

hands, they stood looking intently at me, doubting whether I could be in earnest. I urged them, "You all promised to do what I asked. If you break your promise, these white men will laugh at me, and say that black fellows only lie and deceive. Let them see that you can be trusted. I wait here till I see you all asleep."

One said that his head was cut, and he must have revenge before he could lie down. Others filed past showing their wounds, and declaring that it was too bad to request them to go to sleep. I praised them as far as I could, but urged them for once to be men and to keep their word. Finally, they all agreed to lie down, I waiting till the last man had disappeared; and, being doubly exhausted with the debauch and the fighting, they were soon all fast asleep. I prayed that the blessed Sleep might lull their savage passions.

Before daylight next morning, the Minister and I were hastening to the scene to prevent further fighting; but as the sun was rising we saw the last tribe of the distant Natives disappearing over the brow of a hill. A small party belonging to the district alone remained. They shouted to us, "Black fellow all gone! No more fight. You too much like black fellow!"

For three days afterwards I had still to linger there; and if their dogs ran or barked at me, the women chased them with sticks and stones, and protected me. One little touch of kindness and sympathy had unlocked their darkened hearts.

Who wonders that the *dark* races melt away before the *whites*? The pioneers of Civilisation *will* carry with them this demon of strong drink, the fruitful parent of every other vice. The black people drink, and become unmanageable; and through the white man's own poison-gift an excuse is found for sweeping the poor creatures off the face of the earth. Marsden's writings show how our Australian blacks are destroyed. But I have myself been on the track of such butcheries again and again. A Victorian lady told me the following incident. She heard a child's pitiful cry in the bush. On tracing it, she found a little girl weeping over her younger brother. She said, "The white men poisoned our father and mother. They threaten to shoot me, so that I dare not go near them. I am here, weeping over my brother till we die!"

The compassionate lady promised to be a mother to the little sufferers, and to protect them. They instantly clung to her, and have proved themselves to be loving and dutiful ever since.

CHAPTER L

NORA

WHILE I was pondering over Kingsley's words,—about the blacks of Australia being "poor brutes in human shape," and too low to take in the Gospel,—the story of Nora, an Aboriginal Christian woman, whom I myself actually visited and corresponded with, was brought under my notice, as if to shatter to pieces everything that the famous preacher had proclaimed. A dear friend told me how he had seen Nora encamped with the blacks near Hexham in Victoria. Her husband had lost, through drink, their once comfortable home at a Station where he was employed. The change back to life in camp had broken her health, and she lay sick on the ground within a miserable hut. The visitors found her reading a Bible, and explaining to a number of her own poor people the wonders of redeeming love. My friend, Roderick Urquhart, Esq., overcome by the sight, said, "Nora, I am grieved to see you here, and deprived of every comfort in your sickness."

She answered, not without tears, "The change has indeed made me unwell; but I am beginning to think that this too is for the best; it has at last brought my poor husband to his senses, and I will grudge nothing if God thereby brings him to the Saviour's feet!"

She further explained that she had found wonderful joy in telling her own people about the true God and His Son Jesus, and was quite assured that the Lord in His own way would send her relief. The visitors who accompanied Mr. Urquhart showed themselves to be greatly affected by the true and pure Christian spirit of this poor Aboriginal, and on parting she said, "Do not think that I like this miserable hut, or the food, or the company; but I am and have been happy in trying to do good amongst my people."

For my part, let that dear Christlike soul look out on me from her Aboriginal hut, and I will trample under foot all teachings or theorisings that dare to say that she or her kind are but poor brutes, as mere blasphemies against Human Nature! "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

It is easy to understand how even experienced travellers may be deluded to believe that the Aborigines have no idols and no religion. One must have lived amongst them or their kindred ere he can authoritatively decide these questions. Before I left Melbourne, for instance, I had met Nathaniel Pepper, a converted Aboriginal from Wimmera. I asked him if his people had any "Doctors," *i.e.* Sacred Men or priests. He said they had. I inquired if they had any objects of Worship, or any belief in God? He said, "No! None whatever."

But on taking from my pocket some four small stone idols, his expression showed at once that he recognised them as objects of Worship. He had seen the Sacred Men use them; but he refused to answer any more questions. I resolved now, if possible, to secure some of their idols, and set this whole problem once for all at rest.

At Newstead, on another occasion, I persuaded a whole camp of the Aborigines to come to my meeting. After the address, they waited to examine the idols and stone gods which I had shown. Some of the young men admitted that their "doctors" had things like these, which they and the old people prayed to; but they added jauntily, "We young fellows don't worship; we know too much for that!" No "doctors" were, however, in that camp; so I could not meet with them; but I already felt that the testimony of nearly all white people that the "blacks" had "no idols and no worship" was quickly crumbling away.

On returning to Horsham, from a visit to a great camp of the blacks at Wonwondah, and having purchased, in the presence of witnesses, specimens of their idols from the Doctor or Sacred Man of these tribes, I informed my dear friends, Rev. P. Simpson and his excellent lady, of my exploits and possessions. He replied, "There is a black 'doctor' gone round our house just now to see one of his people who is washing

here to-day. Let us go and test them, whether they know these objects."

Carrying them in his hand, we went to them. The woman instantly on perceiving them dropped what she was washing, and turned away in instinctive terror. Mr. Simpson asked, "Have you ever before seen stones like these?"

The wily "doctor" replied, "Plenty on the plains, where I kick them out of my way."

Taking others out of my pocket, I said, "These make people sick and well, don't they?"

His rage overcame his duplicity, and he exclaimed, "What black fellow give you these? If I know him I do for him!"

The woman, looking the picture of terror, and pointing to one of the objects, cried, "That fellow no good! he kill men. No good, no good! Me too much afraid."

Then, looking at me, she said, pointing with her finger, "That fellow savvy (knows) too much! No white man see them. He no good."

There was more in this scene and in all its surroundings, than in many arguments; and Mr. Simpson thoroughly believed that these were objects of idolatrous worship.

And now let me relate the story of my visit to Nora, the converted Aboriginal referred to above. Accompanied by Robert Hood, Esq., J.P., Victoria, I found my way to the encampment near Hexham. She did not know of our coming, nor see us till we stood at the door of her hut. She was clean and tidily dressed, as were also her dear little children, and appeared glad to see us. She had just been reading the *Presbyterian Messenger*, and the Bible was lying at her elbow. I said, "Do you read the *Messenger*?"

She replied, "Yes; I like to know what is going on in the Church."

We found her to be a sensible and humble Christian woman, conversing intelligently about religion and serving God devotedly. Next Sabbath she brought her husband, her children, and six blacks to Church, all decently dressed, and they all listened most attentively.

At our first meeting I said, "Nora, they tell me you are a Christian. I want to ask you a few questions about the blacks; and I hope that as a Christian you will speak the truth." Rather hurt at my language, she raised her right hand,

and replied, "I am a Christian. I fear and serve the true God. I always speak the truth."

Taking from my pocket the stone idols from the Islands, I inquired if her people had or worshipped things like these. She replied, "The 'doctors' have them."

"Have you a 'doctor' in your camp?" I asked. She said, "Yes, my uncle is the Sacred Man; but he is now far away from this."

"Has he the idols with him now?" I inquired. She answered, "No; they are left in my care."

I then said, "Could you let us see them?"

She consulted certain representatives of the tribe who were at hand. They rose, and removed to a distance. They had consented. Mr. Hood assured me that no fault would be found with her, as she was the real, or at least virtual head of the tribe. Out of a larger bag she then drew two smaller bags, and opened them. They were filled with the very objects which I had brought from the Islands. I asked her to consult the men of her tribe whether they would agree to sell four or five of them to me, that I might by them convince the white people that they had gods of their own, and are, therefore, above the brutes of the field; the money to be given to their Sacred Man on his return. This, also, after a time was agreed to. I selected three of the objects, and paid the stipulated price. And I have the recorded testimony of "Robert Hood, J.P., Hexham, Victoria, 28th February 1863," certifying on his honour all that I am here affirming.

Mr. Hood asked Nora how he had never heard of or seen these things before, living so long amongst them, and blacks constantly coming and going about his house. She replied, "Long ago white men laughed at black fellows praying to their idols. Black fellows said, white men never see them again! Suppose this white man not know all about them, he would not now see them. No white men live now have seen what you have seen."

Thus it has been demonstrated on the spot, and in presence of the most reliable witnesses, that the Aborigines, before they saw the white invaders, were not "brutes" incapable of knowing God, but human beings, yearning after a God of some kind. Nor do I believe that any tribe of men will ever be found, who, when their language and

customs are rightly interpreted, will not display their consciousness of the need of a God, and that Divine capacity of holding fellowship with the Unseen Powers, of which the brutes are without one faintest trace.

Poor, dear, Christian-hearted Nora! The Christ-spirit shines forth unmistakably through thee,—praying for and seeking to save husband and children, enduring trials and miseries by the aid of communion with thy Lord, weeping over the degradation of thy people, and seeking to lift them up by telling them of the true God and of His love to Mankind through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER LI

BACK TO SCOTLAND

EACH of my Australian Committees strongly urged my return to Scotland, chiefly to secure, if possible, more Missionaries for the New Hebrides. Dr. Inglis, just arrived from Britain, where he had the Aneityumese New Testament carried through the press, also zealously enforced this appeal.

Constrained by what appeared to me the Voice of God, I sailed for London in the *Kosciusko*, an Aberdeen clipper, on 16th May 1863. Captain Stewart made the voyage most enjoyable to all. The Rev. Mr. Stafford, friend of the good Bishop Selwyn and tutor to his son, conducted along with myself, alternately, an Anglican and a Presbyterian Service. We passed through a memorable thunder-burst in rounding the Cape. Our good ship was perilously struck by lightning. The men on deck were thrown violently down. The copper on the bulwarks was twisted and melted—a specimen of which the Captain gave me and I still retain. When the ball of fire struck the ship, those of us sitting on chairs, screwed to the floor around the Cabin table, felt as if she were plunging to the bottom. When she sprang aloft again, a military man and a medical officer were thrown heavily into the back passage between the Cabins, the screws that held their seats having snapped asunder. I, in grasping the table, got my leg severely bruised, being jammed betwixt the seat and the

table, and had to be carried to my berth. All the men were attended to, and quickly recovered consciousness; and immediately the good Captain, an elder of the Church, came to me, and said, "Lead us in prayer, and let us thank the Lord for this most merciful deliverance; the ship is not on fire, and no one is seriously injured!"

Poor fellow! whether hastened on by this event I know not, but he struggled for three weeks thereafter in a fever, and it took our united care and love to pull him through. The Lord, however, restored him; and we cast anchor safely in the East India Docks, at London, on 26th August 1863, having been three months and ten days at sea from port to port.

It was 5.30 P.M. when we cast anchor, and the gates closed at 6 o'clock. My little box was ready on deck. The Custom House officers kindly passed me, and I was immediately on my way to Euston Square. Never before had I been within the Great City, and doubtless I could have enjoyed its palaces and memorials. But the King's business, entrusted to me, "required haste," and I felt constrained to press forward, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left.

At nine o'clock, that evening, I left for Scotland by train. Next morning, about the same hour, I reported myself at the manse of the Rev. John Kay, Castle Douglas, the Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to which I then belonged. We arranged for a meeting of said Committee, at earliest practicable date, that my scheme and plans might at once be laid before them.

By the next train I was on my way to Dumfries, and thence by conveyance to my dear old home at Torthorwald. There I had a Heavenly Welcome from my saintly parents, yet not unmingled with many fast-falling tears. Five brief years only had elapsed, since I went forth from their Sanctuary, with my young bride; and now, alas! alas! that grave on Tanna held mother and son locked in each other's embrace till the Resurrection Day.

Not less glowing, but more terribly agonising, was my reception, a few days thereafter, at Coldstream, when I first gazed on the bereaved father and mother of my beloved; who, though godly people, were conscious of a heart-break

under that stroke, from which through their remaining years they never fully rallied. They murmured not against the Lord; but all the same, heart and flesh began to faint and fail, even as our Divine Exemplar Himself fainted under the Cross, which yet He so uncomplainingly bore.

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met in Edinburgh, and welcomed me kindly, nay, warmly. A full report of all my doings for the past, and of all my plans and hopes, was laid before them. They at once agreed to my visiting and addressing every Congregation and Sabbath School in the Church. They opened to me their Divinity Hall, that I might appeal to the Students. My Address there was published and largely circulated, under the motto—"Come over and help us." It was used of God to deepen vastly the interest in our Mission.

The Committee generously and enthusiastically did everything in their power to help me. By their influence, the Church in 1864 conferred on me the undesired and undeserved honour, the highest which they could confer—the honour of being the Moderator of their Supreme Court. No one can understand how much I shrank from all this; but, in hope of the Lord's using it and me to promote His work amongst the Heathen, I accepted the Chair, though, I fear, only to occupy it most unworthily, for Tanna gave me little training for work like that!

I have ever regarded it as a privilege and honour that I was born and trained within the old covenanting Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. As a separate Communion, that Church was small amongst the thousands of Israel; but the principles of Civil and Religious Liberty for which her founders suffered and died are, at this moment, the heart and soul of all that is best and divinest in the Constitution of our British Empire. I am more proud that the blood of Martyrs is in my veins, and their truths in my heart, than other men can be of noble pedigree or royal names.

CHAPTER LII

TOUR THROUGH THE OLD COUNTRY

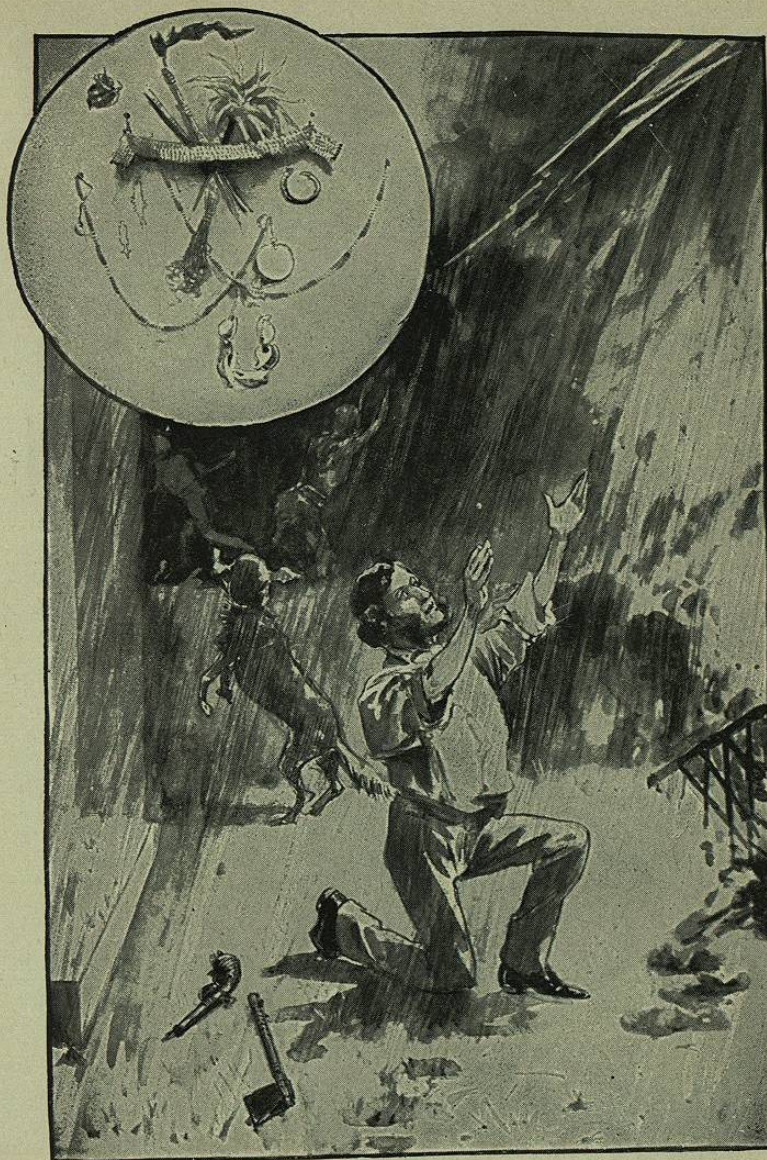
MY tour through Scotland brought me into contact with every Minister, Congregation, and Sabbath School in the Church of my fathers. They were never at any time a rich people, but they were always liberal. At this time they contributed beyond all previous experience, both in money and in boxes of useful articles for the Islanders.

Unfortunately, my visit to the far North, to our Congregations at Wick and Stromness, had been arranged for the month of January; and thereby a sore trial befell me in my pilgrimages. The roads were covered with snow and ice. I reached Aberdeen and Wick by steamer from Edinburgh, and had to find my way thence to Thurso. The inside seats on the Mail Coach being all occupied, I had to take my place outside. The cold was intense, and one of my feet got bitten by the frost. The storm detained me nearly a week at Thurso, but feeling did not return to the foot.

We started, in a lull, by steamer for Stromness; but the storm burst again, all were ordered below, and hatches and doors made fast. The passengers were mostly very rough, the place was foul with whisky and tobacco. I appealed to the Captain to let me crouch somewhere on deck, and hold on as best I could. He shouted, "I dare not! You'll be washed overboard."

On seeing my appealing look, he relented, directed his men to fasten a tarpaulin over me, and lash it and me to the mast, and there I lay till we reached Stromness. The sea broke heavily and dangerously over the vessel. But the Captain, finding shelter for several hours under the lee of a headland, saved both the ship and the passengers. When at last we landed, my foot was so benumbed and painful that I could move a step only with greatest agony. Two meetings, however, were in some kind of way conducted; but the projected visit to Dingwall and other places had to be renounced, the snow lying too deep for any conveyance to carry me, and my foot crying aloud for treatment and skill.

On returning Southwards I was confined for about two



JEHOVAH'S RAIN.

"A panic seized upon them, and in a few moments they all disappeared."

months, and placed under the best medical advice. All feeling seemed gradually to have departed from my foot; and amputation was seriously proposed both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow. Having somehow managed to reach Liverpool, my dear friend, the Rev. Dr. Graham, took me there to a Doctor who had wrought many wonderful recoveries by galvanism. Time after time he applied the battery, but I felt nothing. He declared that the power used would "have killed six ordinary men," and that he had never seen any part of the human body so dead to feeling on a live and healthy person. Finally, he covered it all over with a dark plaster, and told me to return in three days. But next day, the throbbing feeling of insufferable coldness in the foot compelled me to return at once. After my persistent appeals, he removed the plaster; and, to his great astonishment, the whole of the frosted part adhered to it! Again, dressing the remaining parts, he covered it with plaster as before, and assured me that with care and rest it would now completely recover. By the blessing of the Lord it did, though it was a bitter trial to me amidst all these growing plans to be thus crippled by the way; and to this day I am sometimes warned in over-walking that the part is capable of many a painful twinge. And humbly I feel myself crooning over the graphic words of the Greatest Missionary, "I bear about in my body the *marks* of the Lord Jesus."

On that tour, the Sabbath Schools joyfully adopted my scheme, and became "Shareholders" in the Mission Ship. It was thereafter ably developed by an elder of the Church. A *Dayspring* collecting box found its way into almost every family; and the returns from Scotland have yielded ever since about £250 per annum, as their proportion for the expenses of the Children's Mission Ship to the New Hebrides. The Church in Nova Scotia heartily accepted the same idea, and their Sabbath School children have regularly contributed their £250 per annum too. The Colonial children have contributed the rest, throughout all these years, with unflinching interest. And whenever the true and full history of the South Sea Islands Mission is written for the edification of the Universal Church, let it not be forgotten that the children of Australasia, and Nova Scotia, and Scotland, did by their united pennies keep the *Dayspring* floating in the New Hebrides;

that the Missionaries and their families were thereby supplied with the necessaries of life, and that the Islanders were thus taught to clothe themselves and to sit at the feet of Jesus. This was the Children's Holy League, erewhile referred to; and one knows that on such a Union the Divine Master smiles well pleased.

The Lord also crowned this tour with another precious fruit of blessing, though not all by any means due to my influence. Four new Missionaries volunteered from Scotland, and three from Nova Scotia. By their aid we not only re-claimed for Jesus the posts that had been abandoned, but we took possession of other Islands in His most blessed Name. But I did not wait and take them out with me. They had matters to look into and to learn about, that would be infinitely helpful to them in the Mission field. Especially, and far above everything else in addition to their regular Clerical course, some Medical instruction was an absolute prerequisite. Every Missionary was urged to obtain all insight that was practicable at Medical Mission Dispensary, and otherwise, especially on lines known to be most requisite for these Islands. For this, and similar objects, all that I raised over and above what was required for the *Dayspring* was entrusted to the Foreign Mission Committee, that the new Missionaries might be fully equipped, and their outfit and travelling expenses be provided for without burdening the Church at home. Her responsibilities were already large enough for her resources. But she could give men, God's own greatest gift, and His people elsewhere gave the money, —the Colonies and the Home Country thus binding themselves to each other in this Holy Mission of the Cross.

CHAPTER LIII

MARRIAGE AND FAREWELL

BUT I did not return alone. The dear Lord had brought to me one prepared, all unknown to either of us, by special culture, by godly training, by many gifts and accomplishments, and even by family associations, to share my lot on the New

Hebrides. Her brother had been an honoured Missionary in the Foreign field, and had fallen asleep while the dew of youth was yet upon him; her sister was the wife of a devoted Minister of our Church in Adelaide, both she and her husband being zealous promoters of our work; and her father had left behind him a fragrant memory through his many Christian works at Edinburgh, Kenneth, and Alloa, besides being not unknown to fame as the author of those still popular books, *Whitcross's Anecdotes*, illustrative of the Shorter Catechism and of the Holy Scriptures. Ere I left Scotland in 1864, I was married to Margaret Whitcross, and God spares us to each other still (1892); and the family which He has been pleased in His love to grant unto us we have dedicated to His service, with the prayer and hope that He may use every one of them in spreading the Gospel throughout the Heathen World.

Our marriage was celebrated at her sister's house in Edinburgh; and I may be pardoned for recalling a little event that characterised the occasion. My youngest brother, then tutor to a gentleman studying at the University, stepped forth at the close of the ceremony and recited an Epithalamium composed for the day. For many a month and year the refrain, a play upon the Bride's name, kept singing itself through my memory:—

“ Long may the *Whitcross* banner wave,
By the battle blasts unripen;
Long may our Brother and Sister brave
Rejoice in the light of Heaven.”

He described the Bride as hearing a “Voice from the far Pacific Seas”; and turning to us both, he sang of an Angel “beckoning us to the Tanna-land,” to gather a harvest of souls:—

“ The warfare is brief, the crown is bright,
The pledge is the souls of men;
Go, may the Lord defend the Right,
And restore you safe again !”

But the verse which my dear wife thought most beautiful for a bridal day, and which her memory cherishes still, was this:—

“ May the ruddy Joys, and the Graces fair,
Wait fondly around you now;
Sweet angel Hopes and young Loves, repair
To your home and bless your vow !”

My last scene in Scotland was kneeling at the family altar in the old Sanctuary Cottage at Torthorwald, while my venerable father, with his high-priestly locks of snow-white hair streaming over his shoulders, commended us once again to "the care and keeping of the Lord God of the families of Israel." It was the last time that ever on this Earth those accents of intercession, loaded with a pathos of deathless love, would fall upon my ears. I knew to a certainty that when we rose from our knees and said farewell, our eyes would never meet again till they were flooded with the lights of the Resurrection Day. But he and my darling mother gave us away once again with a free heart, not unpierced with the sword of human anguish, to the service of our common Lord and to the Salvation of the Heathen. And we went forth, praying that a double portion of their spirit, along with their precious blessing, might rest upon us in all the way that we had to go.

Our beloved mother, always more self-restrained, and less demonstrative in the presence of others, held back her heart till we were fairly gone from the door; and then, as my dear brother afterwards informed me, she fell back into his arms with a great cry, as if all the heart-strings had broken, and lay for long in a death-like swoon. Oh, all ye that read this page, think most tenderly of the cries of Nature, even where Grace and Faith are in perfect triumph. Read, through scenes like these, a fuller meaning into the words addressed to that blessed Mother, whose Son was given for us all, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also."

CHAPTER LIV

FIRST PEEP AT THE "DAYSRING"

WE embarked at Liverpool for Australia in *The Crest of the Wave*, Captain Ellis; and, after what was then considered a fast passage of ninety-five days, we landed at Sydney on 17th January 1865. Within an hour we had to grapple with a new and amazing perplexity. The Captain of our *Dayspring* came to inform me that his ship had arrived three days ago

and now lay in the stream,—that she had been to the Islands, and had settled the Gordons, M'Cullaghs, and Morrisons on their several stations,—that she had left Halifax in Nova Scotia fourteen months ago, and that now, on arriving at Sydney, he could not get one penny of money, and that the crew were clamouring for their pay, etc. etc. He continued, "Where shall I get money for current expenses? No one will lend unless we mortgage the *Dayspring*. I fear there is nothing before us but to sell her!" I gave him £50 of my own to meet clamant demands, and besought him to secure me a day or two of delay that something might be done.

Having landed, and been heartily welcomed by dear Dr. and Mrs. Moon and other friends, I went with a kind of trembling joy to have my first look at the *Dayspring*, like a sailor getting a first peep at the child born to him whilst far away on the sea. Some of the irritated ship's company stopped us by the way, and threatened prosecution and all sorts of annoyance. I could only urge again for a few days' patience. I found her to be a beautiful two-masted Brigantine, with a deck-house (added when she first arrived at Melbourne), and every way suitable for our necessities,—a thing of beauty, a white-winged Angel set a-floating by the pennies of the children to bear the Gospel to these sin-darkened but sun-lit Southern Isles. To me she became a sort of living thing, the impersonation of a living and throbbing love in the heart of thousands of "shareholders"; and I said, with a deep, indestructible faith,—“The Lord *has* provided—the Lord *will* provide.”

Since she sailed, £1400 had been expended; for present liabilities at least £700 more were instantly required; and, at any rate, as large a sum to pay her way and meet expenses of next trip to the Islands. Having laid our perplexing circumstances before our dear Lord Jesus, having "spread out" all the details in His sympathetic presence, pleading that the Ship itself and the new Missionaries were all His own, not mine, I told Him that this money was needed to do His own blessed work.

On Friday morning, I consulted friends of the Mission, but no help was visible. I tried to borrow, but found that the lender demanded 20 per cent for interest, besides the title-deeds of the ship for security. I applied for a loan from