, a cheque for £110 was presented to me in full cover of all expenses incurred up to that point, and in recognition of a lengthened and arduous effort to secure for the beneficiaries of the Fund the allowances to which they were entitled and of which they were certainly in need.

XXV

MISSIONARY ENTHUSIASM AND DEVELOPMENT

It is refreshing to turn from a recital of conflict over a purely economic question to the story of the revival of missionary interest in the Church, and the kindling of that interest up to the point of enthusiasm. But let no one under-rate, even in this connexion, the importance of a sound economic foundation in the administration of the affairs of the Church. To have removed a rankling sense of injustice and to have eventually secured a settlement received with almost universal satisfaction and approval was a result worth even the necessary years of effort and controversy. But it was felt that the Church had higher functions than the administration of its beneficiary funds, and that the sooner it applied itself to these the sooner would the General Conference occupy its rightful position as the highest court of Australasian Methodism. The opportunity came in 1907, and the Conference was divinely guided in availing itself of it.

Ever since its establishment in Australia, Methodism was conscious of the missionary impulse and was obedient to it. It is significant that the first minister to Australia was also the first missionary to New Zealand; and that just as the Rev. Samuel Leigh had the honour of being the pioneer to New Zealand, so his successor in Australia (the Rev. Walter Lawry) was the founder of the mission to the Friendly Islands and practically the pioneer of the whole cluster of existing Polynesian Methodist missions. Tonga was first occupied; then Samoa; a few years later Fiji was entered; New Britain and New Ireland were next in the succession; then Papua; and finally the Solomon Islands. Hence, at the time of the holding of the 1907 General Conference the work had reached such a stage of development that it was generally felt there must be not only no arrest but a programme of advance

worthy of the Church and of its divine mission and opportunity.

In some respects a crisis had been reached. The Rev. Dr. G. Brown, F.R.G.S., had intimated his retirement from the position of General Secretary, after filling the post with efficiency and success for twenty years. During that period Dr. Brown had practically organized the pioneer mission parties to Papua and the Solomon Islands, and had accompanied them on their journey to those places. It is, of course, a matter of knowledge that Dr. Brown had previously spent a period of thirteen years in mission service in Samoa and had founded and pioneered the mission to New Britain. In noting his retirement, the Conference recorded :

' Full of missionary enthusiasm and possessed of a unique knowledge of the Polynesian races, Dr. Brown has been a trusted leader in all our forward movements and a brother beloved and revered by all the missionaries on the field. He has also enjoyed the confidence and affection of the native races in all the districts under our care. The Conference regrets his resignation, and prays that to him there may be given a prolonged and restful eventide after his long, strenuous, and successful missionary toil.'

The Rev. Benjamin Danks was appointed to the vacancy created by Dr. Brown's retirement. It was fitting that it should be so. Mr. Danks had been Dr. Brown's colleague and successor in the New Britain mission, and had also been associated with him in the administrative affairs of the office for many years ; he had also rendered valuable service as a missionary advocate both in the pulpit, on the platform, and in the press, and was as intense a missionary enthusiast as Dr. Brown, if not as versatile as the many-sided genius whom he succeeded.

There were problems of no ordinary magnitude for the 1907 Conference to solve. The income of the Missionary Society was steadily improving, but it was not keeping pace with the expenditure rendered necessary by the growth and development of the work in the fields under occupation. In the previous year (1906) the income had reached high-water mark at £25,000, but the expenditure had exceeded that amount by £2,500, and there was an

accumulated deficiency to date of £5,500. But there were problems on the fields also. To one of these reference may be made, especially in view of my personal connexion with it. Fiji (one of our oldest mission fields) was the scene of it. A proposal had been made to introduce native lay representation into the District Synod of that mission, and to give the native lay representatives a voice and a vote in the administration of the local finances of the mission. Dr. Brown and his colleagues on a commission sent down there a few years earlier had unanimously agreed on this recommendation. But the European mission staff was opposed to this concession, and a strong if not bitter feeling was being engendered within certain circles over the proposal. In view of the condition of things the Board of Missions resolved to send another commission to Fiji, with instructions to inquire and report to the ensuing New South Wales Conference and also to the General Conference. The instructions explicitly were ' to fully inquire into the state of the work, and to consider and report upon the best means to be adopted to promote the progress of the district generally.' The commission was also instructed ' to consider and report upon proposed or desirable alterations in the constitution of the Fiji district, upon the question of the tenure of our mission lands, and on any other matter that in its judgement may be desirable to report upon as the result of its inquiries while there.' The Commission as appointed by the Board consisted of Revs. B. Danks and J. E. Carruthers, and Mr. T. H. England, B.A., New South Wales ; Rev. H. Bath, Victoria ; and Rev. J. N. Buttle, New Zealand. On the commission meeting together and proceeding to its business, I was elected its Chairman, with Rev. B. Danks secretary. The commission spent twenty-four days in Fiji, and held a prolonged conference with the members of the mission staff, and interviewed several chiefs and native ministers. We visited Suva, Rewa, Navuloa, Noco, Bau, Viwa, and Daviu-levu. A proposed trip to Viria, on the Upper Rewa, was abandoned after an effort, on account of the flooded and dangerous condition of the Rewa River. The whole visit was full of interest. The historic associations of Bau, Viwa, and Rewa could not fail to make a deep impression on the minds of all the members of the party.

The native gatherings and services at the principal centres were occasions to be remembered. Memories of John Hunt, John Watsford, William Moore, Joseph Waterhouse, Williams, Webb, Langham, Fison, and a host of other missionaries, most of whom I had personally known in the earlier years of my ministry, came upon me as I remembered their work and contrasted the scenes they confronted with those now under our eyes. 'Truly it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes.' The hospitality of the veteran and beloved chairman of the mission—the Rev. Arthur J. Small—and the kindness of the Revs. W. A. Heighway of Navuloa, of Rev. W. Brown of Rewa, and of Rev. J. W. Burton of Daviu-levu, left grateful memories of the most pleasant character in our minds. The report of the commission ran into a goodly pamphlet of over sixty pages of print, and was presented to the Board of Missions. The thanks of the Board were recorded and a resolution followed:

'The Board fully recognizes the value of the patient care and wisdom which the members of the Commission have manifested in the many inquiries which were made by them regarding the difficult and delicate matters which they were directed to investigate and to report upon, and records its sincere thanks for the very valuable report which they have submitted for its consideration and approval.'

After prolonged and patient consideration the General Conference arrived at a solution of the difficult problem concerning Fiji—a solution which conceded the main principle contended for, and yet in such a form as to allay the fears of those who were primarily responsible for working the constitution and satisfy the aspirations of the friends of progress in the enfranchisement of the laity of the native Church. Here it may be recorded that the operation of the constitution then granted to the Fiji District has been harmonious and successful. The ill results feared in some quarters have not been realized; and on the other hand the confidence of the chiefs and people has been secured, and they have appreciated the measure of responsibility devolved upon them.

But Fiji was only one of the problems with which the 1907 Conference had to deal. The state of the missionary finances challenged attention in a serious form. The work

must not be curtailed. Retrenchment was not possible in agencies already carried on at a minimum of cost. Retirement could not be thought of for a moment. On the contrary, the isles were calling for reinforcements. Indians were coming into Fiji by the thousand per annum and must be cared for and if possible evangelized. India itself was making an appeal, and pressure was being brought to bear, especially from Victoria and South Australia, to establish a mission from Australasia in Continental India. At a missionary meeting in connexion with the Victoria and Tasmania Conference a few months previous to the General Conference there had been a wonderful outburst of missionary enthusiasm and liberality, and some thousands of pounds had been paid or promised as an incentive to the taking up of aggressive work. The General Conference met under the influence to some extent of that effort. A wonderful thing happened when the Conference came to consider the situation in a practical fashion. A resolution was carried with enthusiasm to inaugurate a 'Missionary Advance and Relief Fund,' aiming first at the extinction of the accrued deficiency and then at the carrying forward on advanced lines of the work in the existing fields and possibly in India itself. The Conference session resolved itself into a financial love-feast. Subscriptions of a substantial character were announced for, or on behalf of, some well-to-do lay members of the Conference; ministers caught the contagion and became responsible for subscriptions that would involve no small amount of self-denial in the family circle; the lay representatives were not to be outdone on the same lines; and when the hour of adjournment arrived the cause was still booming and the list was still open. That evening the Conference Foreign Missionary meeting was held; Chairman and speakers had been designated some weeks in advance. More than one elaborate speech had been prepared and was struggling for delivery. But those speeches were still-born. The meeting took matters into its own hands. An announcement as to what had been done in the Conference during the afternoon set the meeting on fire. One after another rose to express interest in the cause, to strike a note of gratitude to God, to call to mind some loved one who had gone, and to give tangible testi-

mony by a thank-offering. The amounts varied from a few shillings to a pound, from one pound to one hundred, and one outstanding donation reached the goodly sum of one thousand pounds. For two hours the stream of testimony and thanksgiving flowed on. The speeches did not materialize; even a musical programme to which a gifted lady vocalist was to contribute went by the board. The pencils of the recording scribes had to be sharpened again and again; and at the close of a meeting full of gracious influence and of contagious liberality several thousands of pounds were in hand or in sight as the beginning of the Missionary Advance and Relief Fund, to be carried from that meeting and that Conference all over Australia. That occasion may well be regarded as the starting-point of a new era in the development of the missionary work of the Methodist Church of Australasia.

The Rev. B. Danks was appointed successor to Rev. Dr. Brown as General Secretary. The Rev. John G. Wheen received the appointment of Assistant Secretary, and thus began an official connexion with the missionary work of the Church that has continued ever since, to the great advantage of all the interests involved. Mr. Wheen had already won distinction in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference as a man of more than ordinary administrative ability, and of such force of character as to be undaunted by any difficulty. An able preacher, an effective platform speaker, a man of affairs, with a special aptitude for big things, he was the man for the occasion. He has since amply justified the confidence of his Church in calling him to a position of such high responsibility and ever-increasing opportunity. The years since his appointment have been years of advance to which the proverbial expression of 'leaps and bounds' may well be applied. One fact alone may be mentioned. The income of the Missionary Society in 1906 was (as mentioned above) £25,000. In 1920 the aggregate income was £100,000. Other agencies and other people are largely responsible for this gratifying four-fold increase. But it is sheer justice to say that the impetus was largely given by John G. Wheen, and that to his far-sighted vision and quenchless optimism the Church owes it in no small degree that it has been kept up to its missionary obligations. When counsels of

caution would suggest hesitation and delay, he has struck a clear and confident note of faith in God and trust in the Methodist people, and thus far his vision has not deceived and his optimism has been justified.

Another step taken by the 1907 Conference was in relation to the proposal to establish a mission in Continental India. As arising out of that it may here be chronicled that in the following year the Rev. Dr. Brown and I were visiting England; and the Board of Missions appointed us to interview the Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of England in reference to such co-operation as might be found practicable between us and them in India. Our instructions were of a general character, whilst a wide field was allowed us in regard to the inquiries we were to make. The final result was the allotment to us of a sphere, comparatively limited in area but sufficiently populous to engage our attention for many years to come—a sphere adjacent to the districts in which the parent missionary society is operating, and where co-ordination of effort is at once practicable and desirable. Those interviews with the officials and committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society were full of interest. The Revs. Marshall Hartley and William H. Findlay, two of the General Secretaries, were especially courteous and helpful. Mr. Williamson Lamplough, the lay treasurer, and his brother, were generous in counsel and in hospitality also. It was no small privilege to meet with the leaders of one of the greatest movements in modern religious development, in the person of the members of the committee controlling the great missionary operations of the parent Methodist Church of the world. Many of those men bore names that are held in reverence and affection 'wheresoever this gospel of the Kingdom is preached'; and their courtesy to, and consideration for, the two representatives from far-off Australia left an impression for good never to be effaced.

XXVI

SECRETARYSHIP OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

ADELAIDE (S.A.) was again the scene of the General Conference when it met in 1910. A great deal of water had flowed under the bridge since the last gathering of the clans in that city. Methodist Union had been consummated all over Australia, to which sanction had been authoritatively given in the Adelaide Conference of 1894. But many of the men who were conspicuous in the great debate were no longer on the scene. They had passed 'to where beyond these voices there is peace.' There were elements in the representation in 1910 that were not present in 1894. Then it was the General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church. Now it was the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia. The change of designation indicated that the old divisions of Wesleyan, Primitive, Bible Christian, and United Free Methodist no longer obtained. All had come in under the one common designation of Methodist. The representation in the Conference was mainly ex-Wesleyan; but there were prominent and able members of the other ex-Methodist Churches present to visualize the unity and to take full share in the deliberations.

If the Adelaide Conference of 1894 made history in the unification of Australian Methodism, it remained for the Conference of 1910 to make history in the disintegration of the larger Methodism of Australasia by agreeing to the severance of the connexion between New Zealand and Australia.

On its assembling, the Conference elected the Rev. Henry Youngman, D.D., to the chair. By a substantial vote I was called to the Secretaryship—a position I was destined to fill for the next seven years. Dr. Youngman was well entitled to the Presidency. A man of superior ability and of unwearying industry; who had taken

a prominent part in the counsels of his Church, especially in the State of Queensland, of which he was regarded as the outstanding representative, constitutional in his cast of mind, conservative in his instincts, and yet progressive as opportunity offered and prudence dictated; withal a minister of studious, if not of scholarly mind—he was well fitted to occupy the chief post of honour and responsibility for the ensuing term. His conduct of the business was characterized by gravity, and courtesy, and absolute fairness; whilst his addresses at the Conference public meetings were relieved by gleams of humour and touches of tenderness that won for him much popularity among the people that are without. It may be said that the hospitalities of the Conference were on the same scale of graciousness and refinement that won such encomiums for Adelaide in 1894. Personally I was the guest of Sir Jenkin and Lady Coles. Sir Jenkin was at the time Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of South Australia, and one of its most prominent and patriotic public men. We were second cousins, and the hospitality of the home and its inmates was as hearty and unrestrained as it was refined and dignified.

Prominence must be given, in any account of the proceedings of the 1910 Conference, to its action in relation to the separation of New Zealand and the creation of an absolutely self-governing Methodism in that Dominion. Ever since the setback in 1888 the feeling in favour of independence of Australia was still cherished in New Zealand. The triennial visit to Australia of elected representatives to the General Conference was regarded with mixed feelings by those who had the honour or privilege—or task, as some regarded it—of thus crossing the Tasman Sea. But to the New Zealand Church, as a whole, the prolonged absence of these representatives from their ministerial duties or (in the case of the laymen) from their business or professional engagements, together with the great expense involved, was a constantly growing argument for the termination of the tie which rendered these things necessary. Moreover, the creation of the Australian Commonwealth and the simultaneous erection of New Zealand into the status of a Dominion seemed to indicate the line of action to be taken in the ecclesiastical realm.

All the other Churches—Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic—of New Zealand were free of Australian connexion or control. Why should not this also be the case in regard to the Methodist Church? It was tersely said there were 1,200 arguments for separation, in the 1,200 miles that lay between New Zealand and Australia.

The debate in the Conference was one of singular ability. There was a reluctance on the part of Australia to sever the connexion, and many fine things were said as to the value of the presence and ability of the chosen New Zealand representatives in the deliberations and decisions of Australasian Methodism. Dr. Morley, an old New Zealander, and Dr. Fitchett, always a leading and influential Conference debater, were prominent in their opposition. But the New Zealand delegates stated their case with a completeness and earnestness that carried conviction. The addresses of Rev. Samuel Lawry, Rev. C. H. Lewis, B.A., Rev. W. J. Williams and Mr. J. A. Flesher were felt to be unanswerable, and the vote for the resolution of separation was decisive in its strength. The Rev. Samuel Lawry had led the movement in the Dominion with much ability and courage, and many were the congratulations tendered to him on the result. The machinery by which to give effect to the separation remained to be considered. It was thought by most of the legal members of the Conference that an Act of the New Zealand Legislature would be sufficient to validate the separation. But Sir Samuel Way, the Chief Justice of South Australia and a member of the Conference, advised that to make assurance doubly sure the consent of all the Annual Conferences should be obtained and a validating Act be secured in each of the Australian Parliaments; and in deference to his wish it was resolved so to act. In its 'Address' to the people of its charge in all parts of its jurisdiction, the Conference thus referred to the separation:

'After much thought, prayer and conversation, a request from the New Zealand Conference for ecclesiastical independence was acceded to, subject to authorization by the various local Conferences. This proposal and agreement we entertain with feelings of intelligent sympathy and confident hope. Nevertheless, our reluctance to thus officially separate is natural and sincere. The Methodism of Australia and New Zealand alike will lose much by this decision, but we trust that the anticipated gain to our Churches in the Dominion will more than compensate and therefore justify the severance. We fervently pray that upon this issue of our deliberations the rich blessing of our common Lord may abundantly rest.'

If one may digress and anticipate a little at this point, it may here be related that the separation duly took place as from the first of January, 1913; that the first independent New Zealand Conference was held in that year; that at the same time the union of the Methodist Churches in New Zealand was consummated; and that in New Zealand as in Australia, Methodists of all former designations are now able to sing:

We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.

Another important piece of work accomplished by the Adelaide Conference was the completion of the revision of the Book of Offices, and the appointment of a committee for the revision and consolidation of the Book of Laws. In relation to the Offices of the Church—by which is meant the order of the services for the celebration of the sacraments, the solemnization of marriage, and the burial of the dead—there was a growing feeling that these offices were in many respects too archaic and needlessly lengthy. The order for the burial of the dead, for instance, was too sombre and very deficient in regard to the brightness and certainty of the Christian teaching upon immortality. For my own part, I had been accustomed to vary the prescribed order on almost every occasion so as to include such passages as 'Let not your heart be troubled' (John xiv. 1–4); 'We would not have you ignorant, brethren' (I Thess. iv. 13–14): 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev. xxi. 1–4). And it was with great satisfaction that we secured the insertion of these passages, as also Psalm xxiii. into the service for the burial of the dead, as more in keeping with the Christian view of death and the after-experiences of those who fall asleep in Jesus. The other offices were also revised, and for this good work the Church is much indebted to the Rev. W. H.

Beale. The larger work of the revision of the Book of Laws was also mainly entrusted to Mr. Beale as the convener of the Committee entrusted with the task. Here, also, one may anticipate so as to say that this work was spread over the ensuing seven years. It came up in Brisbane in 1913 and practically reached finality in Melbourne in 1917. The indebtedness of the Conference to Mr. Beale for his share in the work as convener of the Committee and compiler of the laws and regulations to be codified or amended was expressed by resolution of the Conference, and by the insertion of the acknowledgement in the preface to the book when finally authorized and published.

Another matter the Conference of 1910 gave attention to was its official recognition of the place and work of the State Home Missions. At a much earlier Conference I had endeavoured to secure such recognition and to obtain reports from the Annual Conferences for the General Conference of the work carried on within their bounds. But it had been held that this work was strictly local and subject only to local regulations and conditions. The larger view was that even home mission work had its broad Connexional aspects, and that in the work and welfare of each all were concerned. The 1910 Conference adopted this view, and gave directions that for the future the authorities of the Home Mission Societies of the several Annual Conferences should furnish a report to each General Conference. In this way a wider survey of the whole field of operations is open to the General Conference at its periodical assemblies. Such places as Port Darwin and its needs and the wide spaces of sparsely inhabited Western Australia are felt to be a part of the care of the whole Church. A practical result of this was seen in the decision of the General Conference of 1920 to request New South Wales and Victoria to render financial assistance to Western Australia in the development and maintenance of home mission work in the vast area included in its jurisdiction. Western Australia is geographically the greatest State in the Commonwealth. But in respect of population it ranks last of all the States on the mainland, and in regard to its Methodism it is numerically the least in our Israel of Churches.

Foreign Missions again claimed a considerable share of attention. The mission to India had been commenced; the work in the older fields was being continued with unabated vigour and on an expanding scale; the disaster of a hurricane in Fiji had temporarily crippled local resources and involved additional outlay; Indians were reported as coming into Fiji in increasing numbers, and the need of an augmented staff and an improved equipment for dealing with the situation was stressed. An important innovation in administration was sanctioned, in directing that at the meeting of the Board of Missions at which the island estimates for the year are considered, and the outlay sanctioned, representatives from Victoria and South Australia should be present at and sit as members of the Board. This was the introduction of a system of wider Connexional representation which received its full and logical development at the ensuing General Conference, and will be more fully described in subsequent pages. The income for the year showed a steady improvement, and now approximated to the sum of £30,000. The Laymen's Missionary Movement had taken vigorous root in Victoria, and the laymen of the Church were beginning to realize that the saving of the heathen world is 'a man's job,' and a business proposition to be looked at in a practical light and from a personal point of view. Administrative alterations were made so as to provide for an advance movement, and a developmental policy aiming at an increase of income every year and a proportionate extension of missionary work. In a word something like ecclesiastical statemanship was being brought to bear upon the task of the Church, so as to co-ordinate effort and enthusiasm in the divinely given duty of more effectively spreading the gospel to the heathen tribes and people adjacent to Australia's shores. For the promotion also of the spiritual work of the Church both at home and abroad—in the hearts of the members of the Conference and in the spheres of labour with which it is charged—it was resolved to hold at each succeeding Conference a special session devoted exclusively to the question, 'What can be done to promote the work of God?'

All of these things contributed to make the Adelaide Conference of 1910 specially interesting and eventful.

XXVII

EXTENSION OF THE SECRETARYSHIP

SUBSEQUENT to the General Conference of 1910 and prior to its successor in Brisbane in 1913, it fell to my lot as Secretary to conduct a considerable correspondence with the parent Methodism in England, and with branches of it in America, Canada, South Africa, and other parts of the world. This included the sending and receiving of greetings to and from the Methodist Church of Japan, a circumstance interesting in itself as showing that in that land of the recreation and development of new facts and forces, Christianity had obtained a solid footing, and that the Methodist Church was sufficiently established to be formed into a Conference under the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. It is significant also that in the year 1911 our Australasian Conference addressed the Japan Conference in the following terms: 'We are pleased to learn that the Treaty relations between the two Empires—those of Great Britain and Japan—are being renewed for another ten years. We pray that during that period the principles of peace among men may have so spread and prevailed that war between the civilized nations of the earth will have become abhorrent and unthinkable.' Comment upon that is difficult in view of the great tragedy which broke upon the world in 1914, except to say that it was probably due in no small measure to the Christian influences operating in Japan that that Empire proved so staunch and useful an ally to our own Empire in the fateful years from 1914 to 1918.

When the General Conference assembled in Brisbane in 1913 it was not anticipated that there would be any 'burning question' to disturb its equanimity. Statistics prepared in advance and published in the Agenda showed that since the consummation of Methodist union ten years before, there had been a gratifying and encouraging

increase in the number of ministers, Church members, junior members, church buildings, and other lines of progress. The most noticeable and one of the most encouraging of those increases was in the number of candidates for the ministry and of preachers on trial, indicative of the hold the sacred vocation of the gospel was having upon the life of the young men of the Church. There was in addition an increase of nearly 100 per cent. in the number of home missionaries employed by the Church. A quite remarkable increase was also noted in the foreign missionary income which during the triennium had risen from £30,000 to nearly £43,000. All these were healthy signs.

The first business of the Conference, after the impressive opening address of the retiring President (Dr. Youngman) was to elect its President and Secretary. In the election of the former a mild surprise occurred. It had been confidently expected that the Secretary of the preceding Conference would be called to the highest office; and so confident was this expectation that the two daily morning papers of the City had each prepared a biographical notice with an accompanying photograph for publication. These notices and photographs duly appeared next morning, but as those of the Secretary and not of the President, The notice and photo of the latter were not available till the next day. On the first ballot the figures were:

Rev. J. E. Carruthers	59
Rev. Dr. Brown	57
Other votes	4

There not being an absolute majority, another ballot was taken, and on that ballot the veteran missionary was elected by 61 to 59. It was a graceful thing on the part of the General Conference thus to put the crown of its highest honour upon its oldest and most prominent foreign missionary. There was a double fitness in that British Methodism had invited Australasia to send a representative to take part in its missionary centenary celebrations; and there was a general consensus that Dr. Brown should be that representative. The Conference showed by its vote that it desired also that he should go clothed with all the honour and responsibility that the holding of its highest office could invest him with.

Hence his election and the popularity of the election throughout Australasia. The islands in which he had laboured, and for which he had spent his useful life, were especially glad. Consequent on this election the Conference by an almost unanimous vote called the present scribe to again occupy the post of Secretary. In acknowledging the vote he informed the Conference that he accepted any honour the Church might place upon him as another call to service. It was the opportunity of usefulness that he appreciated more than any distinction it might carry. Here I may say that it was a great joy to be associated with Dr. Brown for the ensuing four years in the work pertaining to the highest offices of the Church. He was unvaryingly courteous, as all who know him would expect. In many respects he brought unlooked for ability to bear upon the discharge of his Presidential duties. There was more than a bond of confidence between us—there was a mutual affection and trust that was a joy to both. Living not far apart, with frequent opportunities of conversing on the 'phone or meeting, we took counsel on all matters of Connexional import and acted together with a trust that was never misplaced, and an affection that was never clouded.

Here may I say also that the year 1913 was of all the years of my life, an especially onerous and responsible one. By the grace of the members of the New South Wales Conference I had been elected President of that Conference for the year; I was also superintendent of the Lindfield Circuit, with two important and growing congregations requiring pastoral attention; at the same time I was editor of the Connexional organ, *The Methodist* (a weekly paper) subject to all the criticisms that Connexional papers are familiar with; and, as if that were not enough, the Evangelical Council of New South Wales imposed its Presidency upon me. In addition, my help was asked in some literary work then in course of preparation. Issachar crouched between two burdens, but somehow the four- or five-fold burden of manifold offices did not crush me, nor did I hear any serious complaint that the work of any of them suffered. How true it is, 'As thy day so shall thy strength be!'

In some respects the Brisbane Conference of 1913

became one of the most important and historic of its order. It effected settlements concerning the administration of foreign mission affairs and the Supernumerary Fund of a far-reaching character; it initiated useful legislation concerning Sunday-school affairs; it arranged for the adequate celebration of the approaching Centenary of Australasian Methodism; and it made important pronouncements on public questions then agitating the public mind.

Perhaps its most important achievement was in connexion with the broadening of the basis of the administration of foreign mission affairs. From the time of the inauguration of the General Conference, the charge of the foreign missions of the Church had been entrusted to the New South Wales Conference and a Board of Missions consisting wholly of New South Wales ministers and laymen. Similarly, the affairs of the Supernumerary Fund were committed to the charge of Victoria. A small measure of enlargement of the foreign mission administration had been effected at the Adelaide Conference of 1910 by the inclusion of three or four representatives of other States at a meeting once a year to consider mission income and expenditure. But mission operations were expanding, and the outlook was widening every year. Income was steadily growing, and all the States of Australia were contributing in an increasing measure. The work was such as to demand a direct Australian control rather than one centred in any one state or city. Not that there was any lack of confidence in the Mission Board or in the New South Wales Conference. But representation of all the States was demanded by the altered situation and the enlarging responsibility. Hence, Victoria brought up recommendations for constituting the Board of Missions on a widely representative basis, and for meetings by the enlarged Board once a year in Sydney, and once a year in Melbourne. These recommendations were almost unanimously sanctioned by the Conference Committee on Missions, and became the subject of animated and prolonged debate in the Conference. Most of the New South Wales members were opposed to the proposals. But the principle involved commended itself to me, although some of the details were unnecessary and cum-

brous. Hence it fell to my lot to propose a series of amendments in line with the main purpose of the proposals, but simplifying the procedure and providing for an annual meeting of the Board 'at which the work of the Society shall be reviewed, and the whole financial position and outlook of the Society taken into consideration, and the policy of the year be determined.' The Conference also resolved 'that the Board of Missions be constituted so as to provide for representatives of the Annual Conferences and of the Mission Districts being made members of the Board.' As the Board as thus constituted and appointed there and then may be regarded as historic, it is fitting that the personnel should here be given. The Conference record reads:

THE MISSION BOARD.

That the following be the Mission Board, viz.:—

EX-OFFICIO:

The President of the General Conference
(Rev. George Brown, D.D.),

The Secretary of the General Conference
(Rev. J. E. Carruthers),

The President and Secretary of the New South Wales Conference for the time being,

The Officers of the Society, viz.:—the General Secretary, the Rev. J. G. Wheen; and the General Treasurers (Rev. W. E. Bromilow, D.D., and the Hon. J. Garrard),

The Honorary Secretaries (Rev. G. Brown, D.D., and Rev. B. Danks).

BY ELECTION.

New South Wales Conference:

Rev. W. H. Beale — Rev. B. J. Meek
Rev. W. W. Rutledge

The Conference Secretary for the time being,

Mr. R. S. Callaghan — Mr. E. K. Bowden
Hon. W. Robson, M.L.C. — ,, H. M. Hawkins
Mr. E. Vickery — ,, W. E. V. Robson, B.A., M.L.A.
,, P. N. Slade — ,, J. Vickery
,, G. J. Waterhouse — ,, B. H. Chapman

Victoria and Tasmania Conference:

Rev. W. Morley, D.D. — Rev. H. Worrall

The Conference Secretary for the time being,

Mr. F. J. Cato — Hon. R. Beckett, M.L.C.
Hon. W. M. Williams, C.L.M. (Tasmania).

South Australia Conference:

The Conference Secretary for the time being,
Mr. T. C. Reynolds — Mr. W. T. Rofe

Queensland Conference:

Rev. H. Youngman, D.D. — Mr. J. J. King

Western Australia Conference:

Mr. D. Weatherall

New Zealand Conference:

Rev. S. Lawry — Rev. J. W. Burton
Hon. C. Luke, M.L.C.

At this Conference the Rev. B. Danks retired from the position of General Secretary, with many expressions of appreciation of his long and faithful service, and of the affection of the home Church and the mission fields.

Another decision arrived at by the Conference brought a considerable measure of relief and satisfaction to superannuated ministers and to ministers' widows. There was a widespread feeling that more liberal treatment ought to be extended to these, and that the fund (now approximating to a capital of £400,000) could well afford to increase its benefits. A compromise was arrived at in committee between those who claimed to be out-and-out actuarialists and those who took a less stringent view based on Connexional principles and methods. An effort was made in the Conference to upset this; but the great majority of the members were wearied of long controversy and satisfied as to the soundness of the fund, and the equity of the claims made on behalf of the beneficiaries. The compromise was alleged to be very one-sided; but at least it has stood the test of time, and subsequent Conferences are not likely to go back upon it. It is never wrong to do the right thing. A cheerful courage is always justified in Church finance and in religious work generally.

It was at the Brisbane Conference also that some very useful legislation was put on the records in relation to Sunday-school organization and methods. A year or two before the New South Wales Conference had set apart the Rev. Harold Wheen as General Secretary of the Sunday School Department, and Mr. Wheen had entered upon his work with a keen appreciation of the value both to the Church and the State of the young life of the day. He was determined to 'set the child in the

midst' both of the Conference, of the Church, and of the community. With a mind fertile in expedients for improving the methods of Sunday-school work, and with an enthusiasm that was almost impatient of anything that incurred delay or obscured the great purpose of his charge, he applied himself ceaselessly to get a fuller recognition of the place and value of the young people, and to enact legislation that would assist in improving and energizing the Church's agencies in their behalf. As the result of the consultations of himself and other Sunday-school experts in the Conference, a series of regulations was agreed upon, and were subsequently, with some slight amendments, incorporated in the official Book of Laws. Here it may be said that the value of Mr. Harold Wheen's work has been felt in all the other annual Conferences as well as in New South Wales. Other Churches also—notably the Presbyterian and Congregational—have been glad to study his methods, and those of his department, and have to a considerable extent adopted or adapted them. The work of his department has widened with the years, and has embraced religious instruction in public and high schools, special organizations for boys and girls in the Sunday schools, Young Worshippers' League, graded lessons, special literature, and other methods of improving and energizing the activities that make for the conservation of the children to the Church, and their intelligent consecration to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the best citizenship of the State.

Generally speaking, the Brisbane Conference may be regarded as one of the best yet held. The public services and demonstrations were characterized by large attendances and much enthusiasm. The hospitality of the occasion was equal to anything before experienced. The State Governor entertained the President as his guest at Government House; the Premier and his colleagues, as well as the Anglican Archbishop and heads of other Churches, attended a welcome banquet; King's College (within the University) was officially opened. All these doings, together with the consciousness of good work done, made the memory of the Brisbane Conference a pleasant one for all who attended it.

Shortly after the Conference Dr. Brown took his departure for England, there to represent Australasia at the Centenary commemorations of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Before his departure, a unique gathering was held to express affection for him, and to wish him God-speed and a safe return. It was a joy to me to have something to do with the organization of this. The Primate of Australia (Most Rev. Dr. Wright) was present, as also the ex-Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Chairman of the Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand. In addition to these the President of the Royal Society, Professor (now Sir Edgeworth) David, of the Sydney University, and other representative citizens, joined with ministers and laymen of the Methodist Church in expressing the most cordial esteem and affection for one who not only represented the highest office of his own Church, but whose individual service as a missionary, scientist, explorer, and imperialist, entitled him to more than ordinary attention.

Later on, and during the term of my Secretaryship, the Centenary Celebrations of Australasian Methodism fell due and were duly observed. We were favoured with the presence of Bishop E. E. Hoss, D.D., LL.D., of the American Methodist Episcopal Church South, and it fell to my lot to make most of the arrangements for his reception, and the disposal of his time in the several States visited by him. In New South Wales the principal functions were attended by Bishop Hoss, Dr. W. H. Fitchett, Dr. H. Youngman, and the Rev. John Dawson, President of the New Zealand Conference, who attended as special representative from the Dominion. The Centenary Commemoration Fund was practically brought to a head, and its two main and monumental institutions are to-day in active operation as the result of it. Leigh College for the training of students for the ministry, and Wesley College within the University of Sydney, are institutions long desired as part of the Church's equipment in New South Wales. For this happy consummation the Methodist Church is largely indebted to the Rev. W. Woolls Rutledge and the Hon. W. Robson, M.L.C. The former, as Organizing Secretary of the

fund, and the latter, as its lay general treasurer, put unsparing effort into the task of raising the fund. They have both passed hence; but it was an unspeakable satisfaction to them that they were spared to see both colleges successfully founded and in vigorous operation.

XXVIII

ATTAINING THE PRESIDENCY

THE period between the close of the 1913 Conference and the opening of the 1917 was surely one of the most momentous in the world's history. It certainly was so in regard to Australian history. The Great War began in August, 1914. Its reverberations were heard throughout the length and breadth of Australasia. The call to service sounded everywhere. It affected all occupations of life; it was heard in our theological halls; it was responded to by many of our junior ministers. The isles of the sea under our jurisdiction as mission fields were affected by it. Samoa and New Britain passed from under German possession to British occupation. Fiji in the early days of the war was threatened with an enemy bombardment. Tonga—although not technically under our Crown—was sensitive to the action of the warlike forces then moving almost universally. Our church courts throughout Australia gave no uncertain sound as to their attitude and their appreciation of the tremendous issues involved. But the story cannot here be fully told. It is sufficient to say that in the opinion of not a few the crisis was so grave and the situation so complex as to justify an agitation for the postponement of the General Conference. It had been decided in Brisbane in 1913 to meet again in Melbourne in 1917. At the former time there was not the slightest anticipation of the great cataclysm which fell upon the world in 1914, and the prolongation of the period of from three to four years between the sessions was made mainly on grounds of Connexional economy. However, 1917 was on us, and the war was at its height, with no reasonable prospect of terminating for a long time to come.

Other events had also happened. The President of the General Conference (Rev. Dr. Brown) had visited England, and had aroused considerable enthusiasm as he

told English audiences of the struggle and triumphs of missionary work in the South Seas. He had also contributed addresses and articles of value to various scientific societies dealing with biology, anthropology and ethnology, in all of which subjects he was an expert so far as Polynesia and Melanesia were concerned. Later, on his return to Australia, he had visited New Zealand to convey fraternal greetings from the Australasian Church, and then had gone on to Samoa to inaugurate the new constitution giving the Samoan Methodist Church independence of the Board of Missions in its financial arrangements and placing it directly as (in a sense) a self-governing district under the New South Wales Conference. The celebrations in connexion with the commemoration of the Centenary of Australasian Methodism had also eventuated. Great meetings had been held in all the capitals and in the principal provincial centres. The commemorative thanksgiving funds were being brought to a completion. Leigh College (Theological) Sydney, had been established and opened under the principalship of Rev. W. E. Bennett, M.A., B.D.; the foundations of Wesley College, within the University of Sydney, had been laid, and the Rev. M. Scott Fletcher, M.A., B. LITT., B.D., had been appointed Master of Wesley. In laying the foundation stone of Wesley College, Dr. Brown pathetically said that he hoped to live to see two things—first, the end of the war, and next, the opening of Wesley College.

But it was not to be. It was evident to Dr. Brown's friends that his strength was failing and that the long-deferred breaking up was setting in. He had passed his eighty-first birthday, and had possessed an astonishing amount of physical vigour as well as mental clearness right up to that advanced age. Somewhat suddenly the end came. He had begun his preparations for the opening functions of the Conference, at which according to custom he was to preside and to deliver the 'official' address. But on the seventh of April—six weeks before the Conference was due—he entered into rest, and thus ended a long, distinguished, and useful career of ministerial and humanitarian service.

The Conference of 1917 met under the shadow of this great bereavement, and under the still greater shadow of

the awful and almost world-wide war. The first session—after the election of officers—was largely given up to memorial tributes to the departed President. Subsequently a whole day was spent in the reading of papers on various aspects of the world-war and the discussion of the Church's duty in relation to the opportunities and responsibilities of the situation.

The opening of the Conference was preceded by a social function tendered by the ministers and laymen of Victoria, at which an address of welcome of unusual eloquence was given by the Rev. S. Scholes, President of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference. The official address of the Rev. Dr. Youngman—who as ex-President officiated in Dr. Brown's place—was one of much strength and fervour and completely captured the Conference. Moreover, the opening prayer by the Rev. Dr. Morley—an almost ever-green veteran—was so devout and comprehensive and importunate as to obliterate any sense of undue length.

The election of President occasioned some little excitement. An effort had been made in some quarters to secure the honour for the Rev. E. H. Sugden, M.A., B.SC., D. LITT., as representing the higher scholarship of the Church and in recognition of his long and honourable service in connexion with Queen's College, Melbourne. But it was felt in other quarters that the claims should not be overlooked of the minister who had filled the post of Secretary for the past seven years, and who for nearly fifty years had rendered service in the circuit and Connexional work of the Church generally. The ballot showed that the latter view predominated. Apart from a few units, the result of the voting was;

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Be it said that one of the first to congratulate the new President was the Rev. Dr. Sugden, as he was also one of his most loyal supporters during the whole term of his occupancy of the office. All who know the contagious geniality and transparent sincerity of Dr. Sugden will agree that this was just what might have been expected of him. The sessions of the Conference were characterized by a harmony, devoutness, and brotherliness that left a pleasant memory behind. The discussions were animated,

but there was a complete absence of acerbity in them.

One of the subjects that gave rise to keen debate was the proposal to co-operate with the Fiji Government in the scheme promulgated by it for improving and extending education both among the native population and the Indian coolies resident in the colony. Up to that time the matter of primary education had been left almost entirely with the missionary societies operating in Fiji. So widely and successfully had this been attended to, especially by the Methodist Missionary Society, that elementary education was almost universal, and with few exceptions every man, woman, and child in Fiji could at least read and write. But the missionary societies were beginning to find a difficulty, under the changing conditions in Fiji, in securing a supply of competent teachers and especially in fully meeting the need of education in English and on a higher plane of the rising population. The Government of Fiji had created a Department of Education, had appointed a Director or Superintendent, and were embarking upon a somewhat ambitious and expensive scheme to apply to the principal centres in the group. A part of the scheme was to co-operate with the missions, and to give grants in aid where the Government conditions were complied with and the official standard was attained. Some opposition was raised in the Conference to the acceptance of the Government offer. The Fiji Synod had approved of and recommended it. The Board of Missions had endorsed the recommendation with certain safeguards. But the opponents declaimed against any alliance with the Government or the acceptance of any grants in aid as calculated to impair the independence of the mission and to interfere with the freedom of its operations in its schools. But the merits of the scheme and the needs of the occasion secured the approval of the Conference by a very decisive vote. Among other resolutions passed were the following: 'That the Conference accepts the principle of grants in aid towards the establishment, equipment, and maintenance of mission Schools in Fiji.' 'That the Conference recognizes that in connexion with schools under the control of the Missionary Society, and for which grants in aid are accepted, there should be incorporated in the regulations provisions for (a) a conscience clause for any scholars whose parents may object to their receiving religious instruction in the schools; (b) for the Government inspection of the secular instruction imparted in the school; and (c) for the maintenance in the schools of the educational standard required by the ordinance or regulations attached thereto.' For the rest of it, it was resolved that the management and control of such schools should be in the hands of the Missionary Society and its duly appointed representatives, and that liberty should be maintained to embody in the school curriculum such moral and religious instruction as might be deemed to be essential. Writing now after the event, it may be stated that the new scheme is in successful operation in Fiji and with almost universal acceptance. So far, it does not touch what may be called village schools, and the policy with regard to Government control of primary education as a whole remains yet to be determined. A Methodist missionary (Rev. L. M. Thompson, M.A., DIP. ED.) is a member of the Government Board of Education, and may be safely trusted to look after all the interests that are worth preserving and are practicable to preserve.

Another matter that occupied some degree of attention was that of Church Union. But it must be said that, in view of the far-reaching importance of this subject, it did not engage either the time or thought of the Conference to an adequate extent. Whether it was regarded as an academical question, or as one merely visionary and outside the range of practical action, it is difficult to say. Had it been seriously contemplated to bring the separate existence of the Methodist Church of Australasia to an end, it is reasonable to believe that such a proposal would have occasioned a discussion equally earnest and prolonged as (for instance) the question whether the Supernumerary Fund should be administered on an actuarial or on a Connexional basis—a subject to which the Conference of 1904 devoted four days of debate; or as the matter of missionary educational policy in Fiji, to which at its then present session it ungrudgingly gave a whole morning and afternoon. But the continued existence of Methodism or its amalgamation with other forms of organized Christianity was treated largely as a formal matter, and the Conference committed itself to declarations, the far-reaching impli-

cations of which it did not seriously debate. It is true that in its resolution of commitment the Conference appointed its committee to deal with the alternative methods of 'federation' or 'organic union' of kindred Churches. Some members said, subsequently to the Conference, that 'the resolutions were badly drawn,' others said that they were very carefully thought out and explicitly expressed; yet others did not hesitate to say that they were all providentially ordered. But, whatever may be the opinion, it can scarcely be controverted that a matter so fraught with momentous and far-reaching possibilities was relegated to a fag-end session of the Conference and was dealt with in a remarkably short space of time.

As has been already intimated, the War loomed large on the vision of the Conference. How could it be otherwise? Already, nearly 400,000 loyal Australians had gone across the seas to take part in the fateful contest; the theological colleges were either definitely closed or were practically empty. Fiji had sent a company of natives to act as a labour contingent under the care of one of our missionaries as chaplain; disloyal influences were actively at work in Australia, especially emanating from the Roman Catholic Church; the gravest issues as touching the civilization of the world were at stake. Every day at noon special intercession was made on the Empire's behalf. The Conference gave a whole day to the consideration of 'The War and its teaching.' The subject was considered under four questions: (1) What moral causes lie at the root of the war? (2) How does the war affect our Christian faith? (3) What new problems for the Church does the war create and how are they to be met? (4) How may we ensure a nobler citizenship and a better internationalism? To all these questions it recorded its answers.

As might also have been expected, the Conference expressed its loyalty and its estimate of the issues involved in the great struggle. As the terms of this resolution were identical with those adopted by the New South Wales Conference on my motion a month or two previously they may here be given in full:—

'(1) That this Conference records its unabated loyalty to the Throne and Empire of Great Britain, and its unswerving

adherence to the ideals of life and national liberty for which the Empire is so sacrificially contending in the great World War.

'(2) We are grateful for the constancy and courage which have characterized His Majesty the King and his representative advisers in the task of carrying the fateful struggle for honour, freedom and righteousness to a successful issue, and recognize the responsibility resting upon our Australian Commonwealth as an integral part of the Empire to bear our full share of that task.

'(3) We regard with gratitude the dauntless bravery and heroic sacrifices of our Army and Navy in the awful experiences through which they have passed and are passing, and earnestly pray their noble efforts may result in a speedy and lasting peace, based upon righteousness and national honour.

'(4) We record with thankfulness the heroism and patriotism of the tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens who have enlisted in the Empire's holy cause. We tender our deepest sympathy to those who have been wounded, and to the relatives of those who have paid the last great sacrifice, praying that to them may be given a plenitude of the sustaining and comforting grace of God.'

An extract from the Pastoral Address of the Conference to its members and adherents throughout Australasia may also be fittingly given as indicative of the temper and spirit of the Conference in the great crisis:

'We can well be glad as we think of the comprehensiveness of the Empire, its varied races, languages, colours, creeds, cemented into one unity by a common loyalty and noble moral purpose. The soul of the Empire is sound, though there is still much to be redeemed and disciplined. It is an honour to live, work, and fight under the Union Jack, the symbol of freedom and freedom by the Cross. Our largest and most enthusiastic meeting was a patriotic meeting. A day of the Conference was given to the hearing of papers and discussions on war topics, to be made available to our people in another form. The burden of our constant prayer was that we might be made fit to win and be rewarded with victory in this colossal struggle. We remembered with gratitude that so many of our choicest men had willingly offered themselves and

played the man on the battlefield. Our many honour boards are inscribed with long lists of names of brave heroes who "counted not their lives dear unto them" to help to win this war of the Lord. Those who gave them birth or sent them forth are to be congratulated on their spirit. Too many, alas! will never return. Their bodies lie in soldiers' graves "by mount and stream and sea," scattered over two continents. There are vanished forms and hushed voices that were not long ago the light and music of now shadowed and silent homes. And some have returned wounded, maimed, crippled, blind, nerve-wracked. Another element growingly large is in our population—those who have suffered heavily in a great cause. They are to be honoured and kept in reverent remembrance. Their achievements and endeavours will not be forgotten by Him who renders to every man according to his work; nor will He who is the Father of Mercies and God of all comfort forget to wipe the tears from off all faces turned to Him in submission, trust, and hope. May He sanctify our sorrows, that His will may be done more perfectly.'



REV. J. E. CARRUTHERS, D.D. (1917).

XXIX

THE PRESIDENTIAL TERM—1917–20

PRIOR to the General Conference of 1917 I had intimated to the New South Wales Conference of 1914 my desire to be relieved of circuit work, and to be placed on the list of supernumerary or retired ministers. After forty-six years of active and fairly strenuous service, and at sixty-six years of age, the routine of work connected with circuit administration became, like the grasshopper, 'a burden.' The ever-recurring round of little meetings of an evening, and the constant duty of presiding at teachers' meetings, leaders' meetings, trustees' meetings, and the meetings of the many other organizations of the Church, became a weariness. With the main functions—or what ought to be the main functions—of a minister's life and work, such as preaching, pastoral visitation, and the care of the young and the sick, I was in hearty accord and would gladly have continued in the discharge of them. But the multifarious duties of a Methodist superintendent minister brook no diminution, and there is a demand for continued efficiency and vigour at all points. Hence, and with the work pertaining to the General Conference and the editorship of *The Methodist* still in hand, I announced to the 1914 Annual Conference my retirement from circuit work and my request to be made a supernumerary. In acceding to this request, the New South Wales Conference was pleased to pass the following resolution:

'The Rev. J. E. Carruthers, to whose request to be made a supernumerary the Conference has acceded, has filled a unique place in the life of our Church, and rendered distinguished service during the long period of forty-six years in the active ministry. He was appointed to a circuit at the early age of twenty years, and has continued in an unbroken line of circuit work, in the course of which

he has held appointments to our most important circuits. He has occupied almost all the positions in the gift of the Conference, having been several times Chairman of a District, for six years Property Secretary, twice President of this Conference, twice Secretary of the General Conference, and is at the time of his retirement Connexional Editor. Mr. Carruthers gave early manifestation of his capabilities, and has for many years been regarded as one of our leading ecclesiastical statesmen. He has shown himself a man of wise judgement, a man with an outlook, and by virtue of his sagacity and tireless activity has accomplished herculean tasks. The Conference hopes that his retirement will secure to him the enjoyment of well-earned rest, and trusts that he may long continue to serve the Church as opportunity and his rare gifts and ripe experience may enable him.'

This generous tribute was amplified in an extended notice in the Connexional organ and in appreciative articles in the daily papers.

My circuit work terminated with the completion of my term in the Lindfield Circuit, and at the March Quarterly Meeting the following resolution was entered upon the Minutes, and a copy supplied to me:

'That we place on record our appreciation of the services rendered by the Rev. J. E. Carruthers in the circuit during the past two years. We take this opportunity of expressing our admiration of the splendid work done by Mr. Carruthers for the Connexion throughout the long term of his active ministry, serving the Church as he has done with conspicuous loyalty and ability in all its departments. Our earnest prayer and hope is that Mr. Carruthers may be spared for very many years to still serve the Church and to enjoy the rest he has so well earned.'

It was therefore with relief from some of the duties—duties which were also delights—of the ministry that I was able to take up the responsibilities and opportunities connected with the high and honourable office of President of the General Conference. It may not be quite irrelevant if I here relate a conversation between a wealthy Melbourne merchant and one of my sons on my election to the Presidency. The merchant congratulated my son on the honour that had come to his father, and said: 'I suppose it carries at least £2,000 a year.' My son thought the merchant's view of it was a good joke and deserved to be treated in the same way, and so replied pleasantly: 'Oh, easily £5,000!' The Presidency carries with it no monetary remuneration; but it carries that which no money can buy, and that is inestimably more precious than gold—the confidence, love, and prayers of the Methodist people all over Australasia, and the respect and honour of religionists of all schools and of the community in general. I had abundant proof of this during my three years' occupancy of the office. But among the congratulations that came from far and wide none were more precious than those from the members of my own family, and from my old Sunday school at Kiama. The congratulatory gathering in the Conference Hall, Sydney, tendered especially by the laity of New South Wales Methodism, and presided over by the President of the New South Wales Conference (Rev. P. J. Stephen) was a singularly hearty and well attended function. Nor did the congregation of the Mosman Church, with which I and my family were associated, forget to recognize the honour that had come to one of its members. They, too, gathered in excellent numbers at a complimentary evening, and expressed their appreciation and affection in sincere and gracious terms.

The duties of the President of the General Conference have never been defined, and possibly never will be, except in relation to the Conference itself, and the interpretation of its resolutions and regulations. The position and functions of the office in the interval are largely determined by the opportunities that arise during the term, and by the President's own appreciation and use of those opportunities. There was, of course, the responsibility of determining all appeals made to him in regard to the meaning and intention of the General Conference in respect of its resolutions and decisions, and in respect also of the interpretation of the laws as set forth in the Book of Laws. As a new Book of Laws was sanctioned by the Conference of 1917, and the authorization of that Book was over my own signature, I had possibly more than an ordinary share of knotty points to determine,

and over at least one of my rulings an active controversy arose. That will be referred to in another place. For the rest of it the path of the President was largely unpioneered. One of my predecessors had paid an official visit to Western Australia, and had rendered service that was greatly appreciated in that remote State. My immediate predecessor had also gone to New Zealand by direction of the General Conference to convey its greetings. Here, to some extent, was leading worth following. And—freed from circuit work—would it not be a good thing to visit the other States as opportunity offered and the way opened, and also to help to carry cheer and inspiration to some of the remoter and seldom-visited parts of the Mother State itself. Hence, in pursuance of this purpose I was able to visit places as remote as Cobar in the west, and Bombala and Hay in the south, and Tenterfield and Lismore in the north, with quite a number of intervening places.

The first of the Inter-State tours was to Queensland, to which I was invited by the Queensland Conference of 1918. Excellent arrangements had been made by a small reception committee, of which the Rev. G. E. Rowe, D.D., was the organizing genius. Railway travelling facilities were placed at our disposal by the Queensland Government, and no effort was spared to make the tour pleasing to myself and effective from the point of view of the interests of the Methodist Church in Queensland, and the interests of religion and good citizenship generally. Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Archibald were my hosts at their beautiful home at Ennogera Terrace, Brisbane, and at all places visited the most cordial hospitality was shown. Dr. Rowe met me at Wollangarra, and accompanied me practically all through the tour. The Rev. Charles Martin, President of the Queensland Conference, and Rev. T. R. Thurlow, Secretary, also did their utmost to make the visit a success.

In an important sense, the visit to Queensland was opportunely timed. From the local standpoint, an interesting effort in Church co-operation in educational affairs as between the Presbyterian and the Methodist Churches had just been inaugurated. A college for boys and another for girls had been acquired by the Presbyterian-Methodist Schools Association, and I was privileged to take part in some consultations on the matter and to visit both colleges. The Presbyterian General Assembly was in session, and had just given its official sanction to the project. It also declared itself in sympathy with co-operation on a wide basis between the two Churches on matters of common concern. A visit paid to that Assembly made a memorable impression. The two Churches found themselves much nearer in their ideas and aims than they had realized, and an era of better understanding and generous co-operation seemed to be not only possible, but necessary. Here it may be related that the two colleges in Brisbane have since been enlarged and are having a time of exceptional prosperity. And, in addition, similar colleges on an associated basis have been opened in Charters Towers, North Queensland. These are the beginnings of a movement that ought to spread until all Australia is covered with educational institutions under the care of the Evangelical Churches, and pervaded with a distinctly Christian atmosphere.

From another standpoint also, the Queensland visit was most opportune. The time was in the month of May, 1918. The war was then at its most critical and even alarming stage. The German forces were in what appeared to be invincible strength on the Western front, and were driving the Allies back until it appeared as if Paris would fall and the Channel ports be occupied. There was a feeling of deep tension in the minds of the community accentuated by the disloyal speeches of a certain notorious ecclesiastic in Melbourne, and the questionable attitude of some members of the Queensland Government. The time was opportune, therefore, to strike the note of loyalty; to issue a call to unity; and to stress the value and need of prayer in such a time of crisis and trouble. Under these conditions the visit developed some noteworthy experiences.

At Bundaberg, for instance, a civic reception was tendered in the Council Chambers by the Mayor of the City, accompanied by most of the Aldermen, and attended by the clergy of the other Churches, and by the leading business and professional citizens. The Mayor was specially happy in his opening remarks, and some of the

other speakers emphasized the need of forgetting minor differences and working together for the common good. A returned soldier related some experiences in the trenches, and the veteran Hon. Angus Gibson, M.L.C., addressed the gathering in a good old Methodist way. Such was the atmosphere of the occasion—there were some Roman Catholics present, too—that on rising to speak I reminded the gathering of the beauty and sanctity of Christian fellowship, and proceeded to emphasize the need for cultivating that, and especially for recognizing and honouring God in civic, and commercial, and national affairs, concluding with a call for personal consecration and earnest prayer. On leaving the building, a gentleman who had been present remarked—'That was Divine service without singing or prayer.' And at a meeting held in the evening of the same day, in the Methodist church, the local Anglican clergyman—a canon of the Brisbane diocese—came to me and informed me that the influence of the civic gathering in the morning had been felt all day in all circles in the city. The same spirit obtained, possibly not altogether in so marked a degree, in all the public functions of an enjoyable tour.

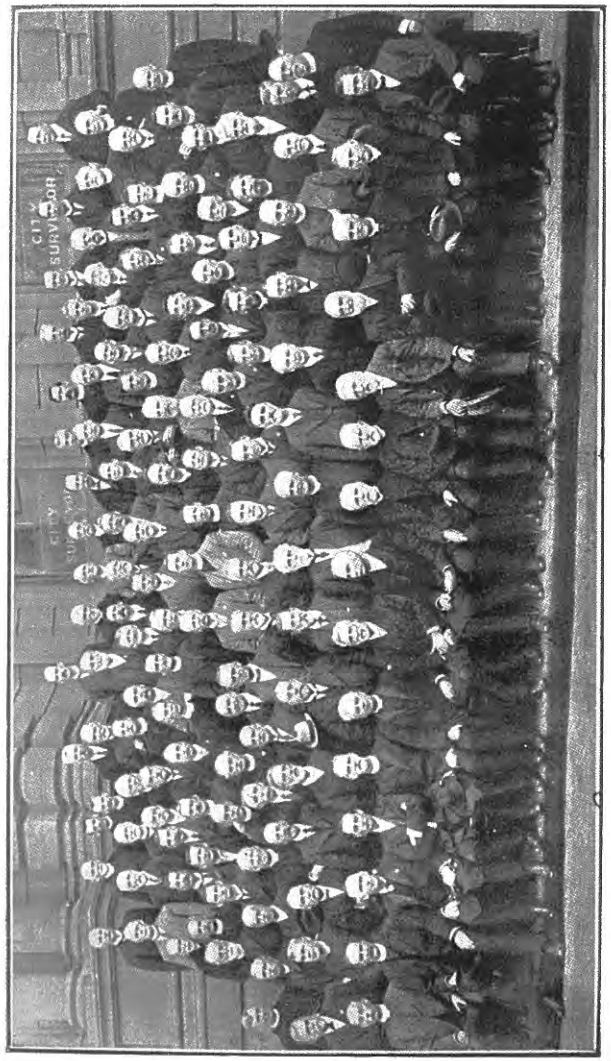
The visit embraced services and meetings in Brisbane, Ipswich, Bundaberg, Mount Morgan, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Sherwood, Toowoomba, and Warwick. The Sunday services in Brisbane were conducted in the Fortitude Valley church and in the central and commodious church in Albert Street. Both churches are excellent in their appointments, and at both there were good congregations. The Valley church was, at the time, under the superintendence of the Rev. A. C. Plane, V.D., who had recently returned from the war and was doing a good work both as a returned chaplain and as a Methodist minister. He had offered for election to the Federal Parliament for the city of Brisbane, and had only been defeated by fifteen votes against the sitting member, who had held the seat as a Labour representative for several years. Mr. Plane stood in the interests of what he considered to be loyalty to the British connexion and to Protestant principles. A little more effort on the part of some pessimistic supporters would have secured his return. Whether it would have been for the good of Mr.

Plane, or whether he would have made an exchange of advantage in surrendering his pulpit for Parliament I do not discuss. It would doubtless have been to the advantage of Parliament and of the State to have put Mr. Plane in. Albert Street church was in the charge of Rev. G. E. Rowe, V.D., D.D., and was the headquarters of the Brisbane Methodist Central Mission. Dr. Rowe had been in possession for over ten years, and had made the church a centre of influence felt all over the city and the State. It is an ornate structure, and is in some respects the best appointed Methodist church in Australia. Dr. Rowe's ambition was to show that a church and a mission could be combined in the one centre. Hence the order of service on Sunday was more ornate than is the case with mission churches generally; the choir was composed of trained voices, and appeared in cap and gown; the organist was an expert at his instrument and in the conduct of a choir. The preacher himself wore a gown; all the accessories of the service were of a reverent and impressive character. But for heartiness and spiritual influence it would be hard to surpass the Albert Street worship. With a good congregation in the morning and a crowded church in the evening, maintained for year after year amid all the changing conditions of city life, the pastor's policy had been amply justified. Moreover, the press of the city recognized that Albert Street pulpit represented the thought and attitude of evangelical religion on current social and moral questions, and gave unusual prominence to deliverances therefrom. Albert Street church was also the home of a spiritual fellowship, and the Church within the church was a live and vigorous institution. My subject on the evening of preaching there to a congregation that crowded every part of the building was 'Christ or chaos?' deduced from the text: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 68). It was war-time, and the great question was in what direction we were to look for national as well as individual deliverance and salvation. People were then asking, 'What is going to be the end of this debacle?' The question has not yet been answered; and in the words of John Oxenham, all the world is still in the valley of decision. It is still groping and asking, 'To whom shall we go?'

XXX

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1920

If the General Conference of 1901 was held back for a fortnight on account of the Royal visit to Australia that year—the visit of the then Duke and Duchess of York, now the King and Queen—the Conference of 1920 was brought forward a fortnight so as to avoid clashing with fixtures in connexion with the visit of the Prince of Wales. This necessitated the hurrying forward of the preparations, but did not in any way affect the success or otherwise of the Conference itself. Its opening session was held in the Lyceum Hall, Sydney, and its deliberations were continued in the Conference Hall, extending over nearly a fortnight in all. It fell to my lot, as retiring President, to deliver the 'official' address at the opening; but to that I refer in another chapter. The Rev. Alexander McCallum, of Melbourne, was elected President, polling four more votes than those recorded for the Rev. Dr. Sugden, also of Melbourne. The Rev. Frank Lade, M.A., of Adelaide, was appointed Secretary—an appointment which was more of a surprise to Mr. Lade than to any other member of the Conference. Both officials had won their way by the sterling merit of services long and faithfully rendered. Mr. McCallum had been for ten years the popular and efficient superintendent of the Melbourne Central Mission; he had also been President of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference, after serving a term as Secretary. For several years he had been Chairman of Districts, and a prominent member of all Connexional committees. His place in the citizenship of Melbourne generally was also widely recognized. Mr. Lade had been President of the South Australia Conference, and in addition to service rendered to his own denomination was an outstanding champion of social reform and the recognized leader of the Prohibition movement in South Australia.



THE AUSTRALASIAN GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1920.

[*face* p. 208.

So far as the interests of the Church generally were concerned, the principal results of the Conference may be summed up in a few paragraphs.

In the field of foreign missions, considerable expansion was reported. The income from all sources had risen to £70,000, showing a constantly increasing interest in the missionary enterprises of the Church. The mission to the Aborigines of the Northern Territory had been successfully initiated, under the tactful and courageous leadership of the Rev. James Watson. Further developments had taken place in the other mission fields, especially in Fiji and in India. War conditions had to some extent interfered with the work in New Britain, formerly German but now under British occupation. The number of European agents in all the fields had increased during the three years from 71 to 91, in addition to which there was quite an army of native ministers, catechists, and teachers. Expenditure had outstripped income by nearly £7,000. But the outlook of the Conference was hopeful and optimistic. The call was still to go forward. The most important decision arrived at was to give official consent to the cession of the Solomon Islands Mission to the New Zealand Conference, in response to the request of that Conference, and on conditions that had been approved of by the Solomon Islands District as well as by the Board of Missions and the New South Wales Conference. The cession was made with many expressions of regret at parting with so interesting a field of missionary labour and with the Rev. J. F. Goldie, the honoured and successful pioneer missionary.

The ever-fruitful Supernumerary Fund—fruitful of animated and sometimes bitter controversy—came in for its need of consideration. A substantial increase was granted in the allowances from the Fund, both in regard to annuities to supernumeraries and widows, and the furniture grant on superannuation. The Conference felt itself justified in doing this on the grounds that the rate of interest earned by the Fund was considerably above that provided for in the Actuary's report, and also that the latter disclosed that the superannuations were 25 per cent. less than the table of expectations. The increase of capital during the triennium had been £35,271, and the

capital stood at £511,242. During the acute discussions on the Fund in 1901–4, such an accretion of capital when forecasted had been scouted as purely visionary. It had become an actuality! Church Union again claimed attention. A Draft Basis of Union had been agreed to by a Joint Committee representing the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches. The Conference re-affirmed its conviction 'that such a union would be in accordance with the will of God and for the advancement of His Kingdom.' It provided for the submission of the basis to a referendum of Church members and trustees of Church properties to be held in the following September; and it re-appointed its committee with directions as to procedure to be followed in certain circumstances. But again no attempt was made to seriously discuss the question of the proposed amalgamation on its merits. The Conference seemed to regard that as a question unnecessary of debate. Sunday School and Home Mission matters—the latter especially in relation to the needs of Western Australia—were dealt with in a sympathetic manner. The growing importance of the Christian care of the young, both in the Sunday Schools, Colleges, and public and primary schools, was stressed. The Australia of the future can never loom too largely before the vision of a deliberative assembly, and especially of the governing Conference of a Christian Church. Methodism's share of this responsibility was represented by the 225,000 young people gathered in its Sunday schools, and by a not inconsiderable number not thus accounted for.

Two or three matters that might be regarded as post-war problems occupied a considerable amount of attention. But, writing a year and a half after the Conference, it is to be feared that little has come or will come of them. The enthusiasts meant well, and the failure is no reflection upon them. One matter was the establishment in London of an Australian Methodist Immigration Bureau, with the view of supplying information to intending Methodist immigrants to Australia and extending facilities to them; also to establish bonds of connexion between them and the Methodist Church in Australia. The object was a most laudable one; but it broke down subsequently to the Conference on financial grounds. The Annual Conference were not unanimous in their support, fearing an indefinite financial commitment; hence for the time being the scheme was held up. Another proposal still more abortive was for the obtaining of 'men from England,' or in other words, 'picked ex-service men, who have had a full course of training in the home theological institutions.' It is scarcely necessary to say that nothing came of this proposal, over which the Conference spent considerable time. On the face of it, it was a splendid proposition to get thirty-five 'picked ex-service men' with a full theological equipment, and to get these at no other cost than that of a government-assisted passage to Australia. But the men were not to be found. The English Conferences were as short-handed as the Australian, and they needed all the trained men they could get—more especially as they had been trained at the home expense.

Among the duties of the President of the General Conference for the time being, is to give a 'ruling' on points submitted to him during his term of office. Of these no less than ten had been sent to me during the preceding three years, in addition to quite a number that had not reached the stage of a formal 'appeal.' These 'rulings' were reported in full to the Conference, and referred to a committee for consideration and report. On all, save one, of these 'rulings' the committee reported in favour of acceptance, and the recommendation was unanimously endorsed by the Conference. A judge who on the review of his decisions is found to be absolutely right nine times out of ten may be presumed to be a tolerably safe interpreter of the law. Such was my position. On the tenth case, however, the committee was divided, and by a vote of eleven in a committee of twenty-one, reported adversely to my decision. The committee's report was presented to the Conference, and gave rise to a discussion in which unhappily a good deal of personal acrimony was displayed. On a vote being taken, the committee's report (of eleven out of twenty-one) was sustained, and the 'ruling' was disagreed with. No reasons were attached to the finding of the Conference, and the Minutes simply say: 'The Committee reported that the ruling be not sustained, and the Conference resolved accordingly.'

As this 'ruling' may become historical, it may perhaps be worth while to give the full text of the appeal, the statements made thereon by the Presidents of the Annual Conferences concerned, and the ruling itself in full. Those to whom points of Connexional law are without interest may skip the next few pages. There will, however, be ministers and laymen to whom the matter will appeal. I give it, therefore, as an Appendix to this chapter. And here I may say that whilst the ruling was given entirely on my own responsibility, and without reference to any legal assistance either within or without the Church, the ruling was submitted to counsel 'learned in the law' for their consideration after it had been promulgated. Two eminent barristers—both K.C.'s and both of whom had acted temporarily in judicial capacities—and another who specialized in constitutional law, expressed their unqualified approval of the decision and of the arguments leading up to it. It may also be stated that on the committee of review there were five legal members, and of these only two voted for disagreement.

Be it said, however, that almost without exception all personal feeling vanished with the Conference vote; and the Minutes contain the following appreciative resolution with regard to my whole conduct as President during the term:

'That the cordial and hearty thanks of the Conference be presented to the Rev. J. E. Carruthers, D.D., for the faithful, efficient, and untiring manner in which he has discharged the duties of his high office during the past three years. The Conference notes especially the valuable service rendered to the Church during his visits to the several States, to Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji, and his timely, wise, and practical address on retiring from the Chair.'



A GROUP OF AUSTRALIAN METHODIST CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS.
From left to right—
Sitting: Rev. T. B. Holmes, N. S. Wales; Rev. A. McCallum, Gen. Conf. of Australasia; Rev. R. Ditterich, Victoria and Tasmania.
Standing: Rev. J. E. Stone, West Australia; Rev. W. A. Potts, South Australia; Rev. T. R. Thurlow, Queensland.

[*face* p. 212

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXX

CHURCH UNION

Appeal re Extension of Vote by Annual Conferences and Conference Committees.

An Appeal made by Mr. W. J. Kessell, of Sydney, through the President of the New South Wales Conference.

'I desire to appeal to the President of the General Conference for a ruling—

(*a*) As to the meaning and intention of the direction of the General Conference on the subject of the taking of the vote or votes on the Basis of Church Union, and as to whether such direction can be interpreted to mean a reference to any other body or bodies than those specified in such direction.

(*b*) As to whether, in carrying out such direction of the General Conference, the Annual Conference, or any Committee thereof, has power to arrange for the taking of a vote from any other body or bodies than those specified in such direction.

(*c*) Whether the Executive Committee of the General Conference charged with the business relating to Church Union has power to direct or grant permission to the Committee of the Annual Conference to take a vote from any other body or bodies (e.g. Church members) than those specified in such direction.

'In connexion with this matter, I desire to invite attention to the Minutes of the General Conference of 1917, page 95, Resolution 5 on Church Union, the Minutes of the New South Wales Annual Conference of 1919, page 213, paragraph 2, and paragraphs 178 and 179 of the Book of Laws.

I am,

'W. J. KESSELL.'

Accompanying the Appeal were statements by the Presidents of the following Conferences, viz :—Victoria and Tasmania, New South Wales, and Queensland, which Conferences were believed to be 'likely to be affected by the decision.'

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES CONFERENCE.

New South Wales Conference,
Sydney, September 10, 1919.

To the Rev. J. E. Carruthers, D.D.,
President of the General Conference.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

In connexion with the Appeal on Church Union which Mr. W. J. Kessell, of Sydney, has asked me to send to you, I note that in such Appeal Mr. Kessell directs your attention to a resolution of the 1919 New South Wales Conference. It is evident from this that in some way the business of the New South Wales Conference may be affected by any 'interpretation' or 'ruling' given by you in connexion with this Appeal. As President of the New South Wales Annual Conference, I therefore submit to you the following 'statement' (as per par. 179, sub-section (3), Book of Laws) :—

(1) The powers of an Annual Conference are set out in the Book of Laws (paragraphs 295–298 inclusive). The closing part of paragraph 295 is very explicit.

(2) The rights of an Annual Conference are carefully guarded in paragraph 12, Book of Laws.

(3) The General Conference of 1917 instructs the Annual Conference to submit the Basis of Union to Quarterly Meetings and District Synods (Minutes p. 95, resolution 5).

(4) It is clearly anticipated by resolution 2, p. 95, General Conference Minutes, 1917, that 'other steps' than those specified in the resolutions of the General Conference may be 'deemed desirable.'

(5) Provided the instructions of the General Conference are duly carried out, no Annual Conference is debarred by the 'Constitution or Laws of the Church,' nor by any resolution of the General Conference from taking 'such other steps as may be deemed desirable,' in connexion with Church Union.

(6) Certain Annual Conferences have decided to remit the Basis of Union to Church Trustees, or to Church members (or to both). This decision in no way conflicts with the resolutions of the General Conference. It is in harmony with the constitution laws and practice of Methodism. It is a matter of local regulation, and is governed by pars. 295 and 312, Book of Laws. No Church Court and no Church officer outside the Annual Conferences can interpose.

(7) Under paragraph 173, Book of Laws, any Appeal relating to such business within an Annual Conference must be sent to, and be dealt with by, the President of the Annual Conference concerned.

As I understand that the Victoria and Tasmania Conference and the Queensland Conference are submitting the Basis of Union to others than those specified in resolution 5, p. 95, General Conference Minutes, 1917, and are therefore, in my judgement, 'likely to be affected by the decision' which you may give upon Mr. Kessell's Appeal, I am sending a copy of the Appeal to the Presidents of each of the Conferences named, so that they may, if they wish, send any statement thereon (as per par. 179, sub-section (3), Book of Laws).

(Signed) JOHN G. WHEEN,
President of the New South Wales Conference.

QUEENSLAND CONFERENCE.

The Statement by the Rev. B. Fredericks, President of the Queensland Conference, was in similar terms, as he adopts and confirms the Statement of the President of the New South Wales Conference.

VICTORIA AND TASMANIA CONFERENCE.

Auburn,
September 6, 1919.

To the Rev. J. E. Carruthers, D.D.,
President of the General Conference.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

The Rev. J. G. Wheen has kindly notified me (as per par. 179, sub-section (3) Book of Laws) of Mr. Kessell's Appeal to you on Church Union, and as the resolutions of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference on Church Union may be affected by your ruling on the Appeal, I therefore submit to you the following statement :—

(1) The evident meaning and intention of the General Conference in directing that Quarterly Meetings and Synods should vote on the subject of Church Union before any Basis of Union shall be finally agreed to by the Annual Conferences, is that each Conference should have such valuable information to help it in coming to its final decision. The General Conference could have no wish—nor has it the power—to exclude other sources of information which would render similar help to an Annual Conference in arriving at a wise decision on so important a question.

(2) The Victoria and Tasmania Conference directed that 'Trustee Meetings and the adult membership of the Methodist Church be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the proposals' (Minutes, 1919, page 78, sec. 10), in addition to the question of Union being submitted to Quarterly Meetings and Synods, as directed by the General Conference. Such an extension of the field of inquiry is

not only no violation of the direction of the General Conference, but a commendable application to the spirit and purpose of those directions, with a view ' to making assurance doubly sure.'

(3) On the latter part of section 5, page 95, Minutes of General Conference, 1917, referring to the report to be furnished to the General Conference Committee, I express no opinion. The Committee may confine its attention to the votes of Quarterly Meetings and Synods, ignoring the reported votes of Trustees and adult members; but that is a matter for the Committee itself to determine. The right of any Annual Conference to ascertain the mind of Trustees and members on such a question as the proposed Union of Churches is surely beyond dispute.

(Signed) A. E. ALBISTON,
President of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference.

RULING OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The questions submitted in the Appeal involve :—

(1) The Rights and Powers of Annual Conferences and Committees of the same in relation to a specific matter remitted to them by the General Conference.

(2) The Rights and Powers of a Committee appointed by the General Conference to deal with a matter under reference by the General Conference to that Committee.

The abstract rights and powers of Annual Conferences and Committees of such Conferences in reference to matters pertaining to Annual Conferences are not involved in the subject matter of the Appeal. It is important to state this, inasmuch as the Presidents of the New South Wales, Victoria-Tasmania, and Queensland Conferences have raised that issue, and rely upon such powers in terms of certain paragraphs of the Book of Laws, quoted by them (Paragraphs 295 and 312). The Appeal is as to ' the meaning and intention ' of a certain ' direction ' of the General Conference. Paragraph 312, referred to and relied upon by the Presidents named, specifically mentions, ' matters pertaining only to an Annual Conference.' A matter which is under treatment by the General Conference, and which affects all the Annual Conferences, cannot be one ' pertaining only to an Annual Conference.' Similarly, Paragraph 295 (last part of which is said to be " very explicit "), is specific as to the extent of ' all other powers,' and limits these to such as ' are necessary for the carrying on of the various departments of its work.' The term ' its work ' is descriptive of that which is internal to and limited by the boundaries of the Conference itself. I am of opinion, therefore, that these paragraphs of the Book of Laws are not pertinent to the points submitted in the present Appeal—much less determinative of them.

The General Conference had under its consideration the subject of the proposed Union of Churches, inclusive, of course, of the Methodist Church of Australasia. Necessarily, the subject is one

for the General Conference to deal with, inasmuch as it affects the vital interests of the Methodist Church in all Conferences under its jurisdiction. In dealing with the matter the General Conference made certain affirmations and gave certain directions. It appointed a Committee, and prescribed the duties and powers of that Committee. It directed the Annual Conferences to do certain things; it also prescribed a certain course of procedure to be followed in the matter of reference to certain Church Courts.

The ' intention ' of the General Conference evidently was to secure uniformity of action in all the Annual Conferences in relation to a matter in which they are all equally and vitally concerned. I am of opinion, therefore, that the direction to do certain things is exclusive of other things not mentioned, inasmuch as a departure from that direction, either by omitting to observe it in any way, or by going beyond and doing other things not mentioned, would produce different results in different Conferences, and thus destroy that uniformity aimed at in the General Conference direction.

In view of this general principle, and in consequence of the statements made and the pleas relied upon by the Presidents of the Annual Conferences above-named, I considered it my duty to carefully examine the Minutes of the several Annual Conferences to see whether any, and if any, what departure had been made from the ' direction ' of the General Conference. I was the more moved to do this by consideration of the attention due to representations made in such courteous terms by the honoured brethren who for the time being are the official heads of the Conferences concerned. As a result of the examination of the Minutes, I found that only one Conference, viz., that of Victoria and Tasmania, had specifically directed or authorized a departure from, or extension of, the General Conference direction. That Conference has (Minutes, page 78) instructed its Committee to take steps to secure a vote of Trustees' Meetings and the adult membership of the Church. This is admitted (paragraph 10) to be in excess of the steps ' as directed by the General Conference.' The Queensland Conference (Minutes, page 145) resolved to ' recommend to the General Conference Committee ' that the question be submitted to Trustees' Meetings and to the members of the Church. There was in this recommendation to the General Conference Committee a clear recognition of the power and rights of the General Conference on the matter under notice.

So far as the New South Wales Conference is concerned, the Minutes show (page 213) that the direction of the General Conference was recognized (paragraph 2), and no provision was made for any course other than that laid down by the General Conference. It is difficult, therefore, to see how in any way ' the business of the New South Wales Conference ' may be affected by any ' interpretation ' or ' ruling given ' by me ' in connexion with this Appeal.' If any departure from the General Conference direction has been authorized within the bounds of the New South Wales Conference it is not provided for in the Minutes of that Conference, and can only have been authorized by a Committee connected with that

Conference or by the President personally. According to its Minutes the New South Wales Conference has (as a Conference) acted 'in accordance with the terms of the resolutions of the General Conference,' and has so stated (page 213, paragraph 2). The South Australia and West Australia Conferences have also so acted.

Coming back to the points of the Appeal, it is clear that Annual Conference Committees appointed under resolutions of the General Conference have only such power as the General Conference has laid down for them. That power is set forth in Clause 4 of the General Conference resolutions (page 95). An Annual Conference may define and enlarge the powers of any Committee appointed by it in so far as that Committee deals with matters relevant to that Conference. But when such Committee acts 'in accordance with the terms of the resolutions of the General Conference' it is limited in its scope by the terms under which it is appointed, and cannot go beyond those terms.

In reference to the power of the Committee appointed by the General Conference, and known as the General Conference Committee, the Appeal does not state that that Committee has taken any action beyond that prescribed for it in the resolutions under which it was constituted. Nor have I any personal knowledge that any such action has been taken or authorized by it. The Presidents of the New South Wales and Queensland Conferences rely on the power given in Clause 2 (page 95, General Conference Minutes) as conferring a general power of action. The terms of that clause, however, do not appear to me to lend themselves to such an interpretation. The terms are, *inter alia*, to 'prepare a Basis of Union and take such other steps as may be deemed desirable to bring about a federation or organic union of kindred Churches.' It seems to me that 'such other steps' must be governed by the matters contained in the immediate premises, and not by those matters which are the subject of definite and explicit provision in Clause 5 of the resolutions of the General Conference. This is evident from the qualification set out in Clause 2, that any 'such other steps' must be taken 'in consultation with Committees appointed for the purpose by other Churches' (Minutes, 1917, page 95).

On the questions submitted, therefore, my opinion is:—

(*a*) The meaning and intention of the direction of the General Conference is as explicitly expressed by it, and the direction cannot be interpreted to mean a reference to any other body or bodies than those specified in such direction.

(*b*) An Annual Conference undoubtedly possesses the power when acting on its own responsibility, to arrange for the taking of a vote for its own information, and it may instruct a Committee to arrange accordingly, in which case the Committee would be acting under the direction of the Annual Conference. But when an Annual Conference is acting under the direction of the General Conference on a matter referred to it by the General Conference, it is explicitly limited in its action by the terms of the reference under which it is acting. It follows, therefore, that if the Annual Conference is thus limited, any committee appointed by such Conference is also thus limited, and has no authority to arrange for the taking of a vote from any other body or bodies than those specified in such direction.

(*c*) The Executive Committee of the General Conference has no power other than that conferred upon it by the General Conference, and, therefore, cannot confer any extra power upon the Committee of an Annual Conference. As the directions given to it are specific and definite I am of opinion that the Executive Committee has not the power to direct or grant permission to the Committee of an Annual Conference to take a vote from any other body (e.g. Church members or trustees) than those specified in such direction. I am of opinion also that if the taking of such a vote has been decided upon by any Conference or Committee under the terms of the reference by the General Conference, the resolution to do so is beyond the 'meaning and intention' of the General Conference, and, therefore, null and void.

And I so rule accordingly.

J. E. CARRUTHERS,
President General Conference.

Cremorne, Sydney,
September 17, 1919.

XXXI

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES

It has fallen to my lot to deliver three Presidential addresses at the opening of Conferences, in addition to minor prelections in connexion with the opening of District Synods.

A 'Retiring Address,' as it is now generally called, has come to be regarded as a usual thing in connexion with the opening of the Conference, whether Annual or General. It was not always thus. Up to the time of the admission of the public to the opening proceedings, it was customary for the President to say a few words of brotherly greeting and spiritual counsel, to be followed by what was called the Conference prayer-meeting. The proceedings then were more devotional if less spectacular. But as Conferences grew in size and attracted more attention, it was felt that the opening should be an occasion for a deliverance somewhat on the same lines as those propounded from the Chair of the Anglican Synod or the Presbyterian Assembly, and similar ecclesiastical bodies. But as—in the General Conference and most of the annual Conferences—the President was not elected till the Conference convened, it was obviously impossible for him to have a speech in readiness; hence, it came to be understood that the retiring President should gather up the cogitations of his year of office, and present them in an address of greater or less length before calling upon the Conference to elect his successor. The method has its advantages, also its disadvantages. By a peculiar irony the address has generally been described as 'the official address,' and yet on more than one occasion the Conference has disclaimed any official responsibility for its contents, and has insisted that it is simply the expression of the personal views of its author. It is official only in the sense that its delivery pertains to the office the holder is about to vacate.

It is needless to say that these Presidential addresses have varied very much both in their length and quality, according to the mood or ability of the speaker. They have usually been delivered from manuscript. One President, greatly daring, essayed to speak without note or help, and evidently without much preparation. He trusted to his power of extemporization, and to a certain faculty for sparkling humour. But neither stood him in good stead and his attempt was not a success. A few others, depending on a well-trained memory, committed their prelection to heart, and fired it off with considerable precision and effect. But if the address had been written out, was it worth while to slavishly memorize it?

Usually these addresses have occupied forty or fifty minutes in delivery. One brother extended himself for an hour and ten minutes, and then fell foul of a critic who ventured to characterize it as a 'colossal' address! Another took advantage of the occasion of his vacating office to declare his right to freedom in regard to the things he believed and taught, and to deprecate the enforcement of any standards in theology. He declared that he had a creed, but that no one should ask him to define it. The Conference, however, could not accept this position, and said so after lengthy debate at a subsequent session. Usually the address has been so much in line with the spirit of the Conference, and with the beliefs and projects of the Church, as to command unreserved approval and frequently to evoke hearty applause. As I write, recollection arises of a comment on the address of a venerated father who was laying down the gavel for a second time. A great 'strike' was prevailing at the time, and the retiring President devoted no little space to a discussion of social and economic questions. An enthusiastic admirer supported the vote of thanks to the ex-President, specially commending him for his address, and saying 'Of all the wishy-washy stuff that has been talked about the strike, Brother so-and-so's was the best!' The roar of laughter with which this was received, and the puzzled look on the face of the ex-President, brought out the correction, 'There's been a lot of wishy-washy stuff talked about the strike; but the address gave us the soundest sense we have heard about it!'

My first Presidential Address was delivered at the opening of the New South Wales Conference of 1896. The year of office had been a particularly full one, involving chairmanship of many committees, and consultations dealing with Methodist Union among other matters. During the year I had travelled to the far north of the State, including the Northern Rivers, and also to the South West, as far as Hay. But the close of the Connexional year was saddened by the passing away of my beloved wife, the mother of my children, and a gracious helper in all my circuit and Connexional responsibilities. Her death occurred within five weeks of the opening of the Conference, and induced a deeply sympathetic feeling on the part of that body to me in its opening exercises. The Address was fairly comprehensive. It briefly reviewed the year in its Connexional activities and its general happenings; it touched on Methodist Union, then a current question; it expressed definite views in relation to the larger question of the re-union of Christendom; it set forth some of the encouragements to Christian service as against the discouragements that some were making much of at the time; it sounded a clear note of protest against any tendency to retreat or retrench, especially in the Church's operations in the city. 'Can we forget that we are here as one of the great forces making for truth and righteousness in the midst of a population that is growing at the rate of from 30,000 to 40,000 per year; and yet we talk of reducing our staff. In the city we have a dense population—and a population growing in density. The trend of the people, deplore it as we may, is to the big towns; and the city of Sydney is destined to become one of the greatest cities of modern times, and unquestionably the greatest city on the Australian continent. And is this the time to say that we shall cut down our staff and abridge our operations?' The challenge was not without occasion, and as the issue proved, it was not without effect. The address concluded with a peroration (what speech is complete without one) on the outlook of the hour, based largely on Longfellow's stirring poem, 'The Building of the Ship.' It was well received and well spoken of. Methodist Conferences, as a rule, have no time or inclination for what may be called

'abstrusities,' but always take kindly to practicalities.

Eighteen years afterwards—in 1914—the duty again devolved upon me of delivering a 'retiring address.' The year 1913 was General Conference year, and in anticipation of that, the New South Wales Conference had done me the honour of placing me in its chair for the year. To the happenings and responsibilities of that year I need not here refer. This chapter has to deal alone with Presidential addresses. But the 1914 audience was a different one from that of 1896. The later Conference was one of united Methodism. The earlier one was the 'Wesleyan,' the later one the 'Methodist' Conference. The 1896 gathering was in the Centenary Hall, York Street, the 1914 Conference assembled in the larger Lyceum Hall, in Pitt Street. The platform that evening was graced with the presence of visitors from India as well as representatives from Melbourne. 'The dominant note I wish to strike to-night,' I said, 'is that of our place and work in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are of the body of Christ. We are an integral part of that great Divine entity, which, in the fullness of the whole, makes up the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. I shall not occupy your time with any polemical proof of this position. . . but it is one thing to accept it theoretically and another to realize it in its profound significance and its far-reaching implications. With this truth emphasized, the question arises, What is the part we are called upon to play in these lands? What is the programme that it is ours to seek to realize?' The address that followed was a plea for the vitalizing of the machinery of the Church, and for the adoption of a programme adapted to the special needs of the times, and especially planned in view of the unique opportunities opening out in the State and Commonwealth. The following year was to be observed as Centenary Year—the one hundredth Anniversary of the establishment of Methodism in Australia. 'We must now begin to put things into final shape, and be ready worthily to honour so auspicious an occasion.' Becoming anticipatory, the address went on—'The occasion gives us the opportunity of ascending the mount of observation from which we

may not only look back upon the way by which we have come, but also, like Moses on Pisgah, 'view the landscape o'er' so far as the future of Australia is concerned. . . . A dazzling vision. What sort of a city will Sydney eventually be? What sort of a Commonwealth will our children's children be the citizens and controllers of? . . . But it is even a nobler vision that is given to us of the Christian Church to seek to actualize. . . To actualize that vision and to bring in the Kingdom of the King immortal, eternal, invisible, we are honoured of God to be co-workers with Him.' But a brief epitome can scarcely give an adequate idea of an address that claimed the close attention of the Conference for more than three-quarters of an hour.

The close of my term of office as President of the General Conference involved another of these official deliverances. The quality of General Conference opening addresses had varied very much. That of Rev. J. H. Fletcher in 1888 was crisp and sententious, elevated in tone, and far-seeing in range; that of Dr. Morley in 1894 was statesmanlike in grasp and effective in delivery. Dr. Fitchett in 1907 was characteristically racy and illuminative. Dr. Youngman in 1917 had excelled himself in the Address he then delivered—deeply spiritual and touched with emotion, and delivered with unwonted energy and unction. There had been addresses of quite a different order from any of these. At an early Conference one ex-President 'fired off a pamphlet' at the Conference, as he was afterwards told; on other occasions the deliverances were ponderous beyond the ordinary. My task and trial in that particular came in 1920. The surroundings were not too helpful. The Conference assembled in the Lyceum Hall, Sydney. A cold blast was descending on the platform, obliging most of the 'fathers' who graced that eminence for the opening session either to retire to the floor, out of the range of the piercing draught, or to closely muffle themselves in their overcoats and wraps. The chilly atmosphere in part chilled the whole Conference and audience, and the speaker did not get much encouragement of the sort that spurs a speaker on. But the Conference survived, as did also the soon-to-be ex-President. The press notices of the address were most encouraging. *The Spectator*

(Melbourne) said of it, 'It was a thrilling, thoughtful, timely utterance, embellished with apt illustration, quotation, and poetry, and embracing the rich and ripe experience of a half century's message and ministry, which culminated in laying down at that moment the insignia of the highest office within the gift of the Methodist Church of Australasia.' The special Conference reporter of *The Methodist* (Sydney) was even more commendatory. Wrote he: 'The retiring address of the Rev. Dr. Carruthers was, by its wisdom and its fidelity to the highest traditions of Methodism, a fitting keystone to a long and distinguished career. During fifty-two years of his service as a minister of the Church, the retiring President has received all the honours and borne almost all the responsibilities which his Church could confer. With no inconsiderable degree of statesmanship, he has done much to mould the developing life of the Church throughout the Commonwealth, the mission field, and elsewhere. To his intimate knowledge of Australian Methodism he has added much that has been gained by his travels and close association with the religious journalism of the world. Twice has he presided over State Conferences, for seven years he was Secretary of the General Conference, and three years its President. His keen interest in missions, both home and foreign, in the matters of Church Union, the training of the ministry, and the Supernumerary Fund, is known to all, and with an almost unequalled versatility in ecclesiastical affairs, there was a very significant weight of authority behind the comprehensive utterance with which he crowned his long and useful career, and that compelled the interest of his hearers at the official opening function of Sydney, 1920.'

After so all-too-generous appreciation of such an effort, it may be sufficient to say that the title of the address was 'The Church and the Age,' and the sub-headings included the following—Presidential visits; A Fifty years' Retrospect; Changes of Theological Interpretation; Church Union; The Church's Mission; The World Situation; The Need of the Age; A Remarkable Manifesto; The Church's Opportunity; Some Practical Suggestions; Christian Consecration; Christian Stewardship; Prayer-Power; The Vision of Victory. Speaking

of changes of theological interpretation I reminded the Conference that some of the notes that were dominant in the preaching of our fathers fifty years ago are seldom sounded now. 'The appeals with which they thrilled their congregations seem somehow to have lost their force and effectiveness. These changes in belief and in preaching may or may not be occasions of loss; in the last resort everything will be affected by the definiteness of our personal experience of the Christ and the simplicity of our loyalty to Him. The supreme need of the world to-day is true religion. Religion—not ecclesiasticism, not credal orthodoxy, not priestly or Connexional organization. But the religion that puts men right with God and right also with their fellow-men, and keeps them in those right relations. It is the rarity of this that is explanatory of the weakness of the Churches to-day, and of the terrifying unrest that is affecting all classes of society and all nations of the world.' 'If I suggest to you systematic effort—effort all through Australia—to intensify the personal religious life of our people—to more fully and effectively organize our prayer forces; to insist on the duty of stewardship in regard to worldly possessions, and fearlessly to claim life, service, and substance as fundamental obligations of personal religion—if I submit that these are primary conditions of Christian effectiveness and the best contribution we can collectively make to the solution of the problems of the age, I fancy I can hear the unspoken rebuke that you have heard these things before, and that you want something new and commensurate with the unparalleled world-situation. Surely the lessons of Christian history are not going to be lost upon us because they are old-fashioned. They are never out of date, and we still await the revelation of anything better.'

And with these words I concluded: 'Our Christian faith is unshaken, for the word of the Lord endureth for ever. The Lord is King. The Christ is yet to reign. Amid the dark clouds and the weltering storms we can see the streaks of light that assure us of the coming dawn. Watchman, what of the night? What of the night? The morning cometh. Yes, the morning cometh. And, assured that that morning is coming, we stretch forth

our hands and pray:

Break, day of God, O break!
The earth with strife is worn;
The hills with thunder shake,
Hearts of the people mourn;
Break, day of God, sweet day of peace,
And bid the shout of warriors cease!

Break, day of God, O break,
Like to the days above;
Let purity awake,
And faith, and hope, and love:
But lo! we see the brightening sky,
The golden morn is drawing nigh!

XXXII

SOME INTERESTING CONTROVERSIES

We are told in Holy Writ that 'it must needs be that offences come.' It is equally true that in a Church or a community that stands for freedom of individual thought and action there are bound to arise sharp divergencies of view that necessarily seek active expression and that lead to more or less keen debate. Robert Hall very truly says: 'However some may affect to dislike controversy, it can never be of ultimate disadvantage to the interests of truth or the happiness of humanity.' There are occasions when a discreet silence is the truest wisdom; there are others when a sense of responsibility challenges, and duty demands that the gage of battle be taken up in defence of the right and the true. It has fallen to my lot to engage in not a few controversies within the Church, and probably as many in the wider sphere of general citizenship. Possibly there is some fighting blood in me; but I have never felt like Browning's hero: 'I was ever a fighter—one fight more.' On the contrary I would gladly have been excused from each encounter as the occasion has arisen; but the sense of duty has been all-compelling. In my judgement some one had to take the matter up. If others would do it, well and good; even then, they must not be left unsupported; if no one else would don the armour, then perforce I must. This was especially the case with the two big controversies within the Methodist Church in which necessity compelled me to take a leading part, and on which in life's eventide I look back with a good deal of pleasurable satisfaction.

To the discussion in relation to the principles of administration of the Supernumerary Fund extensive reference has been made in other chapters. That controversy raged fiercely for seven years, and has 'erupted'

on occasion for an additional thirteen years. The breadth and length of the correspondence it involved is shown by the bulging portfolios in which copies of that correspondence are contained. But the results have been enjoyed all over the length and breadth of Australia and New Zealand. That discussion had results also in a wider sphere than that of the Methodist Church. It led to the publication of a series of articles on 'National Insurance' and the advocacy of a system of State pensions to all classes on a contributing basis, and free of the charitable or eleemosynary element that characterizes the old age and invalid pensions now provided. The huge cost involved in such a proposal deterred a serious consideration of it; but since it was propounded the State and Federal authorities have plunged into expenditures hitherto undreamt of, and have piled up an ever-increasing pension list for State and Federal employees of all grades mainly at the cost of those for whom the State makes no provision. Yet again, as arising out of the Supernumerary Fund discussion, one of the leading Sydney daily newspapers sought a series of articles from me on a railway superannuation scheme introduced by the Government of the day on a totally inadequate basis, and at an ever-growing cost to the general tax-payer. The proposal passed, and served its purpose as a political measure. But it was not long before its inherent unsoundness became evident, and it had to be seriously amended. The actuary who propounded that scheme had condemned my Supernumerary Fund proposals with unnecessary bitterness, and had stigmatized me as an amateur. It was the irony of fate that his 'professional' calculations in his own scheme were found to be absolutely rotten and led very speedily to its ignominious collapse.

In quite another realm was the prolonged discussion within the Methodist Church of New South Wales over the proposal to establish a Theological Institution for the training of candidates for the ministry of the Church. The necessity for such an institution was admitted all round, and for many years a fund was being built up for its establishment and endowment. The Jubilee Fund of 1867, the Centennial Thanksgiving Fund of 1888, the Century Commemoration Fund of 1900, and the Methodist

Centenary Fund of 1912–15, all included such an object in the list of those to be benefited and helped. As the result a not inconsiderable sum was in hand. It was at this point that the project was revived in some quarters of the establishment of an affiliated college within the University of Sydney, and the diversion of the theological fund to the erection of that college. It was held by the advocates of that proposal that the University College might be made to serve also the purposes of a theological institution, and that the double object might be accomplished by the one effort. But as against this, some of us held that the purposes to be served by the two institutions were not similar and would be found incompatible in any attempt to work them jointly. Briefly stated, the Affiliated College would be a University institution, vested in the University and subject to the provisions of the Act of Incorporation. It contemplated University students only, and any others would be there on sufferance if admitted at all. The governing clause in the charter, as set forth in the Act of Incorporation, provided that 'all students immediately on entering therein shall matriculate in the said University and be subject to the discipline thereof. They shall pursue the studies and attend the lectures necessary to graduation therein, with honours.' We held that whilst the provisions were applicable to University students they were absolutely inapplicable to our Divinity students as such, and would be found to be unworkable. We were quite in favour of the Divinity students attending such University lectures as were practicable in pursuance of their general and Divinity studies. But we were averse to the University curriculum being imposed upon all of them, and stated our reasons at length. Moreover, we held that it would be a breach of faith to take the money that had been contributed for the establishment of a theological institution and apply it to a college that could only be used in a partial way as such, and would still leave the majority of the theological students without a home and without oversight. The discussion prevailed for many years. Eventually it was settled by each side gaining in effect what it had contended for. The Theological Institution was established on its own basis, subject only to the

direction and control of the Conference and its appointed Principal. The Affiliated College materialized in the shape of Wesley College within the University of Sydney, under the control of its own council and subject to the traditions and discipline of the University. No sooner were they established than it was found that the functions of each were so distinct that it would have been difficult if not impossible to manage the two under the one roof and with the one control. Both parties are now content, and a happy issue has been reached out of the afflictions of many years of animated discussion.

Controversies arising out of ecclesiastical claims—especially those of the Roman Catholic Church—have been frequent during the period. So far as my connexion with them is concerned, they occurred especially in 1878–9 and in 1900–3. In the former years Archbishop Vaughan was on the war-path with a crusade against the public school system of New South Wales. In association with the other Roman Catholic bishops of the province, he issued a pastoral in which he described the State schools as 'seedplots of immorality and crime.' It was their least offence, in his eyes, that they were 'godless'; and in his pastoral he intimated the intention of his Church to oppose them in every possible way, and to introduce Premonstatensians, Calathumpians, and other teaching orders to instruct the rising generation and save it from the 'godless' influence of the State system of public instruction. The pastoral was so needlessly offensive and arrogant that it gave rise to discussion of a fairly vehement description. My contribution to it was an address on 'The Bishop's Pastoral—or the Claims and Aims of Rome.' This was delivered in the church at Bega, of which I was the minister, and was published by request *in extenso* in the local paper.

But it was in the year 1900 and those immediately following that a controversy of a particularly acute character obtained, and in which His Excellency the Governor of the State and other high personages involuntarily became involved. The Evangelical Council took the matter up, and prosecuted it until some curious revelations were made and some significant confessions received. Archbishop Redwood (R.C.) had been brought

over from New Zealand to preach at the official opening of St. Mary's Cathedral. To give dignity and pomp to the occasion the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Premier, Lord Mayor, and other leading citizens had been invited to be present, and were assigned prominent seats. During the course of his address, as reported in full in the daily papers next morning, Archbishop Redwood delivered himself of an especially gross attack upon the Protestant Church, regardless of the fact that the official representatives of a Protestant Queen and a Protestant State had been officially invited to be present and were present. Among other things he affirmed :

'The leaders and founders of Protestantism, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, &c., were notorious for their vices. . . Protestantism covered Europe with blood and ruins in the sixteenth century, and has ever since been the helper and instrument of the worst foes of Christianity. It desecrated the home, it polluted the nuptial bed, it lowered the dignity of womanhood, it devastated the school, and stopped the progress of science. . . In fine, neither Protestants nor Greek schismatics have shown that the action of the Holy Ghost is with them. Their ministers have no lawful mission, and they cannot say that they have been sent by Jesus Christ.'

Repulsive as these statements were in themselves, it was felt that the offence of their delivery was aggravated by an occasion being availed of when the Governor and other leading citizens were showing a broad and tolerant spirit by being present at an elaborate Roman Catholic ceremonial. A storm of protest immediately arose. The Evangelical Council issued a dignified manifesto in which it called upon the Governor, and Premier, and Mayor to dissociate themselves from any complicity in such an attack upon the religious faith and practice of the head of the realm and the vast majority of her subjects. The indignation culminated in an immense public meeting in the Sydney Town Hall, with an overflow meeting in the Pitt Street Congregational Church, at which the following resolutions were carried with unmistakable enthusiasm :

'(1) That this public meeting of citizens expresses its surprise and regret that His Excellency the Governor,

as representing Her Majesty the Queen, and his Worship the Mayor, as representing the citizens of Sydney, should have, by their presence in official uniform and state, lent the sanction of their high offices to the ceremonies connected with the celebration of the mass on the occasion of the opening of St. Mary's Cathedral on the ninth of September.

'(2) This meeting further protests against the assertions reported to have been made by the selected preacher, Archbishop Redwood, in his official dedication sermon, relating to the moral character of the leaders of the Reformation, and the effects of Protestantism upon civilization and morality. It declares those assertions to be libellous in character, contrary to historical fact, and repugnant to a community enjoying the inestimable blessings that the Protestant Reformation has secured to our nation and the world.

'(3) That this meeting expresses its abhorrence and condemnation of the tactics pursued by Archbishop Redwood, and countenanced by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, in publishing statements objected to as having been made in the presence of His Excellency the Governor and other officials and without protest on their part ; and, in view of the denials given as to the utterance of these statements by His Honour the Chief Justice, by the Right Hon. G. H. Reid, P.C., and others who were present, calls upon the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church as honest and truthful men to withdraw these statements from the published official reports of the proceedings, and to publish a disclaimer in the daily press.

'(4) That copies of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor, to His Worship the Mayor, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.'

In reference to No. 3 of the foregoing resolutions, it may be explained that Sir Frederick Darley, Sir G. H. Reid, and other influential citizens who were present in the Cathedral informed the President of the Evangelical Council that no such words as quoted above were uttered in their hearing. It then transpired, upon an admission by Archbishop Redwood, that he had omitted delivering the passage in his MS., although he had prepared it for

delivery, and had handed copies of the MS., as prepared, to the press reporters for publication without expurgation. For this he was labelled by Sydney's most incisive weekly journal, 'The Bigot who backed down!'

Scarcely had the echoes of this controversy died down than Cardinal Moran delivered a considered attack upon Protestant Missions in the Pacific, accusing them of divers atrocities upon the natives and of general ineptitude and non-success. Among other things, he reproduced an old charge that the London Missionary Society mission vessel *John Williams* had carried 'spirituous cargoes' to the island natives, basing his accusation upon a report of some years previous that the 'manifest' of the *John Williams* disclosed that on one occasion she had carried a consignment of wines and spirits to her island destination. It was pointed out to him—and clearly established—that this was a newspaper error. Two vessels had cleared the port on the same day, and the 'manifests' had become mixed in the shipping column, the *John Williams* being wrongly credited with the cargo list of the other vessel. The correction was made at the time and remained in print, thus clearing the London Missionary Society and the Captain of their mission ship. This was pointed out to the Cardinal, and was confirmed by the Editor of the paper which had made the mistake at the time. But the Cardinal would brook no correction. He continued in his asseveration in his subsequent contributions to the controversy. The weekly paper before referred to published a scathing cartoon in which the Cardinal figured. It represented the well of truth, with a Cardinal's hat lying beside the top of it. A spectator looking down the well, and seeing the hat alongside, opined: 'Seems to me the Cardinal has fallen in here!' On which a voice came up from the occupant of the well: 'But I don't admit it, though!'

My contributions to these controversies were the preparation in the main of the manifestoes issued over the signatures of the President and Secretaries of the Evangelical Council, of the resolutions carried at the public meetings referred to, and of the memorial to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In the lengthy newspaper correspondence arising out of the

incidents referred to, it was an honour to be associated with the Rev. W. M. Dill Mackay, D.D., Rev. Thomas Roseby, M.A., LL.D., Canon Boyce, Rev. W. W. Rutledge and others. A brief tribute is due to such men as Dr. Dill Mackay and Dr. Roseby. Dr. Dill Mackay was the recognized Protestant champion of his time. He was a man of fearless courage and withal of rare gentleness. He was as brave as a lion and yet as gentle as a child. Even his enemies respected him for his sincerity and his courage; and his friends loved and honoured him for his brotherly goodness and his passionate devotion to what he believed to be right and true. His funeral was one of the finest tributes that has ever been paid to a Christian leader in Sydney, and its chief merit lay in the unaffected sincerity of it. Dr. Thomas Roseby was, in some respects, a kindred spirit; cultured, courteous, and ever considerate of the feelings of others, he was an uncompromising crusader on behalf of social reform and of religious freedom. To high culture he added the charm of deep personal piety, and he was a tower of strength to every cause that he expoused. Canon Boyce (subsequently Archdeacon) was another with whom it was a joy to be associated. A loyal Churchman, a sound Protestant, and an imperialist of wide vision, he diligently sought in all the aspects of his many-sided life to build up society on the broad basis of truth, righteousness, and brotherly love.

XXXIII

PROPOSALS FOR CHURCH UNION.

DURING the past fifty years many proposals of a more or less definite character have been made in the direction of Union of the Churches in Australia. For thirty years I have been intimately associated with the most important of these. Some of them have looked in the direction of co-operation and the promotion of the spirit of unity; others have specifically and avowedly aimed at organic union. Of the latter, the movement for Methodist union in Australia deserves extended notice, as having reached a successful consummation; another movement—still current—for the organic union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in the Commonwealth, is also of outstanding importance, and claims adequate consideration. A volume might be written on either; a few paragraphs or pages at most is all that can here be devoted to them.

Apart, however, from these definite movements, there have been several efforts to get the Protestant Churches into line so as to act unitedly on matters of interest common to all. For some years there was in existence in Sydney a 'Council of the Churches,' in which Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists were associated, and with which the then Primate (Most Rev. Dr. Saumarez Smith) was closely identified. That Council did useful work in several matters, especially in directing attention to public evils and bringing pressure to bear upon the Government and the public for the observance of the sanctities and proprieties of evangelical religion. For one thing, it strenuously resisted the attempt of a Postmaster General of the period (of New South Wales) to open the post offices on the Lord's Day, and secured the withdrawal of the proposal. But when an effort was made to get a move on in resistance to the aggressive claims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the conservative and non-combative

elements in the Council drew back, and the Council practically died of inanition.

Shortly afterwards the Evangelical Council of New South Wales came into existence, prompted largely by the formation of the Free Church Council in England. The aim of the Evangelical Council was, as stated in its constitution, 'to secure the application of the law of Christ in all relations and callings of life.' The council was comprehensive in its membership. All the Protestant denominations were well represented, and in the succession of its Presidents were prominent ministers of the Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist Churches, and eventually also of the Anglican. For a period of ten years the council was full of vigour and of 'fight.' It rendered splendid service, at a time when such service was urgently required. Eventually the council struck upon a rock. It was partly representative and partly personal. The latter provision enabled a few 'cranks' to get in and make themselves officious and obnoxious, with the result that a process of disintegration set in, and the council practically became moribund.

Another organization sprang up, aiming to include all the Churches, including the Roman Catholic and the Jewish, and to secure the affiliation of societies and associations working for social reform. It adopted as its title 'The Council for Civic and Moral Advancement.' It owed its initiation to the Rev. C. E. James, an old colleague of mine and now a Presbyterian minister and a journalist of considerable repute. While Mr. James retained the executive officership as honorary secretary, the council maintained a vigorous existence, and exercised a powerful influence in a wholesome censorship of picture-shows and stage performances as well as in liquor restriction during the early days of the war. But water and oil will not mix, nor will the Roman Catholic Church as such co-operate with other Churches as such, even in matters of morality and public order. Hence the R.C. representatives soon withdrew. Other Churches gradually also grew half-hearted in support, and after a few years of vigorous and useful activity the Council for Civic and Moral Advancement followed its predecessors into the limbo of well-meaning but defunct organizations.

The fault of all these efforts lay in the fact that they were started independently of the Churches and then sought affiliation with them. They were at best representative only in a secondary way; moreover, they had no adequate financial basis; they were always hampered by 'the eternal want of pence,' and consequently could not enter upon any schemes or plans that meant organization and effort of an adequate character. The Churches were so busy with their own denominational affairs that they had little time and no money for those large general affairs that affect the citizenship as a whole. Meanwhile the Sabbath question (to mention only one) is allowed to care for itself, as it were. Encroachments are continually being made upon the sanctity of the Lord's Day. It is increasingly being given up to sport, both in the suburbs and in country towns; politicians are beginning to use it for political propaganda purposes. The Churches are conscious that they cannot act singly in the matter. If anything effective is to be done, it must be done unitedly; the whole strength of the Churches must be brought to bear in support of the Divine institution and perpetual obligations of the day of rest; the duty and benefit of a proper observance of the day must also be adequately stressed. But who is to do this? The Churches are practically silent, and the disaster is gaining in magnitude every month.

Methodist Union

Coming now to the matter of Methodist Union, it is significant that it took nearly twenty years from the inception of the movement in Australia till its consummation in 1902. At first it was treated as an academical question—a pious aspiration on which it was safe and non-committal to pass approving resolutions. This was certainly the case in New South Wales. But in 1890 the matter was taken up as a serious proposition and by leaders in the three or four Churches concerned, with a determination to see it through if it were practicable, and, if it were not, to bring the talk concerning it to an end. As I was closely connected with the movement in New South Wales, my story will be of the local happenings rather than of those of the movement in Australia as a whole. But

it must be understood that we were seeking to keep step with those who—especially in Victoria and South Australia—were working to bring about a union that should be general within the bounds of the Australasian Conference.

The method of approach to the subject is interesting as a matter of history. The Conference (N.S.W.) of 1892 resolved: 'That in the opinion of this Conference the time has arrived when initiatory steps should be taken to promote the organic union of the various sections of the Methodist Church. To give effect to this a committee was appointed to confer with similar committees of the other Methodist Churches on the subject of the advisability and practicability of Methodist Union. Although resident at the time at Maitland (120 miles from Sydney) I was appointed a member of that committee, and continued to be a member until the consummation was effected ten years later. The Rev. W. Woolls Rutledge was the mover of the resolution; he was appointed convener of the committee; he came to be recognized as the leader of the movement, and he never faltered in his purpose until success was achieved. Year by year the committee was re-appointed, with some changes in the personnel. A Federal Council was formed, consisting of representatives from all the Churches concerned, with powers of federal action on such matters as might be agreed upon. At the General Conference of 1894 a basis of polity was provisionally agreed to, and authority was given to any of the Annual Conferences to effect union upon it, provided that a vote of two-thirds of the Conference could be secured in favour of union. A good deal of co-operation was effected in the life and work of the several Churches in their respective neighbourhoods, and every effort was made to draw the people together. But it cannot be said that the progress of the negotiations was invariably smooth and pleasant. The opposition in certain quarters was persistent and obdurate, and in the heat of debate things were said that in the light of subsequent happenings were found to be unnecessarily harsh if not bitter. Such is human nature, and such are the limitations of our human knowledge.

Before the Conference committed itself to an adoption of the basis agreed upon by the Joint Committee, it wisely resolved to remit the question of union, together with the

basis as drawn up, to the Quarterly and District Meetings for consideration and report; and, at a later stage, it again referred 'the whole question' to the members, adherents, and office-bearers of the Church, 'believing that this matter must ultimately be determined by the people of the several Churches concerned.' It is significant, in this connexion, that for the first time the Conference officially recognized adherents other than members, and extended the franchise to them. The result of this referendum was not sufficiently satisfactory to warrant the Conference in proceeding to a definite commitment; but it re-appointed its representatives to the Federal Council, 'to foster a fraternal spirit among the Churches; to promote a periodical interchange of pulpits and the holding of united meetings; to consider any proposals for building new churches or taking up new stations in localities where Methodist agencies already exist, with a view to prevent overlapping.' Subsequently a united Examining Committee was appointed, to deal unitedly with the qualifications and studies of candidates for the ministry of the negotiating Churches. Whilst all this was going on in the Wesleyan Church the minor Methodist Churches—viz. the Primitive, Bible Christian, and United Free Methodist—adopted in their Church courts the basis agreed upon by the 1894 General Conference. At length the feeling in favour of union had grown in the Wesleyan Church to such an extent that a majority was prepared to vote for Union, when it was discovered that the Primitive Methodist Conference had omitted to take a referendum of its members and adherents, and the matter was held up pending the taking of a popular vote within that section of the Church. The delay was resented in some quarters; but the wisdom of the step was afterwards generally admitted. When the Wesleyan Conference of 1901 arrived, it was reported that the votes taken in the Primitive and United Methodist Churches showed a substantial majority in favour of union, and the Conference agreed 'to enter into organic union with the Primitive Methodist Church and the United Methodist Free Churches in New South Wales, as one Church, with a common name, common funds, common laws, and equal rights.' The Conference Minutes record that this was carried by ninety-eight to ten.

It fell to my lot, at the request of the Federal Council, to draw up the 'Plan of Union' as between the three Churches. This was a lengthy document, and needless to say a very important one. It will be found in full in the Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of New South Wales for 1901. It was, of course, a different document from the 'Basis of Union' as formulated by the General Conference of 1894. It recited the legal steps which had led up to the act of union in New South Wales, and provided for the constitutional position, settlement of properties, amalgamation of circuits and of funds, rights of ministers, and date of union as in the State of New South Wales. For this service a special vote of thanks was recorded by the Conference of 1901, as per its Minutes for that year, page 300.

According to th Plan thus agreed to, the Union was definitely and formally effected on the first of January, 1902. The deed of Union was engrossed on parchment and signed by the then Presidents of the three Churches, viz. Rev. G. Lane, D.D., Wesleyan; Rev. J. W. Holden, Primitive; Rev. E. W. Briscombe, United Free Methodist. An enabling bill was brought into Parliament, prepared by Mr. W. E. V. Robson, B.A., Solicitor. Mr. J. L. Fegan, M.L.A., was requested to take charge of the measure in the Legislative Assembly; Hon. W. Robson, M.L.C., was in charge in the Legislative Council. No opposition was shown in Parliament to the measure, and it speedily became law, thus securing a legal settlement of all the property and other matters involved. As union became general in Australia in that year, the name of the Church was changed, as per direction of the General Conference, and in harmony with the Basis of Union, to 'The Methodist Church of Australasia.' The first Conference in New South Wales of the now united Church was held in 1902, and was presided over by Rev. W. W. Rutledge, whose services as leader of the Union movement were thus appropriately recognized and rewarded.

It may be pertinent just here briefly to review and evaluate this epoch in the history of Methodism in Australia. The desirability—one might almost say the inevitability of the movement—no one will now question. It was preceded by a long period of discussion and prepara

tion, but that period was not in any way wasted. The religious associations and susceptibilities of men and women are too delicate and sacred to be dealt with in a ruthless or hasty manner. Even as it was, a not inconsiderable number of people connected with the smaller Methodist Churches did not feel themselves drawn to the larger association, and quietly transferred themselves to other communions. But the method of co-operation adopted and the tender consideration shown in the matter of circuit adjustments reduced the loss in that way to a minimum. Still, that there was a loss was shown at the next following census, when united Methodism made a worse showing in the returns than it had made at the previous census. Under the conditions prevailing in 1901 Methodism ranked third in the official enumeration, being considerably above Presbyterianism as regards the number of its registered adherents. In 1911 the positions were reversed, and Presbyterianism led by many thousands. Nevertheless, Methodism in 1911 was homogeneous, and possibly a greater power for good—more compact in its organization and more influential as an ecclesiastical entity—than it had ever been before. The experience seems to show that periods of transition are not unaccompanied with peril, and that all movements for union need to be on eminently spiritual lines and by such processes as will carry the sensibilities as well as the judgement of the people concerned.

Presbyterian–Methodist–Congregational Union

The story of the negotiations still current (1921) for the organic union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches of Australia might be told at equal if not greater length.

Those negotiations began in 1903, at the instance and on the invitation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of 1902. A committee of the Methodist Conference was appointed to confer with a committee appointed by the Presbyterian Assembly, and for a time the negotiations were confined to the representatives of those two Churches. The Revs. Dr. Clouston and Dr. A. Harper were the principal men on the Presbyterian side, and Dr. Clouston was regarded

as the leader of the movement, and continued so to be till his death. His catholic-spirited and transparently sincere interest in the matter served to keep it alive when otherwise it would have died out through general absorption in purely denominational work. On his decease Dr. A. Harper became the leader, and with unflagging earnestness continued to advocate the scheme in the midst of abounding complications and discouragements.

At an early stage I drew up a series of resolutions which the Joint Committee unanimously adopted, and which in due time found their way into the official records of the highest courts in Australia of both the Churches. They were as follows :—

'This Joint Committee, consisting of duly-appointed representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and of the Methodist Church of Australasia in the State of New South Wales, having conferred, hereby resolves :

'I. That, in the judgement of this Committee, the hand of God is to be distinctly and gratefully discerned in the providential upraising of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches as sections of the great universal Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the wonderful measure of blessing the great Head of the Church has been pleased to confer upon the world through the instrumentality of these Churches. The Committee is persuaded that the separate existence of these Churches up to the present time has been amply justified by the results that have accrued from their operations, by which the seal of God has been placed upon their testimony and work.

'But the Committee is deeply convinced that the time has now fully come when the question of the closer union of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in the Commonwealth of Australia should be seriously considered with a view to their ultimate organic union, and assigns the following amongst other reasons why in its judgement this step should be taken :

1. The general agreement of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches on all essential doctrines of Christian faith as revealed in Sacred Scripture and as taught by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. The similarity in their methods of Church government, both being Presbyterian as distinguished from Episcopalian, and recognizing fully the rights of the Christian laity in the government and administration of the Church.
3. The fact that in Australia those local circumstances and historic conditions do not exist which in the United Kingdom have hitherto explained and justified the separate existence of the Churches concerned.

'II. The Committee is not unaware of the fact that there is much to be said in favour of the continued separate existence and operation of the Churches, coincidently with the cultivation of a spirit of fraternal fellowship and with practical co-operation in good works. But the Committee believes that the interests of Christ's Kingdom in this new and growing Commonwealth will be more effectively promoted by the organic union of these Churches, and submits the following as amongst the advantages which will justify an earnest effort being made to bring about such an organic union:

1. The powerful impression which such a union must necessarily make upon the community of the reality and effectiveness of true religion.
2. The multiplied resources of all kinds which the united Church will possess to be used in the promotion of all forms of Christian work.
3. The economy which will thus be practicable in avoiding the overlapping and undesirable competition which are inseparable from the existing condition of things.
4. The opportunity which will be afforded of unitedly undertaking those social and philanthropic enterprises which are a necessary part of modern Christian effort, and which can be more effectively carried out by a united Church, strong in spiritual life and possessed of adequate material resources.
5. The creation of a strong national religious sentiment and force, which, under the blessing of Almighty God, may be applied and directed to a comprehensive system of Home Missions—

Missions such as shall provide for the lapsed masses of our great cities, the lonely dwellers in the bush, and the new populations which from time to time spring up in the States of Australia.
6. The more adequate discharge of the great missionary obligation which rests upon the Christian Churches of Australasia in regard to the tribes and people of Polynesia and adjacent groups, and to India, China, and other non-Christian countries.
7. Lastly, the giving more practical and visible effect to the Saviour's prayer, 'That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.'

'III. The Committee, therefore, suggests to the chief Courts of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches of Australia that those Churches should consider the matter with a view to a solemn, definite, and authoritative deliverance upon the desirability of organic union as between them. In the event of a deliverance in favour of union being carried on both sides by an adequate majority, the Committee further suggests the appointment of representatives to a Joint Committee to prosecute its inquiries with a view to the formulation of a practicable basis on which eventually to consummate the union.'

'The Committee also recommends that in the meantime steps be taken to foster fraternal relations as between the congregations of the respective Churches; to secure the joint use of Colleges for the training of candidates for the Ministry; and to promote united public action on all matters affecting the social, moral, and religious welfare of the community.'

In 1905 the Congregational Church came into the negotiations; and with intervals here and there the conference between the representatives has been going on from then till now. It has not all been plain sailing. A serious interruption occurred by reason of the Presbyterian Church carrying on, for a period, separate negotiations with the Anglican Church behind the back of the representatives of the other Churches. This was, of course, objected to, and for a period caused the nego

tiations between the three Churches above named to be suspended. It looked as if the project were defeated. The Methodist General Conference discharged its committee in 1913, but in doing so expressed 'its profound sympathy with the movement which is seeking to bring about a closer union amongst the Churches, and recommends our Annual Conference to promote the movement as far as possible.' A year or two later the Presbyterian General Assembly of Australia revived the matter by passing a declaratory resolution and issuing an invitation to the other Churches to renew negotiations on the subject. In New South Wales and Victoria the matter was then taken up with a serious purpose, and the result is that the project is now a live issue and in the hands of those who purpose bringing it to a successful conclusion. A basis of union has been agreed upon, covering both doctrine and polity, and on this an affirmative vote of Church members has been secured in the three Churches—the Presbyterian vote showing 60 per cent. and the Methodist and Congregational vote 80 per cent. in favour.

For a number of years—in fact, from 1905 up to the time of writing in 1921—it has been my custom to contribute an article to the *Sydney Morning Herald* for its Christmas Day issue on the subject of Church Union. In those articles I never ceased to stress the conditions on which alone an organic union could be successfully accomplished, and the means to be adopted to secure those conditions. As often as possible, also, in the committee, I ventured to say that this also—the preparation of a documentary basis—we should do; but not leave the other—the cultivation of the spirit of union among the people by spiritual fellowship and co-operative action—undone. In 1918 we succeeded in getting a committee appointed to promote co-operation, although there was no small opposition—strange as it may appear—to the appointment of that committee. Good work was done in several directions, and the way prepared for the subsequent appointment of the Council on co-operation. But in view of the projection of the acceptance of the Basis of Union upon the people of the Churches without any adequate preparation for the fact of union, and in the presence of conditions in which any hearty co-operation

in spiritual work and especially in work that did not lie within specifically denominational lines had been neglected, I found myself unable to support the immediate acceptance of the basis, and did not hesitate to say so. In a series of resolutions moved by me in the New South Wales Conference in 1918, and which were unanimously adopted, it was affirmed that 'A nominal union, on whatever basis it may be effected, will be valueless and inoperative unless accompanied by those conditions which will ensure the spiritual solidarity of the united Church and give assurance of increased zeal in the promotion of the interests of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Conference therefore went on to recommend that 'concurrently with the negotiations for union there should be frequent opportunities for intercession of a united character for the deepening of the religious life of all the Churches concerned, and for the bestowment of such a measure of the Holy Spirit's grace as shall ensure a widespread spiritual revival.'

In an article more recently published, I have stated that 'The true basis of union lies in a clear perception of the nature and purpose of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and a close personal sympathy with the spiritual ideals of this Kingdom. When the hearts of people are as one, minor differences will not be made much of, and there will be a spirit of give and take—the only spirit in which an effective union can be secured and maintained. Who is there who will not admit that there are grave dangers in precipitating a union before that spirit is actively in operation? Unhappily the church relations of many people to-day are loosely held. It is possible that by dissolving old ties and destroying old sentiments the church relations of hundreds, if not thousands, of these may be completely ruptured. Hence the necessity of proceeding on lines that will first of all strengthen the attachment of the people to spiritual religion; that will more firmly unite them to Him who is the centre and soul of all religion; and that will thus prepare them for that wider fellowship in which none shall say, I am of Paul, or I of Cephas; but all shall be one in Christ Jesus.'

It is easy to designate one as old-fashioned, behind the times, and as out of sympathy with popular aspirations.

But, at the risk of being so classified, I do not hesitate to put on record my conviction that any union will be futile that is sought to be effected on a documentary basis, however excellent, or on such considerations as the strength of numbers, the necessity of combination, and the so-called economy of forces. Church union stands in a realm of its own. It pertains only in a minor degree to the realm of sociology or economics, it transcends even the ecclesiastical; it is essentially spiritual. If it be not that, it had better be left alone.

And yet it may be that the increasing and intensifying desire for more Christian unity is of the operation of the Spirit of God. Who shall say it is not? And if it be, we may confidently hope for eventual realization of the ideal on lines of widespread spiritual revival and in the fellowship of a federation of the Churches. Variations in shades of belief, in forms of government, and methods of worship there are bound to be. Churches are not lifeless things that can be mechanically compressed into sameness of order and form. They are living entities, and each will preserve best the inner truth given to it in its vital setting. There is nothing to be gained by a pooling of certain abstract truths taken from that living embodiment. I believe, with the author of *The Free Churches*, that 'the future of union lies in the federation of Churches.' Not uniformity, but unity. The former without the latter would land us in a condition worse than we are now in.

XXXIV

A CHAPTER ON THE PACIFIC

On three occasions I have had the opportunity of visiting the older mission fields of the Australasian Methodist Church in the Pacific. The first was in 1907, as a member of the Commission of Inquiry into Mission affairs in Fiji. The next was in 1919, when, as President of the General Conference, I visited Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. The third was in 1921, at the invitation of the Samoa District Synod, to officially open the College at Lufi-lufi. The latter purpose was, however, frustrated by the action of the medical authorities in preventing the holding of all public gatherings on account of the occurrence of some cases of measles. An extended account of all these visits is not practicable within the limits of these 'Reminiscences.' But amid so much of interest and information something may be said concerning the middle visit, which was the most important and extensive of the three. The visit was undertaken at the direction of the General Conference, and an official report was furnished to that body, as will be seen in the official Minutes of 1920. Let us take them in the order of my visitation. Chronologically Tonga is entitled to first place, as it was there the 'lotu' first took root; then Samoa, originally missioned from Tonga; and lastly Fiji, as another outcome of mission work in the Pacific. But Fiji is the nearer to Sydney, and the first place of call.

A Fijian Bose Levu

While we lay in Suva Harbour awaiting the termination of the period of quarantine, the Chairman of the Fiji District came out in his launch, accompanied by some members of the mission staff, to assure us of a cordial

welcome. Also to inform us that the Fiji Annual Synod was to be held at Nailaga, on the Ba River, and that we should all proceed thither by the *Levuka* as far as Lautoka. This made a further voyage of 120 miles along the south-western coast of Ni Viti Levu. The in-between experiences need not be related. Suffice it to say that every mile of the journey was fraught with interest. We passed through the Benga Straits; along by the Nandi coast; saw the Nadroga Mission Station in the distance; inspected the Lautoka Indian Mission premises on our arrival there; passed through an Indian bazaar or local market, with its picturesque features; took the Sugar Company's train to Ba, and travelled on the free-gratis-for-nothing basis on it; and duly arrived at Nailaga, where the Fiji Synod was already overdue. One of the brethren spoke facetiously of the Pullman car in which we had travelled! Suffice it to say that, though it was an open truck with seats across, it was the best mode of conveyance short of a motor-car available in those parts; and as the 'train' travelled at over ten miles an hour, it was not too bad.

Nailaga (pronounced Nailang-a) Mission Station is on the Ba River, in the province of Ba, and about four miles from the C.S.R. Co.'s sugar-mill and settlement at Rarawai. The premises consist of mission house, native church, boys' school and bure (sleeping quarters), girls' school, kindergarten, and sisters' residence. The staff is composed of missionary, native minister, English teacher (boys), missionary sister, and kindergarten mistress. It is possibly one of the best equipped in the group of our Fijian Mission Stations. Great preparations had been made by the mission staff and by the native chiefs and people for the 'bose,' as they term the Synod. Unfortunately circumstances had militated against them. A drought affected to some extent the food supply for the native ministers and representatives; the delay in our arrival had disappointed the adjoining tribes who had brought in their 'offerings' a day or two previously, and who went through their 'mekes' prior to returning to their respective villages; and the sudden death of one of the native ministers who had come to the Synod threw a gloom over all the preliminary proceedings. However,

something remained to be done. A native ceremony of welcome to the Synod and to the President of the General Conference was gone through in picturesque fashion by the chiefs and representatives, and words of appreciation and affection were spoken in response thereto.

The Synod was presided over by the venerable Chairman, the Rev. A. J. Small, who holds the record of over forty-two years of continuous service in Fiji, and who enjoys the unqualified confidence and affection of the whole of the mission staff, and also of the chiefs and people of the Fiji group. He is a bishop in the true sense of the term—a veritable 'father in God,' and is well reported of by those who are without, such, for instance, as the Government officials and the white population generally. There are nineteen missionaries in the group, of whom eighteen were present—the one absentee being the brother on the lonely island of Rotuma, 300 miles from everywhere. In addition to these there were one native minister and one lay representative (Fijian) from every Fijian circuit in the district. In all, therefore, the Synod was a fairly large body, and there was no mistaking the intelligence and earnestness with which the native members applied themselves to the business as it was brought before them. The Fiji Synod is unique in that it has to deal with three distinct lines of work, viz. English, Fijian, and Indian. One-third of the staff is in the Indian section. The men engaged in it are specialists and of a fine type. They have many problems confronting them, and need almost infinite patience and grace. The Fijian work was to me specially interesting, as the result of the labours of men and women personally known to me. Such names as James Calvert, Thomas Williams, John Watsford, William Moore, Joseph Waterhouse, Lorimer Fison, Joseph Nettleton, Frederick Langham, Arthur J. Webb, and William Weir Lindsay occurred to me—men whom I personally knew in my earlier days, and who, with their predecessors, laid the foundations of this great Mission broad and deep. The succession has been well maintained from the days of Cross and Cargill, of Hunt and Polglase and Hazelwood; and the present staff is one for which the Methodist Church may well be grateful to God.

The Synod had its lights and shadows. Some of the shadows were specially sombre. The influenza epidemic had stricken the group very badly. One missionary had succumbed to it; two others had been brought nigh unto death; nearly all had been more or less affected. Over two thousand Church members and six thousand adherents had fallen under the scourge, and serious decreases were reported in consequence. A few small secessions had occurred, arising from semi-political and other causes. Social evils were also recognized and deplored. But there were bright lights in the survey. A large number of native candidates for the ministry were brought before the Synod and preached and were examined in the usual manner. The majority of them passed satisfactorily. The examination was said to be one of the best. The tone of the Synod itself was earnest and hopeful. The missionary contributions of the native Churches had been well maintained, despite the influenza and the comparative drought. Plans and methods for the development of the work on an entirely self-supporting basis were reported as being tried with encouraging results.

Of the Synod services there were two that will not soon be forgotten. The 'official service' conducted by the Chairman on Sunday morning, and the Ordination Service, at which the Rev. W. Brown gave the charge to the native ordinees, were times of spiritual interest and power. In both of these the visitor was privileged to take a part. The singing by the native congregation was something to remember, and the fervour of the worshippers might well be emulated with advantage by Australian and other congregations.

Fiji Past and Present

A big subject is opened up under such a heading as the above. On Fiji past a volume might be written, as indeed volumes have been. During my passage from Sydney I interested myself in reading the account given by the Rev. Walter Lawry of *A Missionary Visit to the Friendly and Feegee Islands* in 1847. Even at this distant date the little volume makes excellent reading, and one

is surprised at the amount of information gathered by that indefatigable collector and exemplary missionary superintendent. Some of the early missionaries gave the reading public the benefit of their literary abilities, and such volumes as *The King and People of Fiji*, by Rev. Joseph Waterhouse, and *Fiji and the Fijians*, by Rev. Thomas Williams and James Calvert, will always remain as missionary classics. The story of Cross and Cargill; the exemplary devotion of the saintly and consecrated John Hunt; the intrepid heroism of men like Lyth, Watsford, Moore, Langham, and Lindsay—all these go to make up an epic in missionary service and success rarely equalled and perhaps never surpassed in the history of the Christian Church. Australasian Methodism may well look to these once dark and cannibal islands, and say, 'Ye are our joy and crown of rejoicing in the Lord.' There is no need to overdraw the picture. It would be untrue to say that the condition of the people of Fiji to-day is idyllic—it is far from that. But by contrast with the old dark days—days of superstition, terror, and cruelty—the transition is so great as to lead one to exclaim, 'This is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

So long ago as 1847 Walter Lawry wrote: 'In passing up and down I often ask myself, "What but the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ could have produced such a change in this once deeply-polluted people?" Surely Acts of Parliament could not; counting beads and making crosses could not; baptismal regeneration and priestly assumption could not; the teaching of a Christless morality could not. No; the Author of this work is God, and the work is worthy of Him.' Not a few writers have given quite other explanations of the change that has been wrought in the spheres of Missionary activity; but the testimony of Robert Louis Stevenson harmonizes with that of Lawry, and may here be fittingly reproduced. He wrote: 'I suppose I am in the position of many other persons. I had conceived a great prejudice against missions in the South Seas, and I had no sooner come here than that prejudice was at first reduced and then at last annihilated. Those who deblaterate against missions have only one thing to do, to come and see them

on the spot.' Being 'on the spot,' although without any prior prejudice against missions, I will briefly set down a few things that I saw and pondered on.

Let us take a mission station in a native town, and look at some of its activities. Nailaga—already referred to—will serve as an example. It is a native town in the province of Ba. In it there are a commodious native church and a full missionary educational equipment. A boys' school, a girls' school, and a kindergarten leave little to be desired on that side of the work. The mission house (European) stands in a compound of its own. There are also a native hospital and quarters for a native medical practitioner. We saw some of the work in the schools. The little brown-faced kiddies did kindergarten exercises that would have been creditable in a Sydney public school infant class; the girls acquitted themselves so well in marches, rounds, and action songs, as to gain the vociferous applause of a company of chiefs and other delighted spectators; the boys showed by their written work and their ready answers to questions that they were of an order of intelligence not below the average of our own boys in Australia. All these institutions are a witness to the large-mindedness of modern missions and to the high ideals they seek to attain to. The distinctly religious side is, of course, given special prominence to, and the large congregations at the public services, the hearty singing, the devout praying, and the intelligent listening are outward evidences that the gospel has come to these people not in word only, but in power, and much assurance, and in the Holy Ghost. What can be seen at Nailaga can be seen also at all the principal stations, and in a lesser degree in the hundreds of native villages in the many islands of the group.

Or take another illustration, and in what seems quite another sphere. On the thirty-first of October there was a unique gathering in the Albert Park in Suva. The Fiji Labour Corps returned that day from the War. Their enlistment and dispatch was only one of many proofs of Fiji's loyalty to the Empire that had sent to them the gospel of light and love. The Governor of the Colony officially welcomed the native contingent, in the presence of a great concourse of Fijians, Indians, Samoans, Solomon

Islanders, and other dark skins, with a good representation of Europeans. The Governor publicly recognized their loyalty, and the captain who commanded them paid a tribute that deserves to be permanently recorded. He said that there were three things for which these Fijians had won an enviable name for themselves in France—for the good work they did, the excellent character they bore, and the regularity with which they attended to their religious exercises. Ninety-two per cent. of these Fijian soldiers were Methodists, and three of their number had rank as honorary chaplains! The Empire owes something to Christian missions! The following Sunday morning the contingent attended parade service at the Jubilee (native) Church in Suva; the native constabulary also attended; the rokos or principal chiefs from most of the provinces were present. The church was packed to its utmost capacity, and a service of unusual power and impressiveness was held. This was in addition to an official thanksgiving service on the park on reception day—a service conducted by the Chairman of the District, and attended by the Governor and his staff, the Mayor of Suva, and other principal personages.

On the banks of the Rewa River, and occupying a commanding site, stands the Methodist University of Fiji. I do not hesitate to apply this term to the fine group of buildings that makes up the Daviu-Levu Institution. The Baker Memorial Hall is an out-standing building, finely conceived and solidly built. Around it are grouped the High School, the Industrial School, as also the Primary and Kindergarten Schools. The Theological College for students for the ministry is carried on in the main hall; the training institution for teachers and catechists is in one of the annexes; the High School provides for 'boys' up to twenty years of age; the Industrial Institution turns out craftsmen; the young folk are provided for in the lower departments. In all there are about 400 trainees, including the children. The influence of the institution is felt all over Fiji. Daviu-Levu is wholly an institutional town, and all the buildings are of a worthy and suitable character. The Sunday morning service there was something to remember. The rows of shining faces, the shock heads of black hair, the

spotless white sulus; the harmonious singing, the close attention, the reverent demeanour—it was worship indeed. And what a sight the students presented, as they marched away again to their 'bures' or dwellings, headed by their own fife and kettle-drum band!

Hard by is Dilkusha, the Indian Mission Station. Here, too, are church, school, orphanages, and training institution. Mr. Thompson gathered his company together in the church to greet the visitor—orphans bright-faced, well-fed, and cleanly clad; school boys (Indian) and girls; the small company of students in training as pupil teachers, catechists, and possibly assistant ministers. And what is going on at Dilkusha is going on at Lautoka, Suva (Toorak), Rarawai, and Navua.

XXXV

IN THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS

It is now nearly a hundred years ago since Methodism essayed to mission the Friendly Islands. Such was the name by which the Tongan group was officially designated in our Minutes and other official records. But there was nothing specially 'friendly' about the treatment meted out to the first missionary, the Rev. Walter Lawry. On the other hand, he experienced cruel and violent opposition, and retired after a year or two practically unsuccessful. An earlier attempt at missioning the group by agents of the London Missionary Society was given up, after three of the party had been killed and eaten by the natives. But into this unpromising sphere the Rev. John Thomas entered in 1826, with results that were so remarkable that in the course of two or three years the whole aspect of life in those islands was changed. The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death light sprang up. The revival that occurred in the Tongan group—and especially in Tonga-tabu—in the early years of John Thomas's apostolic ministry, was surely one of the most remarkable displays of divine power that history contains any record of. Almost literally a nation was born in a day, heathenism tottered and fell as at one stroke; the idols were utterly abolished; and with one consent the king and people of Tonga turned to the living God. It is said that there was a considerable interval, after this revival, before any mail arrived from the outside world. It was no uncommon thing in those days for the missionaries to have to wait a year for letters from home. There was such an interval at that time; and tradition has it that the saintly John Thomas fully expected to hear that Pentecost had fallen upon the world, and that the Lord's arm was being made bare in all the mission fields as it was during those wonderful

days in Tonga-tabu! The king had become a nursing father and the queen a nursing mother in the Church! King George was a local preacher and class-leader, and Queen Charlotte was a prayer-leader, and in a very happy sense the island was really Tonga-tabu—sacred Tonga!

But there is another chapter in the story that cannot be kept out of mind. An unhappy division in the Church has marred its peace and broken up its unity. The 'secession' of 1884–5 cast a blight upon one of the fairest missions that Methodism or any other Church had ever possessed, and it was to a faithful 'remnant' that I was carrying the greetings of the Church that had never ceased to love and pray and care for those interesting isles of the Pacific.

Steamer arrangements in connexion with the Tongan group are of such a character that there is no alternative between a hasty visit to the three principal centres—Nukua-lofa, Haapai, and Vavau—paid while the steamer is in port for a few hours, or the spending of a whole month or five weeks pending the arrival of the next steamer. The latter was not a practicable proposition; so I had to make the best of the few hours in each place.

Nukua-lofa is a place of special interest. There are the King's Palace and the Chapel Royal; there are the Government offices and principal residences; Tubou College and 'Zione' church are there, as also the headquarters of the Free Church, represented by a spacious church, comfortable mission house, school buildings, &c. The King and Queen reside there; the British Consul has his office; the Chairman of the Methodist Mission and the President of the Free Church Conference are near neighbours. It is the capital of the kingdom, and in its own way a place of no small importance. It was a joy to visit Tubou College and address its students; to stand within the consecrated wall of old 'Zione' and admire the solidity and beauty of its native architecture; to meet the native ministers and spend a couple of hours in informal but deeply interesting Conference with them; and to exchange hand-shakes with not a few of the faithful souls who had adhered to us in dark days and who pressed forward for what they deemed the honour of shaking hands with the 'gasa-levu,' or great elder from

Papalangi! Nor was this all. By the aid of a motor-car we had an interesting drive through the island, admiring its scenery, noting its wonderful fertility, and passing through quite a number of its native towns and villages. Among other places we visited Houma, where one of our native ministers resides, and Hihifo, where John Thomas landed in 1826 and began his ministry of grace and power in what was then a wholly heathen town. Everywhere we went we noticed the strength and wealth of the Free Church. In a lesser degree the activity of the Seventh Day Adventists and of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) was also in evidence, with here and there a Roman Catholic establishment of no mean pretensions. What a tragic travesty all these things appear to be in such a land as Tonga!

Our visit to Haapai was specially interesting from the fact that there we renewed acquaintance with Mrs. Rachel Tonga, widow of Rev. David Tonga. The visit of David and Rachel to Australia is well remembered. They were a splendid pair in every way, and their addresses and influence have lingered long in the memory of tens of thousands who met and heard them during that remarkable visit in 1889 and 1890. Our Church is not strong in Haapai. The wonder is that we have a remnant there at all. But the fire proved the fine gold of which some of those people are made. It was an interesting gathering we had at the Mission House, now occupied by the native minister. The class-leaders and members observed all the native customs of welcome, including the kava bowl; their chiefs made the customary speeches; they provided a very suitable meal; and they listened with grateful attention to the message of greeting from Australia and to the words of encouragement and counsel with which that message was accompanied.

The next day found us at Vavau. It is approached through one of the most beautiful harbours in the Southern world. For picturesqueness of situation, it holds the palm in the Tongan group. It is evidently a considerable trading centre, and by reason of its wonderful anchorage it is bound to become increasingly a place of importance in the Pacific. When the steamer made fast to the wharf, the Rev. A. M. Sanders was waving a welcome. He had

heard the gun announcing her approach, and he hastened down from the school in which he was teaching to be there to meet the President. For the rest of the day we were in his hands, and a most interesting time we had. In his good wife we discovered a grand-daughter of an old circuit steward of over thirty years ago; in the hospitality of the Mission House we were made to feel quite at home. A drive out to an out-station gave us an opportunity of seeing something of the scenery and people of the environs of the town, and also of the costliness and style of some of the Free Church edifices of the island. A little later on the native officials gathered for a ceremonial welcome, with presentations following the time-honoured kava bowl. Still later, and after tea, nearly the whole strength of the local Church, with some native ministers from surrounding villages, assembled on the lawn, and repeated and enlarged the welcome of the afternoon. Some of the native oratory will not soon be forgotten. It was picturesque and poetical, and delivered with a gracefulness and fervour that almost rendered it intelligible to one who does not understand a word of their language. The evening was plentifully interlarded with singing. The Tongans excel in musical matters. They have a notation introduced by Dr. J. E. Moulton, and their repertoire is fairly extensive. Vavau is surely unique in some respects as a Methodist Circuit. It contains, in all its sections, a membership of 175 persons—men, women, and children; of these, fifty-two are local preachers! A service never falls through in Vavau Circuit for want of a preacher. There is a total adherency of less than 500, again consisting of men, women, and children; yet that small company raised gladly and cheerfully the sum of £1,250 at their then recent missionary meetings!

XXXVI

SAMOA, THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC

A WIRELESS message announced the date of our arrival in Samoa several days in advance, and permitted of adequate local arrangements being made. No sooner had the *Paloona* anchored in Apia harbour than interesting preparations could be seen going on ashore. Medical examination over, and pratique granted, three whaleboats put out, manned by Samoan crews, in spotless attire; each boat arched and garlanded in honour of the arrival; and to the accompaniment of a Samoan chant of welcome we were rowed to shore. There almost the full strength of the local Church was gathered, and plentiful handshaking was indulged in. A move was then made for the church—a substantial stone structure. A prominent chief spoke in behalf of the company; the Rev. F. W. Mueller acted as interpreter; an address in reply was given, and an interesting service was brought to a close with the Benediction. The opening hour lacked nothing in spectacular effect and in evident sincerity of welcome.

But the afternoon! It would almost require the pen of a poet and the brush of an artist to do justice to that. A native gathering had been arranged at Vimocia, a village about three miles distant from Apia, and a programme provided that time proved all too short to go through in its entirety. What a glorious drive it was along the leafy road, with all the characteristic flora and fauna of a rich tropical clime in full luxuriance! By this time my eyes had become fairly accustomed to the wealth and warmth of colour of South Sea vegetation. But Samoa took the palm in that regard, and I was ready to endorse Dr. Solf's description of it as 'The Pearl of the Pacific.' For richness of soil, variety of products, blaze of beauty in its bush, and a general sense of almost unlimited possibilities of

wealth according to native notions, Samoa takes the prize!

Arrived at Vimocia, the strains of a band, the fluttering of flags, and the garlanding of the native houses—especially the chief's meeting-house—indicated that there was something doing or going to be done. The chief's house—a circular building, thatched, open all round, and comfortably matted—was the scene of the first act. Here a 'tofina' or chiefs' meeting was held, according to Samoan custom. Fine stalwart men they were, for the most part; with a grace and dignity that came to them as to the manner born; gathered from all parts of the island of Upolu, the main island of the group. Their 'palaver' seemed a bit tedious, until the chief designated to voice their welcome began his oration—a speech that was comprehensive, picturesque, and full of the usual characteristics of Polynesian eloquence. To his every sentence the rest assented by expressions equivalent to the 'hear, hears' of our own gatherings or the 'vinaka' of the Fijian. The reply followed. A message of greeting from the Methodism of Australia; words of tender sympathy with a people whom the influenza scourge had smitten to the loss of over 20 per cent. of the entire population; counsels to purity and loyalty in personal life, and to the setting of a high standard, especially by the chiefs in the exercise of their great influence among the people: such was the burden of the message in reply. A big chief followed. He expressed appreciation of the message, and especially of the sympathy of Australia with them in a visitation that clouded the life and saddened the heart of the people of Samoa. The inevitable kava bowl followed, and then an adjournment was made to an improvised booth where a feast had been prepared, and to which all were invited to literally 'sit down.' Fowl, ham, tongue; salads and sauces; vegetables (native) galore; pastry and sweets of a toothsome sort; fruit salads equal to the best; ending up with ice-cream and cake to suit a connoisseur! And all this in the native village of Vimocia! To crown all, Samoan girls stood guard with fans to protect the visitor from flies, and to temper the heat to one unaccustomed to it. The repast over, the church was visited—a stone building not yet

quite completed—and then an adjournment was made to a central green, where the rest of the programme was to be carried out. This consisted of the ceremonial of the presentation of food and other tokens of respect—the food all going back to the villagers; 'sivas' or dances equivalent to the 'mekes' of Fiji and the 'hakas' of the Maories, and without which native ceremonies would be incomplete; followed by some words of appreciation, and of counsel and exhortation in regard to the higher things of life. Time pressed; it became known that other engagements awaited us; the courtly natives intimated that they had other 'sivas' in readiness, but would forgo them and release the visitor! The rest of the afternoon was occupied with a call upon the Administrator (Colonel Tate) at Government House—'Vailima,' the aforetime home of Robert Louis Stevenson; a visit to the principal representative of the London Missionary Society, and an interesting run through a number of native towns and villages and some of the principal cocoanut plantations of the island.

Next morning we were up early—so early that at 3 a.m. we were on board a motor-boat bound for Lufi-lufi, fifteen miles along the coast. The party consisted of Mrs. Shinkfield, wife of the Rev. G. S. Shinkfield, B.A., Chairman of the District (unavoidably absent at Savii), the native minister, and several students. We made good time; were duly carried by the students ashore at the shallow landing-place; and found ourselves at the well-appointed and picturesquely-situated Mission House before 6 a.m. Our main purpose in visiting Lufi-lufi was to inspect the Piula College and to meet the students thereof. This we did after breakfast, and spent an interesting hour. Piula is Samoan for Beulah, and so in our phraseology the institution would be designated Beulah College. It is a solid edifice, of architectural design and imposing appearance; standing on a prominent headland facing the ocean, and can be well seen by travellers approaching Samoa in an easterly direction. The College is said to be the most imposing and substantial building of any kind in Samoa; and it is, and will be, the monument of the skill and devotion of the late Chairman, the Rev. E. G. Neil, who designed and superintended the erection of the edifice

from the start. Like Daviu-levu in Fiji, it is at once the theological institution and the training school for teachers and catechists for the whole district. After an inspection of the building we spent an interesting hour with the students, and subsequently with the native minister—the Rev. Jone Falou, a man of superior mind and gracious spirit, enjoying the confidence and affection of his superintendent and of all the people. Much of the pleasure of this particular visit was due to the charming hospitality of Mrs. Shinkfield, to whom this slight word of acknowledgement is more than due.

Mid-day found us back in Apia, the guests of Mr. and Mrs. H. Nelson, life-long friends and adherents of the Wesleyan Church. To them, as also to Mr. P. A. Pattrick, Commissioner of Crown estates in Samoa, we were under much obligation. The former placed his motor-car at our disposal; the latter arranged motor-launch and other conveniences, and stinted neither time, money, nor effort to make the visit a success. There were two or three hours to spare between lunch-time and the departure of the *Paloona*. This we resolved to utilize by taking a run out to see the Girls' School and Missionary Sisters' quarters at Faleula, about six miles from Apia. The property is a very fine one, well situated, and in good order. At the time of our visit it was unused, there being no missionary sister in residence. A Christian lady possessed of the missionary spirit could hardly desire a more promising sphere of labour than is to be found in that part of Samoa.

Other matters of interest can only be mentioned. The veneration and affection with which the name of Dr. George Brown is cherished; the number and quality of the churches belonging to the several Missionary Societies—especially the London Missionary Society and our own; the easy care-free life of the natives, the result of the climate and the productivity of the soil; the proclamation of prohibition, and the various views held with reference to it; the effect of the occupation by Great Britain, and the responsibilities thus opened up to us; the return voyage skirting the coasts of Manono and Savaii, with the reminiscences awakened thereby—all these things must be left undiscussed or undescribed at present.

Samoa, it may here be said, is now under mandate from the League of Nations and is administered by New Zealand. It is to be hoped that a liberal and enlightened polity will be provided, giving the natives as large a share as possible in the management of Samoan affairs.

XXXVII

MID ISLAND GEMS AND FRONDED PALMS

AMONG the many experiences of a trip that was full of interest throughout, there were several that are deserving of more extended notice, but must each be compressed into a paragraph.

Four days were spent at Levuka, on the island of Ovalau, Fiji. Levuka was for a number of years the capital, and even prior to that it was the principal centre of trade in the group. It is picturesquely situated; but the narrowness of the width of foreshore rendered expansion almost impossible, and the penalty was paid in the removal of the capital to Suva. Here, by way of parenthesis, it may be said that not often is a better opportunity afforded for laying out a town on lines that shall include beauty, as well as utility, than was in the hands of the town-planners of Suva, and never surely was such an opportunity misused. The laying out of Suva is a triumph of unsuitability in every way. Streets are narrow and circuitous. Plantations and parks are scarcely provided for; and now that motors have been introduced, locomotion within the town boundaries is attended with constant danger to life and limb. And it was a company of British engineers that accomplished this triumph of how-not-to-do-it! But to revert to Levuka. It runs along the sea-front on a narrow strip of foreshore for about a mile in length. The hills rise steeply right behind it—terrace on terrace, as it were, culminating in some peaks that stand almost sheer up in varied shapes of picturesque grandeur. These slopes are richly clad with tropical verdure and foliage, and delight the eye from whatever angle they are observed. The Mission House stands on an eminence that has to be reached by successive flights of steps. It is undoubtedly beautiful for situation, but a penalty of laborious climbing has to be paid every

time the ascent is effected. The outlook in every direction is rich in all the elements of tropical beauty—the coral reef encircling the harbour, the islands in the distance over a sea of varied colour such as we have little conception of in Australia; the graceful cocoanut and the umbrageous mango, combining with other specimens of tropical growth to adorn the slopes and crown the heights, making up an ensemble of perfect natural beauty. The genial hospitality of the Rev. W. R. and Mrs. Poole contributed to an unalloyed enjoyment of the four days' stay, and the services and gatherings at the native church and in the church for English residents will always remain as a pleasant memory. At a week-evening gathering in the native church—a well-built and well-seated stone edifice—I sought to interest the Fijians in a talk on 'The Land of the Bible.' The effort was so successful that when I proposed to stop there was a request to go on. Like Oliver Twist, the natives asked for 'more,' and they got it. The native choir, too, was in good form. They sang Wesley's hymns and Alexander's songs with great gusto and effectiveness, and would fain have attempted the choruses, 'And the Glory' and the 'Hallelujah,' from the *Messiah*, if they had only had a little more time for practice! The next official visitor may look forward to a treat on these lines.

Experiences at sea were not without their variety and interest. But if one is looking for physical enjoyment, so far as shipboard travelling is concerned, let him not adventure into the mid-tropics in the summer months. The heat of the engine-room and the heat of the weather attend you all the time, and almost all over the ship; and if rain falls to cool the temperature for a time it is only to add to the discomfort. But there is one item in the sea travel in the inter-island trip that deserves to be mentioned, as in itself an evidence of the practical value of mission work among the natives. It is the custom of the shipping companies to carry their 'labour' around from Suva to the other ports of call on the round trip that ends again at Suva. Fijians accustomed to loading and unloading cargo are carried with the ship, and to the number of about fifty are strewn over the deck. The super-cargo gives them an excellent character, and one

of these officials assured me that they would do more work in a given time and do it better than the same number of any Australian wharf-labourers that he had ever had to do with. Each evening these Fijians would fix themselves up on the hatchway or other part of the deck and have a sing-song. One of their number seemed to be recognized as their leader, and would set the tune. Occasionally it would be an old-time Fijian chant; but for the most part the songs they sang were the songs of Zion. 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name' (in Fijian) seemed to be a prime favourite, to the tune of 'Diadem'; and the refrain, 'Crown Him, Crown Him,' was rolled out again and again with a vim that seemed to have a lot of soul in it. Old memories of revival days were stirred as they sang the plaintive appeal, 'Alas, and did my Saviour bleed, and did my Sovereign die?' And one thought of the Chapman-Alexander crowds in the Sydney Town Hall as the improvised Fijian choir on the ship deck put their soul and strength into the well-known 'Glory Song.' It was a happy way of passing the evening hours, and very different from the method of our own white-faced wharfies and coalies.

Have any of my readers had the experience of having two days rolled into one? That was what befell the passengers on the *Paloona* the day before our arrival in Suva on our return from Samoa. We were travelling from the Western into the Eastern hemisphere—Samoa being in the Western and Fiji for the most part in the Eastern. At a quarter to 3 p.m. we crossed the meridian—hence up to that time it was Sunday; after that hour it was Monday! In the morning we celebrated divine worship in the saloon. The captain was the organist, and did his part well; some officials in the Samoan Administration and some of the ship's officers led the singing—good singing it was; and all present listened with unflagging interest to the message of the preacher. It was a unique experience to the said preacher to have the aide-de-camp of the Samoan administrator wait upon him in his cabin after the service to convey the thanks of the company assembled for the service held and the message delivered. Up to 2.45 p.m. the ship observed Sunday well. After that hour it was declared

to be Monday, and deck games were brought on, and those disposed thereto took part in them with a good conscience.

In other respects also that day was one to be remembered. The sea was as absolutely calm as if it were a sea of glass—not mingled with fire, but burnished with silver; the sky was flecked with fleecy clouds tempering the sun's rays, and a gentle breeze was as the wafting of a cooling zephyr. Here and there small islets lifted their fronded palms in air; a little later and Taviuni—'the garden of Fiji'—showed its picturesque outline, with the straits of Somosomo separating it from the islands lying to the north and north-west of it. Then Koro loomed in sight—an island rendered famous as the scene of the capture of Von Luckner, the German pirate, who had wrought much mischief in the *Sea Adler* while that craft was under his command. Then Ovalau; then other islands the names of which it is not necessary to mention. Fiji consists in all of about 250 islands or islets; a fair proportion of them came within our ken on that most interesting day.

Two other experiences in mid-ocean deserve a passing mention. En route from Samoa to Fiji we called at Niua-fo'ou—the northernmost island of the Tongan group; a tiny out-post 250 miles away from Tonga-tabu; with which circuit it is connected as a section. Our steamer lay off while a native swam out from shore with a small mail for us to take on board. On arrival at the ship's side this was dropped by him into a bucket let down to receive it; the mail for the island was then thrown into the sea, sealed up in a kerosene tin. The native swimmer took hold of the tin, and swam with it in front of him half a mile back to shore! A lonely life it must be on Niua-fo'ou. It is a small island, apparently rich in cocoa-nuts. It is said the best in the group are grown there, on a soil enriched by a volcanic eruption that shook the island thirty or forty years ago. About 1,200 people live on the island—natives, for the most part, a firm of traders, two or three Roman Catholic priests or brothers, and, of course, a Free Church minister and his helpers. The original Methodist Church is represented by a little remnant of twenty-five members, of whom seven are local preachers, and fifty-two attendants at public worship.

The Chairman of the District regularly visits the island at least once a year, and seeks to keep the little flock in good heart. Far from the madding crowd, and getting its 'tin-can mail,' as it is called, once a month, and in the way above described, life at Niua-fo'ou must be to our way of thinking fairly monotonous.

A look-in at Norfolk Island and passing under the lee of Lord Howe Island on our return trip supplied almost all that one could desire to have with regard to the completeness of an island tour. Norfolk lies to the eastward of the ordinary course to and from Sydney, but passengers to the number of over thirty desired a passage to Australia, and a cable message to Suva secured a deviation of the *Levuka* from her regular route so as to ship these passengers at Norfolk. Among these were the Administrator and his Secretary and others connected with the life of the island, with whom it was interesting to converse. Weather conditions were not very favourable, and there was no opportunity of a personal inspection of the lovely island except from the deck of the ship, nearly a mile from the shore. But we saw Kingston, the little township with its once pretentious Government buildings; a settler's house, neat and trim, peeped out here and there from the wooded enclosures; the slopes were with verdure clad, and the magnificent Norfolk Island pine threw out its handsome fronds from numberless stems as they grew in unchallenged profusion all over the island. The boats' crews that came out were composed of typical Norfolk Islanders—descendants of the Pitcairners with their admixture of Tahitian blood. Bunches of bananas and boxes of pineapples brought on board by the passengers gave some idea of the productivity of the island. Almost everything seems to grow there, and it was refreshing to learn that in these days of constant increase in the cost of living there is one place within four days' reach of Australia where neither poverty nor riches obtain, and life is simple, easy, and cheap. We have a home missionary on Norfolk Island and a band of faithful members. Norfolk is certainly entitled to be included when one sings of

> Each lovely green island that gems the salt wave
> His truth shall convert, His philanthropy save.

XXXVIII

A VISIT TO VICTORIA

A VISIT paid to Victoria during the period of my Presidency of the General Conference, and in a sense an official visit, was not the first, as it proved to be not the last, of several visits to the Southern State. But it enabled me to gain a more extended and intimate acquaintance with some portions of that favoured area. In the early days it was well named Australia Felix; for in regard to compactness, proximity to the sea board, climate, and productivity, it stood for many years at the head of all the Australian States. The discovery of gold in 1851 and the large finds in Bendigo, Ballarat, and adjacent fields, attracted population in an unwonted measure, and placed Victoria in the forefront of the goldfields and gave Melbourne the pre-eminence among all the capitals. But time has wrought changes. The extent of territory in New South Wales and the variety of its mineral resources, together with the unique position of the port of Sydney in regard to the trade of the Pacific, have turned the tables in favour of the older State; and at this time of writing Sydney has considerably outstripped Melbourne in population and in the volume of its trade, and New South Wales has gained a lead in the census figures and is at the head of the list of all the States.

Victorian Methodism from the first was vigorous and aggressive. A considerable influx of Cornish miners gave a preponderance to Methodism in most of the mining-fields, and a good type of laymen assisted in the counsels of the Church in the early days and backed up the vigorous policy of ministers like Revs. D. J. Draper, Dr. Waugh, John Watsford, and W. A. Quick.

On my first visit to Melbourne, in 1874, I was struck with the cathedral-like proportions of Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne; with the massive aspect of

Wesley College, on the St. Kilda Road; and with the size and strength of the leading suburban churches. During a three-years' residence in Deniliquin, in Southern Riverina—a province that was not ineptly described by some one as a suburb of Melbourne—I had further opportunities of forming an acquaintance with and of gathering impressions of Methodist life and work in the Southern State. Since then frequent visits in connexion with the holding of the General Conference and attendance upon committees or commissions appointed by it have enlarged the opportunities of not only seeing Victoria from without, as it were, but of forming the acquaintance, enjoying the hospitality, and rejoicing in the friendship of some of its leading representatives, both ministerial and lay. It is a pleasure to set down some of the favourable impressions of these visits.

Among the outstanding institutions of Victorian Methodism prominence must be given to the Central Methodist Mission in Melbourne, and to the three colleges of which it is justly proud, viz. Wesley College, the Methodist Ladies' College, and Queen's College within the University of Melbourne. Methodism is strong in what may be called its circuit life in many of the suburbs of Melbourne, notably in Auburn, Kew, Canterbury, and Malvern; and in the leading provincial centres, such as Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, and in Gippsland and other farming areas. But in the city of Melbourne it is suffering in the same way as has been experienced in Sydney and in London and other city centres. Hence it is grappling with the problem by the special agency of the Central Methodist Mission connected with Wesley Church—an agency instituted by the big-hearted, broad-minded A. R. Edgar, and successfully carried on by him for over twenty years; then to be taken up (on Mr. Edgar's decease) by the Rev. A. McCallum, and to be maintained for another ten years. It is a centre of evangelistic and philanthropic work that commands the confidence of the whole Connexion, and has won tributes of admiration from prelates of the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions, from representatives of all the other Churches, and from politicians of all schools of thought. It knows no political party; it stands on a broad theological basis; it aims at social amelioration and individual reform on evangelistic lines; and from its Sunday afternoon platform it does not hesitate to denounce, in unmeasured terms, vice in all its forms and disloyalty under any and every disguise, as well as to advocate all that makes for the enlightenment and uplift of the community. At the time of this writing it is under the superintendence of the Rev. S. J. Hoban, who has gone there after a triumphal term of six years in the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney, and who promises to repeat if not to surpass the palmy days of the mission under the magnetic personality of Rev. A. R. Edgar.

The Methodist colleges of Victoria are also, in a sense, its glory and its crown. Wesley College is the oldest of these, and has had a splendid record. It was founded through the munificence of Mr. Walter Powell and some other wealthy laymen in the palmy days of 'the gold' in the later 'fifties and the early 'sixties of last century. It is now under the care and control of Mr. L. A. Adamson, M.A., an educational enthusiast, who has lifted the college to a degree of influence and popularity and usefulness never before attained. It was my privilege to visit the college on the first of November, 1918, and to witness a scene that I shall never forget. It was a Friday morning. The whole school was gathered in the fine assembly hall for the weekly 'sing-song,' and for receiving announcements concerning college arrangements of general interest. The war was reaching a crisis. Great events were impending. Patriotic fervour ran high. School songs were sung with much gusto. Announcements were made concerning class fixtures, school sports, and other matters of interest. Between 400 and 500 schoolboys were assembled, and youthful spirits were exuberant. Presently they would all be going to their respective classrooms for the work of the day. A messenger entered and interviewed the head master. As soon as could be the head master called for attention. In quiet tones he announced that a message had just been received that Turkey had capitulated and that the British fleet had entered the Dardanelles! The result may be imagined. The school-boys rent the air with their 'hurrahs'; they stamped until one might have imagined the floor would

give way; they clapped their hands as if they would never stop; and they finished up with three ringing cheers for the King, and made the walls resound with the strains of 'God Save the King.' Over 600 'old Wesley Collegians' had joined the colours, and in the hall we were gathered in were Memorials to those who had fallen at the post of service for their King and Empire.

The Methodist Ladies' College (popularly known as the M.L.C.) is largely the creation of the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, B.A., LL.D., who has been its President from the date of its opening in 1881. He is now in the forty-first year of his appointment. The college stands in its own grounds in the suburb of Hawthorn, near to the Glenferrie railway station, and is one of the largest and best-equipped girls' colleges in Australia. It fell to Dr. Fitchett's lot to carry a motion in the Victoria and Tasmania Conference in favour of the establishment of a girls' college; and, foreseeing many difficulties, especially in the early years, the Conference thought that there was no one more entitled to face these difficulties or better able to solve them than the pioneer of the movement. Consequently his appointment was as much in the nature of a penalty as a prize. But the enthusiasm of Dr. Fitchett, joined to his winsome personality and his commanding ability, soon won out and placed the College on a sound foundation. The fame of the institution has gone all over Australia, and pupils are sent to it from all parts of the Commonwealth and from the isles of the Pacific. It has been my privilege to stay at the College more than once as the guest of the President and his accomplished wife. Dr. Fitchett will perhaps not thank me for divulging his methods of work; but one cannot stay under his roof without becoming conscious of the variety of his activities and the systematized way in which he gets through his varied and—what would be to most people—exacting duties from day to day. Dr. Fitchett began his literary work in quite an unpretentious way nearly fifty years ago as a contributor to the *Spectator* (Melbourne) under the initials of X.Y.Z. His 'Easy Chair Chat' in that paper—the organ of Victorian Methodism—soon attracted attention and won popularity. Not long after the Melbourne *Argus* enlisted him as

a contributor; and his graphic series of articles in that paper on 'Deeds that Won the Empire' and 'Fights for the Flag' stamped him as one of the most vivid and picturesque delineators of patriotic scenes that the literary world possessed. His rise to world-fame soon followed. An admirer hardly knows whether to wonder most at his versatility or his fecundity. In the religious realm he has written *Wesley and His Times, The Unrealized Logic of Religion, The Beliefs of Unbelief,* besides contributing week by week to the *Southern Cross* (of which he is the editor) articles of a critical, expository, and devotional character well worthy of being preserved in permanent form. On the historical side he has published the series of war sketches above referred to, *How England Saved Europe, Wellington and His Captains, The Cruise of the Hirondelle,* and other volumes of a kindred character. In addition to all this he edited for some years the Australian *Review of Reviews,* and later his own magazine *Life;* and while doing all this has superintended the affairs of the college of which he is the President, and taken his share in the Connexional and general movements of his Church and State. Tradition has it that on one occasion a visitor found him in his study engaged in keeping three stenographers going while he dictated to each of them in turn, and that he personally answered telephone rings while all this was going on! His intake is as marvellous as his output. He seems to read all the newspapers and magazines of the world, and to absorb most of the new books as they come out, whilst his knowledge of general literature is so extensive that he appears to be able to quote at leisure from almost all the poets, historians, scientists, and essayists of bygone times. His Church has honoured him above most. On two occasions he was elected to the Presidency of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference, and the highest office of all—that of President of the General Conference—was conferred on him in 1904. In that year also he was appointed Representative to the British Conference; and his public addresses there made a profound impression by their freshness and vigour. His success and popularity as an author may be judged from the fact that the aggregate issues of all his books total 900,000 copies!

Queen's College (within the University of Melbourne) was fortunate in securing as its first Principal or Master a minister of the ability and attainments and personality of the Rev. E. H. Sugden, M.A., B.SC., and now D.LITT. A good story is told concerning the conferment by the Melbourne University of the last-mentioned diploma. Dr. Sugden is a musical genius, among many other things; he also is a diligent student of Shakespeare, and an authority on most matters connected with the great dramatist's life and work. He chose as the subject of his thesis for the D.LITT. degree *The Topography of Shakespeare's Plays*. The learning displayed in this thesis so astonished the professors who formed the examining board that they agreed there was only one man who could correctly appraise such a paper. 'Send it to Sugden,' they said. Not till then did they learn that it was Sugden's own paper. So the thesis was remitted to the professors of Sydney University for appraisement, with the result that Mr. Sugden was awarded the highest degree in letters the University could confer. A versatile man in many directions is E. H. Sugden. As theological tutor he has won the confidence and affection of successive batches of students for the ministry; as Master of the college he has supervised the studies of young men in all the faculties of the University—arts, laws, science, medicine, engineering, philosophy—and produced results that have won for Queen's an enviable place in the records of the affiliated colleges of Melbourne. For many years he was choir conductor at the great Conference demonstrations, and report has it that he was musical critic for one of the great Melbourne dailies. Withal, he has retained his evangelistic fervour, and is as much at home as ever in a revival prayer-meeting. One good brother declared, after hearing him preach and witnessing his conduct of the after-meeting, that the Conference ought to appoint him as Conference evangelist! His critics allege that he has limitations, but possibly they are not as many or as serious as those of the fault-finders. He, too, has gained some reputation in the literary world. His latest publication is a valuable two-volume edition of Wesley's First Fifty-three Sermons with annotations—the annotations illuminating the text in quite a unique fashion.

Speaking of Queen's College reminds one of the venerable and saintly minister to whom Victoria is principally indebted for its establishment, and who was for many years the President of its Council. The Rev. William A. Quick was a fine specimen of a cultured and consecrated Methodist minister, and the personification of an English gentleman. His noble bearing, his unaffected courtesy, his rare and beautiful piety were such as made an ineffaceable impression, and secured for him a wide-spread influence among all classes, and especially among the refined and cultured people of his congregation; they also won for him the profound respect of the whole community. Very diverse in his methods from John Watsford—the antithesis of the fervid evangelist—there yet subsisted between the two an intimate friendship and a spiritual affection that led them in their later years to seek one another out very frequently to spend pleasant hours together in fellowship of the sweetest type. It was a rare privilege to have the friendship of such a saint of God, and to receive his benediction on every occasion of visiting him in his ripe old age in his quiet retreat at Brighton. One could quite imagine that when he went home all the bells of the celestial city would ring out a welcome.

Nor would mention of Victoria and of later Victorian Methodism be complete without a recognition of the part the Rev. Dr. Morley has played there for the past twenty years, and the position he has won in the Connexional life and religious world of that State. For over thirty-five years he was a leading figure in New Zealand; on his transfer to Australia in 1902 to take charge of the affairs of the Supernumerary Fund in Melbourne, his forceful personality speedily commanded attention and won respect and admiration in all the circles in which he moved. With a firm grasp of governing principles, an unremitting attention to details, a tireless patience in acquiring information, and an intense sympathy with the spiritual ideals and purposes of Methodism, he came to be recognized as speaking with no mean measure of authority, and as a representative of all that is noblest and best in the Church he has so long served. He has the unique honour of being the only minister or layman who has been

a member of all the General Conferences from the first in 1875 to the latest yet held, in 1920. He has written and published the *History of New Zealand Methodism*, and is a recognized authority on Methodist law and procedure as well as upon Methodist history generally.

Providence was kind to me in many ways in connexion with my Melbourne visits in opening up such a home to me as that provided by my good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Berry, at 'Otira,' Kew. Mr. Berry was one of Melbourne's successful men of business, and has retired to enjoy in a mellow eventide the fruits of his industry and ability at his beautiful home in Kew. Withal he has retained the simplicity of his early piety and the graciousness and gentleness of a disposition refined and sweetened by the grace of God. In Mrs. Berry—the devoted companion of his later years—he has found a helpmeet in every way in sympathy with his ideals and tastes. Loyal to his Church, generous in the support of every good cause, and delighting to do good in ways known only to himself and his wife, it was a privilege to stay under their roof and enjoy a hospitality that was as homely and unaffected as it was sincere and generous. The Methodist Ladies' College and Queen's College have both benefited considerably of late by this good man's benefactions. Mr. Berry's case may be cited as an up-to-date fulfilment of the old-time promise: 'Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses burst out with new wine.'

With the itinerary kindly arranged for me by the then Secretary of the General Conference (Rev. Alexander McCallum) I need not deal at length. It embraced visits to Geelong, Ballarat, Hamilton, Warrnambool, and Bendigo. It gave me an opportunity of meeting some of the leading Methodists and prominent citizens of all those places. Mayoral receptions and Church socials were attended by ministers of other Churches and citizens of all denominations, and were occasions of pleasant and profitable intercourse. The supreme things in Church life and good citizenship were stressed at these gatherings. But the Sunday services at Ballarat East and Lydiard Street (Ballarat), and a week later at Golden Square and

Forest Street, Bendigo, stand out as the memories most sacredly cherished. Large and attentive congregations in well-appointed churches, and with choirs in efficient strength, gave opportunities for ministering in holy things and witnessing for the supreme truths that make for personal righteousness and national strength. Incidentally the travel opened one's eyes to the greatness of the heritage that God has given us in this wide territory of Australia. Is there land anywhere in the world superior to wide stretches of it around Ballarat? Where will you find the equal of the broad acres between Hamilton and Warrnambool? Colac, Camperdown, and the rich areas lying between those points and Geelong are surely unsurpassed for fertility and reliability in any other part of Australia. The panorama was satisfying in its beauty; the landscape was bewildering in its suggestion of productiveness and wealth. The description given of Palestine of old is more true of this Southern land than even of the ancient Canaan. 'A good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.' Bendigo and Ballarat had yielded minerals more precious far than iron or brass, and the broad acres of rich pasture abundantly watered by running streams and regular rainfall were year by year furnishing comfort and fatness and strength to the dwellers in so fortunate a neighbourhood.

Nor can I close this chapter without paying a tribute to the host of noble laymen and women who are the strength and glory of Victorian Methodism. Their constancy and liberality and devotion are worthy of all praise. In a deepening interest and increasing liberality to both home and foreign missions they are showing the depth and fervour of their piety, and in their support of their colleges and of all good causes they are making a contribution of value to the higher citizenship of the State and Commonwealth. If I single out for honourable mention my friend and host, Mr. Henry Berry, and my helper and champion in the supernumerary fund contest, Mr. W. B.

McCutcheon, added to these such noble men as the late Hon. R. Beckett and Mr. J. W. Egglestone and such liberal supporters of all good causes as Mr. F. J. Cato and Drs. Gault and Wilkinson, it is because I have been brought into more direct and personal contact with them. Nor can I forget Sir John Quick, of Bendigo, one of the framers of the Australian Commonwealth Constitution, whose guest I was on my visit to Bendigo in 1918, and Mr. H. Hitchcock, of Geelong, whose mayoral hospitality was extended to me in that same year. Mr. Hitchcock has done noble and generous things for Geelong Methodism.

XXXIX

ACROSS THE STRAITS TO 'TASSIE'

AN invitation to be present at the Annual Sessions of the Tasmanian Methodist Assembly suggested the possibility of a visitation that should include the principal centres in 'little, lovely, loyal Tasmania.' At one of the gatherings held during a tour that extended over four weeks, the superintendent of an important circuit lamented (so to speak) that Methodism is weakest at its head. He immediately disclaimed any personal application of so equivocal a statement, and indicated that his meaning was that the 'head' of the Church possessed no powers equal to those (say) of an Archbishop or similar functionary, opining that such powers might be wisely used for the good of the Church as a whole. Opinions will, of course, vary in regard to such a proposition, and this is not the time or place to start a discussion upon it. The fact remains that neither executive nor administrative functions pertain to the office as at present constituted. But it is not without significance or utility. It is at least the visible symbol of the unity of Australasian Methodism, and may be so filled as to be an occasion of stimulus and inspiration as well as of guidance and leadership in those ideals and movements that are not local but general in their Connexional bearing.

Crossing the Straits to Tasmania is an experience that even seasoned travellers do not anticipate with equanimity. 'Your atrocious Straits and your atrocious steamer' was the terse description given to a Launceston audience by Chaplain Rentoul of his experience in getting to the meeting at which he and I were the principal speakers. I fared well on the passage thither; but I prefer to draw a veil over what I and my fellow-passengers went through on returning in the teeth of a south-east gale and on board a steamer never built for such a traffic.

A volume might be written in praise of the scenic beauties of the little island. Its people are fond of describing it as 'the Garden State.' I was present in Launceston at the reception given to the French Mission, and General Pau was duly advertised by the Mayor and Premier that he was being welcomed to the Garden of the Commonwealth. With true French suavity and courtesy, the veteran acknowledged that it was so, and gallantly referred to the girls and women who were assisting in the welcome as the flowers who gave beauty and fragrance to the garden. But pleasantry apart, Tasmania has an embarrassment of riches in the scenery that delights the eye and satisfies the sense of beauty. The Cataract Gorge at Launceston stands unique in its way. There is nothing else of the kind to equal it in Australia. Taste and skill and enterprise have made the most of the opportunity bestowed by Nature. And as a Government publication puts it: 'This is a famous spot, and its rugged grandeur, tumbling water, and wealth of foliage is a sight that must appeal to and linger in the memory of all beholders.' As to Hobart, one hesitates to begin to mention—to say nothing of describing—the multitude of beauty spots and pleasure trips that have their centre and starting-point in the capital of the island. The courtesy of the Chairman of the Hobart District (Rev. H. Overend, B.A.) secured for me a hasty motor run up Strickland Drive, skirting the base of Mount Wellington and climbing up its spurs, until we reached the Springs, about half-way up the mountain. What a wealth of vegetation we passed through—forests and fern glades, babbling brooks and miniature cascades—until we reached the open space at the refreshment kiosk, from which we obtained a glorious panoramic view of the city and its suburbs, the Derwent River and its Valley, and the D'Entrecasteux Channel, fortressed as it were by Bruni Island and studded with bays and islets along its course. Surely this is one of the scenes of the world. Weather conditions, too, were favourable. Misty rain now drew a thin veil over the scene, as it were; the sun in turn dispersed this, and painted the panorama as with silver and gold; and, to complete the whole, a shower of sleet and snow flakes passed along the mountain-side and up

its flanks, and passed, leaving old Wellington thinly clad in a vesture that seemed like crystal in its snowy beauty. If the performance had been humanly got up we should have heartily said, 'Thank you.' But it was above the art or skill of man, and we could but inwardly say, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' Among many pleasant memories of scenes of loveliness—the wealth of apple blossom, the varied tints of hawthorn hedges of white and pink, the gay parterres of exquisitely laid-out and well-kept gardens—the recollection of that drive in an hour snatched from public engagements will live long and be treasured highly.

In dealing with the knowledge gained and the impressions formed of the Methodism of Tasmania, the limitations of space are again irksome and embarrassing. Some reader will perhaps ask, 'What is the Tasmanian Methodist Assembly?' The answer to that is in part negative. It is not a Tasmanian Conference. Indeed, the principal subject discussed at the sessions of the year was the desirability and practicability of a separate Conference for Tasmania. For some time past there had been a growing feeling, in some quarters, in that direction, and the proposal gave occasion for a full-dress debate that lasted all the afternoon of one day and the morning of the following. The debate was, in every respect, highly creditable to the members of the Assembly. It was characterized by much ability on both sides, and by admirable courtesy. The laymen took a broad all-round view of the proposal, admitting the advantages and weighing well the difficulties and disadvantages. The ministers left the principal part of the speaking to the laymen, but one or two of the younger men expressed themselves with an ability and weight of argument that stamped them (in my judgement) as clear and independent thinkers with a future before them. The proposal did not carry, and still the question remains, 'What is the Tasmanian Assembly?' Well, it is a representative body, nominated by the Synods of Tasmania, and appointed by the Victoria and Tasmania Conference. Its functions are to review the proceedings of the Tasmanian Connexional Committees, viz. Home and Foreign Missions, Theological Funds, Ladies' College, Capitalization and other

funds, and recommend certain things for the consideration of the Synods and the Annual Conference. Public statistics show that Methodism occupies an important place in the public and ecclesiastical life of Tasmania. Numerically we rank next to the Anglican Church among the Protestant Churches. Our laymen take a prominent position in public life. The present Premier is a Methodist local preacher, and is exemplarily loyal. Of fifty-four members of Parliament—thirty-six in the House of Assembly and eighteen in the Legislative Council—twelve are Methodists. Our people are also to the fore in the commercial, industrial, and agrarian interests of the State. There is a considerable amount of enterprise in the matter of Home Missions and Church extension, and the hope is expressed that in a few years it will be possible to set apart a minister as a sort of general superintendent of the home mission work. All the general funds of the Church have shown an upward tendency for some years past. The one exception—and it ought to be mentioned—is in regard to ministerial stipends. Cost of living has increased enormously; the upkeep of a home and the bringing up of a family are seriously menaced when the salary stands at £200 or under, as was then the case in not a few of the country circuits. A scandalous maintenance, said Dr. Guthrie, makes a scandalous ministry. Happily there has not been anything of that sort thus far in Tasmania. But the lot of country or suburban parsons on an inadequate maintenance demands consideration and—redress.

A visit to the North-West Coast was to me the breaking of new ground. Hobart and Launceston were fairly familiar, on account of previous visits. But Longford, Westbury, Devonport, and Burnie were personally unfamiliar. Those townships all represent the head of a Methodist circuit, and are situated in a tract of country which for picturesqueness and fertility it would be hard to surpass in any part of the world. Longford, Westbury, and Deloraine are old-established circuits, dating back seventy-five years or more. In them some of the early pioneers and some of the foremost men in Methodist Australian history served useful terms. The country is mostly level, or nearly so, and is rich and fertile. The

roads are on the English pattern, lanes rather than roads, and running between hedges not too carefully trimmed. The historian can find much to interest him in these quaint old-fashioned English-like villages. The country, too, reminds one of certain parts of the countryside in old England. General Pau told the Devonport people that it reminded him of Normandy and Brittany in France; hence I thought I was not far out in saying that the resemblance to me was of certain parts of Devonshire and Somersetshire. In any event, it is a country worth having, worth loving, and worth living and dying for. Latrobe, Devonport, and Burnie are also prosperous and progressive places, in which Methodism is well represented, and is seeking to keep abreast of the movements of population and the development of the resources of the district. From Burnie railways run out to Zeehan, Mount Lyell, and other mining-fields in the mountain ranges. But opportunity did not permit of visits to those places. Suffice to say, the resources of the tight little island are not all in sight even yet. And those who know it best say that its mineral wealth and its industrial activities—stimulated by its wonderful hydro-electrical installations—will yet surprise the rest of Australia. May it be so!

Services in such centres as Patterson Street, Launceston, and Melville Street, Hobart—two of the largest and best-equipped churches we have in Australia; seasons of worship in Margaret Street (Launceston) and Newtown (Hobart); helpful meetings in Westbury, Longford, and Devonport; the public functions in connexion with the Tasmanian Assembly; the kind and generous hospitality of the homes; the public welcome organized by Hon. W. M. Williams and Mr. S. Brownell in Hobart; the generous thought of the friends at Burnie amid uncomfortable weather conditions,—these, with innumerable kindnesses on every hand, will remain a happy memory as long as life shall last.

XL

A VISIT TO ENGLAND

In the year 1908 it was my privilege and pleasure to visit England. The circumstances preceding that visit were a temporary physical break-down and a pronounced opinion from my doctors that a six-months' rest was absolutely necessary for recovery. Thus, by a way unseen by me, and certainly undesigned, an opening was made for the taking of a trip that had been long desired, but that seemed to grow less practicable every year. Surely the line of counsel given in one of our hymns is eminently wise :

> Leave God to order all thy ways,
> And trust in Him whate'er betide.

The incidents of the trip need not be described in detail. Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Freemantle were the Australian ports of call. We touched at Colombo, and enjoyed the pleasure of a hasty railway run to Kandy, the ancient capital of Ceylon. We steamed up the Red Sea, and early on a memorable Sunday morning caught sight of Mount Sinai in the Arabian Peninsula. An interesting day was spent at Port Said. The beauty of the scenery as we passed around 'the toe of the boot' of Southern Italy and as we steamed through the Straits of Messina was fully enjoyed. Naples attracted us immensely. The feast of St. Januarius was on in the Cathedral, and we saw the alleged liquefaction of the blood of the saint as it was held by the officiating prelate before the eyes of wondering crowds of pilgrims in the Duomo. Of course, also, we visited the ruins of Pompeii. Rome was full of interest. Fortune favoured us in that on the occasion of our visit to St. Peter's a high ecclesiastical function was proceeding, with Cardinal Rampolla in charge. The talismanic word 'Australia' secured us

a good seat within the chapel, near the high altar, and just above the dignitaries who were there in force to assist in the consecration of the Apostolic Nuncio to Constantinople. Everything about the Imperial city interested us. We roamed through the great Cathedral ; we spent a wonderful morning in the Vatican galleries ; St. John's Lateran deeply impressed us ; and not least of all were we interested in the Appian Way and in the Mamertine prison, with their close connexion with the story of the Apostle Paul and his sojourn in the city. Nor did we miss the opportunity of visiting the Wesleyan Mission, under the care of the Revs. W. Burgess and H. J. Piggott, and the more extensive premises of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, with its wonderful network of evangelistic, social, and educational agencies. Florence, Venice, Milan, Lucerne, and Paris were visited in turn. The tour gave opportunity for the writing of a series of articles which appeared in *The Methodist* from week to week, and of another of a different character to which the *Daily Telegraph* gave prominence in successive issues.

1908 was, of course, before the war. The aspect of things on the Continent has changed very greatly since then ; and any description of things as I saw them would be much out of date to-day. But it is possible now to interpret mutterings which one heard on that trip, and which seemed then incoherent and unmeaning. We heard those mutterings in France. Now and again they rumbled in England while we were there. But if any one ventured to sound a note of warning they were denounced as alarmists. France was palpably uneasy, but England was wrapped in slumber, and resented any effort to awake her out of sleep. But it is no part of my task to deal with these problems—they belong to other minds and other books.

It was in the merry month of May we landed in London ; and for nine weeks we feasted our eyes and delighted our souls with the physical charms, the historic sights, the rural beauties, and the religious opportunities of old England, interspersed with brief visits to Scotland and Ireland. Did ever tourist crowd into so brief a space a wider range or more interesting variety of travel than we succeeded in accomplishing ?

'What do you think of London?' was the question put to us before we had been many days in its midst. But London is vast and complex. It has innumerable lights and shades. Its contrasts first strike you, and then appal you. And the more you know of it, the less you feel you have admeasured its extent or realized its uniqueness amongst the cities of the world. The city proper is full of historic and antiquarian interest, as well as being the centre of the great financial arrangements of the world. An area in which are situated in close proximity the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange, and the Mansion House, counts for more in the world of finance than any similar area upon the face of the earth. But 'the city' is only one of a conglomeration of cities and boroughs that together make up the London of to-day. Westminster, Southwark, Finsbury, Islington, Stepney, Kensington, with a score of others, are in themselves centres of separate municipal administration, each with a population greater than that of most English or Continental cities. But one runs into the other so closely that it is difficult to say where one terminates and the other begins; and in their aggregation they form the largest capital city the world has ever seen.

But if London is amazing and almost awe-inspiring in its magnitude, its wealth, its historic associations, and in the sociological problems occasioned by the aggregation of so vast a population, rural England presents a counterfoil and relief to it. England has many great towns and cities, and in them the bulk of its people find their occupation and home. The growth of some of these of recent years—as of Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool—has been proportionately as great as that of London. But the strength and stamina of the national life depend upon its rural population; and a bold peasantry is as much a country's pride to-day as when the oft-quoted line relating thereto was first penned. And if the cities and towns are crowded, it is refreshing to find that in the open fields of the country there is still breathing-space and room to live for the existing population and for millions more. If all the land in England were put to profitable use, as is the case, for instance, in Italy, there would be no need for emigration, and no occasion for

pessimism as to the future of the nation. The sheep walks, the deer parks, and the grouse preserves might surely be more remuneratively employed, and national necessities as well as the pressure of social problems may eventually compel the conversion of these into areas for human occupation. But apart from these considerations, rural England is to the Australian visitor a vision of beauty from the scenic standpoint, and a liberal education in the great realm of history. Australia has its fairy-like scenes, and at certain times of the year parts of it are hard to beat as spots to please the eye. But there is a charm and variety about English scenery peculiar to itself. The sky lacks the softness and clearness of that of Italy; and its mountains and valleys cannot rival those of Switzerland for awe-inspiring grandeur. But neither of those countries—nor, indeed, any others that I know of—can present such a constant panorama of loveliness as is disclosed in a railway journey through such counties as Somerset and Devon in the west of England, or Derbyshire and Yorkshire in the north. Other counties will dispute the pre-eminence of these in regard to scenery, and in this interesting contest I am not going to be the arbiter. The soft and rich vegetation, the 'living green' of the fields, the deep, thick carpeting of the hills, the symmetry of the trees, and the variety and beauty of their foliage; 'the leafy lanes and wooded combes'; the rippling rills meandering between hills and through glens that invite a painter's brush or a poet's muse to do justice to them—these are all features that attract and delight a visitor accustomed to the sunburnt fields and scarred hillsides of Australia. Never shall I forget the delightful impressions produced as I looked out of the railway carriage as it sped along upon scenes too lovely to be described, and thought within myself, 'These be Thy works, Thou Parent of Good.' Nor, save on the French Riviera, have I seen coast scenery to equal that of Torquay in the south and Scarborough in the north of England. Nice, Monaco, and Mentone, on the Mediterranean, have a reputation that is world-wide, and visitors from all parts of the world resort thither to feast their eyes upon Nature's charms and to breathe the soft air of those delightful spots. And yet Scarborough can compare favourably with any of

them, and of Babbacombe Downs, adjacent to Torquay, it may in truth be said, 'thou excellest them all.'

For historic interest, also, rural England possesses infinite attraction to a visitor to whom the great names and great deeds of the past count as of value and significance. The country towns are glorified by memorials to the memory of men whom the neighbourhood gave to the nation; and on the hill-tops are to be found obelisks to remind the generations as they arise of the valorous deeds and the brave heroes to whom the nation owes its present liberties and privileges. England has a magnificent history, and at every turn you are reminded of the men and women whose names are enshrined in the national recollection and affection. And not alone the heroes of the battlefield, of the forum, and of the parliamentary arena; but the singers of the nation, the citizens who have rendered the contribution of high and self-sacrificing civic service, the martyrs who have suffered and died in assertion of religious liberty, and the writers who have informed and inspired their generation in thoughts that breathe and words that burn—of these the visitor is reminded as he moves from place to place in England and its associated kingdoms. Here is pointed out the place where Bunyan was born and where he was imprisoned; yonder Cromwell led his troops and engaged the Royalists; in such a room Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher smoked and talked; in that insignificant village the learned and saintly Fletcher exercised his ministry; and so on through a catalogue of names and deeds too lengthy to be transcribed. Surely these associations have an intellectual and patriotic influence of no mean value; and a generation brought up amid surroundings that speak to them of great souls and great deeds that together have made the nation what it is to-day—the greatest and mightiest nation of all time—ought to feel no small measure of responsibility as the heirs and successors in so illustrious a line.

On the religious side there was a peculiar fitness in the fact that the first church I attended after landing in England was St. Paul's Cathedral. How centrally placed is that magnificent fane! How admirable its proportions, how perfect its symmetry, and how inspiring its sacred

and historic associations! Within its walls are memorials to many of England's mighty dead, and under its slabs sleep not a few of those whose names the nation will not willingly let die. It was in this St. Paul's that I heard two of the foremost men of modern Anglicanism—one of whom it is said that he is the most popular bishop of the day, and the other one of the most scholarly and broad-minded of modern divines. By these I mean the Bishop of London (Dr. Winnington Ingram) and Canon Scott Holland. On each occasion the congregation was large, consisting of from 4,000 to 5,000 persons, and calculated to call out the best of which the preacher was capable. Bishop Ingram is a man of striking personality. His face is indicative of goodness, decision, and courage, and the matter and manner of his discourse bore out this promise. His sermon was simple in its form, earnest in its spirit, and practical in its aim. But I should judge that his strength as a bishop lies rather in what he does than in what he says—in other words, that he excels more as a worker than as a preacher. As Bishop of London his energy is tremendous. His open-air missions have imposed a great tax upon him, as he has largely borne the brunt of them himself; and his zeal in licensing reform brought down upon him some biting criticisms from Mr. Balfour, and the withdrawal of subscriptions to his diocesan funds from wealthy brewers. But Dr. Ingram goes courageously on his way, a true 'overseer' of his huge flock, and a veritable Sir Galahad in knightly courage against the social and moral evils of the day. The only other Anglican divine of note I sat under was Archdeacon Wilberforce, who preached at Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the visit of the German pastors. Tall in stature, scholarly, and almost aesthetic in appearance, dignified and precise in manner, generous in his sympathies, and catholic in his spirit, the Archdeacon was the ideal man for such an occasion; and he showed a fine discrimination and wise appreciation of his opportunity in the noble and brotherly discourse he then delivered.

Of the great princes of Nonconformity at that time it was my privilege to hear such as R. J. Campbell, Dr. Clifford, J. H. Jowett, Dr. Horton, Archibald Brown, Professor Peake, Dr. Watkinson, Alexander Whyte, and others.

Mr. Campbell was at that time so prominent a personality that a few words concerning him may not be deemed redundant. He counts in the religious life of England. He draws as few preachers do. There is a magnetism about R. J. Campbell. Some of his statements irritate, others wound, and now and again they repel. But you feel you have to listen, if even after pondering you reject what he says. His originality, his independence, his daring, create admiration and attract auditors. Frankly speaking and speaking personally, I found Mr. Campbell a puzzle. His doctrinal teachings do not cohere, and in his sermons he seems to repudiate the truths he rests upon and finds comfort in pleading in his prayers. But the man has passion in his nature. He seems to feel that God has been misrepresented, and that men and women have been done out of their spiritual and social rights. When dealing with these themes he stands up to his subject with intense conviction and passionate earnestness, and there is something of the mien and language of the old prophets about him. It is true, he says strong things—even, some would say, wild things. But get him on his knees; hear him leading his congregation in prayer, and R. J. Campbell answers to the description given in the 'old, old story,' and remembers 'I'm the sinner whom Jesus came to save.' Intellectualism doubtless counts for a good deal, but in solving the great religious problems upon which R. J. Campbell was then exercised, the yearnings and instincts of the spiritual nature are more influential as determining factors. Personally I have little doubt as to the side on which Mr. Campbell will eventually emerge.

In front even of R. J. Campbell as a force then making for truth and righteousness amongst Nonconformists in England, I would be disposed to place Rev. Dr. Jowett. As the minister of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, he was in a great succession. John Angell James and Robert W. Dale were his predecessors; but he maintained the best traditions of their ministry, and in some respects surpassed them. In appearance he is tall and spare, his countenance 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' with a clear, resonant voice, confident in its tones and winsome in its inflections.

'The wooing note' is one of his own phrases, and certainly he possesses and uses it. He does not dress clerically; the philosophy of clothes does not trouble him. He is a student and a thinker; his ministry is of the teaching order, and his conceptions of the office and functions of the Christian pastorate are such as to lead him to identify himself with movements making for social amelioration and intellectual progress. But his outstanding characteristic is deep spirituality, and it is this quality conjoined with others that gives him his acknowledged pre-eminence amongst the Christian leaders and teachers of the day. His ordinary week-night service was at that time usually attended by a congregation of 600 or 700 persons.

Another of the Nonconformist leaders whom I heard was Dr. John Clifford. Although then on the shady side of seventy, Dr. Clifford spoke and preached with tremendous energy and effectiveness. He is of leonine appearance, possessed of a strident voice, of a courage that blanches before no foe, and withal of a manly, tender heart. On the occasion on which I heard him he captured his congregation from the start, and held its attention as in a vice to the finish. He has been described as 'a great orator in gesture, voice, and word.' To the world in general he is known best as a militant Nonconformist. He has fought in the front ranks against the Education Act, and as a passive resister his household goods have been many times distrained upon. But his friends are legion, and just before my visit they gave practical exhibition of their friendship by presenting him with a testimonial amounting to £6,100 for his services to Nonconformity. Although he differs widely from Mr. Campbell's 'new theology,' it was in the City Temple I heard him preach, and his sermon was a splendid plea for sacrifice and service as against selfishness in religion.

Dr. Horton is another distinguished preacher whose name is familiar in Australia. At one time he, too, was inclined to views that were considered too broad to be orthodox. But he has shed these, and at that time he was regarded as one of the most spiritual and scriptural teachers in the kingdom. He has written many books on religious subjects, and has developed special interest in missionary matters. He, too, has a great congregation;

but I heard him, not in his own church, but at a school function at Cambridge, amid academical surroundings and in an academical atmosphere. The occasion furnished little inspiration, and the preacher failed to sustain his great reputation. Possibly Solon was not always as wise as people expected him to be.

The other eminent men to whom I listened must be dealt with in a sentence or two. Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, was certainly a choice character. Venerable and benevolent in his appearance, saintly in his spirit, saturated with the Scriptures and with Puritan theology, his speech distilled as the dew, and his congregation hung with interest upon his discourse to the end. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, whom I heard in London, has a style all his own. He is tall and gaunt, of the lamp-post order, but original, quaint, illuminative, and instructive all through. There is possibly no other present-day preacher who is so effective in illustration, or who discovers such wealth of instruction in out-of-the-way texts or obscure characters of the Bible as does Dr. Watkinson. Professor Peake, of Victoria University, Manchester; Dinsdale T. Young, then of Wesley's Chapel, London; Dr. J. S. Simon, Dr. J. Scott Lidgett, and Dr. Beet, were amongst the Methodist leaders to whom I listened. One and all they combined scholarship with evangelism. The old-fashioned thunderous style of Methodist preaching seemed to have gone out. At any rate, I heard none of it during my travels in England, Scotland, or Ireland.

On the return journey my companion (the Rev. T. F. Potts, at the time of writing Secretary of the New South Wales Methodist Conference) and I visited the Riviera and enjoyed the unique scenery of Nice, Mentone, and Monte Carlo. We put in a most interesting week in the Holy Land, visiting Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethany, Bethlehem and Hebron, and surrounding places. A few days were profitably spent at Cairo and the Pyramids, in Egypt; and a day was sufficient to satiate us with the heat and depravity of Port Said. But of the days of absorbing interest in Palestine, and of the all-too-short period in Egypt, one would fain write at length.

For such a trip I have ever since been profoundly thankful. It gave one a deepening personal interest in

the happenings and geography of old-world countries. When the war was on, one could follow with a more intelligent interest the developments on the Continent and in Egypt and Palestine. A personal acquaintance, although far from intimate, with the topography of the Holy Land, formed the basis of many a talk in which hearers were interested, and which some of them were pleased to say made the Bible a more real book to them. And not the least of the many pleasures enjoyed in the retrospect and subsequent use of observations and recollections was the enjoyment I was able to afford to some native congregations in Fiji, when they listened spellbound as I told them of some of the things I had seen and heard in 'the land of the Bible,' the Bible that has been to them the light of their life and the redemption of their islands from the darkness of heathenism and the dense darkness of cannibalistic superstitution.

XLI

EDITORIAL AND JOURNALISTIC WORK

It is an oft-quoted saying that

> Beneath the rule of men entirely great
> The pen is mightier than the sword;

but it may be doubted whether the power of the pen is sufficiently recognized in some Church quarters. John Wesley believed in it, and in addition to his prodigious labours as a travelling evangelist, field-preacher, and general religious organizer, he provided a literature for his people and for others that has ever since his time been of great value. But the Methodist ministry, as a whole, has not addicted itself very much to literature, and Methodist Conferences have given scant encouragement to those of its members who have had a vocation for journalistic or editorial work. In fact, they have seemed to think that any one who has ventured into the journalistic realm or who has accepted a position as Connexional Editor is a proper target to shoot pellets at, and to make a sort of Aunt Sally of in Synods and Conferences. Holders of other Connexional offices may go on from year to year with little or no criticism so long as they fulfil the routine of their office; but the hapless editor must provide his weekly supply of pabulum for criticism and digestion by all sorts of critics—informed and uninformed, competent and incompetent—and get at the end of the year a running fire of comments and suggestions, interlarded with a few qualifying sentences of grudgingly given appreciation. When Bishop Hoss, of the M.E. Church South, U.S.A., was in Sydney, he told an audience of ministers that among other appointments conferred on him during his career by his Church was that of Connexional Editor. On his appointment being announced, one of his brethren condoled with him, remarking, 'I'm sorry for you, Brother Hoss; in three years you won't have a friend left.'

Having occupied the position of Connexional Editor in connexion with the Methodist Church of New South Wales for possibly the record period—a period in all of over fifteen years—I may be allowed to dissent from that remark, especially in view of the warmly-appreciative testimony of many friends and the resolution of the Conference on my retirement from the position. But that the office does expose one to all manner of criticism is only too obvious; and that that criticism is frequently petty, ill-natured, and incompetent will not be seriously disputed. Having now relinquished the office, and in relinquishing it obtained a certificate of competency such as any man might value, I may be permitted to say that the Conference will be well advised to place the office and the holder of it in a more worthy position than it has hitherto done. The work is arduous and constant. It requires the exercise of superior ability and sound judgement. It is a position of influence second to none in the gift of the Church, and involves a responsibility that is of no mean order. And yet it has hitherto been the least remunerated of all the offices of the Church—scandalously so; and it has been expected that the holder of the office should do the work in the odds and ends of his time, just as he has received a sort of so-called 'honorarium' for so filling up his time and serving the Church.

And yet the position has had its great compensations, just as it has had and still has great possibilities of usefulness. It has been hedged around with limitations, especially in regard to the financial position of the Connexional newspaper and the chronic condition of its being unable to pay its way. The Conference never saw any necessity or desirability in regard to subsidising the paper. It recognized the wisdom of giving aid to 'missions' that aimed at carrying the gospel to slum-dwellers in Surry Hills and Redfern and to out back settlers in the 'Never Never' country of the far west; it also believed in helping to permeate labour circles and industrial centres with the Christian view of the great social questions of the day. But to help to promote Connexional loyalty and denominational solidarity, as well as to provide wholesome and helpful Sunday reading for the families of its people alike in city and country, has not heretofore

presented itself to the Conference as a proposition worthy of serious consideration. American Methodism has a different outlook, and believes that an efficient press is among the most desirable and necessary of all its lines of religious action. Australian Methodism will be well advised to take a similar view and to provide accordingly.

In its Connexional editorship, New South Wales Methodism has been well served by some of its most capable men. The Rev. William Hessell was practically the first in the succession, he having founded and edited the *Wesleyan Advocate and Christian Record*, which dated from 1856. Prior to that year there had been fitful efforts to establish and maintain a periodical in advocacy of the claims and interests for which the Wesleyan Church (as it was then called) stood. The *Australian Magazine*, a compendium of religious, literary, and general information, was published in 1821, but had only a brief existence. *The Gleaner* was issued by Rev. W. B. Boyce in 1847, and consisted chiefly of 'gleanings' from home and foreign religious journals. But a couple of years saw the end of the venture. W. B. Boyce was too big a man for so small a job. He evidently had little heart in it, and got small encouragement. William Hessell saw the need for a periodical that would be regularly issued and should deal in something approaching an adequate manner with the doings and plannings of the Church of which he was so earnest and cultured a minister. Hence he established the *Wesleyan Advocate* as a monthly paper, and during his stay in the colony he edited it with a literary grace and Connexional loyalty that left little to be desired. Nor was this the only service that Hessell rendered during his all-too-brief stay in Australia. He founded the Wesleyan Book Depôt and became the first Book Steward; he originated the scheme for the establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Church Sustentation and Extension Society, and was its first clerical General Secretary. Surely his brief residence in Australia was providentially ordained; and we marvel that so frail a man should have accomplished so much in so short a time.

In the editorship Hessell was succeeded by the Revs. W. Kelynack and W. Curnow; and thereafter, up to the time of my appointment, the position had been filled in

turn by those brethren, and by Revs. G. Hurst, J. H. Fletcher, G. Martin, F. W. Ward, G. Brown, H. Youngman, B. J. Meek, and P. Clipsham. Sometimes the appointment was vested in one holder; at other times it was a dual appointment; and for a year or two Messrs. Brown, Youngman, and Meek were associated in a triplicate. Needless to say, that arrangement was found too cumbrous. It should be said that the earlier appointments were to the editorship of a monthly paper. In 1877 the name was changed to that of *The Advocate*, and the issue became weekly; in 1891 the name was again changed to that of *The Methodist*. In this connexion it may be pertinent to observe that editorship of the Connexional paper has, in more than one instance, been the stepping-stone to journalistic eminence. The Rev. W. Curnow eventually found his way on to the staff of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and finally became its editor-in-chief, a position that he filled with distinction for many years. F. W. Ward (now LL.D.) soon received a call to the editorship of the *Sydney Mail*, subsequently to the editorship of the *Daily Telegraph*, and came to be recognized as one of the prominent journalists of the world. Another one-time Methodist minister, the (Rev.) John Osborne also achieved prominence in the newspaper world, first as the Sydney correspondent of a leading provincial paper and finally as editor of the evening paper *The Star*, now issued as *The Sun*.

I may candidly say that the larger sphere of secular journalism never attracted me so as to become a temptation to break away from the sacred vocation of the ministry. I appreciated the opportunity accorded me by such papers as the *S.M. Herald*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Worker*, and occasionally the *Evening News*, to find an outlet for articles of a descriptive or historical character. The range of these was fairly wide. The mountain scenery of New South Wales always appealed to me, and gave occasion for sketches couched in a reverent spirit; the beauties of the 'winter excursion' to Northern Queensland could not be denied expression; wherever nature impressed and inspired me I found occasion to write in terms and phrases calculated to lead from nature up to Nature's God. Early history—

especially of the Illawarra District in which my boyhood was spent, and of the Methodist Church in Australia, with sketches of its early founders and worthies—was always a congenial theme on which to dip my pen in ink. The visit to England and the side journeyings to Palestine and Egypt gave opportunity for many a descriptive article. A series entitled 'On Sea and Shore' evoked many much-prized tributes of appreciation and admiration. There was also a distinctly religious use of many of these. One good mother told me of how she had taken my account of a Sunday in Jerusalem and a visit to Bethlehem as a reading at family worship on Christmas morning, and it had seemed to make the sacred transaction more real. Another article on 'The Holy Places of the Gospel,' published in one of the Sydney morning daily papers on Good Friday, was read (so I was assured) with eager interest by thousands of readers, including devout Roman Catholics, and was a distinct contribution to the profitable spending of that day of remembrance. Public questions and occurrences, especially in their bearing on moral and religious considerations, frequently sent me to my blotting-pad and afforded an opening which kindly editors effectuated in their principal columns. During the war especially my pen was kept employed. On the grave issues involved in that momentous struggle I held very definite views, and did not hesitate to give expression to them. A policy of pacifism was to me impossible. How some men within our own Church could counsel non-participation in a conflict in which the very existence of the Empire was involved, and all the ideals of honour, justice, freedom, and righteousnes swere so blatantly challenged by Germany, was to me a mystery, and one I confess with which I had little or no patience. Within the sphere assigned me as editor, I struck no uncertain note; and if my out-spokenness gave offence in some quarters, I at least had within me the answer of a good conscience, as I also had the approval of the great bulk of our people and of the community generally.

But the principal value of the editorship was that it enabled me week by week to provide matter for useful and helpful reading in the homes of our people. Connexional loyalty is a great asset, and I sought to promote

this. The interests and operations of our Church need to be better known, and the more widely they are known the keener will be the appreciation of our people of the Church to which they belong. Of late years there has been a disposition to encourage the thought that all Churches are pretty much alike, and that it does not matter to which of them a person belongs. Possibly not, from one point of view, providing always that the fundamental fact of living union with the Lord Jesus Christ is fully stressed. But there is a grave danger of creating the thought that if one Church is as good as another, possibly they are not of much account at all; either, or none, it is much the same. Hence I have sought to promote denominational loyalty as the best method of fostering loyalty to the Supreme Head and active participation in His service. Our Home and Foreign Mission enterprises; our evangelistic agencies, whether represented by the circuit system, by the central missions, or the far west mission; our schools and colleges, and our young people's work—with all of these I sought to associate the paper in its weekly issues. We discussed plans and policies always in the light of their ultimate bearing upon the work of the Church and the advancement of the interests of the Kingdom of God; and in the devotional and other studies presented for the quiet reading possibly of the Sunday afternoon, the spiritual profit as well as intellectual improvement of the people was never overlooked. Yes; the editorship was a great opportunity. With all its drawbacks and irritations (and there were irritations) it was a joy to feel that every week one was addressing a larger congregation than any other Methodist minister in the State, and exercising an influence for good that could not be tabulated in figures or remunerated by any monetary consideration.

On retiring from the position in 1921, the Conference was pleased to pass an appreciative resolution which may here be appropriately presented:

'The Conference records with gratitude its high appreciation of the magnificent services rendered to the Church by the Rev. Dr. Carruthers, who, as editor of *The Methodist* for the long period of sixteen years, has, by the distinguished ability and unfailing courtesy by which

he has discharged the duties of the office, added greatly to the already remarkable volume of his labours devoted to the interests of the Church. The Conference assures the retiring editor of its admiration of his rare gifts, especially appreciating the efforts by which the ideals and enterprises of the Methodist Church in the Commonwealth have secured wide publicity and recognition, and prays for him divine illumination and grace in the quieter spheres of service belonging to the eventide of life.'

At the risk of the charge of egotism I may also here transcribe a few of the many tributes of appreciation and affection called forth by my retirement from the editorship.

My good friend and journalistic contemporary, the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, LL.D., in his journal, the *Southern Cross*, wrote:

'Dr. Carruthers, who has been for fifteen years the editor of our contemporary the Sydney *Methodist*, and for more than forty years a contributor to its columns, has resigned the editorship of that journal. The *Methodist* is the official organ of the Methodist Church in New South Wales, and Dr. Carruthers has been for half a century one of its leading ministers, and only recently finished his term of office as the head of Australasian Methodism. It will be easily understood he has led a singularly busy life—a life crowded with high duties and responsible offices; and yet, through it all, he has kept his love of literature, and has used his literary gifts in unsparing service—not merely to his own Church, but to the cause for which all Churches exist—the service for the Kingdom and Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Carruthers, in laying down his pen as editor of the *Methodist*, is entitled to the respect of all who know his work.'

Not less but even more generous was the notice of the *Australian Christian World* (Sydney) on this occasion:

'Rev. Dr. Carruthers, who has conducted the New South Wales *Methodist* with conspicuous ability for so many years, has relinquished his task as editor, although, we trust, he may long remain a contributor to this and other journals. Dr. Carruthers has the pen of a ready writer, and he has not spared himself in providing his weekly bill of fare. He knows Methodism and its place in the comity of the Churches. He has kept the good old Methodist flag flying at the topmast all the time, but he has been ever ready to lower it and salute the flag of the King of kings when matters pertaining to the general interests of the Kingdom of Christ were concerned. He was on the best of terms with the editors of the other religious papers published in Sydney, and we shall miss a genial and able comrade.'

The Rev. A. J. Small, the veteran Chairman of the Fiji Mission District, wrote expressing his appreaciation of 'the very fine editorial work during the past fifteen years in connexion with *The Methodist*.' 'You have lifted the paper (says Mr. Small) to a high level, thus placing all New South Wales Methodists under a heavy debt of gratitude and the Connexion under lasting obligation.'

A young minister wrote:

'On the eve of your retirement from the editorship of *The Methodist*, permit me to offer you my small tribute of appreciation of the great service you have rendered the Church by the unique and outstanding ability with which you have directed the official organ of the Church, and particularly the encouragement you have given young writers.'

Other tributes from ministers of various denominations and from laymen in city and country I pass over, having personally acknowledged these on receipt of them. But a unique letter from His Excellency the State Governor (Sir W. E. Davidson) may properly find a place in this collection of reminiscences.

His Excellency wrote:

'Government House (at Hill View),
3rd March, 1921.

My Dear Dr. Carruthers,

I see in the Press to-day that you have joined the ranks of the *rude donati*. You have reached that milestone on the road of life with all honour; and you can review the activities of life with a clear conscience. But your retirement from office will not, I hope, deprive me of the pleasure of meeting you constantly on the platform and elsewhere, for that would deprive your many

friends—count me as one—who listen to you with keen enjoyment.

I do not know whether to congratulate you; but believe me in any case to be,

Yours sincerely,

W. E. DAVIDSON.

(The Latin phrase (*rude donati*) used by the Governor refers to the wooden staff presented to the gladiator when he retired from the arena. It was a mark of honourable discharge. The phrase came to be applied to any one who had honourably discharged the duties of any office he was about to lay down.)

XLII

PUBLIC MEN AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

INTEREST in public affairs has been characteristic of the stock to which I belong. It has found its highest expression in the life of the State and Commonwealth in the person of my younger brother, Sir Joseph H. Carruthers, K.C.M.G., who has filled the office of Premier of the State of New South Wales with marked success and distinction, after a fairly lengthy course of political life and office as Minister for Education, Minister for Lands, and State Treasurer. After his entry into Parliament at the early age of twenty-eight, he never suffered defeat at the poll, but continued to hold his seat until the year 1908, when on account of ill-health he resigned office as Premier and also his seat in the Legislative Assembly, and was thereupon appointed a member of the Legislative Council—a position he still holds. The story of the work he has done for his native State and for the Commonwealth of Australia is one that might be told with advantage. As I write, he is engaged upon a task the magnitude of which has attracted attention outside of Australia, and which (if he succeeds only in part in accomplishing it) will stamp him as one of Australia's greatest benefactors and as an empire-builder in no small degree, viz. to open up a million farms and settle upon them a million farmers in the now unoccupied spaces of Australia. In addition to his parliamentary positions, he has also served as Executive Commissioner for New South Wales at the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908. He is a member of the Senate of the University of Sydney, of which he holds the diploma of M.A., with honours. The degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him by the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, on his visit there in 1908. In the same year His Majesty the King knighted him as a Knight Commander of the order of St. Michael and

St. George. He has not sought federal honours, but he was an elected representative of New South Wales in the Federal Convention that drew up the Constitution on which the Commonwealth of Australia was established in 1901, and on which it is now working.

Had my vocation not been definitely and consciously to the Christian ministry, it is quite possible that I would have sought entrance into the public life of the State. But my vocation has had at least one advantage over that of the parliamentarian and the political office-holder. There has been the element of continuity in it, unchallenged by the varying moods of electors and the changing fortunes of political parties. A little incident may illustrate this. On one occasion I was advertised to deliver a lecture in one of the seaside suburbs. My brother had been in office under Sir Henry Parkes, but the Ministry had gone out. A resident inquired of the local clergyman if it was the Minister for Public Instruction who was to lecture. On this being repeated to me as rather a joke, I replied: 'The difference between us is, that my brother has been the Minister for Public Instruction, but now is not. I am a minister for public instruction, have been for many years, and hope to continue so to the end of the chapter.' That, at least, is one particular in which the parson has the advantage of the politician.

The mention of Sir Henry Parkes reminds me of the first occasion on which I heard that distinguished man, and of several subsequent occasions on which I was brought into more or less closely-related association with him. It was in Kiama, in my boyhood days, that Sir Henry (then Mr.) Parkes first loomed upon my horizon. He had returned from England, where he and Mr. W. B. Dalley had acted for a year or so as Immigration Commissioners for Australia. It was the desire of some of the influential electors of Kiama (then a constituency in itself) to put Mr. Parkes into Parliament as the local representative. The opposition to him was a curious mixture of Orangemen and Roman Catholics, and a concerted effort was made to prevent Mr. Parkes from being heard; but he confronted the storm of boohoos with smiling good temper, and by some pleasantries

happily introduced he made an opening and eventually secured a splendid hearing. The opposition, however, had stirred him as he always needed to be stirred to become effective. His speech was a masterpiece of political if not of statesmanlike oratory, and completely captured the crowd. Thereafter his course through the electorate was a triumphal progress, and he was elected by a large majority. The evening after the election he delivered a lecture on 'England after twenty years Absence.' But the lion was quiescent again. The lecturer was as listless as the candidate had been electrical. It was always thus, so far as my experience and recollection of Sir Henry Parkes went. Confronted with opposition and fighting a battle there was no one to surpass him in eloquence, although of a somewhat rugged description. He rode on the storm and was at his best in fighting with the gloves off. But in the absence of the stimulus of opposition he was frequently listless even to weariness. He was a great man, with severe limitations. After his death it so happened that I came into possession of a drawer full of his letters and correspondence which gave disclosure of the financial difficulties which dogged his steps all through his long political career. But, as the author of the Public Instruction Act and the Local Government Act of New South Wales, and as the leader in the movement which culminated in the federation of Australia and the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth, Sir Henry Parkes deserves to rank among the foremost of Australian statesmen and a great empire-builder. Of several interviews I had with him I retain pleasant recollections. On one or two occasions he was irritated and petulant, but the native greatness of the man was his dominant characteristic.

Another eminent man with whom it was a privilege to be brought into close relation, both personal and official, was the Rt. Hon. Sir G. H. Reid, P.C., K.C.M.G. Sir George was my brother's second Premier, as Sir Henry had been his first. Reid was a many-sided man, whose ability came to be recognized as of the first order in public life. As an effective popular platform speaker there were few to equal him, and possibly none in his day to surpass him. And the generousness with which he gave his aid

to small companies as well as to large was an outstanding characteristic. On more than one occasion he visited societies of the mutual improvement order under my charge, and to a company of thirty or forty young men and women gave addresses that were worthy of audiences of hundreds or thousands. Nor shall I ever forget the wonderful oration he delivered under physical conditions of a most difficult description at a Salvation Army demonstration at which I was present as then President of the Conference. With little or no time for preparation and amid the stress and strain of one of the severest electioneering campaigns on record, he responded to the invitation to speak on social amelioration under Christian auspices, and delivered an address worthy of a statesman and a Christian alike in the loftiness of the sentiments expressed and the chasteness and felicity of the language in which those sentiments were couched. Reid's reverence for sacred things and the high ideals he cherished of individual Christian life led him to shrink from direct association of a personal sort with Church life and work. But his sympathies were always in that direction. His ready wit as a speaker and his power of apt and telling repartee have invested his record with a fund of amusing anecdote that will be recounted in Australian and other circles for many a day.

Going back a few years, remembrance occurs of a battle we fought in West Maitland with an influential section of the townspeople—headed by the parliamentary member for the town and some prominent aldermen—against the diversion of the public park to purposes of periodical horse-racing. It fell to my lot to take a prominent part in that discussion, which raged fiercely for a month or two. It was feared that the political influence of the promoters of the racing proposition would ensure the success of their move, in the obtaining of the necessary permission from the department in charge of public parks. Local feeling ran high, and crowded meetings were held for and against. The first shot in the battle was the delivery of a protest from the pulpit of the church of which I was the minister. Happily legal restrictions favoured the cause of those who were working to preserve the park for the uses to which it had been dedicated, and

to prevent a monopoly being granted on race occasions to the patrons of the turf and their concomitants the bookmakers and punters.

The war and circumstances arising out of it gave occasion for services of a public character on behalf of causes common to all the Churches. One of these incidents attracted no little attention, and possibly had results more far-reaching than was realized just at the time. The Premier of the day (Hon. W. A. Holman) had unfortunately allied himself with the interests that were standing against the popular demand for restriction of the hours and opportunities for the sale of liquor. The war was on, and thousands of young Australians were in camp at Liverpool and other places contiguous to the city. All too frequently there were scenes in the streets that were far from creditable, owing to the facility with which liquor could be obtained and the temptations placed in the way of young fellows from the camps and probably just on the eve of embarking for the war. A strong demand was made for the shortening of the hours of licensed houses. But Mr. Holman refused to favour any curtailment earlier than 10 p.m. He so dominated Parliament at the time that his ultimatum of 10 p.m. could not be got past. In reply to a storm of protest he launched an attack on those whom he denominated 'wowsers'; he stigmatized proposals for liquor reduction as 'wowser legislation'; and attributed the movement for reform to 'maudlin Sunday-school sentimentality.' In reply to this I addressed 'an Open Letter to the Hon. W. A. Holman, Premier of New South Wales,' per favour of the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*. In this letter I pointed out,—

'You are doubtless aware that the term "wowser" is the favourite one in use among the sections of the community who think that clergymen and church-going people are fit subjects for low-tongued abuse. It is the last word in their vocabulary of derision. Personal character, personal position, personal service for the community do not count with these people. A clergyman, as such, is in their phraseology a wowser; a man or woman who keeps the Sabbath and goes to church is a wowser. And now, as the Premier of New South Wales, you give sanction to this low-toned abuse, and dare publicly to

stigmatize those who are asking for some legislation to discourage drunkenness and promote sobriety as wowsers!'

In regard to 'maudlin Sunday-school sentimentality' I reminded the Premier that such an expression was unworthy of himself personally and of the position he occupied:

'Sunday schools need no defence at this hour of the day. . . . The Sunday schools of New South Wales are doing a work of incalculable value in furnishing the minds of the rising generation with sacred truths and in bringing them under influences which will tend to make them law-abiding, self-respecting, and public-spirited citizens of the State.'

Amplifying and urging these considerations, the 'Open Letter' concluded:

'Are the epithets worthy of you? Are they consonant with the dignity of the position you occupy? Do they contain in themselves any argument? If not, and if they are purely offensive, why sling them at a body of men whose only offence in this connexion is their earnestness, and whose object is one that should at least command your respectful attention?'

The terms of this letter received prompt and widespread approval. On the day of its publication congratulations and commendations poured in by post, telephone, telegraph office, as well as by personal communication. Be it recorded, to the credit of Mr. Holman, that he promptly acknowledged the justice of the strictures and bowed to the rebuke. In the succeeding issue of the *Daily Telegraph* he wrote:

'I do not propose to pass by Dr. Carruthers' open letter to myself without a word of comment. When Dr. Carruthers deals with the decorum which should attend public controversy and the utterances of public men, he is dealing with his own subject, and his authority will not be disputed. Dr. Carruthers has rebuked me for using a term which, while very frequently used in a sense of more or less jocular contempt, is one which, as he points out, is capable of giving very large offence to earnest-minded people. . . . I bow under this rebuke, and am prepared, so far as the frailty of human nature will permit,

to refrain from the further public employment of the objectionable phrase.'

But the movement did not stop there. The agitation for restriction of drink-selling went on, gathering strength as it continued, until it culminated in a referendum as to the hours of closing, when, by an overwhelming vote, the electors of the State demanded six o'clock closing of liquor bars, instead of the nine o'clock originally asked or the ten o'clock that Mr. Holman stood for. The beneficial results of this are so manifest that there is no disposition to revert to any later hour.

It was during the war also that the influenza epidemic occurred, with the severe restrictions imposed by the Health Department to prevent the spread of the trouble. These restrictions included, among other things, the closing of churches on Sunday, and even for a time the prohibition of open-air Church services. As the result of a gathering of Church representatives I was placed in the chair of a committee to watch proceedings and to suggest united action. We pointed out to the Government the unfair incidence of a prohibition against assembling for public worship while hotel bars were allowed to be crowded, and sports of various kinds could go on without any limitation of the number of those who thronged the pavilions or lawns at such gatherings. Again our representations were effective. They secured some measure of regulation in respect to the number of persons allowed in hotel bars and ultimately permission for the holding of open-air services until such times as the churches might be re-opened. The same committee also prepared and published a form of Sunday Service for home use on the Sundays when by proclamation the Church services were not allowed at all. It was a joy to be thus associated with ministers of all denominations in a time of general anxiety and sorrow, and to be in a sense their mouthpiece in the press organs and in communications with the Government.

It was in this latter capacity also that I communicated with the Press in regard to certain official acts of actual or attempted secularization of the Sabbath. One of the most outstanding of these was the proposal to have a huge public demonstration on a Sunday to welcome the world-

aviators Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith on the completion of their great flight from England to Australia. A letter published by me in the Sydney daily papers at the time will be of sufficient interest to be recorded here. It was as follows:

OFFICIAL SUNDAY DESECRATION

To the Editor of the Herald.

Sir,

Circumstances have prevented the official landing of Sir Ross Smith and party on Sunday, as was arranged by the authorities. Much as we regret the disaster to the gallant aviator, and greatly as we admire the courage and skill with which he accomplished his remarkable flight from England to Australia, there are some of us who cannot but deplore that it was intended to signalize the completion of his great feat by an act of public Sabbath desecration on a scale never before attempted in Sydney. Lest the same thing should be contemplated on some future occasion, and the authorities be emboldened by the absence of any public protest at the present time, let me say that the announced intention of those who were responsible for the arrangement to have the official landing at twelve o'clock on Sunday occasioned great pain of mind in many quarters, and especially on the part of the leaders of the Christian Churches of Sydney. To land on Sunday at any hour seemed to some of us an unnecessary intrusion on the sanctity of the Sabbath; but, as if it were not sufficiently hurtful to church-going and Sabbath-keeping people to arrange a huge demonstration for that day, the authorities timed the event for the very hour when divine worship would be in observance, and at an hour that would involve the maximum amount of interference with the regular morning services of the churches. It may be that this circumstance was quite over-looked; but it is fitting that the authorities should be reminded of this, and that a protest should be registered against the intention. Had the unfortunate accident not happened, Sunday would have witnessed such a procession of trams, motors, and vehicles of all descriptions as Sydney has never seen before; with the concomitant either of churches depleted of their congregations or congregations disturbed in their worship by the circling aeroplane overhead, and the whirr and rush of road traffic around and about. And all this arising from a wholly unnecessary arrangement, so far as the particular day was concerned. Saturday or Monday would have done quite as well; but in place of so arranging, the one sacred day of the week must needs be chosen, and its hours of worship be wantonly invaded.

I need not enter into an argument in favour of the maintenance of the sanctity of the Sabbath. Possibly the officials concerned—whoever they may be—would readily acquiesce in a proposition of that kind. But our authorities seem to be breaking down or giving up, one by one, the guards that maintain the sacred institution of the Sabbath Day. To the extent they are doing so they are diminishing the quality of reverence in the community. Can we afford to do that? Is not that quality one of the great assets of our national life? If the Sabbath Day goes, the Churches will diminish,—the best elements will be eliminated from our national life. Liberty will run to licence, and anything will be possible that cannot but give pain to God-fearing people and to patriots who truly love their country. I am, &c.,

J. E. CARRUTHERS,
President General Conference Methodist Church of Australasia.

Cremorne, December 27, 1919.

It is to be recorded that the arrival of Sir Ross Smith took place a week or two later, and in connexion with the arrangements for his reception Sir Ross publicly intimated that he would not land on a Sunday! The committee accordingly arranged for another day.

This chapter may fittingly close with the expression of a hope that the Churches of Australia will seek to make their voice heard and their influence felt in an increasing measure in the public affairs of Australia. When the Constitution of the Commonwealth was being drawn up, it was noted by the Christian leaders of the day that there was no recognition of Almighty God in it. At once, and with almost a united voice, they demanded that in the

preamble of the Constitution there should be inserted a reverent recognition of the Supreme Sovereign of life. This was done; and furthermore, it was subsequently resolved that every sitting of the Federal Parliament should be opened with prayer. This continues to be so. It would be well if this recognition of God were carried into all the realms of life among us; and that in reverencing the sanctuary, keeping the Sabbath, and honouring the Scriptures we continuously honoured those basal principles by which the well-being of any community is promoted and the stability of a Commonwealth secured.

XLIII

A LAND OF FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY

In a volume of 'Reminiscences' it is not inappropriate that some instances should be given of the changes in fortune—'for better, for worse'—that have come under my own observation during the long period over which these recollections extend. Of scores, even hundreds, that might be given only a few shall be mentioned. Proportionately to its population it is probable that Australia can present more cases of success in life, as that term is commonly understood, than any other country—success achieved in the face of difficulty and without any of those adventitious aids that are accounted in ordinary calculation to be necessary to such an achievement.

Not that there are wanting instances of a contrary sort that may be set over against these. One of the most pathetic cases of several that have come under my personal observation was that of a lady who sought my assistance in securing for her the old-age pension (then ten shillings per week) allowed to indigent people over sixty-five years of age. I had known the lady years before as the wife of a wealthy squatter, owning large properties in New South Wales and Queensland, and living in a style befitting that position. But over-speculation in land, conjoined with the occurrence of successive bad seasons, had wrought disaster. The husband died practically insolvent; the widow had no provision to fall back upon; and the old-age pension was the only barrier between her and the poorhouse. Yet again, I have more than once met men who sat for years in Parliament and had enjoyed Cabinet rank and office, who in time 'lost the number of their mess,' or in expressive Australian phraseology had 'dropped their bundle,' and had become out-at-elbow derelicts, with none so poor

to do them reverence, and eking out a precarious existence at such odd jobs as they might get to do. Not that politics have not, as a rule, proved a profitable occupation for those who have followed the profession—for such it has become. Against the failures referred to there have been scores of cases in which entrance upon public life has proved the pathway to affluence if not to eminence. The Australian politician does not as a rule serve his country for nought. Patriotism is usually a paying proposition, more especially since parliamentarians have passed so liberal a scale of allowances for themselves both in the Federal and State arenas. Not a few immigrants also fail to realize their rose-coloured anticipations, but in many cases it would be a wonder if they did. On the Orient steamship on which I returned from my trip to England, there were many young fellows of the right stamp who would be sure to get on in Australia. But there were some whose friends were exporting them to this sunny South land to get rid of them; others who thought that gold could be picked up in the streets; and more than one English lass who openly confessed that she fully expected to be taken possession of on landing by a well-to-do swain and installed at once as a rich man's wife! Needless to say, such expectations were bound to be cut off!

But as against these failures, if not frauds, a legion of cases might be cited of men who have proved that 'the hand of the diligent maketh rich.' 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall not stand before mean men; he shall stand before kings.' A few illustrative cases may be given.

In my earliest circuit—away back in 1868—two young men settled on the river that ran through that interior district. It was no small adventure to do so, for they were 200 miles away from the railway, and farther still from the port. They secured a section of land each of 640 acres. It was good soil, but needed constant and careful attention. Of ready cash they possessed little when the deposit on the land was paid and the necessary plant secured with which to work it. Their fortune consisted in brawny arms and stout hearts and in a life-partner in a wife each as determined to achieve success if hard

work could do it as the husbands were. Their story is the usual one of the pioneer settlers. Drought now and flood again; difficulties many and disheartenments not a few. But they believed in sticking to their job. They were confident they had a gold-mine in their farms that only needed to be diligently and systematically worked. And they held on and prospered. Eventually they drove their motor-cars and lived in well-appointed homes. One brother's wealth census card would show him to be worth at least £100,000, and the other would not be much behind that amount. It is needless to say that their possessions were not confined to the original 640 acres. Grit and gumption did it.

Dining with a well-to-do farmer at an elegantly-furnished farm-house on the Hunter River, the lord of the manor related to me with pleasurable satisfaction that when he arrived in Australia as a hired hand he was struck with the richness of the land he was hired to work, and said to himself that if ever he owned a farm in Australia he would like to own that one. He neither smoked, drank, nor gambled. He wrought patiently and faithfully. He had had no education, and when he arrived could neither read nor write. The years had dealt kindly with him, and Providence had prospered him. He not only owned the particular farm he wrought upon in his hired days; but he had added so many more to it that when any one of his nine children—sons and daughters—married, there was a good farm for each as a dowry, and yet enough left to keep up the family home in elegance and an equipage fit for a duke to drive in to town or to church, as the case might be. Oddly enough, the good man did not think there was much in farming, and opined that the farmers ought to have more 'protection'!

Yet another case along the same line. In the New England district there is a prosperous family who among the numbers of the family own several stations and run several motor-cars. The good father and mother were God-fearing industrious people who were glad to begin their colonial days as hired helpers on a station. They won the respect and confidence of their employer, and saved all they could, until they could invest in a free selection on their own account. They were blessed with

a large family, and all the sons and daughters put their shoulders to the wheel to push the family coach along. Nothing went to the public-house, nothing to the gaming-table. Frugality and industry and good sound sense so won out that in the end they acquired the station on which they had served as hired hands; yet other properties came their way also. They were godly people; and in their case the promise was verified: 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'

Driving me in his motor-car through his well-cultivated fields in the Riverina district, and in sight of his well-fleeced flocks, a prosperous yeoman told me a tale of personal thrift and success that would be hard to beat. About forty years previously he as a sturdy lad emigrated from England to Australia. Arrived in Sydney, he hired himself to some dairy people on the South Coast at a weekly wage of fifteen shillings with board. A year or so later he obtained a better billet at twenty shillings per week. After a further term of such service he left the coast for Riverina, and in process of time acquired a small farm of his own. By dint of industry, frugality, and what may be called braininess, one farm grew to another; paddock to paddock; until as I sat in his car he owned 20,000 acres, with 4,000 under cultivation, and 10,000 sheep, to say nothing of horses and cattle, assisting to swell his annual returns to over a score of thousands sterling. And yet he held no diploma but such as he had won for himself in the hard school of practical agriculture. He had done well for himself—he had also done well for the country. He had made more than two blades of grass grow where only one had grown before. Almost literally, he had made the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Not far off from this successful cultivator was another farmer, whose father and mother I had known as struggling pioneers, and whose hard tussle was long in bringing them the substantial reward it deserved. But it came in time. The son had learned the sturdy virtues of his parents and had followed in their worthy footsteps, and to my surprise and gratification I gathered that he had

so prospered that he now possessed what had formerly been the station homestead, with some hundreds of acres of rich river flat and adjacent land. I met him in a railway carriage, and he modestly told me of his parents' virtues and of his own success, and emphasized that, after all, the land is a good proposition to go upon and that industry and probity in the long run generally win out.

But it is not only in relation to cultivation that Australia has proved to be a land of splendid opportunity.

During my years of office as President of the Conference, I was among those who enjoyed the right of private entrée at the State Governor's levee. On one particular occasion an incident occurred of special interest to me. Among the dignitaries present was a gentleman who had just been knighted, having received the distinction of K.C.M.G., and who was warmly congratulated by His Excellency. The gentleman had been known to me from his infancy. But what aroused my special attention was that there were also two other gentlemen present who enjoyed the same distinction and who had sprung from the same district and from parents practically of the same rank or class in that small seaside neighbourhood. Looking around the room I recognized another titled gentleman, of high position in the banking world, whom I had known as a boy in a far-off Riverina town. The words came forcibly to my mind,

> Honour and shame from no condition rise,
> Act well your part; there all the honour lies.

The life story of those four Australian boys might well be enlarged upon as an encouragement and incentive to lads of succeeding generations and as an illustration of the opportunities that Australia affords to young fellows of ability and enterprise and good sound character. The first one of the four referred to was at the time Premier of the State. He was born and brought up in the Kiama district. His father had prospered sufficiently to give the son a good education, including a University course. In these respects he was the most favoured of the four. The honour conferred upon him obtained almost general approval, and his ability and fitness for this position no one disputed. Another of the group had won still higher distinction. He stood beside the Governor in the official

group, holding the high offices of Chief Justice of the State and Lieutenant-Governor. In addition, he was Chancellor of the University of Sydney. I knew him in his early boyhood as the son of a dairy farmer, and the youngest of a large family of sons and daughters. It was with considerable difficulty and at the cost of no small measure of self-denial that he secured a good education and a University course. When his degree was obtained, his difficulties were not at an end. But ability and self-reliance and a resolute doggedness of purpose carried him on until eventually he won a leading place at the Bar, and finally with general approval was called to the Chief Justiceship of the State. Personal influence and political favouritism had nothing to do with his advancement. It was achieved by sheer merit in the face of many difficulties and much early discouragement.

The third in the group was my own brother, and despite that relationship I have no hesitation in placing him among the leading public men of Australia, a place he has won by unquestionable ability, and by high and disinterested public service. As pointed out elsewhere, he too had occupied the Premiership of the State and other high positions among the statesmen of Australia. It was a singular and noteworthy circumstance that these three men—of slightly varying ages—should have sprung from the same small district on the coast; that they should have achieved high rank in public life, and have each received so signal a mark of royal favour. In their boyhood days in Kiama and Jamberoo who would have dreamt of it?

There was another eminent man in that company with whose early days I was also familiar. The son of a schoolmaster in a remote town, and dependent for his education mainly on the instruction given in what would now be regarded probably as a third-grade State school, the young fellow absorbed all the learning then imparted in such a school. At an early age he entered the service of a bank as a junior, the staff of the branch consisting of the manager, an accountant, a teller, and the junior. Years afterwards, when the lad had grown to be a middle-aged man and had won a high and responsible position in the service of the bank he had entered and had a son of my

own under his direction, he handed me for reading a copy of *A Message for Garcia* as a sort of guide to how to get on in a bank. The lesson of that little book is—when you are set to do a thing, do it; never mind what the difficulties are, overcome them; whatever the instructions, follow them out faithfully. These, I believe, were the keynotes of that officer's life. They were the guiding principles of his banking career. Those who knew him best were perfectly satisfied as to his competence for any position in the banking world he might be called to fill. And when he was appointed first Governor of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia his appointment was approved in all financial circles, and has been justified by the singular ability and complete success with which he has administered the affairs of that great institution. Australia has shown that it can raise its own scholars, statesmen, jurists, and bankers, and places no embargo on ability, industry, and integrity in whatever sphere or grade of life these qualities may be found.

What may happen to a man in Australia in other directions may further be illustrated in a couple of cases. As a small boy in knickerbockers, I used to sit side by side in a small school not far from the Haymarket, Sydney, with a lad of my own age. We were chums as little chaps, and as we grew up we went to different schools and took different courses. My erstwhile chum went into business, and in process of time became head of a great firm. He adopted as his motto, 'While I live I'll grow'; and he went on growing until his business became a mammoth emporium, and when he died his estate was estimated to be worth three or four millions sterling!

In one of my early circuits I used occasionally to entertain the shearers at the shearing-sheds with lectures as well as religious services. Among other lectures I delivered was one on 'The Triumphs of Perseverance.' The proprietor of one of the stations was pleased to be specially appreciative of the effort, and remarked to me that possibly his own story might not inaptly be added to the others as told in the lecture. His story, in brief, was that thirty years previously he had landed in Australia with thirty shillings in his pocket. Shortly after landing he contracted an illness, and when he recovered from it he was

£6 in debt. He took a position in a small grocery at ten shillings per week, and remained in that shop till he became its proprietor. Years went on, and he developed into a wholesale and retail merchant. Then an opportunity occurred to purchase a small pastoral property. Later on he went into a bigger proposition. 'And here I am to-day,' said he, 'managing partner of the station; we are shearing 95,000 sheep; our wool cheque alone last year ran into £35,000, to say nothing of fats and stores.' He was one of Riverina's wool magnates at the time, and richly deserved all the success he had achieved.

Wealth, however, is not the be-all and end-all of life. And one is glad to know that in other spheres than those of land acquisition and money-making the conditions of life in Australia constitute it to ardent and studious young people a land to be desired and to be proud of. Some of our most brilliant scholars are scions of poor families; some of our University dons owe their positions and influence to a beneficent system that practically throws the door of the University open to them without charge or fee, and puts students on the mettle of their own brain and soul to shape their careers according to the pattern of their own vision. And it is not without significance that the highest positions in the Commonwealth of Australia and in the State of New South Wales at the time of this writing are held by men whose life story ought to be an incentive and an inspiration to aspiring Australian youth for generations to come. Of humble birth, and accustomed for many years to earn their living by manual labour, they kept their vision of higher things; and by clean living and conscientious study entitled themselves at length to the highest places the Commonwealth holds for any who serve it. Henry Ward Beecher once said, 'Luck is in vigour, in courage, in good hard sense, in work. If there is any luck, it is in the heart, in the head, in the hand.' It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich; it is the man who once defeated tries again who gets on.

XLIV

AT EVENTIDE

'THE days of a man's life are threescore years and ten,' says the Psalmist. The estimate is more than the average. Life does not tend to greater longevity; and so far as the ministry of the Methodist Church is concerned, the 'In Memoriam' records show that comparatively few reach the limit set forth in the well-known quotation as above. In the cases of those who do, it is generally a case of 'superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.' A generation arises that knew not Joseph in his vigour and power; and the latter is relegated to an unhonoured place among the 'has beens' of the church.

* * * * *

Well, here am I well past the seventy, and as my friends say, 'still going strong.' Thanks possibly to the war—if it be permissible to ascribe thanks in any form or for any cause to that dire tragedy—Methodism is finding some place for its so-called 'worn-out' ministers in supplying appointments and filling gaps that the young men would have monopolized if the war had not cut off the sources of supply for the years of its happening. In any event some of us can say:

> For us no melancholy void,
> No period lingers unemployed,
> Or unimproved below.

There lies before me as I write a list of my Sunday appointments for the month past and the three months to come. The list is suggestive as indicating the amount of honorary service the Methodist Church finds for its 'supernumerary' ministers to do, generally at the bare cost of travelling expenses, and not infrequently not even providing such. The list is as follows:

Oct. 2—Bondi, 11 ; Lugar Brae, 7.15.
9—South Chatswood, 11 ; Central Chatswood, 7.15.
16—Kiama, 11 and 7.30.
23—Dee Why, 11 ; Balgowlah, 7.15.
30—North Sydney Circuit, 11 and 7.
Nov. 6—Camden Circuit, 11 and 7.30.
13—Windsor Circuit—Foreign Mission Deputation work.
20—Albert Street, Brisbane (Q), Anniversary services.
27—North Sydney Circuit, 11 and 7.15.
Dec. 4—Crowella, 11 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7.15 p.m.
11—Chatswood, 11 ; Ryde Jubilee Service, 7.15.
18—Bondi, 11 ; Rose Bay, 7.30.
25—Katoomba, 11.
Jan. 1—Leura, 11.
8—Woodford Circuit, 11 and 7.30.
15—North Sydney, 11 and 7.30.
22—Parramatta (Leigh Memorial Church).
29—Chatswood, 11 and 7.15.

Thus it has been for months ; and thus I hope it will continue to be for quite a while to come. In all labour there is profit ; and whether the hearers profit much or little, there is always uplift and inspiration to one's own soul in ministering in holy things. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits ; and seeking to water others the ministrant is himself watered.

* * * * *

It so happens that as I write I am sitting in the home of old friends—friends of my boyhood—in the old town of Kiama. Time has wrought many changes in the little hamlet and district. The hills and dales remain, as of yore, with their picturesque undulations and the majestic background of the mountains and the shimmering sea in the foreground. Truly nature has been bountiful and has given the little old town a peerless setting. But the brave and sturdy pioneers have all passed hence. They were, in a sense, a great type of men and women who founded the settlement in these parts and built up estates for their children and names for themselves that are still remembered and honoured. Their descendants

are widely scattered, and have done not a little to populate the North Coast, and to found farms and settlements in Riverina and New England and even farther west and north. Kiama has lost much of its rural charm. Its quietude is disturbed four or five times a day by the in-rush or outgo of the train ; every evening almost there is a cannonading as of a bombardment by the discharge of shots at the stone quarries just outside the town boundaries. The hillsides are being torn and riven, and one at least of the picturesque points jutting into the sea is being blasted out, and in a few more years will have clean gone. Civilization is making for vandalism, and natural beauty is being sacrificed to provide ballast for railway-lines and metal for street-making in the city and suburbs. The Churches are not what they once were. The blight of an age of haste, hurry, and money-making seems to have fallen upon them. But this is a passing phase, so far as they are concerned. They shall yet arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord shall light upon them.

* * * * *

Recollections arise of those who went out from the old Sunday School to be ministers of the Gospel. Within a few years Kiama sent out no less than eight of its Sunday scholars to be preachers of the Word. Of that goodly number, only two of us remain. The brothers Dinning—John, William, and Benjamin—have all finished their course. John served for some years as a Congregational minister ; William had a useful course for nearly forty years, attaining the Presidency of the Queensland Conference ; Benjamin was reaching the zenith of a ministry that was useful from every point of view when suddenly the silver cord was snapped, the sun went down while it was yet noon. Joseph Beale was another of the eight. Chivalrous, cultured, and unconventional, he was universally respected and much loved, especially in his country circuits and by the younger brethren. He filled the chair of the Conference with distinction. His addresses during his year of office were among the most striking and impressive of such prelections on record. His death in mid-career was a loss to the Church and the community. Richard East was another of our band. He never sought

prominence in Connexional life, but did his work well as a circuit minister, and as a preacher and pastor earned a good degree. In his retirement as a supernumerary he rendered useful service in hospital visitation, among other lines of Christian usefulness. Thomas Benson Rootes was the first to go. A brief ministry in Fiji and in New South Wales was followed by an early translation. Two of us remain. William H. Beale is far spent in his physical strength; but his clear brain and unsparing service command for him a place of influence in Church Councils of almost unique interest and strength.

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It is possibly one of the compensations of retirement that there come testimonies of good received that are withheld—why should they be?—during the more active years of ministry. The box of alabaster with the sweet-smelling ointment is too frequently reserved for the funeral, when the one intended to be honoured is all unconscious of the compliment. But I have had at least a whiff or two of the spikenard.

Not long since I was invited to take part in a devotional service in a Congregational church. At the close of the service a lady waited to see me. Addressing me by name, she inquired if I was the same as a minister of that name who used to conduct services many years before in a small country town. Replying that I was, she told me that she was then a little girl, and that with her mother she attended occasionally on a Sunday evening. Under one sermon she definitely decided to lead a Christian life and had ever since done so. She was then in fellowship with the Church I had spoken at that evening, a Sunday-school worker, and the mother of a family, all of whom were endeavouring to walk in their mother's footsteps. How true it is that the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days. We scatter the good seed,

> And duly shall appear,
> In verdure, beauty, strength,
> The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
> And the full corn at length.

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Walking along Pitt Street a year or two ago, a cab-

driver hastily descended from his seat and accosted me. He said he supposed I did not recognize him, and then informed me that he had been a member of my congregation some years before, in Parramatta Gaol. He said he could not let me pass without speaking to me and thanking me for the interest I had taken in him and his fellow-prisoners. 'I have not forgotten your kindly counsels,' he went on; 'and I resolved that when I came out I would lead an honest life. I have tried to do so,' he continued, 'and this is my cab and I am doing well.' The hearty grip of his hand and the unmistakable sincerity of his speech were more than ample reward for any effort I had made to influence him and his fellow-prisoners aright. It so happened that within a month or so of this incident another ex-prisoner made himself known to me as I was standing at a street corner waiting for a tram. Approaching me from a shop entrance, he first satisfied himself by inquiry of me as to my identity. He then told me who he was, reminded me of Parramatta Gaol, and of its services; said he had turned over a new leaf, and was then running the shop in front of which we stood, and was making a comfortable and honest living. 'Broken earthenware,' I thought; and that I had had some little part in repairing and restoring it was to me a matter of sincere thankfulness.

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One of the most singular and interesting stories that has come to me during these later years was related to me by a Methodist minister who had seen a good deal of back-block service in Queensland. Located in one at the outposts of Methodism—'back of beyond, out towards sunset' as they say out there—he was travelling in to civilization in a slow-moving railway train. The compartment he was in—a second-class one—was full of sundowners and other rough fellows of the bushie type. Among them was a well-known bruiser, a redoubtable prize-fighter, who had had a profitable scrap—from the money-making standpoint—the night before in the little town from which the train started. The language in the compartment was in keeping with the roughness of the company, until the parson tactfully expostulated and

asked for a little more decency. Upon this the prize-fighter took a hand, and said they must respect the 'sky-pilot's' cloth and behave themselves. He then said he had a good mother, and told the men it would be a good thing if they thought a little more of their mother and sisters. Becoming communicative, he asked the minister if he knew a parson in New South Wales of the name of Carruthers; and the bruiser went on to say that he used to attend the services of that minister occasionally in Armidale, and especially some revival meetings conducted by him. The minister who related the story asked me if I had ever sung a solo at any of those meetings. I had almost forgotten that I had at any time broken out in that direction, but now remembered that at some especially interesting services I had emphasized the message in a musical way. 'Yes,' said the minister, 'and Blank (mentioning his name) told me that one of the solos you sang got him powerfully, and he had never forgotten it.' He gave an opening for the travelling parson to say some words of kindly and faithful counsel to that motley company; and finally the prize-fighter took up a collection in the compartment, and asked the preacher's acceptance of it. 'You fellows don't go to church,' he said to the men, 'and I don't; but it's up to us to help the parson. The country's bad enough; but it would be ever so much worse if it were not for them.' A halfnote from the self-constituted collector led the way, and he insisted on a good donation from each. The parson's pockets were somewhat weighted when he left the train; but his heart was lightened as he thought of the ministry he had been able to exercise in so unexpected a way.

Beside all waters sow,
The highway furrows stock,
Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
Scatter it on the rock.

The good, the fruitful ground,
Expect not here nor there;
O'er hill and dale, by plots 'tis found,
Go forth, then, everywhere.

* * * * *

Among other interesting occupations of these years of retirement has been the almost regular participation in

the United Intercession Service held every Tuesday in the Pitt Street Congregational church. The service was instituted in the very early days of the war; it dates from August 1914, and has been regularly continued from then till now. The Rev. N. J. Cocks, M.A., has been the moving spirit, and has done much to create for his Church a recognized position as the non-Episcopal Cathedral of Sydney. It has been a joy to be associated with the cultured and gracious pastor, and with the Rev. Robert Dey, of the *Australian Christian World*, who has largely assisted in the organization of the services. We have had some wonderful times together. More than once during the war the services were continuous from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On special occasions we have had the spacious building crowded to overflowing. Always there has been an encouraging attendance and a very earnest and brotherly spirit. We have had Anglican dignitaries, Presbyterian Moderators, Methodist Presidents, Congregational and Baptist Chairmen, and Salvation Army officials taking part from time to time. College principals, suburban pastors, and occasionally interstate visitors have occupied the rostrum. The influence upon the city during the anxieties of the war was most marked and beneficial, and always the services have made for Christian unity and earnest co-operation in efforts for the city's good. Quite recently the Bishop of Willochra (S.A.) was present, accompanied by the Bishop of North Queensland, the former giving an informative address in a beautiful spirit on the subject of 'Reunion.' If prelates, preachers, and people were imbued with the spirit of the Bishop, as evinced on that occasion, the question of Reunion would soon be settled. For, after all, if the hearts of the people are right with God and with one another (as the Bishop said) the outward barriers will soon disappear. The main object of reunionists should, therefore, be to cultivate the spirit of unity.

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It would be a false modesty if I were to omit all mention of the honour that came to me at the conclusion of my forty-six years of active ministry and subsequent to my retirement from the chair of the New South Wales

Conference in 1914. Quite unsought by me, although the proceedings leading up to it were not altogether unknown to me, the Victoria University, Toronto, Canada, conferred on me the honorary degree of D.D. The recommendation for this distinction was made primarily by the Right Hon. Sir Samuel J. Way, Bart., P.C., Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia, and Chancellor of the Adelaide University. Sir Samuel subsequently did me the honour of supplying me with a copy of the letter to the Chancellor of the Victoria University in which he preferred the request. The terms of that letter were all too generous and appreciative; but I had no reason to doubt that they expressed the genuine estimate in which the great-hearted Chief Justice was pleased to hold one. I was also informed that the request had been supported by the Rev. Dr. George Brown and the Rev. Dr. W. H. Fitchett, and by the Right Hon. Joseph Cook (now Sir Joseph), who was at the time Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. The official communication from the Registrar ran thus:

'At the meeting of the Senate of Victoria University on the ninth of this month (April 1914), it was unanimously voted that you be offered the honorary degree of D.D. . . . I am sure we all consider it a very great honour to number you among our Alumni.'

Subsequently to the conferring of the degree, a number of friends and well-wishers in the ministry and laity of the Church, with some outside the Church, resolved to show their appreciation of the action of the Victoria University by presenting me with the hood and gown of the D.D. degree, and this they did at a very pleasant social function, at which many generous things were said and kind wishes heartily expressed.

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When Cecil Rhodes was reaching the end of his great career he is said to have exclaimed, 'So little done; so much to be done.' It is something of the same estimate of life that comes upon all active and earnest spirits as the shadows lengthen and the day darkens into the night. From another point of view it is perhaps permissible to say, 'Something attempted, something done, has earned

a night's repose.' In any event, regrets are vain; and it is better to cultivate a thankful spirit and an optimistic outlook. It is easy to see now, in the eventide, how the hours of life might have been more fruitfully employed; how, under other conditions, other and perhaps better work might have been done. Circumstances might have been more wisely controlled; advantages might have been more usefully employed; mistakes might have been avoided; a little more patience, and perseverance, and prayer, and what might not have been accomplished? But, on the other hand, there is at least something to show. Life's labour has not been altogether in vain. One's strength has not been all spent in vain. And, in any event, if life's work has been honestly and conscientiously done, the issue and the judgement may be humbly and confidently left in Higher Hands. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening hold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both shall be alike fruitful.'

XLV

A VISION OF THE FUTURE

MANY years ago I stood on the cliffs overlooking Wentworth Falls on the Blue Mountains, to get my first glimpse of the valley that there opens out to view. It was an unpropitious day from the sight-seer's standpoint. A mountain mist enwrapped the crags and filled the depths. But I stood there, content for the time being with such morsels of scenery as a little nook of ferns here, a miniature cascade there, and projecting ledges from which the dense sea of mist that filled the valley could be the better seen. Presently, however, the mist parted. Nature, like Isis of old, removed her veil, and disclosed her beauty. The valley lay before me in a rare setting of fleecy wreaths and garlands, and withal shaded by the clouds that still hung o'erhead. It was but for a moment or two, and then the mist closed in again, and all was as obscure as before.

As I think of that scene, it seems to me a parable. Fain would we look into the future of Australia. Poets have sung about it, and far-seeing souls have told us how great and glorious it is to be. But the conditions to-day are obscure. There are dark clouds upon the sky, and the horizon is filled with a mist that shuts in and for the time being baffles the vision. Shall one seek to penetrate the mist? Or will it part if only for a moment or two that one may venture upon a glimpse of the coming years and foretell the future that awaits this great and sunny land? Whatever the mist may conceal, the future lies there all the same. That it will be wondrous fair is as sure as the beauty of the valleys that lie below and run out from the fleece-crowned mountain crags. And just as the storms that darken the sky and the mists that obscure the view conceal and contain the elements that enrich the earth and make mountain and valley alike more

glorious when the storm is spent, so it may be that the experiences Australia has passed and is now passing through will clothe her with a new strength and adorn her with a fresh beauty in the years that are to come. And it may reverently be recorded that when the seer of Patmos looked out upon the future of the world from his rocky fastness, it was through a murky medium. There were heavy clouds upon the sky. War and tumult and persecution were in the air, and fear and distress lay heavy upon men's hearts. But it was through such a medium that the seer caught a glimpse of the most glorious sight that has ever gladdened human vision, and he saw a new heavens and a new earth, and most concrete of all, 'a new Jerusalem coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband.' Of this we may be sure, that if there is to be a new Sydney and a new Australia, they, too, must come from above and not from beneath—from God and not from man.

From the material and political standpoints, the future of Australia may be regarded as fully assured. Dealing with the latter first, I refuse to believe that there is any other destiny in store for this great island-continent than that which its past history so clearly points to. Other European and even Asiatic nations had knowledge of the existence of Australia for at least a century before Captain Cook charted its eastern coast and took possession in the name of Great Britain. Why was this prize reserved for us of the British race and of the Protestant faith, if it had not been providentially so ordered? Yet again, amid all the scrambles that have gone forward among the nations for other unoccupied parts of the earth's surface—as, for instance, Africa, South America, and the islands of the Pacific—no nation has hitherto put in any serious claim for a share in this great heritage. Surely, again, a Higher Power has said 'Hands off!' It may be that possession will not remain undisputed or unchallenged in the coming years. The war has opened our eyes to the ambitions of other nations. Germany, in claiming 'a place in the sun,' did not hesitate to back up her claim with a military strength and moral unscrupulousness that were the wonder of the world. Nor can it be forgotten that while the great Western nations have

depleted their strength by a war expenditure in both men and money that must leave them exhausted for years to come, the Eastern nations are slowly yet surely conserving their strength to be used possibly for political purposes as soon as opportunity offers. What of Japan? Friendly to-day, but in years to come she may be a dangerous competitor, if not an actual foe. Who can look back upon the history of the past half-century without noting how utterly selfish national politics are, and that in that arena it is 'every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.' It may be, then, that our boast of 'One Flag, one People, one Faith, one Destiny,' will not remain unchallenged. But at all costs the foot of the invader must be kept from our shores and we must hand Australia on to our children and our children's children undivided in its political obedience and unsullied by foreign domination. So far as stout hearts and strong arms are concerned, Australia will be prepared to do its duty. But there are certain old-fashioned truths that have a vital bearing even upon political delimitations, and some of these we are in danger of forgetting. Frankly, if perhaps somewhat bluntly, the position may be stated thus: God can do without the Britisher, but the Britisher cannot do without God. We may say, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this country, and will keep it too. But history tells us of peoples being dispossessed of their heritage because of unworthiness, and of that heritage being given to others who bring forth the fruits of righteousness. And if Australia is to be kept under the purest form of Government the world has ever known, the unsullied treasure of generations yet unborn, its people must show themselves strong in those virtues that make a people great—loyal to that righteousness which in its very quality exalteth a nation!

Given that that be so, no reasonable bounds can be left to the future greatness of Australia. Its wide extent, its varied and almost illimitable resources, its genial if somewhat erratic climate, and its favoured geographical position, combine to guarantee a great place among the nations for this, the youngest of them all. Its progress during the past fifty years has been nothing short of marvellous. Some of our States—Queensland

and Western Australia especially—are yet in their infancy. A century hence, and Australia's population of five millions will probably have become fifty millions. Australia will be one of the great granaries of the world. It will have achieved manufacturing greatness. Its mineral wealth will be utilized within its own borders and be made contributory to the service and wealth of other lands. No longer will its great interior be a vast solitude, or its west separated from its east by a great stretch of barren inhospitable desert. Science, enterprise, and courage will have made the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Some of the writer's own words, printed elsewhere, may aptly be repeated here: 'Such an opportunity of nation-making has never before occurred in the history of the world. For the first time in human annals a whole continent is under one flag, subject to the same laws, and occupied by a people speaking the same language, and professing practically the same religion. Its fields have never been reddened with blood-shed in cruel war. Its people practically call no man lord or master. They are all free and equal. Its fringe only, so far, comparatively speaking, has been occupied. Millions of square miles of its interior await occupation and utilization. A just and sane estimate of its material and latent wealth goes to show that Australians are rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Great indeed is our opportunity. Imagination paints a glowing picture of great cities yet to be; of industry and commerce assuming colossal proportions; of seats of learning rivalling those of the old foundations of the motherland; and of Churches compassing the whole area of work in both the home and foreign fields, witnessing for righteousness, nourishing the young, and evangelizing the islands of the sea and the nations beyond.'

But if this vision is to be realized, the whole question of the future will have to be searchingly and fearlessly faced. If it be—and it surely is—that we are making the future in the present, it may well be asked, 'What kind of a future are we making day by day?'

For the time being it must be confessed that the forces that make for secularism and materialism are all too active as against those that tend to moral idealism and

spirituality. The conditions of life are such as to present a strong temptation in the wrong direction. The climate is soft and to some extent enervating. The rewards of enterprise and effort are dazzling and are almost certain. Instances are constantly before men's minds of those who have succeeded in acquiring position and amassing wealth, and who spread themselves like a green bay-tree in all the luxuriance of an assured competence. Human nature finds it hard to resist the inducement to strive to obtain the same result, and to make the acquisition of wealth the be-all and end-all of existence. Along with this is a growing addiction to pleasure, even at the cost of lowering or surrendering the sanctities of life. Secular writers are recognizing the peril of this and the shadow it throws on the future. They are asking whether, amid the material prosperity with which the bounties of Nature, aided by the enterprise and energies of man, have endowed the country, we are becoming less virile, less self-reliant, and disposed to pay less heed to the spiritual ideals and intellectual pursuits which lift man above the brute creation? It is not long since the editor of one of Sydney's daily journals affirmed: 'We are like to become drunk with prosperity if the joyous draught lasts much longer. In our increasing wealth we are giving thought only to material gains and material pleasures. We are becoming hardened in materialism, and that may become a national peril more harmful than any enemy's blockade of our ports.'

The lessons of all history go to show that no people can long exalt the material over the spiritual without paying the penalty. There are indications that this is a growing peril in Australian life. It is deadening the finer sensibilities of the people. It is honeycombing business. It is determining and lowering the ideals of public life. It is diminishing the sense of reverence for sacred things—if indeed it is not undermining the spiritual beliefs that enter into the warp and woof of personal strength and national security. Many of the forms of sport are coarse, if not brutal. Entertainments that are crowded on week-days, and are seeking to get a footing on Sundays, are at the best frivolous, and at the worst dissipating and deteriorating in their influence and effect.

Australia is not alone in this regard. England and America cannot throw stones at her; for if report be true, the things we complain of are imported from those countries, and the worst has not been sent us. But the fact remains that, after over a hundred years of colonization and Christianization, Mammon is strongly entrenched. Materialism in many forms is benumbing the nobler life of the land; giant evils remain to be attacked and destroyed. And in any sane vision of the future these things have to be reckoned with. They are spectres with a lot of substantiality in them. They are the corpses that are dragged through the banqueting-hall of our reveries in regard to the future, to induce serious thought and reflection in the midst of a delirium than would otherwise become intoxicating.

And as to our politicians. When Abraham Lincoln was faced with the tremendous responsibilities of the Civil War, he became a godly man. He had not been so before. But he realized then that there was none other that could help and guide but God alone, and he daily sought counsel and strength in prayer. We should face the future with more confidence if our politicians and statesmen were similarly impressed. Alas! it is not so. The drink curse is let severely alone, to work mischief and breed misery; gambling is encouraged under the guise of patriotism and charity; brutal sport is almost deified; and Sabbath desecration is made legal by public enactment and increasingly catered for by railway commissioners. The ideals of public life are lowered in the presence of motor-cars and money-bags; and the moral coinage is debased because it pays to pander to certain tendencies and classes. These are the things from which we have yet to be purged, and it may be that in the purging we shall have to pass through the tribulum. Who are we that we should not have to submit to the eternal law and learn obedience by the things that we suffer?

As to the Churches: Is the perpetuation of the system of aloofness now prevailing likely to build up a strong, compact, and spiritually-influential Christianity as the determining factor in national life? Competition has its advantages, but co-operation is infinitely better. And I do not hesitate to say that the solitariness of the

Christian denominations among us and the aloofness that characterizes them in their relations one to another are at once a scandal to true religion and an omen of ill import to the future best interests of Australia. Each Church has its work to do in winning the Commonwealth for God. But they will do their work best by doing it in the spirit and methods of harmonious Christian co-operation, and not in those of mistrust and thinly-veiled antagonism.

The Australia of to-morrow! Much more might be written, especially if the writer assumed a licence to indulge in dreams and visions as to what he would like to see. Our poets have vied with one another in chanting the praises and anticipating the greatness of this fair Austral land. Says A. H. Adams:

> Vast the heritage we hold,
> League on endless league unrolled,
> Splashed with sun and wattle gold,
> God's demesne, Australia!
>
> Great our opportunity,
> Greater must our courage be,
> For our race we hold in fee,
> God's demesne, Australia!

In 1877 James Brunton Stephens wrote his forecast 'The Dominion of Australia':

> She is not yet; but he whose ear
> Thrills to that finer atmosphere
> Where footfalls of appointed things,
> Reverberant of days to be,
> Are heard in forecast echoings,
> Like wave-beats from a viewless sea,
> Hears in the voiceless tremors of the sky
> Auroral heralds whispering, 'She is nigh.'

Patriotism indulges the prayerful and confident hope that Australia will remain an integral part of that great Empire whose Flag is the flag of freedom everywhere, and whose highest mission it is to be a light-bearer to other nations.

United, that Empire shall yet stand in its strength against the emissaries of evil and the fomenters of strife, and in itself invulnerable. Divided, its division will be a disaster to the world, and a constant menace to each of its at present united parts. It is a great opportunity

for men of good will, of enlightened patriotism, and of high-souled Christian consecration. In the presence of such an opportunity we may well unite in the prayer so aptly expressed by Rudyard Kipling in his 'Ode in Commemoration of the Inauguration of the Commonwealth on New Year's Day, 1901':

> Tempered, august, abiding, reluctant of prayers or vows,
> Eager in face of peril, as thine for thy mother's house.
> God requite thee, my Sister, through the wonderful years to be,
> And make thy people to love thee, as thou hast loved me!

And what the poets sing of, the prophets have with confidence foretold. The earth is the Lord's, and surely the forces of righteousness are bound to win in the end. The waves may be thrown back, but the tide cannot be defeated. Faith rises triumphant o'er our fears. And we look adown the years—how many soever they may be—to the time when the little one shall become a thousand and the small one a great nation; when of Australia it shall be said, 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise'; when the Lord shall be unto her an everlasting light, and her God her glory.

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