

Threlkeld ANNUAL REPORT 1833

“Ebenezer Lake Macquarie”
Decem^r 28th 1833. N.S. Wales.

“To the Venerable
The Arch Deacon”
“Reverend Sir”

Unexpected difficulties have occurred to prevent the completion and forwarding of the *Introduction to the Language of the Aborigines of New South Wales* with this report, arising in part from the difficulty of maintaining the necessary communication with the natives in consequence of my inability to bear the pecuniary burthen of supporting many during their detention with me — and also in consequence of the many months absence of **M’gill** the Aborigine whose knowledge of the English language renders his services to me of very much value. He has however returned to our annual Christmas feast, and the work will now it is presumed be completed in time for your departure to England.

The whole of the past year has been devoted exclusively to the *Grammar*, every particularity that appeared in the progress of our researches have it is hoped been shewn and explained so as to prevent in others much of that labor the natural consequence of a first attempt to reduce a foreign Language into the English tongue. The work itself when completed will it is presumed preclude the necessity of any apology for the time it has occupied in its preparation.

I have been most anxious that this report should state the completion of an appropriate building in which Christian Instruction could be given to the natives in every possible mode likely to improve them; but the carpenter assigned by his Excellency to assist me in this department became free in a few months after his assignment and although I hired another carpenter to assist it could not be accomplished, my means not allowing a continuance of workmen at high wages, at that period our crops not being sufficient for our consumption. — An application for a Carpenter was made early in the present year, and I am now anxiously waiting the result to complete my arrangements.

—
The more I advance in capability to converse with the natives, the more I feel convinced of

their susceptibility of moral impressions on their minds. The too prevalent opinion of the incapacity of the Aborigines is almost undeserving of notice; The following instances may prove interesting to those who hope for better things: —

Being on a visit to **Sir Edward Parry** at Port Stevens, **Lady Parry** had the Blacks collected and put through my interpretation numerous questions of a religious nature, on my asking some questions respecting the creator, the men gave no reply, but one of the women to our surprise answered suitably. On making enquiry she informed me that she had obtained her information when she lived with our tribe on the Lake. This fact evinces that the ramblings of the natives, although at present, an apparent Obstacle to their conversion to Christianity will ultimately prove a rapid means of spreading the knowledge of God our Saviour, in like manner as has occurred in the South Sea Islanders.

In another instance recently conversing with a black respecting God, his displeasure at Sin, his compassion to all, he asked where is the path to go to him, what should we say to him, had he a wife? To which natural questions replies were given; but on mentioning the end of the wicked, he swore a dreadful Oath that he was very much afraid; on rebuking him for this, stating that such language provoked God, and was only used by wicked men we parted.

A few weeks had elapsed when he came again and whilst seated at the fire he called to me asking whether he who is above was still angry with him for the expression he had used —

However trivial these circumstances may appear to some, they are nevertheless highly desirable as evidences of motion amongst the dry bones in this wilderness.

The commencement of a school for adults & children will be attempted as soon as the Indian corn now in cultivation is harvested —

When the natives are detained from their natural resources for sustenance it becomes necessary to supply a portion of their wants, the loan of my boats to obtain fish is not only an

inducement to frequent visits, but it also lessens the expences which otherwise would be more severely felt, and when the needful building is completed in which education and divine service will be conducted, other means are in contemplation to open a communication with the numerous tribes on [118] the sea coast, to enable them to visit this place, so that it ultimately may become a rendezvous for the Aborigines and thus afford frequent opportunities of instructing them in the Blessed Gospel of God our Saviour.

An impediment exists at the present to the assembling of the tribes, and their continuance in this part, of which the Government may not be perhaps aware, namely: The distribution of the annual slops being made at Newcastle, Maitland &c which draws off the natives many weeks before the period appointed lest they should be amongst the number of those who are usually disappointed in consequence of the paucity of the Donation.

The evil of enticing them to towns where drunkenness and prostitution are the certain consequences might be avoided by appointing this station for these districts as the depot for such donations as the Government may think just to bestow on the Natural Lords of that soil now sold for the benefit alone of Europeans.

The *Gospel of Luke*, a translation from the Authorised English Version into the Language of the Aborigines will undergo its final correction after the grammar is put to the press, and likewise the selection of prayers for public worship. It will then be needful to prepare lessons in the language from the Alphabet progressively for the use of such natives as may be induced to attend for instruction, to establish which the whole of my energies will be directed in the ensuing year.

Thus whilst breaking up the fallow ground, the full exercise of patience on our parts is demanded from on high, the sure word of prophesy declaring that: "In due season we shall reap if we faint not."¹

That the labors of the past and designs for the future year may meet your approbation, and the approval of His Majesty's Government, but above all the blessing of God Almighty who has

given the Heathen for an Inheritance to his Son and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his possession,² is the earnest prayer of

Reverend Sir
With Unfeigned respect
Your Most Obedient Servant
L. E. Threlkeld.

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 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. [Psalms ii.8]