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LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

ABORIGINAL MISSION, LAKE MACQUARIE.

NEW SOUTH WALES, MAY, 1827.

AFTER some months' unexpected and unavoidable delay, partly owing to my distant residence from the press, and partly to the sickness of the printer, the "Specimens of the Language of the Aborigines of New South Wales" are printed. An acknowledgment of the kind Patronage of His Excellency the Governor, General DARLING, in purchasing one hundred copies, is tendered with respectful and sincere thanks. The same grateful acknowledgment is also due to the Committee of the Sydney Auxiliary Church Missionary Society, which has purchased fifty copies; and to all those friends who have interested themselves in forwarding the Work.

It is natural to suppose, that, by this time, some opinion may be formed as to the probable result of a Missionary Establishment for the Aborigines. I am fully persuaded, that, unless means are provided for the employment of the natives, no success at all can be anticipated. The Blacks will not associate and continue in one place unless they are provided with flour, clothing, and other necessaries of life, for which they are willing to perform such work as they are capable of, when superintended by persons who will condescend to treat

them with kindness. I have had full proof of this, having at one time nearly sixty Blacks, belonging to two distinct tribes—the one from Newcastle, the other from **Tahkahrah** Beech—at work, cutting down and burning off the timber of about five and twenty acres of ground, now in cultivation; but, being obliged to purchase every article for their and our consumption, pecuniary circumstances and communications from Home, rendered it necessary to check rather than encourage others to join in the labour.

It must be understood, that this was only a temporary case; for when the fight was over, for which they assembled, the tribes returned to their respective abodes, and through not continuing to employ them, we had not, for weeks together, six natives about us.

Newcastle has attractions for drunkenness and prostitution, which, the promise of land and every encouragement to labour for their own advantage at this Station, cannot at present overcome. The still small voice, secretly speaking to the conscience, and changing the ferocious disposition of the savage, can alone effect this on moral principles; but much may be accomplished prior to such a permanent good, if the expence necessary to carry on the work can be borne by the Society, or be not deemed a misappropriation of its funds.

In such a rising Colony as this, the changes are quick and various. When this Station was formed it was secluded; but, as would be the case in any other part of the Colony, the moment one person forms an establishment, however distant or

isolated, when known, others will fix their abodes in its vicinity. Thus the attention of the Blacks becomes divided, as they are [29] frequently employed at new farms, and thus their wandering habits are more firmly fixed.

The numbers of Blacks with us, latterly, have not been great; for the past few months we have not had more than 20 or 30 about us; the remainder of the tribe, with the boys and girls, being at Newcastle or Sydney. Our expectation of the Blacks from Port Stephens joining us has not been realized, because the Australian Agricultural Society settling in that part, together with the liberal encouragement they give to the natives for their labor (a most praise-worthy example), fix the Port Stephens' Blacks to their Settlement, thus proving the practicability of localizing the natives if efficient means are used. "You," say the Port Stephens' Blacks to our tribe, "*work for rations of corn meal, but we, we have wheat flour.*" "Massa," said one of our Blacks to me, "*you must give us flour too.*" They were informed then how to rebut the present mortifying laugh against them, by planting corn, &c. on their own ground, and cultivating wheat upon their own respective farms, for which purpose every assistance would be afforded.

This Station has cost me much anxiety ever since its commencement, which will continue until it is decided by the Directors as to the probability of its being permanently continued or not. From actual experience, I cannot estimate the annual expence of this Mission at less than £500 per annum, taking out of this

sum only £180 a year for the maintenance of myself, wife, six children, and domestics. Were I living in a town the expences of my family would amount to at least £300 a year—every thing being so expensive in this Colony. I am fully convinced that, though the expence of £300 a year may be decreased in proportion as produce is raised on the spot, yet other expences, if the Mission prove successful, will arise for school instruction, and other consequential occurrences, which will increase in proportion as the present ones decrease. I feel it a point of duty to state to the friends of Missions the probable cost, whilst the Mission is yet in its infancy, and if continued under my superintendence.

It is a most difficult task to state plainly and faithfully to the Public the aspect of a Mission; but false hopes should not be excited, or discouragement be given to those, without whose aid nothing could be carried into effect.

The "Specimens" of the Language are all that can be presented for encouragement at this time; a greater knowledge would have been obtained but for the difficulty of collecting the natives so as to associate with them. Our opportunities were far more numerous whilst residing at Newcastle than ever they have been since we removed to this Station, and, but for the employing them at a heavy expence, not one of them would have remained at this Station a week.

I have endeavoured to persuade them to build huts, more substantial than

their own screens; and have been out with them to encourage and direct them, but they have abandoned the two they began. because I would not ration them with flour, &c. &c. whilst they were employed in building for themselves.

About ten acres of land is now being felled by themselves in order to plant corn next season on their own farm; but only two of the whole tribe work at it; and at present this also is forsaken until their thirst for liquor is satisfied at Newcastle. One has since returned, worked a day or two, but the report that His Excellency the Governor is about to send blankets and slops for the blacks at Newcastle, has taken away every individual excepting two blind natives who are committed to our charge for sustenance, otherwise they would be also abandoned to perils [?] in these woods.

Of eight native children, boys, whom we have attempted to teach the alphabet of their own language, only two remain, but now, about three weeks since the commencement, not one is left; they are all with their friends [30] at Newcastle, where drunkenness is as common with the black boys, 7 or 8 years old, as prostitution is with the other sex of the same age; but *all*, young or old, or either sex, are equally abandoned to vice.

It is exceedingly grievous to the mind to perceive such things, and nothing but time, patience, and perseverance in

the use of means, together with a peculiar coincidence of circumstances, ordered by the providence of God, and his secret operation on their hearts, will render any attempt effectual to the conversion of the Blacks.

At present they appear most likely to be annihilated through their own wicked dispositions, urging them to rob and murder, which, in many instances, bring upon themselves a just retribution, whilst drunkenness, prostitution, and disease, mark them a prey for total destruction. “Let us not, however, be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not;”¹ and while following the example of the inspired writer of the Acts of the Apostles, in endeavouring to present a faithful representation of facts, although such statement may have no other recommendation to public notice than unadorned truth; let us also remember “He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap,”² but “we walk by faith not by sight;”³ and “Blessed are they who sow beside all waters.”⁴

L. E. THRELKELD, MISSIONARY.

¹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. [Gal. vi.9]

² He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. [Eccles. xi.4]

³ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) [2 Cor. v.7]

⁴ Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass. [Isaiah xxxii.20]