

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

the agent of the London Missionary Society (then agent for us too) on the credit of the Reformed Presbyterian Church's Foreign Committee, but he could not give it without a written order from Scotland. There were some who seemed rather to enjoy our perplexity!

Driven thus to the wall, I advertised for a meeting of Ministers and other friends, next morning at eleven o'clock, to receive my report and to consult *re* the *Dayspring*. I related my journeyings since leaving them and the results; and then asked for advice about the Ship.

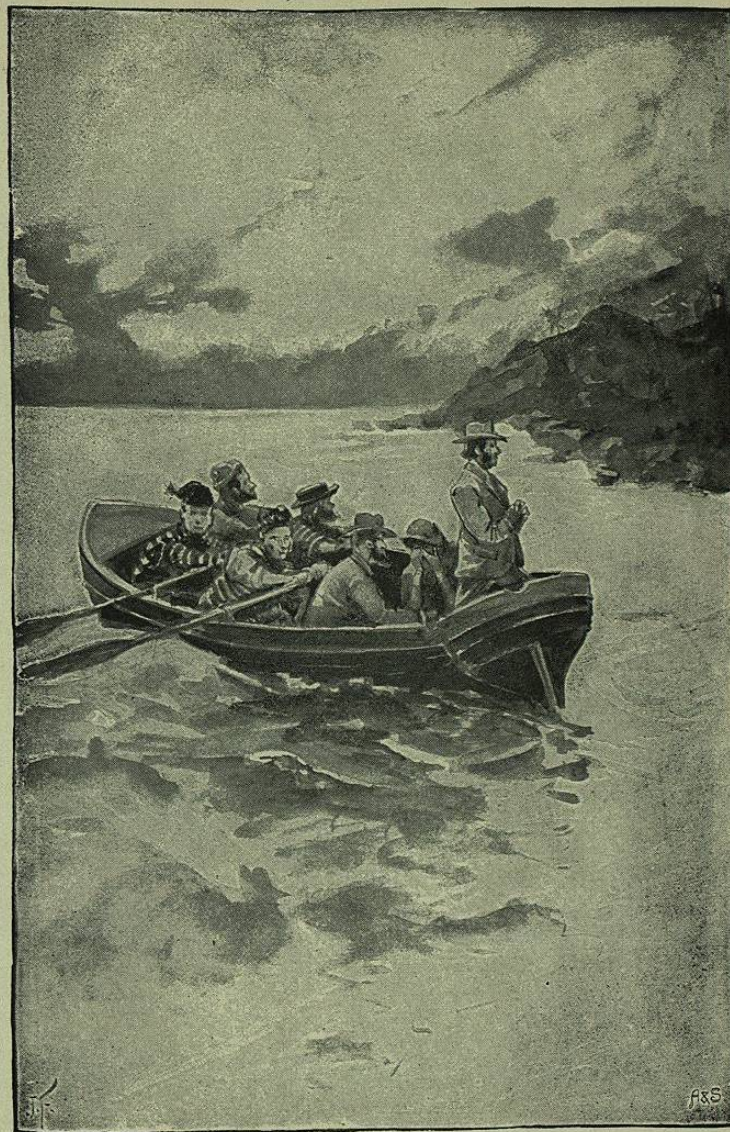
"Sell her," said some, "and have done with it."—"What," said others, "have the Sabbath Schools given you the *Dayspring* and can you not support her yourselves?"

I pointed out to them that the salary of each Missionary was then only £120 per annum, that they gave their lives for the Heathen, and that surely the Colonial Christians would undertake the up-keep of the Ship, which was necessary to the very existence of the Mission. I appealed to them that, as my own Church in Scotland had now one Missionary abroad for every six Ministers at home, and the small Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia had actually three Missionaries now on our Islands, it would be a blessed privilege for the Australian Churches and Sabbath Schools to keep the *Dayspring* afloat, without whose services the Missionaries could not live nor the Islanders be evangelised.

Being Saturday, the morning Services for Sabbath were all arranged for, or advertised; but Dr. M'Gibbon offered me a meeting for the evening, and Dr. Steel an afternoon Service at three o'clock, combined with his Sabbath School. Rev. Mr. Patterson of Piermont, offered me a Morning Service; but, as his was only a Mission Church, he could not give me a collection. These openings I accepted, as from the Lord, however much they fell short of what I desired.

At the Morning Service I informed the Congregation how we were situated, and expressed the hope that under God and their devoted pastor they would greatly prosper, and would yet be able to help in supporting our Mission to their South Sea neighbours. Returning to the vestry, a lady and gentleman waited to be introduced to me. They were from Launceston, Tasmania.

"I am," said he, "Captain and owner of that vessel lying



FAREWELL TO TANNA.

at anchor opposite the *Dayspring*. My wife and I, being too late to get on shore to attend any Church in the city, heard this little Chapel bell ringing, and followed, when we saw you going up the hill. We have so enjoyed the Service. We do heartily sympathise with you. This cheque for £50 will be a beginning to help you out of your difficulties."

The reader knows how warmly I would thank them; and how in my own heart I knew *Who* it was that made them arrive too late for *their* plans, but not for *His*, and led them up that hill, and opened their hearts. Jehovah-Jireh!

At three o'clock, Dr. Steel's Church was filled with children and others. I told them in my appeal what had happened in the Mission Chapel, and how God had led Captain Frith and his wife, entire strangers, to sound the first note of our deliverance. One man stood up and said, "I will give £10." Another, "I will give £5." A third, "I shall send you £20 to-morrow morning." Several others followed their example, and the general collection was greatly encouraging.

In the evening I had a very large as well as sympathetic Congregation. I fully explained the difficulty about the *Dayspring*, and told them what God had already done for us, announcing an address to which contributions might be sent. Almost every Mail brought me the free-will offerings of God's people; and on Wednesday, when the adjourned meeting was held, the sum had reached in all £456. Believing that the Lord thus intervened at a vital crisis in our Mission, I dwell on it to the praise of His blessed Name. Trust in Him, obey Him, and He will not suffer you to be put to shame.

Clearing out from her sister ships, then in harbour, the *John Williams* and the *John Wesley*, our little *Dayspring* sailed for Tasmania. At Hobart we were visited by thousands of children and parents, and afterwards at Launceston, who were proud to see their own Ship, in which they were "shareholders" for Jesus. Daily, all over the Colony, I preached in Churches, and addressed public meetings, and got collections, and gave out Collecting Cards to be returned within two weeks.

We received many tokens of interest and sympathy. The steam tug was granted to us free, and the harbour dues were remitted. Many presents were also sent on board the *Dayspring*. Still, after meeting all necessary outlays, the trip

to Tasmania gave us only £227 : 8 : 11 clear for the Mission fund.

Sailing now for South Australia, we arrived at Adelaide. Many friends there showed the deepest interest in our plans. Thousands of children and parents came to visit their own Mission Ship by several special trips. Daily and nightly I addressed meetings, and God's people were moved greatly in the cause. After meeting all expenses while in port, there remained a sum of £634 : 9 : 2 for the up-keep of the vessel. The Honourable George Fife Angus gave me £241—a dear friend belonging to the Baptist Church. But there was still a deficit of £400 before the *Dayspring* could sail free of debt, and my heart was sore as I cried for it to the Lord.

Leaving the ship to sail direct for Sydney, I took steamer to Melbourne; but, on arriving there, sickness and anxiety laid me aside for three days. Under great weakness, I crept along to my dear friends at the Scotch College, Dr. and Mrs. Morrison, and Miss Fraser, and threw myself on their advice.

"Come along," said the Doctor cheerily, "and I'll introduce you to Mr. Butchart and one or two friends in East Melbourne, and we'll see what can be done!"

I gave all information, being led on in conversation by the Doctor, and tried to interest them in our work, but no subscriptions were asked or received. Ere I sailed for Sydney, however, the whole deficiency was sent to me. I received in all, on this tour, the sum of £1726 : 9 : 10. Our *Dayspring* once more sailed free, and our hearts overflowed with gratitude to the Lord and to His stewards!

CHAPTER LV

THE FRENCH IN THE PACIFIC

WE went down to the Islands with the *Dayspring* in 1865. The full story of the years that had passed was laid before my Missionary brethren at their Annual Synod. They resolved that permanent arrangements must now be made for the Vessel's support, and that I must return to the Colonies and

see these matured, to prevent any such crisis as that through which we had recently passed. This, meantime, appeared to all of them the most clamant of all Missionary duties,—their very lives, and the existence of the Mission itself, depending thereon. The Lord seemed to leave me no alternative; and, with great reluctance, my back was again turned away from the Islands.

The *Dayspring*, doing duty among the Loyalty Islands, left me, along with my dear wife, on Maré, there to await an opportunity of getting to New Caledonia, and thence to Sydney. Detained there for some time, we saw the noble work done by Messrs. Jones and Creagh, of the London Missionary Society, all being cruelly undone by the tyranny and Popery of the French. One day, in an inland walk, Mrs. Paton and I came on a large Conventicle in the bush. They were teaching each other, and reading the Scriptures which the Missionaries had translated into their own language, and which the French had forbidden them to use. They cried to God for deliverance from their oppressors! Missionaries were prohibited from teaching the Gospel to the Natives without the permission of France; their books were suppressed, and they themselves placed under military guard on the island of Lifu. Even when, by Britain's protest, the Missionaries were allowed to resume their work, the French language was alone to be used by them; and some, like Rev. J. Jones (as far down as 1888), were marched on board a Man-of-war, at half an hour's notice, and, without crime laid to their charge, forbidden ever to return to the Islands. While, on the other hand, the French Popish Missionaries were everywhere fostered and protected, presenting to the Natives as many objects of idolatry as their own, and following, as is the custom of the Romish Church in those Seas, in the wake of every Protestant Mission, to pollute and to destroy.

Being delayed also for two weeks on Noumea, we saw the state of affairs under military rule. English Protestant residents, few in number, appealed to me to conduct worship, but liberty could not be obtained from the authorities, who hated everything English. Again a number of Protestant parents, some French, others English and German, applied to me to baptize their children at their own houses. To have

asked permission would have been to court refusal, and to falsify my position. I laid the matter before the Lord, and baptized them all. Within two days the Private Secretary of the Governor arrived with an interpreter, and began to inquire of me, "Is it true that you have been baptizing here?"

I replied quite frankly, "It is."

"We are sent to demand on whose authority?"

"On the authority of my Great Master."

"When did you get that authority?"

"When I was licensed and ordained to preach the Gospel, I got that authority from my Great Master."

Here a spirited conversation followed betwixt the two in French, and they politely bowed, and left me.

Very shortly they returned, saying, "The Governor sends his compliments, and he wishes the honour of a visit from you at Government House at three o'clock, if convenient for you."

I returned my greeting, and said that I would have pleasure in waiting upon his Excellency at the appointed hour. I thought to myself that I was in for it now, and I earnestly cried for Divine guidance.

He saluted me graciously as "de great Missionary of de New Hebrides." He conversed in a very friendly manner about the work there, and seemed anxious to find any indication as to the English designs. I had to deal very cautiously. He spoke chiefly through the interpreter; but, sometimes dismissing him, he talked to me as good, if not better English himself. He was eager to get my opinions as to how Britain got and retained her power over the Natives. After a very prolonged interview, we parted without a single reference to the baptisms or to religious services!

That evening the Secretary and interpreter waited upon us at our Inn, saying, "The Governor will have pleasure in placing his yacht and crew at your disposal to-morrow. Mrs. Paton and you can sail all around, and visit the Convict Island, and the Government Gardens, where lunch will be prepared for you."

It was a great treat to us indeed. The crew were in prison garments, but all so kind to us. By Convict labour all the public works seemed to be carried on, and the Gardens were most beautiful. The carved work in bone, ivory, cocoa-nuts,

shells, etc., was indeed very wonderful. We bought a few specimens, but the prices were beyond our purse. It was a strange spectacle—these things of beauty and joy, and beside them the chained gangs of fierce and savage Convicts, kept down only by bullet and sword!

Thanking the Governor for his exceeding kindness, I referred to their Man-of-war about to go to Sydney, and offered to pay full passage money if they would take me, instead of leaving me to wait for a "trader." He at once granted my request, and arranged that we should be charged only at the daily cost for the sailors. At his suggestion, however, I took a number of things on board with me, and presented them to be used at the Cabin table. We were most generously treated—the Captain giving up his own room to my wife and myself, as they had no special accommodation for passengers.

Noumea appeared to me at that time to be wholly given over to drunkenness and vice, supported as a great Convict Settlement by the Government of France, and showing every extreme of reckless, worldly pleasure, and of cruel, slavish toil. When I saw it again, three-and-twenty years thereafter, it showed no signs of progress for the better. If there be a God of justice and of love, His blight cannot but rest on a nation whose pathway is stained with corruption and steeped in blood, as is undeniably the case with France in the Pacific Isles.

CHAPTER LVI

THE GOSPEL AND GUNPOWDER

ARRIVING at Sydney, I was at once plunged into a whirlpool of horrors. H.M.S. *Curacao* had just returned from her official trip to the Islands, in which the Commodore, Sir William Wiseman, had thought it his duty to inflict punishment on the Natives for murder and robbery of Traders and others. On these Islands, as in all similar cases, the Missionaries had acted as interpreters, and of course always used their influence on the side of mercy, and in the interests of peace. But Sydney, and indeed Australia and the Christian

World, were thrown into a ferment just a few days before our arrival, by certain articles in a leading publication there, and by the pictorial illustrations of the same. They were professedly from an officer on board Her Majesty's ship, and the sensation was increased by their apparent truthfulness and reality. Tanna was the scene of the first event, and a series was to follow in succeeding numbers. The *Curacao* was pictured lying at anchor off the shore, having the *Dayspring* a-stern. The Tannese warriors were being blown to pieces by shot and shell, and lay in heaps on the bloody coast. And the Missionaries were represented as safe in the lee of the Man-of-war, directing the onslaught, and gloating over the carnage.

Without a question being asked or a doubt suggested, without a voice being raised in fierce denial that such men as these Missionaries were known to be could be guilty of such conduct,—men who had jeopardized their lives for years on end rather than hurt one hair on a Native's head,—a cry of execration, loud and deep, and even savage, arose from the Press, and was apparently joined in by the Church itself. The common witticism about the "Gospel and Gunpowder" headed hundreds of bitter and scoffing articles in the journals; and, as we afterwards learned, the shocking news had been telegraphed to Britain and America, losing nothing in force by the way, and, while filling friends of Missions with dismay, was dished up day after day with every imaginable enhancement of horror for the readers of the secular and infidel Press. As I stepped ashore at Sydney I found myself probably the best-abused man in all Australia, and the very name of the New Hebrides Mission stinking in the nostrils of the People.

The gage of battle had been thrown and fell at my feet. Without one moment's delay I lifted it in the name of my Lord and of my maligned brethren. That evening my reply was in the hands of the editor, denying that such battles ever took place, retailing the actual facts of which I had been myself an eye-witness, and intimating legal prosecution unless the most ample and unequivocal withdrawal and apology were at once published. The Newspaper printed my rejoinder, and made satisfactory amends for having been imposed upon and deceived. I waited upon the Commodore, and appealed for his help in redressing this terrible injury to our Mission. He

informed me that he had already called his officers to account, but that all denied any connection with the articles or the pictures. He had little doubt, all the same, that some one on board was the prompter, who gloried in the evil that was being done to the cause of Christ. He offered every possible assistance, by testimony or otherwise, to place all the facts before the Christian public and to vindicate our Missionaries.

The outstanding facts are best presented in the following extract from the official report of the Mission Synod:—

"When the New Hebrides Missionaries were assembled at their annual meeting on Aneityum, H.M.S. *Curacao*, Sir Wm. Wiseman, Bart., C.B., arrived in the harbour to investigate many grievances of white men and trading vessels among the Islands. A petition having been previously presented to the Governor in Sydney, as drawn out by the Revs. Messrs. Geddie and Copeland, after the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon on Erromanga, requesting an investigation into the sad event, and the removal of a Sandal-wood Trader, a British subject, who had incited the Natives to it,—the Missionaries gave the Commodore a memorandum on the loss of life and property that had been sustained by the Mission on Tanna, Erromanga, and Efate. He requested the Missionaries to supply him with interpreters, and requested the *Dayspring* to accompany him with them. The request was at once acceded to. Mr. Paton was appointed to act as interpreter for Tanna, Mr. Gordon (brother of the martyr) for Erromanga, and Mr. Morrison for Efate.

"At each of these Islands, the Commodore summoned the principal Chiefs near the harbours to appear before him, and explained to them that his visit was to inquire into the complaints British subjects had made against them, and to see if they had any against British subjects; and when he had found out the truth he would punish those who had done the wrong and protect those who had suffered wrong. The Queen did not send him to compel them to become Christians, or to punish them for not becoming Christians. She left them to do as they liked in this matter; but she was very angry at them because they had encouraged her subjects to live amongst them, sold them land, and promised to protect them, and afterwards murdered some of them and attempted to murder others, and stolen and destroyed their property; that

the inhabitants of these islands were talked of over the whole world for their treachery, cruelty, and murders; and that the Queen would no longer allow them to murder or injure her subjects, who were living peaceably among them either as Missionaries or Traders. She would send a Ship of War every year to inquire into their conduct, and if any white man injured any Native they were to tell the Captain of the Man-of-war, and the white man would be punished as fast as the black man."

After spending much time, and using peaceably every means in his power in trying to get the guilty parties on Tanna, and not succeeding, he shelled two villages,—having the day before informed the Natives that he would do so, and advising to have all women, children, and sick removed, which in fact they did. Indeed nearly the whole of the inhabitants, young and old, went to Nowar's land, where they were instructed they would be safe, while they witnessed what a Man-of-war could do in punishing murderers. But before the hour approached, a foolish host of Tannese warriors had assembled on the beach, painted and armed and determined to fight the Man-of-war! And the Chief of a village on the other side of the bay was at that moment assembled with his men on the high ground within our view, and dancing to a war song in defiance.

The Commodore caused a shell to strike the hill and explode with terrific fury just underneath the dancers. The earth and the bush were torn and thrown into the air above and around them; and next moment the whole host were seen disappearing over the brow of the hill. Two shots were sent over the heads of the warriors on the shore, with terrific noise and uproar; in an instant, every man was making haste for Nowar's land, the place of refuge. The Commodore then shelled the villages, and destroyed their property. Beyond what I have here recorded, absolutely nothing was done.

We return then for a moment to Sydney. The public excitement made it impossible for me to open my lips in the promotion of our Mission. The Rev. Drs. Dunmore Lang and Steel, along with Professor Smith of the University, waited on the Commodore, and got an independent version of the facts. They then called a meeting on the affair by public advertisement. Without being made acquainted with the

results of their investigations, I was called upon to give my own account of the *Curacao's* visit and of the connection of the Missionaries therewith. They then submitted the Commodore's statement, given by him in writing. He exonerated the Missionaries from every shadow of blame and from all responsibility. In the interests of mercy as well as justice, and to save life, they had acted as his interpreters; and there all that they had to do with the *Curacao* began and ended. All this was published in the Newspapers next day, along with the speeches of the three deputies. The excitement began to subside. But the poison had been lodged in many hearts, and the ejection of it was a slow and difficult process.

Feeling absolutely conscious that I had only done my Christian duty, I left all results in the hands of my Lord Jesus, and pressed forward in His blessed work. But more than one dear personal friend had to be sacrificed over this painful affair. A Presbyterian Minister, and a godly elder and his wife, all most excellent and well-beloved, at whose houses I had been received as a brother, intimated to me that owing to this case of the *Curacao* their friendship and mine must entirely cease in this world. And it did cease; but my esteem never changed. I had learned not to think unkindly of friends, even when they manifestly misunderstood my actions. Nor would these things merit being recorded here, were it not that they may be at once a beacon and a guide. God's people are still belied. And the mob is still as ready as ever to cry, "Crucify! Crucify!"

CHAPTER LVII

A PLEA FOR TANNA

EVERYTHING having been at length arranged for in the Colonies, in connection with the Mission and *Dayspring*, as far as could possibly be,—and I having been adopted by the Victorian Assembly of 1866, as the first Missionary from the Presbyterian Church of Australia to the New Hebrides,—we sailed for the Islands on the 8th August of that year. Besides