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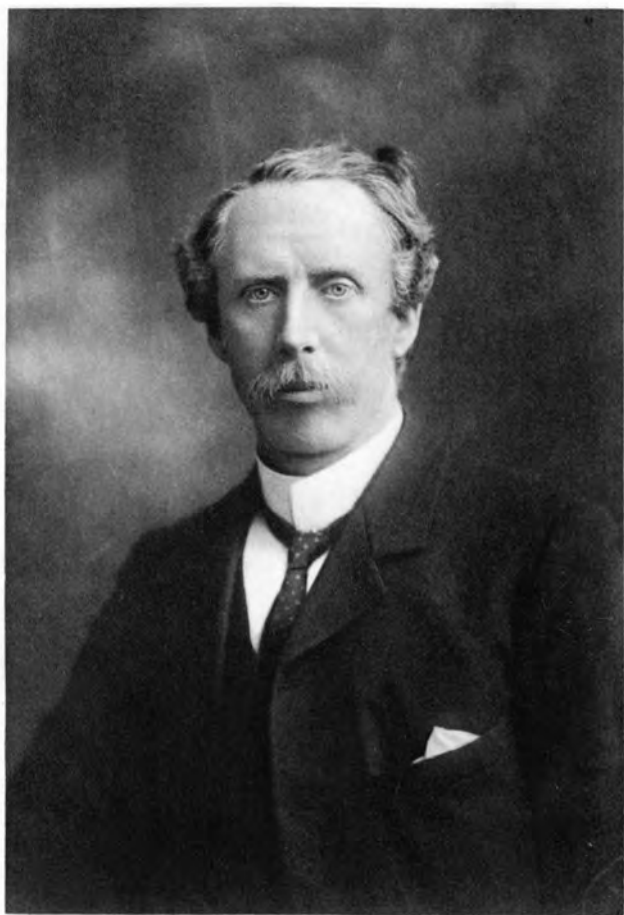


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*William Wilson*

# A MAN IN SHINING ARMOUR

THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF

WILLIAM WILSON, M.R.C.S. AND L.R.C.P.

*Missionary in Madagascar*

*Secretary of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association*

BY

A. J. AND G. CROSFIELD

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TO

ALL BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN

WHO ARE FIGHTING IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST

FOR THE GOOD OF MEN

OUR struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the Powers of Evil, against those who hold sway in the Darkness around us, and against the Spirits of Wickedness on high. Therefore take all the armour of God in order that when the evil day comes, you may be able to withstand the attack, and having carried the struggle through, still to stand your ground.

*St. Paul.*

## PREFACE.

THIS record has not been put together, without kind help from many friends, friends at home and abroad, English, Malagasy, French, who, some more, some less, have given their tribute of information or of grateful love. To all these without whom it would have been impossible to have compiled these pages, we tender our sincere thanks, especially to Miss C. W. Pumphrey for her invaluable assistance in selecting and revising letters and papers placed at our disposal by the family.

A. J. & G. C.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CALL TO ARMS

1857-1877

ACCORDING to legend a marvellous and triumphant event closed the career of the Cid "Campëador," the greatest of Spain's national heroes. After his death, by his own command he was arrayed in full armour with his sword beside him and placed on his charger. And so at the head of his own funeral procession, in absolute silence, for

There rose not a voice of war nor woe,  
Not a whisper on the air,

his army wound out at the gates of Valencia into the ranks of the Moors who were beleaguering the city. And then a wonderful thing happened. The dead warrior was suddenly endued with a mysterious and awful power before which the enemy trembled and fled. They were

vanquished before him, and, like Samson of old, the foes he slew at his death were more than those he slew in his life.

In this story, as in nearly all the myths that gather round the history of great men, there is a suggestive thought at the root : That a man who has fought his fight and given his life for others leaves an impetus behind him which death can only make stronger ; and in placing on record the life-story of a very different "Campëador," who fought on a very different field it is this fact that is foremost in our thought. We do not aim to set forth a record that shall reveal a man of any very striking gift or supremacy. But our object is to catch a true glimpse of the soldier in "shining armour," with the strift and strain of the battle upon him, how he lived perhaps, rather than how he died, so that the glow and ardour and energy of his spirit which was fed by the mystic forces of divine love, may make their appeal to many who will marshall in rank behind his lead ; and that they may bear the banner he has laid down to victories he himself possibly hardly dared to contemplate for the Lord he loved.

It was true of him, as of all whose work tells amongst men, that the "man's whole life precludes the single deed."

We must go a long way back to find the beginning, perhaps then we do no more than tap the stream some way from the source; it did not begin with him. "Before he was born," says his mother, "I consecrated him to the Lord," and she always looked upon her little son as belonging to Him.

Their family was Scotch, and William Wilson's great-grandfather, Alexander Wilson, came to Newcastle-under-Lyme and settled near that town. He was a typical sportsman of the day, married to a sweet religious woman, called Mary Plant. The prayers of this faithful wife for her husband were answered in a singular way. He had a favourite mare called "Black Bess" of which he was very proud, declaring he could make her do whatever he wished. One day he laid a bet that he would make her jump the parapet of the bridge into the river at Newcastle-under-Lyme. The beautiful creature obeyed him, took the tremendous leap, but was killed with the effort. Her master escaped

uninjured, and it proved the turning-point of his life. Grief and remorse for his headstrong act and the loss of his horse, perhaps the shock of his own danger, turned his thoughts to higher things and he became a changed man.

Their son, John Wilson, married Hannah Ashlin whose father was a man of substance living at Uxbridge. The following letter from William Ashlin to Alexander Wilson, written about the time of the young people's engagement, gives a glimpse of the home life of the time.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my thanks for procuring me a pipe of excellent port wine, it has been bottled off some time, and shall be happy in your witnessing many a *St. James Cork* drawn at *Cranford*. Mrs. Ashlin also begs you will accept her acknowledgments for the cranberries and turkey, they were very fine.

Your letter was received at this place, which in some measure has retarded the business, as I could not immediately go to town on the receipt of it. Have now to observe in return, that Mr. John Wilson breakfasted with me in Sloane Street yesterday morning and in consequence of the

conversation at that time has my leave to continue his suit to my daughter. I cannot entertain a doubt but that his friends will do what is eligible to themselves. On the other side, one thousand pounds shall accompany the hand of my daughter, which I hope will be found very inferior to her person, and I pray God to bless the union abundantly to themselves and their connections. We shall expect Mr. and Mrs. Wilson as soon as convenient and agreeable and without the least ceremony make our *House* their *Home*. Mrs. A. unites with me in kind respects to Mrs. W. and family.

I am, Dear Sir,  
Yr. hble. serv.,  
WM. ASHLIN.

Cranford, near Houndslow,  
24th January, 1800.

Hannah Ashlin was a beautiful woman and a devoted and tender mother to her children. There is a painting of her in the family to which a story is attached. As it was nearing completion she heard of the death of her brother. Next morning, as she was speaking of this to her favourite maid, she said: "Oh, Bessie, may my end be as peaceful as his!" and with the words she leaned back in her chair and was gone.

They had a charming country house at Knutton, near Newcastle-under-Lyme. It was probably after his wife's death that John Wilson, following the sportsman-like instinct of his father, began his speculations in coaches and horses to try and compete with the then new development of railways. A pathetic attempt to stem the tide of progress, with the only result we can well foresee, his own fortune suffered disastrously and was eventually lost.

His son, John Ashlin Wilson, was a man of kind heart, a sunny disposition and a generous sensitive nature, and was physically frail. He died comparatively early, before he was able to make provision for his wife and young children. He had married the daughter of a Birmingham manufacturer, Emma Smith, a girl of eighteen, who found herself twenty-one years later a widow with only her own energies to rely upon. This was in the year 1861, when her youngest child, William, the subject of this narrative, was but four years old.

Emma Wilson opened a school and faced the situation with a silent heroism perhaps as great as any shown by her son in his

more exciting career. We may not lift the veil from those early years of strain and loneliness, when the faith of the mother was tested to the last extremity. But her courage never failed.

The children grew up in this bracing atmosphere of faith and prayer. And this fine woman did more than pray. There may be mothers who do not see the fruit of their petitions. In some cases perhaps there is a reason for this mystery. It is the life behind the prayer that brings conviction to the observant questioning child. The example of a quiet confidence carried into the practical details of daily life taught the boys and girls more of the hidden strength of the Christian than many sermons, and the times of their mother's extremity, when she committed her cause to the Lord, were times that made the Unseen a reality in a way that was never forgotten.

She lives still, a dignified sweet woman of eighty-seven, surrounded by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, tenderly loved and honoured in their bright family circle.

As we sit beside her it is not difficult



to trace the firm and steadfast personality she cultivated in her son. Something had to be done to perfect the adventurous spirit he had drawn from his fathers, and to deepen the bright attractive nature before he could take his place in the fight before him.

The mother has much to tell of her son Willie, who was never very strong, and who, as a boy of his instincts was bound to do, had his full share of accidents during childhood. Bright and sunny, he was yet a thoughtful child, often so silent and wrapped up in his own meditations they wondered what was passing in his mind. His eldest sister, who had him especially under her charge, was fond of relating stories of his sweet winning ways which meant much to them in these days of trial. The family love for animals came out strongly in him. "I can see him coming up the road to his home followed by a whole troop of dogs," says his mother. "He loved and was beloved by all the dogs in the neighbourhood."

A friend writes of him later :—"He had a fellowship with animals, recalling that of St. Francis. He could catch the wildest

colts in the field by the Went or the lambs in the school-fields. And he would walk up quite as an every-day matter to a strange bull-dog, and without apology open its villainous jaws to see its teeth."

This sympathy with animals and the courage founded on it probably laid the foundation for his success as a surgeon later. We shall have many evidences of this attraction to animals and his understanding of them, as we go on.

When he was seven years old, in the year 1865, a large missionary meeting was held in the Town Hall in Birmingham. William Ellis was the speaker and gave an account of the persecutions of the faithful native Christians in Madagascar. In that large gathering few people would notice the little fair-haired lad and his mother in her widow's dress beside him. But the boy was drinking in every word, and when toward the close of his address the speaker threw down a shackle he had brought with him, which had once been used to chain the neck of a poor slave, the clank as it fell on the floor entered the ears of the sensitive child with a power that influenced his life. "The sound of that shackle is

still ringing in my ears," said William Wilson to his wife not long before he left us.

It was characteristic of the mother that she followed up her prayers for her children by often taking them to such meetings. The parents were members of Carr's Lane Congregational Church, of which John Angell James was minister, by whom William was baptized later at Francis Road Chapel, Edgbaston.

William Wilson and his brother John, who was three years older than he, both went to Christ's Hospital. William was about ten when he entered the Hertford branch where he remained two years. Soon after going there he was made a monitor, and had to take his turn in reading the prayers in the evening before all the boys the matron also being present. William Wilson tells that one night he was feeling specially nervous, and whilst reading kept fidgeting with his hand in one of his pockets, when he suddenly started a musical box going. He raised his voice so as to drown the sound, but it was no good. After prayers were over the musical box was confiscated and he never saw it again.

During this time he also had a dormouse, which lived in his pocket through one winter.

At the age of about twelve he went to Christ's Hospital in London. School life gives opportunity for testing character, and the fatherless boy with the strenuous home training behind him found such opportunities.

In those days the only drink for thirsty boys at supper was beer. He was an abstainer and would not touch it himself, getting a good drink at the pump before taking his seat at the table. His example spread, but not much notice was taken until another boy wrote to his parents, and in his enthusiasm pointed out the error of their ways in taking alcoholic stimulants, and announced his intention of practising abstinence during the holidays. This brought a letter from the boy's father to the Headmaster remonstrating with him for allowing such proceedings, and upon enquiry being made young Wilson was brought forward as the culprit. Remonstrance and the threat of a flogging, no light thing in those days, made the young offender tremble but were unavailing,

and the Chief then called for his form-master. He said he could do nothing with the boy who had done his best to make *him* an abstainer! Eventually water was sanctioned as a supper beverage on condition that Wilson obtained it daily from the pump, which we may be sure he did not fail to do.

Again, on Commemoration Day the boys received from the Duke of Cambridge a new shilling, a bun and a glass of wine. When Wilson's turn came he took the shilling and bun and very courteously refused the glass of wine, and it is pleasant to note that the Duke commended him for his courage and independence.

But another incident was to bear more important results. Wilson had a treasured whistle which he kept in his pocket. In class one day while the master was giving a lecture, suddenly a shrill whistle was heard. "The boy who did that, rise," said the master. For a minute there was silence. Then Wilson rose. "Come to me in my study this evening," said the master. Tribulation was evidently before him. Counsel was tendered by schoolmates, consultations held, but, however, he went.

The result was remarkable. A friendship was established which became as years passed one of the choicest gifts of life, a friendship as honourable to the master who could recognize the worth of the boy's character, as to the lad who earned it through his straightforward truthfulness.

Years later, when he was on the eve of going to Madagascar the second time, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson spent an evening with this friend. "If you will come here I will show you what made us such firm friends," said he to Mrs. Wilson, and opening his desk he took out the little confiscated whistle of school-boy days. "I felt sure," said Mr. Wingfield, "that the boy who could rise when I made that condition, and come to me afterwards, must have something good in him." A correspondence was kept up between the two men, and William Wilson called his eldest boy Wingfield after his beloved master.

Whatever intimations Wilson may have had at this time of his future destiny, and it is more than likely that, all unconsciously, such were forming in his mind, the time came when he must decide on the next step towards a career, and after seven years at the

Bluecoat school, it was arranged that he should obtain training as a teacher at the Flounders Institute, at Ackworth, Yorkshire, a training college for teachers in the Society of Friends. Here he remained two years, and here gravitated to him in lasting friendship two men, William S. Lean and Edward Worsdell, both men of strong and gifted personality, to whom he always felt he owed much.

The gift of friendship was one of the dominant influences of Wilson's life. He surrounded himself thus early with comrades bound to him with "hoops of steel," men often his superior in age, in attainment or position, but drawn to him in lasting loyalty and love by the strength and beauty of his personality; a rare and attractive combination.

One of his comrades at the Flounders writes as follows :

I first met Wilson in September, 1873. He was youngest student but one at the Flounders. He was at once assigned to me to make a start at Greek; in this, I did not think him clever beyond the average, but his work was so thorough and conscientious that, in January he was

able to join the class preparing for Matric. His Greek work was but a sample of all he did, everything characterized by system, scrupulous neatness and a resolve to do each thing perfectly at the time. He came from Christ's Hospital, bringing a wide knowledge of human character, a pluck and straightforwardness particularly his own, and a child-like ignorance of everything outside the school walls. He has told me that from the ordinary common conversation of Flounders students' country rambles, he learned a great deal, and this was obvious to us, he seemed to grow mentally every day.

The summer holiday of '74 he spent on a farm, I think in the Yorkshire dales, and returned from the short sojourn with an intimate first-hand knowledge and love of animals and farm-life.

Soon after coming to the Flounders, we were all swept by Edward Worsdell into his gospel net. There was an evening prayer meeting weekly, which many attended for a while, but to which William remained faithful for the whole two years of his stay. In an early one of these he gave evidence of his moral courage, which was as remarkable as his physical. Some of us had fallen into the way of nagging each other and William, the



youngest of us all, under manifest pressure of spirit, pleaded with us gently but forcibly to give the habit up ; incurring by his faithfulness the violent hostility of at least one of the offenders.

Wilson had brought from Christ's Hospital a very neat fall. With no apparent effort in a playful sparring encounter, he could lay a heavier opponent neatly on his back ; he could do it very quickly and I don't think any of us ever learned how it was done. In the school swimming-bath, where we bathed right up to the frost, he swam little, not seeming to care for it, but was a most beautiful diver, taking the water from the slate-roof of the dressing shed.

In an argument he was apt to lose his temper and consider that the holder of an opinion differing from his, *ipso facto*, doubted his word. This was an early characteristic, before he had learned to think.

An incident characteristic of Wilson may be given : he was late down one morning ; I rapped at his door, got no reply and thinking him still sleeping rapped and rapped again. After a long pause he came out and explained in the most natural way that he was at his morning prayers ; with him " first things were first."

In the summer of 1875, George Robinson the school tailor and William Lean, with a strong choir, anticipated the Salvation Army by visiting on Sunday afternoons near and distant villages for open-air services; William, one of the choir, would leave the meetings and sprint home five or six miles in the June sun supperless, in order not to miss the evening meeting for worship.

After two years at this Training College, he accepted a post as an under-master at Wigton School, Cumberland, in 1875, and remained there for one year. It was here he met his future wife. She remembers well her seventeenth birthday, when he presented his first little love token, and soon after this he told her of his desire and his intention of being a missionary to Madagascar. The next year he went on to Waterford, taking a more advanced post in Newtown School. Both these schools are under the direction of the Society of Friends. Wilson at this time was still a Congregationalist, but it was during his year at Waterford that he took the step of joining the body with which he had been for five years in close association, and with whose

views he had been gradually growing in accord. His loyal and steadfast allegiance springing from conviction to the foundation beliefs of the Society of Friends, was thenceforward shown in the service of his life, not only in the foreign field but in the work at home.

His friend, William S. Lean, writes on this occasion :

Ackworth,

18th 5 mo., 1877.

I am pleased that you are duly enrolled as a member amongst us ; I am thankful that your faith has been clear and simple enough to go steadily and straight forward in what has been opened out to you, both as to beliefs and also as to practice. Your experience has been no doubt only one more instance of the truth that to have our souls in health we need practice to be combined with theory ; to yield our hearts to the power of the Gospel as well as to believe it. Perhaps there is really little true belief that stops short of knowing the power.

Wilson's first introduction to the Society of Friends was through the circumstance that in 1869 his mother undertook the care of Richard Cadbury's home

and children on the death of his first wife. He had a great influence on Wilson's life, and treated him as an elder son. It was through his influence that Wilson entered the Flounders College. When later the definite call came to enter the field of foreign missions a great difficulty stood in the way. His family had looked to him to make a home for their mother, and they were much disappointed at the turn events had taken. Here Richard Cadbury came forward with encouragement and practical help. The home which the son would gladly have provided, he took care should not be lacking, and so lifted the burden from his shoulders. They were still more closely united in the bond of friendship when Richard Cadbury married, as his second wife, Emma, the elder sister of William Wilson.

These years were marked with other events of much importance, indeed they were the formative years of his life. At Waterford he took the step which changed his career and opened before him the life of a pioneer in the service of Christ in Madagascar.

His mother tells how at this time she

met her son near Birmingham, and they had a delightful month to themselves at Alvechurch. It was here he told her he was going to offer himself as a candidate to the Friends' Foreign Mission Association. But she knew he had consecrated himself silently to this service years before. "I don't think," she says, "that either of us ever forgot that month we had together," a wonderful time for both, when the mother saw the fulfilment of her blessed hope for her son, and he was experiencing the first moments, awed and joyous, of a step of dedication to God and man. We recall the tender communion of Monica and Augustine, as we enter into sympathy with these sacred days.

Much to his own surprise his offer was at once accepted by the Friends' Foreign Mission Board, with a promptitude perhaps that later years would deem inexpedient, but which experience abundantly justified. It is possible that the Board was influenced by the evident maturity which marked the young candidate, and accurately judged the balanced character which had been disciplined in early misfortune and trained in responsibility and stead-

fastness by the hard realities of life. Thus if we judge with insight we shall find that conditions which we are apt to regard as hampering the advancement and development of the career of those who have to fight against difficulties, may, as a matter of fact, be the very influences which are carving out their fortune.

## CHAPTER II

### MADAGASCAR

1877-1882

WHEN William Wilson landed in Madagascar he joined eight other missionaries of his own Society. The first of these had gone out some eleven years before. The wonderful and pathetic accounts of the persecutions of the young Christian community under their cruel Queen, Ranavalona I., who died in 1861, attracted the sympathy of the Church at home and led to new offers of help from several missionary associations.

Like all stories of the victory of the Gospel, the story of Madagascar is one of great struggle and great self-sacrifice. Welsh missionaries first laid down their lives in loneliness and suffering in the early part of the last century. Other missionaries who followed lived to reduce the language to writing, and to complete a translation of the Bible. The then reigning king, Radama I., was pleased with the new

teaching, but his successor, the Queen just mentioned, did her best by every cruelty to stamp out the faith. After her death, and that of her son and his wife, a new Queen, Ranavalona II., had the idols burned publicly and brought in an era of enlightened and peaceful Christianity, and the missions began once more to spread amongst the surrounding districts. There are now five Protestant missions working under mutual arrangement in the country.

Madagascar is an island some four times as large as Great Britain, with a population of about three and a half millions belonging to tribes which from time immemorial have waged frequent internecine war. Of these, the Hova, living in the centre of the Island, and apparently more closely related to the Malays than to the Africans, has been the race that has ultimately become the dominant one, and which has so far come most under the influence of Christianity.

A miniature Africa, with its low malarious coast line and its forest belt leading up to tablelands ; its climate of rains and sultry heats ; its uplands of rank grass, where herds of cattle were exposed to the raids of



wandering tribes; its villages nestling under rich tropical growths starred with brilliant flowers and alive with wonderful butterflies; its streams dangerous with crocodiles; a land for the explorer and the adventurer, a land still more for the Christian enthusiast; what vistas of interest would open up to the young Englishman gazing for the first time on all these strange and fascinating scenes.

“I remember very well,” writes a fellow-missionary, Mr. J. C. Thorne, “the great impression of youthfulness, earnestness, vigour, enterprise and fresh breezy optimism that he made upon some of us on his first arrival, and his subsequent career always deepened that impression.”

Another missionary, the Rev. Charles Jukes, writes :

We lived near to each other, he with Mr. Clemes on the east of the road, and we in the house opposite at Faravohitra; so I had frequent opportunities of seeing the genial curly-headed youth. It was generally felt that this young missionary had a future before him, but we could not surmise what would be the bent of his genius. From the first, however, he displayed those intellectual and moral qualities which

developed and so distinguished him in after years. Always cheery, full of thoughtful kindness, ever ready to give help when needed, never failing to rejoice in the welfare of others, he quickly became a popular favourite both with Europeans and natives.

Here is an instance of how his devotion, backed by strong common sense, unusual in one so young, struck the Malagasy. One day two or three men came to my house direct from an interview they had had with Mr. Wilson. They had been to consult him on some subject (I forget what it was), when he took them into his study and had a long talk with them. In narrating to me the event, they made a remark which impressed itself on my memory. They said, "he is only a young man, but he has already become a father and mother," thus indicating what they felt as to his sagacity and tenderness of heart.

He lost no time in applying himself to the language, and he did it in the most effectual way, namely, by cultivating constant intercourse with the people themselves. He could speak simple sentences on his arrival at the Capital and added daily to his vocabulary by mingling with the boys in the High School. No new word, phrase,

or proverb that he heard from child or adult would he let pass without an attempt to ascertain its exact meaning. This effort to get hold of the vernacular as it is actually spoken was persisted in from year to year, until no missionary could excel and very few, if any, could equal him as a master of colloquial Malagasy.

William Wilson's teaching ability stood him in good stead, for he was soon put in charge of the men's school. This was an important post, as it was actually a kind of school of the prophets, where some thirty young men were trained as teachers. Moreover, in 1879, the large district of Mandridrano, with nineteen congregations, was placed under his care.

His letters to his future wife will best describe the life he was living.

*Antananarivo, October 11th, 1877.*

After Christmas I hope to begin work in William Johnson's school, but before then I must drive away at the language. As you well know I was never too good a hand at turning out of bed in the morning; however, lately, I have generally been down soon after six. But there are so many interruptions—just little things. Before

anyone comes out to Madagascar he ought to be well stocked with patience. People sometimes come in and salute and then quietly sit down on the floor, and presently they will announce to you the object of their visit and after all it may be very trifling!

It was queer that I should land in Madagascar on the last day of my teens, for on Saturday, September 16th, I commenced my journey up the country. You know that date I expect.

We have just returned from seeing the Queen. Her Majesty was seated in a large state chair or palanquin—a little of both—shaded by a large red umbrella and supported by eight strong bearers. In general people who go about in palanquins are carried by slaves, of course they are paid for it—but people do not let slaves carry the Queen. It would be considered a disgrace.

The most comical sight of all is the various costumes that are worn by the great people. To-day we met an old friend whose dress at ordinary times would consist of trousers, shirt and lamba, but on state occasions he appears in a red swallow-tailed coat, trimmed with any amount of gold lace, and a French cocked hat. These in fact were seen in great quantities and the uniforms would be of various colours,

some red, some purple, emerald-green, black, and all except perhaps the latter, were profusely ornamented with gold lace. Speeches were made, guns fired, and one small company of soldiers put through their drill. Bands played, and whilst the Prime Minister was speaking, about every five minutes a brass field-gun was fired.

By the time this reaches you I shall have charge of what we call the Men's School at Ambohijatovo. We have about thirty men, nearly all married with families who come up from various parts of the country to improve themselves. Then, after staying for a year or two, they return to their places as teachers. It hardly does to put them among the boys, so we have them quite distinct. These men consist of three classes, with native teachers to each. My particular work will be to teach one and have care of the lot. I went to see them in school the other day, and they quite took my fancy. One or two mornings lately I have been occupied the whole time making up prescriptions for Mr. Clemes. One morning I made gregory powder for four hours.

*Antananarivo, November 21st, 1877.*

Yesterday I went to Ambohijatovo, William Johnson's school, professedly

to help him to examine the boys in reading. He says I helped him, but I cannot see it yet. All that I know is that if I were placed among the class and examined with them, I should have to take a very low place. However, this afternoon was vastly better, for we did three lower classes in arithmetic, geography and dictation. The latter gave me some practice in correcting Malagasy, and it was more enjoyable than sitting to hear lads read one after the other.

On Monday Mr. Clemes and I start for the country. To-day I have been making a great many preparations for it, at least one thing principally, which has taken nearly seven hours to make, namely, a mattress to fit across the two long poles of my palanquin to serve as a bed at night, and when having our meals to use as a table. When you remember that everything here in Madagascar has to travel on men's shoulders, and these individuals want paying too, it becomes, in the course of a long journey, a serious affair if you have to take six or seven men to carry your traps. Mr. Clemes says, "You might as well have simple boards at once," but I quite disagree with him. It is well padded with sheep's hair. Sheep here, of course, do not grow wool but only hair like goats

at home, and in my opinion my mattress is fit for a king !

Every morning now I am at Ambo-hijatovo and the men's school is to be my work at present. Hitherto, Mr. Clark or Mr. Clemes has given occasional lessons, but now I hope that I shall be able to take them all myself. Malagasy teachers are not English, and it would take a lot to make them so. When they are well looked after all goes well, but if not, you may have one day a class learning addition ; next day you will find them doing multiplication, having slipped over subtraction altogether. As to order, there is very little unless someone is there. All except a few are from the country, so they have a great number of things to learn besides mere school-work. After they have been here a time they keep their clothes somewhat cleaner, and the whole outside appearance seems to be a little improved.

Things are going on smoothly here now. The Prime Minister at the head of affairs is keeping the country in good order, and above all, both the Queen and he are striving by personal, and not merely official, efforts to have the people educated.

Their efforts are by no means confined to their own particular tribe of Hovas. They are anxious to send teachers to the

distant parts of the country so that Christ may be preached all over the island.

A short time ago the Palace Church sent out word to all Imerina people to collect what money they could for the purpose of sending evangelists out to the heathen tribes. Now the Malagasy as a whole are very poor, but at the same time, if the Queen says a thing has to be done, it will be done. This message was distinctly not compulsory; still, a sum of £1,200 has been collected, which is enormous for this country, and has been handed over to a small committee of missionaries and representatives of the churches here in Imerina, to be used as they think well.

Our garden is, I am glad to say, looking tolerably well now. I have done a great deal of planting where before it was simply a waste howling wilderness, and every bit of spare time I have, I give to it, and the exercise does me good.

*Antananarivo, April 26th, 1878.*

While Mr. Clemes has been away I have been kept very busy with people coming for medicine. Fortunately I had been able to get a few hints from one of the Queen's doctors, a Scotchman, who is a great friend of mine. We had a sudden change in the weather which has been



followed, as it almost always is, by a severe epidemic. Last year it was small-pox; this year it is a very bad type of fever. It is very sad as our bottles of quinine are very few, and just now it is very dear and scarce.

Every afternoon I have a Malagasy teacher for two hours. We are going through the Acts of the Apostles. He does not know one word of English, so that all his explanations of words, etc., are in Malagasy.

*Antananarivo, May 24th, 1878.*

I am having the examinations of the men's school this week. It involves no little amount of work, but still I hope to get through it satisfactorily. Being in Malagasy, it often troubles my soul greatly, for when I wish to make anything very clear to the comprehension of these not altogether bright youths, I suddenly find myself stopped for want of one or two words. The answers, too, will take me some time to look over. Patience, I find, is the great thing to be learned. I have come to the conclusion that everyone, everywhere, would get on better were there more of this virtue in the world.

At the beginning of this month I went for the first time into the country by my-

self to meet the teachers and pastors of the district, and to pay their salaries, etc. I ridiculed the idea at first of being able to do what was necessary. However, I let it rest awhile on my mind, and then concluded to do just what I could and leave the rest, and hoped that what would be accomplished would be done in Christ's strength and name, and would also receive His blessing. I was away two and a half days altogether, and I can assure you I felt very queer when I was sitting at the head of the meeting with natives all around me, no Englishman near. It was a strange feeling to be working for them, and of course in a foreign tongue, little of which I at present understand.

At the second place I went to I was taxed more than at the first, for I had to do my best at giving them a Scripture lesson. I had, of course, prepared one, Matt. xxv., the two parables, Virgins and Talents. How much they understood of it, it does not lie in my power to say. Let us hope that some few got some good from it. But as soon as one has done a little, one's own weakness and inability are plainly seen. Some two Sundays ago I read for the first time at service in church. The services here are conducted like those of the Independents at home.

*From Andrangoloaka, in the forest about thirty miles from town, June 15th, 1878.*

We heard long before coming that there was a splendid waterfall here. Our search for this up to yesterday has been in vain. Thursday morning, a fine day, I went off on a long expedition to endeavour to find it. One of our men, who seemed to have been here before, acted as a guide. The road is a curious one. In this country of mountains, most of the paths, for they are nothing more, run along the ridge of the ranges, so that even in the forest we found ourselves high up, with a huge, deep, precipitous valley on either side. The grandeur of the whole is something beyond words. The creepers are beautiful and curious, climbing everywhere, encircling both great and small, vieing with each other for existence, and often so growing into the body of trees as to be inseparable from them.

Sometimes up and sometimes down, and seldom level, the road wound about. The slippery path, made worse with fragments of broken trees lying in all directions, occasional awkward stones and projecting roots, was not the easiest one I have seen. At the same time, I have rarely enjoyed such a walk. All around was thoroughly tropical. Every tree I saw was strange,

and every shrub seemed to tell me I was in a strange land. Then again, the birds were totally different from any I had ever seen.

Yesterday was fine too, and without allowing ourselves to be deceived any more, we took with us as guide, a youth acquainted with the deceptive by-path, and in less than an hour we were at the waterfall! We laughed heartily as each of us was so utterly out of count.

*Antananarivo, October 9th, 1878.*

This is the great feast and merry-making time of the Malagasy year. It is called the Feast of the Bath.

In a large room of the palace where we were all assembled there is a little place curtained off where the Queen is supposed to take her bath, but report says she only dips one foot in the water. Directly she touches the water a salute is fired from about thirty or forty guns. We were all inside the palace squatting down on the bare floor from 6.30 till nearly 11 o'clock. Of course all the ladies had cushions, which were brought by their husbands, and I could have taken one for myself had I troubled, but you see I had never had the experience before. Sitting on the ground is all very well when one has plenty of room to spread out and draw in one's legs, but

no such thing was obtainable there. Still, I enjoyed it all, and it was quite a new experience.

Much money is presented as a sign of loyalty, and the Queen, after her bath takes some of the water and sprinkles first the princes and nobles, and then the people. Moreover, it is considered a great privilege to be sprinkled.

Bands producing more noise than music were performing a constant succession of pieces—perhaps more to their own edification than any one else's. This varied with singing, together with speeches from the Prime Minister, formed the greater part of the affair. During all this programme cooking is going on in the centre of the room, the smoke ascending in the room. Towards the end, one is inclined to rub one's eyes and feel generally queer. The next part is to eat the dainties, namely, cooked rice with honey, and then a peculiar kind of beef. A little of this is served out to each person. The general verdict is that it is horrible, but I nearly finished mine. Tastes evidently differ!

*Antananarivo, November 4th, 1878.*

I am not sure whether in my last I told you that my pet lemur had broken his leg. I am glad, however, to say that now he has

almost recovered. I have another one too now, such a loving little thing. When I go near it, it climbs up me and licks my face all over in such an affectionate manner, and I have difficulty to get away again for it holds my hair so tightly.

You will be interested to hear that I have bought a canoe from one of the Queen's doctors here. It was one I had used before, and now I mean to use it at least once a week. There is a small piece of water not very far away, where I can go to paddle for the afternoon. I have found already that it has done me a great deal of good.

*Antananarivo, January 30th, 1879.*

Since last mail I have been enjoying a fortnight's holiday near the forest. For the first time I was there in the summer; the last time it was mid-winter. The difference was somewhat striking, yet both are beautiful. The amount of life in the small insects was something remarkable. Next time I go, I mean to try and get one or two specimens, for I think it would form a good hobby.

What do you think my last piece of work has been? I turned saddler amongst other things just before coming to the forest, and fitted up a donkey with saddle

and panniers and bridle, for Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's children. I never felt so stupid at making a thing before, as when I first set to work upon it ; for I really did all the work except the actual sewing, and some of that even fell to my lot. I had often seen a donkey with panniers at home, and yet I had never noticed them sufficiently to know exactly how the whole thing was fixed and arranged. However, by scheming and planning and puzzling my brains, I have made a very good acting kind of apparatus, which carries the children splendidly. It is said to be the best thing of the sort yet. Now, that's a piece of boasting for you ! The natives were very much astonished at it, but now, most have got used to it.

*Antananarivo, March 27th, 1879.*

Early next [month, that is in about ten days' time, I am going with Mr. Clemes on a journey round the district.

During this journey I have resolved to begin what, if I mean to take up country work, I must come to sooner or later—the sooner the better—and that is preaching. How much one falls behind one's ideal, and I sometimes almost despair of myself, and yet I am ready to do anything ; and I think it is just at such times that perhaps

Christ seems to come nearest to one. I can assure you that I am very anxious about beginning, and I know that you will lift up your prayers for me that I may be able to set the story of Christ's love before the people simply and truly, and that in doing so I may not preach one atom of myself.

*Antananarivo, April 25th, 1879.*

You will have seen by my last month's letter that Mr. Clemes and I were intending taking a journey into the far part of our district for the purpose of examining schools and taking church meetings, etc. We came back last Monday, the 22nd, having been away two weeks and a day. Some time before we started the mail from England was overdue, and it was with heavy hearts that we went. Then we looked forward to having the letters sent out to us by the man that is always sent with food, etc., after we had been away a week; but we were always disappointed. On the morning of the last day we started at 5 o'clock, whilst it was still dark, and reached town at 12; and you may fancy us when the answer to our first question: "Have the letters come?" was again "No, and no news has been heard of them either." That night I went to bed early,



for I was very tired, and was just going to sleep when the long looked-for letters were brought in. Sleepy though I was, a very few minutes passed before I lit my candle and was eagerly devouring my mail.

Now let me tell you what we did whilst away in the country. School examinations, perhaps, formed the bulk of the work, and there being two to do it not much time was lost. Then, if we happened to be staying in the town where we had been examining, a great number of people always came for medicine. Mr. Clemes wrote the prescriptions and I dispensed them, so that we were able to have a little more time at our disposal for rest than is usual upon such journeys. After being at work all day the sick folk almost completely upset one. Still it is good work, and I am very glad I can help Mr. Clemes.

Sunday I went to one place and Mr. Clemes to another, and it was then that I preached my first sermon.

It was difficult, but I had made up my mind that I would do it, and I believe I was helped. I can hardly tell you my feelings at the time, but what with the language, etc., it was somewhat novel. However, I have made a start, and I hope by God's help, to be able to go on in some degree and persevere.

At that time Isaac Sharp and Langley Kitching, two Friends from England, were on a visit to Madagascar to help and encourage the missionaries in their work. Isaac Sharp was then seventy-three years of age, but his loving energy was unabated.

*Antananarivo, October 30th, 1879.*

I think I told you last mail that I was intending to go out into the country to what was likely to become my share of our large district. Now I can say that I have been and come back and have assumed the management of it. In future when I speak of Mandridrano you will know what I mean, for that is the name of the district.

It contains nineteen churches or congregations, and about ten or twelve schools. There are also five more congregations and three schools in a small district near, which I shall take as well.

You heard last mail that H. E. Clark, Samuel Cledes, Isaac Sharp and Langley Kitching were to be away visiting the churches and schools for nearly a month. When they reached the Mandridrano part I thought it would be a good thing if I went out and joined them. Accordingly, I left town in good time on Thursday morning, and in two days reached Lake Itasy,

intending on the Saturday morning to get a canoe and go across the lake to a village on the west side, where I expected to find Mr. Clark having a school examination. It happened to be a very windy day and therefore the possessors of the only decent canoe (people only fish on the shore and just close to the land) were not very much inclined to take me across. But I had looked forward to this, and had gone to some little trouble to get there, so I was not going to be done out of my trip. At last we set off; two men to paddle, my cook and myself, with the cook's luggage which consisted of all my pots and pans and food. I sent the bearers and the palanquin round to catch me up. Once or twice it required a little working from the two paddlers to keep the old, round-bottomed canoe straight on account of the wind being very high. It amused me to see how scared my cook was, for it was his first trip on the water. It was quite safe with care and sitting still.

When about half-way, we got into quieter parts, and came into good view of the crocodiles which were basking in the sun on the sand in a row, to the number of twenty or so. I made the men go as close as ever they would and then ran the canoe in shore and jumped out, and ran along to

get a better glimpse of them before they all disappeared. Oh! the noise and splashing they made when tumbling into the lake. There were some of all sizes both large and small. We saw them quietly and lazily swimming about with just the nose and eyes above water.

On Sunday I stayed at Mahatsinjo and spoke to the largest congregation I have had yet. They had rather expected Isaac Sharp to be present, but Mr. Clark took him off to another village as I did not feel up to the work of interpreting for him. My subject was John xv. "Abide in me." I am beginning quite to enjoy speaking now. After January I shall make arrangements for going into the district for two Sundays every two months, and I hope to be able to visit four churches at least every time. In that way I may get to all under my charge once a year, and if possible oftener.

I turned dentist on this journey, having a set of instruments from one of my greatest friends here, and before I came away I had taken out twenty or thirty teeth. The Malagasy are wonderful people for bearing pain; they will have three or four teeth out and often more, without the slightest groan. I took five from one man's mouth, and he still had more he wished me to take,

but I refused, thinking he had had sufficient for one time.

It is perhaps a little unusual for a young missionary to accept so simply the practice of dentistry with the many other demands upon him. But this ready willingness to take any charge required, and give any kind of help called for, was one of the traits of character which from the outset made William Wilson what he was, a capable, useful friend to all in need. Such a man draws constantly on the unknown resources of his being, and with a cheery enterprise ventures out in fresh directions of service hoping for the best. With faith in the ever ready supplies of strength divine, and with plenty of practical good sense, such men rarely fail in their endeavour to meet danger or emergency, or the constant trouble calling for help in those about them. In the next letter we see the definite idea taking form respecting the need for medical knowledge.

*Antananarivo, December 1st, 1879.*

All day yesterday I have been preparing my medicine chest. Perhaps you didn't know I had one, for I have only lately

acquired it, and I feel I must seriously take up some medical work even if it is only as a quack!

I am firmly convinced that every missionary ought to possess some knowledge of medicine. Tooth-drawing I know I can manage, and that will help me; hitherto, except the last journey, even Mr. Clemes had not any dental instruments, so this is a new thing among the people which I hope to take advantage of.

*From Ambositra, North Betsileo,  
December 16th, 1879.*

Yesterday evening I spoke [to a good congregation and I must confess it was rather hard work; certainly the hardest I have ever yet experienced. I felt so fettered with the language, and seemed as if I could not express myself as I wanted to. When a thought comes into your head you suddenly find you want a "passive" that you are not familiar with, and therefore you are bound to beat around the bush to find the "active." My text yesterday was "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

I have been here now nearly ten days, and a very enjoyable time I have had. Some days I have had a good romp with

the scholars. I taught them a few of our good old English games, leap-frog, hop-skip-and-jump, and others, and ever since, I have been paying the penalty by being so stiff in all my joints that at times it hurts me to move.

*Antananarivo, February, 1880.*

Since last I wrote I have found a friend here. He is a young American just a few months older than I am. He is not a missionary but belongs to one of the trading firms here. He has not very much company where he is, and as a companion and a friend I think I may be of some use to him. He is fond of games and sports, which you know find response in my nature. He is different from anyone else here. Of course being the youngest missionary all I can associate with are much older than I am, which of itself is apt to make me old before my time, so I find it refreshing to have someone of my own age.

It now seemed best to the Committee under all the circumstances that William Wilson should take an early furlough. This unexpected change of plan he communicated as follows :

*Antananarivo, March 21st, 1880.*

I have great news for you this time. I am coming to England this year, and shall, in all probability, arrive somewhere about August or September. Last Thursday our committee was held in usual course, and we found it getting late before the real and most important business came up, that is the question of furloughs. I can assure you that when it was proposed that I should go home this year I scarcely knew where I was or what I was doing. But since then I seem to have lived a whole month instead of three days, during which time I have been able to look calmly at it. I have talked it over with everybody, and all seem thoroughly agreed that I ought to go this year, if the real interests of the mission are to be taken into account, which most assuredly they are.

You may wonder why I have been telling you so much about the books I am reading. Well, I made up my mind that I must always have some book on hand, so that I may not throw away any spare time, but have my recreation in a change of occupation and not be doing nothing.

The Sunday school carried on in the Friends' Boys' School at Ambohitatovo was founded in 1874, and was for eight years



the only Sunday school in Antananarivo. It set an example and prepared the way for many such schools in later times, and it has continued its existence up to the present. Many missionaries, men and women, and many Malagasy Christians have at different times taken part in the work, none more efficiently and zealously than William Wilson. Of the former scholars many have become known for their sterling Christian character and earnest service as teachers, evangelists and pastors. The following is a translation of a farewell address presented on behalf of the school to William Wilson in 1880.

The Sunday School,  
*3rd October, 1880.*

To Mr. W. Wilson,  
Friend,

As you are about to separate from us to go home to the other side of the water, we your fellow teachers in the Sunday school write this letter as an indication of our union with you in the work and of our mutual love.

We have been very glad to have you as a fellow worker in the Sunday school, wearying yourself to do good to the children

and giving attention to all the details of teaching and good fellowship. We thank you exceedingly, Sir, for what you have done is pleasing and sweet to us ; and we are confident that God will prosper all your labour here in the Sunday school. Even though your self-denying efforts to do good to the Malagasy may not have their immediate reward, that reward will yet come, for even those who give a "cup of water," says our Lord, "shall in no wise lose their reward."

We are all very sorry to part with you, and our sorrow makes us wish that we might not have to part, yet perhaps this is God's will for your and our good, and so we and the scholars give you our token of blessing and farewell ; may God preserve you in the way that you go, that you may arrive among all your kinsfolk and friends, and may He prosper all your work in the land of your ancestors.

And though you and we may be far separated in body, let us continue to remember each other in prayer, and especially to ask that God may bless all our scholars for whose good we have together laboured.

And we earnestly long that there may be nothing which shall hinder your return to Madagascar, if that be God's will.

Farewell, Friend, till we meet again ; but should it be the will of God that we do not meet again on earth, may we then meet together in heaven with the children whom we have trained.

Thus, say all your friends, the teachers of the Sunday school.

Signed, FRANK RASOAMANANA, *Sec.*

J. C. THORNE, *Supt.*

The dark places of the earth are full not only of the suffering that comes from cruelty, but of the misery that comes from ignorance. No one can live in a pagan land without feeling the burden of this preventable suffering pressing upon him and calling for some practical solution. But to help effectually, training is needed, and as we have already seen these years had impressed Wilson with the important fact that, if he would really grapple with the need, this training must be gained, and he determined in his first furlough to do something towards attaining it. He arrived in England in December 1880, coming up the Thames in a heavy snowstorm ; and the next month laid his request for a course of medical study before his mission committee. Leave was granted, and he shortly afterwards

began to attend the London Hospital, and also dispensed medicines two afternoons in the week for Dr. Dixon in the Mildmay Mission for the Jews.

The missionary, however, was not put off with the new life of the medical student. He did some deputation work, and also threw himself into the religious and social work connected with the Society of Friends carried on at the Bedford Institute, Spital-fields. His Sundays and some evenings in the week were filled in this way, and he was also secretary of the Y.M.C.A. connected with the London Hospital, and he joined their football club.

The missionary came to the fore also in the lecture room and in the dissecting room. On one occasion when Mr. Treves (now Sir Frederick Treves) was in the chair, the doctor who was giving the address began to scoff at religion. Wilson, then a young student in his first year, got up and asked the chairman if this was not against the rules; the Chairman said it certainly was, and came afterwards and thanked Wilson for having had the courage to get up and speak.

An opportunity occurred in which Wilson

could show his religion in a more practical way. A letter gives the details in his own words :

In the ordinary course of things I was attending the out-patient department on Thursday afternoon when a message came down to Mr. Treves, the surgeon I am under, from Sir Andrew Clark, asking him if he would mind going up to see a patient who had tried to poison herself by drinking carbolic acid. The only thing in such a case is to put pure blood into the system. This the two medical men were agreed upon, but the surgeon, Mr. Treves, asked: "Who is to supply the blood?" I went up there out of mere curiosity to see the operation. I volunteered to supply the blood. Everything was prepared to a nicety, and a very interesting operation it was too, quite apart from having a share in it. During the whole time the blood was flowing from my arm both Dr. Clark and Mr. Treves kept asking me if I felt faint. They also wanted me to take some brandy, but I said I should prefer not unless I felt faint. And while the blood was being passed into the patient I sat by and saw it all, and very nicely and simply it was done too. I had a cup of tea and many congratulations on having stood it so well,

and then went to see a young fellow away at Camden Town with whom I had an appointment. I was told to go home and keep quiet! There was disobedience! But as soon as I had had tea I came away. Yesterday and Friday I felt somewhat weak as also I do to-day; but I shall be all right and myself again to-morrow and at work. To return to the patient who was quite unconscious. She began visibly to mend and the surgeon was quite in hopes that she would get over it. But alas! she died at ten o'clock the same evening. When Mr. Treves told me next day he said, "Well, you have the satisfaction of knowing that *you* gave her *the only one chance* of life that there was; and had there not been quite so much poison in her system your blood would have saved her."

W. Wilson studied dentistry with much success. He had not time to follow up this branch of surgery however. But there were opportunities when it was very useful, as the following incident shows: When in Paris in 1907 he was introduced to M. Waddington, a Senator in the French Government; the latter at once exclaimed "Oh, are you the Dr. Wilson from Madagascar? I shall never forget all that you

did for my son ; you made a new man of him ; you not only gave him medicine, but you were his dentist.”

In October, 1881, William Wilson took the examination of the Medical Hospital Board and registered as a medical student, the work done during this time of study being counted as a year of the medical course.

He left the hospital at the end of March 1882, regretted by doctors and students and especially by the warden, who, when he knew Wilson was leaving, repeatedly begged him to stay and finish his medical course. This William Wilson would not do, as he knew he was urgently needed in Madagascar.

On May 3rd, 1882, William Wilson and Hannah Henderson were married, and then on the 26th, after a farewell breakfast at Bunhill Fields, they left London accompanied by Miss Herbert to join their boat, the *Kinfauns Castle*, at Dartmouth, and there they found on board ten London Missionary Society missionaries with their five children, all bound for Madagascar. The *Kinfauns Castle* took them as far as Cape Town.

At Cape Town they had to trans-ship into a much smaller vessel, the *Florence* (400 tons). She had been a private yacht in her early days, and they were told that she would go through anything, and she certainly did, but they had a terrible voyage to Tamatave ; everybody on board suffered from *mal-de-mer*, even the captain was down for a time, and moreover the boat was terribly overcrowded.

Wilson as usual was the good angel of the party, he got round the cook and had the *entrée* of the kitchen, and many bowls of beef tea and arrowroot he was able to bring to the ladies, after having taught the cook to make these things.

The captain, who was partly French, had never been to Tamatave before, and he got very anxious as his charts and instructions told him of the dangers connected with getting into the harbour, which is almost entirely surrounded by a coral reef some little distance out, and unless the place is known it is not easy to find the opening. The captain came to Wilson as they were getting near the port and asked his help. Wilson told him it was too late to enter that day, and that he must stand well out



for the night and take the boat in early next morning. So by 4 a.m. Wilson was on the bridge and literally took the boat into the harbour. They were on shore by 10 a.m., right glad to be once more on dry land.

In the afternoon some of the party went to call on the British Consul. He said none of them must think of going up country as war had just broken out; the Malagasy flag had been pulled down on the north-west coast, and two French men-of-war were in the harbour, and Tamatave might at any time be bombarded. They thanked him for his reception, but said that they were all willing to take the consequences of their action and should start for the Capital as soon as possible. After about eight days spent in Tamatave arranging luggage and sending it off and getting bearers they started on the journey up country, which took ten days. Thus ended their long wedding tour as Wilson used to love to call it.

They arrived in Antananarivo on the 25th of July, 1882, and went to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert F. Standing.

Miss Clara Herbert, who travelled with

them, has written an account of the journey up country. She says :

The journey up country from Tamatave to the Capital in July, 1882, was a revelation to me of the genial, unselfish consideration of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson for others.

Many a gentleman would have chosen to travel alone with his young bride, who was still suffering from her continuous illness during that long voyage out from England. Not so William Wilson; and his unvarying brightness and kindness to me on that journey are remembered with gratitude. Several groups of missionaries had left Tamatave on different days, the reason for this arrangement was revealed at our first halt for the night, for there was not a single hotel, only native houses which the native occupants yielded to us after William Wilson's persuasions and gifts of money. The strangeness of being carried in a palanquin by natives whose language one did not understand was relieved by the merry tones of W. Wilson chatting with his bearers. They were a happy group of men, and evidently on good terms with him, and he with them. How entirely foreign it was thus to be carried along past the small thatched huts of the natives, through the tropical growth on the outskirts of the town,

and along the sea and lagoon coast, through a deeper and more thickly-wooded strip of country. This again was succeeded by delightful park-like districts, and William Wilson pointed out to us the Tangena and other trees, and lovely orchids, and the climbing plants. The knowledge of so many trees and plants made me at the time suppose that he had made botany a special study, but I discovered later that he had just as intelligent a knowledge of birds and stones, places and people.

His ingenuity in rigging up a division in their only room, which served as dining-room, sitting-room, and bedroom combined was only equalled by his goodness in thus arranging for a single missionary. He might so easily have put one into a small hut near and set a trustworthy native in charge; but no, their inconvenience was not considered, but another's comfort was always made their care.

Through forest, by the sea, across plains, climbing heights, William Wilson kept the bearers and luggage porters in good humour. He cared for their needs, dispensing quinine to us and many of the men every morning *en route*. Some of the men got fever, so their loads were lightened and other men found to carry some of the burdens for a whole day, so that they

might recover. Feet were bandaged and medicine was dispensed.

One day as we were travelling through the forest we met the Malagasy embassy on their way to France and England. They all evidently knew him and he knew them, and chatted with them in their native tongue for some time. Again and again did two of the embassy turn round and call out "Veloma é" (=Goodbye), and W. Wilson replied "Tsara mandrosa tsara miverina é" (May you go and return safely).

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Standing until they could find a house suitable to live in, there being no mission house available. Unfortunately a few days after their arrival Mrs. Wilson had a fall which kept her in bed for a month, and when she was able to be moved W. Wilson with such pleasure and pride took her over to their first little home, which he had prepared and furnished. "Everything," writes Mrs. Wilson, "was in perfect order; servants waiting to welcome me, and tea on the table. Nothing had been forgotten. It was a tiny house, two rooms upstairs, bedroom (with *very* small box-room used as

dressing-room), and sitting-room ; downstairs, dining-room and study, where my husband received the natives and did his medical work.

“In this house which my husband afterwards enlarged, we lived for five happy years, full of joy, and yet not without sorrows.”



DR. AND MRS. WILSON.  
Taken in 1882.

## CHAPTER III

### THE USEFUL MAN IN THE CAPITAL— SECOND RESIDENCE

“All service ranks the same with God”

1882-1888

THE party reached the Capital none too soon, for within a week or two the French were bombarding the coast towns. As there were no European Consuls in Antananarivo, the British residents met and appointed a Committee of Safety of which Wilson was chosen as secretary. On him rested the work of sending mails for Europe to the coast, with great uncertainty as to whether they would be despatched. Mails from England only reached the Capital at long and uncertain intervals.

The chief event during 1883 was the death of Queen Ranavalona II. and the succession of Queen Ranavalona III., as described in the following letter from William Wilson to his mother :

*Antananarivo, July 20th, 1883.*

Here we are all well and very little to complain of, except that we are almost shut off from communication with anyone outside us. If you ever get these letters it will be by a mere chance. All regular communication has been stopped both ways, and now we are only trying to get letters to you by a very haphazard sort of way; we are sending to a port on the east coast where a vessel occasionally calls.

More than ever my time is engrossed with the secretaryship, and especially lately have we been living in stirring times here.

Just a week to-day the alarm spread through the town that the Queen Ranavalona II. was dead. The scene of hurry, bustle and excitement was one that can only be compared to a hive of bees attacked by some enemy, or an ants' nest with the top knocked off. Such hurrying to and fro! for at such a time anyone who has any superior under whom he ranks whether free or slave—all, without exception, are obliged to assemble under that superior within the shortest possible time after the firing of the cannon which announces the Queen's death, for any tardiness of action is immediately construed into rebellion, and the consequences may be fearful. The



excitement was such as I had never seen here before.

Curiously the very morning on which the late Queen died we were awakened by a somewhat severe earthquake. The sound of the wave was very distinctly audible, and the shock could be plainly felt for about thirty seconds. It generally takes a good deal to wake me, but I was wide awake long before the wave came up to us. The house in which we are at present is very well built and strong, but the upheaval of it was very sensible indeed. Windows and doors rattled and creaked and shook as if they would tumble out of their places.

This happened at 2 a.m., and at 4 a.m. the poor Queen succumbed to an attack of her old enemy gout and dropsy combined. Doubtless she had been greatly enfeebled by worry and anxiety caused by the French invasion of her domains.

Although the succession was not by any means fixed, the Prime Minister, who is the real power in the land, was all prepared, and when the fact was announced to the populace, they were also presented to the new Queen who herself spoke to the people declaring in simple language that all that the late Queen did she would do, and that she would also keep the present Prime

Minister, and the war with the French was to go on as it had been commenced.

The present Queen, Ranavalona III. is quite young, not much over twenty-two, if that, and has always been esteemed for her good character. A short time ago her husband died, and she was still in mourning when she was sent for. Her surprise was very great, I hear, and when addressing her subjects for the first time she trembled and shook, scarcely being able to get out the few necessary words.

The next day, Saturday, all we foreigners went in a body to pay a visit of condolence and present the funeral offering, and after doing that we moved off to another part of the building to offer our congratulations to the new sovereign. The nation being at war, everything was done as expeditiously as possibly, and whereas under ordinary circumstances the funeral orgies, for you can call them little else, would have lasted over a month, these have been got through in a week. Very few bullocks have been killed, a thousand only. At the last Queen's death over three thousand were slaughtered. The people have not shaved their heads as they had to formerly. Of course all work is suspended *pro tem.*, and we in the midst of alterations are obliged to grin and bear it. A few days since a present of ten

bullocks was sent by the Queen to the committee. They were divided out, and I had to superintend the killing of two, after studying Mrs. Beeton to see how the joints lay. I am also keeping two till next week, so that for some time to come at any rate we shall not want for beef. It is very difficult for us to give you any good idea of how we are faring here for the situation is so thoroughly unique. The operations of the French are tardy in the extreme, and may only result in blockading the ports.

We are longing for our letters from you which we do not see much prospect of getting just now.

Mrs. Wilson's notes give a glimpse of the home life at this time :

The first year I often felt lonely, for my husband was very busy and I saw very little of him during the day ; and he spent a part, sometimes as much as a fortnight, of every month away from home in the country districts of Mandridrano and Mahabo. The former was then three days' journey from the Capital. But, once his work was done, he came home as quickly as his bearers, or a trifle later his faithful old Dick could bring him. Of this horse he speaks later in writing to his mother.

I may here add an incident which happened during the early part of 1883. My husband was travelling late one evening in the district of Mahabo, through a tapia forest. The tapia is a small tree upon the leaves of which they feed the silk worms. It was quite dark, and suddenly someone appeared from behind a clump of trees, and called out to the men to stop. His bearers recognised the voice of the man at once. He was a terror to the whole district and a noted highway robber. My husband called out, "What do you want?" The man, hearing the voice of a foreigner, ran away. My husband told his men to put him down, he was riding in a palanquin, and they gave chase and caught the man, who, finding he was hard pressed, threw away his big knife, etc. The bearers soon caught him and took him to the nearest village, where they were intending to sleep that night. My husband saw that the man had food, and then had him locked up for the night, but before going to bed himself, he called the Governor and headmen of the village and gave the man into their charge.

Great were their expressions of thankfulness that this highwayman had been caught; he was a very bad character and guilty of not a few murders and they

promised that he should be taken up to the Capital the next day to be tried there. He arrived at Antananarivo about the same time as my husband and was put in prison. My husband next sent for the chief judge and told him the man's history and informed him that there was to be no bribery, and that he meant to see the case through, even if he were obliged to take it to the Queen and Prime Minister. His trial never came off, for the old Queen died, and he, with the rest of the prisoners, was according to Malagasy custom set at liberty. He went home a changed man, and sent a repentant and most thankful message to my husband for what he had done for him by thus bringing him to justice. He never went back to his old ways.

The war was still supposed to be going on, and the French from time to time bombarded the ports on the East Coast. Some of us had no letters from our dear ones in England for nine months, and provisions such as flour and sugar, which had to be imported, were very dear and the supply almost ran out. We had to pay two shillings a pound for sugar, and eighteenpence for flour.

On the 22nd of July, 1883, our daughter Emmeline was born. We had no trained nurses at that time in Madagascar, so my

husband had much of the nursing to do himself for me and baby. Her father's pet name for her was "Meddy." I can look back with great joy to that happy time, and see him put on a big apron and prepare baby for the night ; he did it so beautifully, it was a marvel to me how he managed her so deftly, for she was a tiny mite.

In November, 1883, we went to the forest for a change, to a lovely place called Ambohidatremo. We had a native house with two rooms, but were very comfortable and blissfully happy with our little darling. Mr. Wills (L.M.S.) came to visit us, we were in the district under his charge, and he took the opportunity of having a little holiday with us.

On one occasion my husband and I had an experience which might have proved disastrous. I was riding, and he was walking just in front of the horse in a narrow path of the forest. It was a perfect jungle on both sides of the path. Suddenly, to our horror, we heard an animal come tearing along ; we knew it must be a bullock and would pass us. The bullocks in Madagascar have huge horns. My husband in a moment saw the only thing to do. The horse was drawn as far as possible into the bushes, and he stood opposite to us on the

other side ; just as the fierce creature was about to pass us, my husband caught hold of one of the horns and dragged his head on one side into the bushes until he safely passed the horse, who was very much frightened, snorting and pawing the ground.

Dogs can be as dangerous and difficult to manage as bullocks. William Wilson was however able to grapple with either. He once caught by the neck a mad dog, which in another moment might have sprung upon and bitten persons standing near.

Hydrophobia was frequent in Antananarivo during the hot season of the year, and on a previous occasion, as his friend, the Rev. C. Jukes, relates, Wilson sitting in his study was attracted by the shouting of some people in the road. Going outside he found that a number of men and boys were chasing a dog, supposed to be rabid. The poor wounded creature took refuge in the garden and lay beneath a bush ; his persecutors climbing on to the wall to continue the sport. Wilson asked that no more missiles should be thrown, and requested the people to leave the wall. He then went towards the dog, spoke to it and endeavoured

to coax it. The tormented animal remained quiet, but looking with its piteous, glassy eyes, seemed to say, "Please don't hurt me." In pity for the dog, and thinking there was really nothing the matter with it, he went near to it in order to pat it, when the creature suddenly turned his head and bit him severely on the hand. Undoubtedly the dog was mad, but with great presence of mind and no little courage, Wilson took out his pocket-knife and opened the wound scraping and cauterizing it several times, until danger was past.

Mrs. Wilson continues :

In June, 1884, my husband for the first time took me into his district with him. Mrs. Clark very kindly took charge of my baby, who was then eleven months old. We travelled about from place to place, and visited during that time twenty-six villages and schools, and had a meeting with the inhabitants during part of the day at each place. Some of the villages being near to each other we could visit two in the day. Every evening there were crowds of sick to see, and it was often twelve o'clock before my husband retired, and frequently we were up by day-break and off to the next village. It was a great joy to me to see



the way the people came to welcome him. They loaded him with presents, food of all kinds, and everybody insisted on shaking hands. He had a bright cheery word for every one, and was most patient in listening to all their tales of woe and aches and pains. No white woman had ever been in that part of the country, so I was somewhat of a curiosity. I was not able to talk much to the people, but I could help a little in giving out medicines and books.

During this time we took a day's journey to visit two Hova military outposts in the "Efitra," or No-man's-land, between the Hova and Sakalava territory, where my husband was anxious to place out teachers if possible. We made a very early start (4.30 a.m.) as we knew we must reach the first outpost early in the afternoon, as they always brought in their cattle and closed the gates at sundown. The first place of interest we passed after leaving Andrainarivo, the village near to which my husband afterwards built our station, was Ranomafana, where there are some hot springs. The place was under no control, and whereas, if properly managed, it might have been a great blessing, it proved very much the reverse, as people with all sorts of diseases could be seen sitting or lying in the same pool of water, and the water was left to

change itself, which must have been a very gradual process, from the appearance of the springs.

After leaving Ranomafana we entered the "Efitra," and went on and on for some hours, often in single file, as we were following a path no wider than an English mountain sheep track, between grass from twelve to fourteen feet high. My husband rode in front, I followed behind in my palanquin, and then came a string of carriers with our bed and bedding, medicine chest, food and clothing. We went over some low hills and as we climbed up the men must have killed thousands of young locusts, the ground being for some distance simply covered with them. We arrived at the Hova outpost of Ankisabe at half-past four o'clock, and found the gates shut! We knocked and called, and knocked again for at least half an hour before any notice was taken. At last a poor old decrepit man came peeping over a prickly-pear bush, and as soon as he saw who we were he went in to inform the Governor, who gave orders that we should be admitted at once. We afterwards found that three days before, a band of roving Sakalava (the wild tribe of the west) had taken all their cattle and belongings. There were only eleven men and one woman in the village. After

dressing himself up in his best official clothing according to his idea, the Governor came to greet us, and enquired after the Queen, Prime Minister, Antananarivo and Ambohimanga, the two chief towns of the province, and even the cannon round these two places were not forgotten in his kind enquiries. .

After receiving a few presents such as rice and bananas, my husband called our men and the Governor and his men together for a short service in the open-air.

When the sun went down it was intensely cold ; I have never suffered so much from cold anywhere as I did at this little desert station. After dispensing medicine to everyone in the village,—they had had time to think of their various ailments during the night,—we left about half-past six. The Governor and the garrison of six soldiers escorted us to the outer gates. My husband promised to visit them again soon, which he did. His hearty, ready sympathy was a great help to them, and he always endeavoured to lead their thoughts on to nobler and better things than the mere existence which they were leading.

We reached the next outpost, Bezezika, about noon. This we found was quite a large place, and in the afternoon we gathered all the children together and taught them

some hymns, and then later on we had a service to which most of the people came. They asked that they might have a teacher sent to them to teach them and their children. We returned to Mandridrano and then set our faces homewards.

My husband's love of animals very soon resulted in our having quite a collection of pets—birds, lemurs and dogs. One dog named Jack was particularly intelligent. He had been taught, amongst other things, to sit up and take his food from a plate, which he did very nicely. My husband would say to him, "Speak, Jack, do you want any more?" and Jack would reply by opening his mouth and making noises as if he really was trying to speak. He was equally able to understand what was said to him in Malagasy and English. He was with us on the month's journey which we took in 1884. Our bearers were very fond of showing him off to the natives; and I remember an old woman, in a remote part of Mandridrano, when one of the men asked Jack to speak, and he answered in his usual way, held up her hands in astonishment and said "And can he read?"

Jack always followed his master into the church, and lay down beside him during the service. At one village where he often went with his master, he overslept himself and

was left behind. Rousing up and feeling quite at home he settled himself again for the night. At 4 a.m. the teacher's wife got up, cooked him a chicken and some rice and started him on his way home, where he arrived about the same time as his master.

William Wilson writes :

*Antananarivo, 17th October, 1882.*

Since last mail I have bought a horse to do my work in the country with. Dick, for that is his name, cost me eighteen dollars and eightpence. He was a poor sort of a picture when I bought him ; very thin, with a slight sore on his back. The former fault is all but gone, and the latter is quite well. The daily brushing and grooming he gets have given him quite a new appearance, and after I had had him only two weeks, his former master scarcely knew him again. He is quite devoid of vices of any sort, and I have seldom seen a native-bred horse that had not any. He has during the last few days tried to find out what I am made of, and now that he has found out, he is quite decided that I am his master.

Three afternoons a week I am teaching

the teachers of our boys' school, English twice a week and physiology once. Other classes may be added, but I am afraid that I have already more than can be thoroughly and satisfactorily accomplished.

I am going to see if I can succeed in keeping bees, as a good swarm can be got here for three or four shillings, and if it only gives us amusement it will help to teach the folks the value of such things; for as yet they have always destroyed the bees in order to take the honey; at least they do so in the west, and any quantity of wax is exported yearly from the country. Bee-keeping in some districts would I am sure pay well, if only for the wax produced. We have too, a species of bee here that is peculiar to the country, and bee fanciers at home are anxious to procure them. Which the special one is I have not found out yet, but I am trying to do so. A hobby of some sort does one good, and I am making this mine now.

During their stay in the Capital, another child was born to them, a little son, who was named after Wilson's boyhood friend, Mr. Wingfield, his old Master at Christ's Hospital. But the joy of this sweet possession was very short. A few months later on, in 1886, the father writes :—

Our darling little baby boy was taken from us on July the 17th. He had been ill just seventeen days. Dr. Fox gave him unremitting attention during the whole time, coming three times a day and once or twice was called up during the night. All was done that could be done, but every day he got visibly weaker and breathed his last in his mother's arms.

On Monday morning we took him to his little grave, and there with nearly all the Europeans gathered around we laid the little coffin quietly down. The little grave was one mass of white and pale coloured flowers most of the children bringing some in their hands.

In the following year Mr. and Mrs. Wilson had the joy of welcoming another little girl, Lucy Mary, to their home.

Two years later their sojourn in Antananarivo drew to its close. In spite of the manifold interest in the Capital at these stirring times, Wilson's letters throughout this period show that his heart was outside it. His journeys among the villages taught him how important a field was waiting for their workers in the country districts. This fact had been indeed for some time generally recognised, and a centre of work had

been opened in a native house in a district called Arivonimamo, where Mr. and Mrs. John Sims were in residence. But it was desirable to place someone in charge of each important division of the district under the control of the mission. This was the more necessary as the excitement of the French invasion had, as was inevitable, an adverse influence on the work of the missionaries everywhere.

It is quite true that the danger of an enemy at their gates had the effect of stimulating the faith of the faithful. Special meetings were held, eager and earnest petitions being offered for God's forgiveness for the national sins, and for God's help at the national crisis. But after the death of the Queen there was a curious impression that the "Praying" which had begun with her reign would close at the end of it, so the churches in the country districts were in some cases closed. Many of the boys too, who ought to have been at school, were busy drilling with their spears and shields.

For some months the missionaries were confined to the Capital by the desire of the Government, and unable to reinforce the



work beyond it ; it seemed as if some general loss of vitality must result in the spiritual growth of the nation.

In the face of all this, Wilson took advantage of the first opportunity to begin his journeys in the country. Looking round for a good base from which permanent work could be established, he fixed on Mandridrano. This was a thickly-populated district sixty to seventy miles from the Capital with schools in which twenty-four native teachers were employed, and there were in it a rapidly increasing number of congregations. There were thirty-six at the time when William Wilson finally settled among them. It adjoined the Sakalava country, separated from it however by a hundred miles of *efitra*. But so eager were the people of Mandridrano that they were then the most liberal in their contributions towards the evangelization of these Sakalava ; and they volunteered from among their members to send preachers to some of the out of the way villages that were in need of help.

In Mandridrano then William Wilson chose a site for his new home, and here during the year 1887 the astonished natives saw a

new house rise, made of bricks and wood, the materials for it carried by teams of bullocks, a sight that drew hundreds to the spot for its amazing novelty. Indeed one good man expostulated with W. Wilson on the cruelty of making animals work against their will, though slaves were at the same time being sold in the open market of Antananarivo and even the Christians were loath to give them up.

Finally in May, 1888, the house was finished after some months of busy supervision and the time came to move into their new home.

It is not surprising, considering in how many various ways Wilson had shown himself useful to those about him, that when he left Antananarivo his fellow missionaries, as a mark of their appreciation, presented him with an address and a purse containing twenty-five pounds. The address runs :

In view of the near approach of the time when you are leaving Antananarivo and going to open a new mission station at Mandridrano we cannot allow you to go away from our midst without expressing our sincere regret that we shall soon no longer have the pleasure of your own, and

Mrs. Wilson's presence among us in the Capital.

This feeling we share in common with all your friends, but we whose names are at the foot of this paper are under special obligations to you for the great kindness, the unwearied attention, and the cheerful readiness to help us, you have so often shown to ourselves personally and to our families in times of sickness and anxiety; your medical skill has always been at our call, and we thank you most heartily for all you have done for us and ours.

So with the good will of all they were leaving behind, they set out for their new home.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CHILD'S LIFE IN MADAGASCAR

1883-1890

THERE is a beautiful law by which the life that is sunny and bright will create its own atmosphere even in the most adverse surroundings. It is true of each one of us that

Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high  
Can keep my own away from me.

A home of happy and charming interest belonged of right to the little English family surrounded by strange tropical sights and sounds, and by men and women whose natural instincts were so different from theirs. It belonged to them, and it came to them. The little baby girl now a mother in her own home, has given in the following notes, a picture of her first memories in Madagascar. They show how a healthy joy of life, united with true love

for God and man, can create and preserve its proper setting ; and we see through her descriptions how a sweet bit of English home life was planted down in this African island. The home of a missionary child may not have all the advantages that come to the little ones in our own country, but joy and charm and pleasures were not wanting there. The artist's delight in all pretty things, and the collector's interest in gathering them and arranging them, belonged to William Wilson. Moreover he liked to have the best of all he could rightly attain, and home and house and garden showed the result of care and thought. He had a talent for making places beautiful, whether in Madagascar or in England.

It will be seen that the following contribution from Emmeline Cadbury covers several years, some of which we shall have to retrace in the succeeding chapters.

The first home I can remember was the house in which I was born ; it was situated below the present British Consulate ; it had a large tennis court attached to it where the missionaries and Europeans in the Capital used to come and play tennis. My

father was always the centre of all the tennis parties, and enjoyed them very much when he was able to be there, but that was not very often—my mother sometimes gave tea and I used to help her.

When about three years old, I can remember one evening, as I was lying awake in my cot, my father came and took me up in his arms and carried me into a room where it was dark ; my brother's cot was there, and my mother was sitting beside it with her head bowed down in her hands ; my father put me into her arms, and I can remember now the little still form of the baby in the cot, and the tears in my father's blue eyes. My mother's sad face (she was not crying) made me realize that I was alone with them, and my little brother had gone.

I remember my father telling me that we were going to live right away from the Capital in a house that he was building, and he often left us for weeks at a time, coming back full of the building of the new home and the bullock cart that he had started and how the natives were helping him, and how he had to sleep in a little native hut near the house. At last all was ready for us, and we packed up and with our servants

and bearers started for the new home, three days' journey from the Capital. We were quite a procession, father riding his black horse called "Dick," and Mary and nurse in one palanquin, mother in another and I had a little one to myself. We had to go through a forest where there were known to be robbers.

As we neared Mandridrano, father came trotting up to my palanquin to point out to me our new home and the school house high up on the hills above us. I exclaimed, "Then are we all going to heaven," and how he laughed! He patted my hand with his riding whip and said "Not yet Meddy."

Then followed very happy years in Mandridrano. As I look back on the life at Mandridrano, it was a time of sunshine and happiness, and though surrounded by so much that was sad and must have been at times discouraging, still both my father and mother seemed overflowing with love and joyousness; all was so bright and happy, even during the long separations when my father was away on his journeys and we were left alone; we were two long days' journey from any white people.

You know my father's love of animals. At Mandridrano we had many of these, as we had to keep our own cows, for otherwise it was impossible to get milk. Not far from the house was our little farm, and I remember well the herd of cows which he got together and did his best to tame. The Malagasy cows would never be milked unless their calves were near, and I believe he was the first in Madagascar who ever got a cow to give her milk, away from her calf. They were small cattle with large horns and large humps on their backs, very picturesque to look at, but fierce and wily to deal with. I remember so well these times of "breaking in" the cows, and the excitement of seeing them.

There is a story in connection with these cows which I do not remember myself, but it has since been told me by a missionary, though I remember the cow, a particularly beautiful black one. She had been very difficult to tame, but at last my father thought he had truly made her feel that no harm was coming to her calf whilst she was being milked; he was standing watching her being milked one evening, when she suddenly put her head down and



went for him. The native man who was there called out, but for my father there was no way of escape, as only the wall was behind him ; so when she charged he drew himself up against it, and her horns struck the wall each side of him ; he promptly got hold of her, with the help of the man, and had her fastened up.

Father's big black horse, "Dick," was his faithful animal for many years. I think my father went journeys on him almost every day, for I remember how after tea mother and I used always to start off out of the compound and down between the tall dry grass to meet my father ; we nearly always met some distance from the house, and whilst he and mother would walk back together, he would put me on old Dick, and I would ride back to where the road to the farm divided from the road to the house ; there Dick would stop, and when father and mother came up, my father would lift me off with his cheery "Thank you Dick," and Dick would solemnly walk off to his stable, and we would go into the house.

The other horse we had was a small pony called "Berry" ; sometimes my mother

rode him, and when he was not wanted otherwise I was put on his back and sent for a ride. We had some panniers sent to us from England, and I remember for days and days my father trying to break Berry in to these panniers, but somehow he never could bear them, and we never used them on Berry ; he was a little chestnut. Dick always had a holiday on Sunday, and my father rode Berry to the Sunday meetings.

We had a great many dogs, partly to keep off the mad dogs, of which there were a great number at the end of the dry season.

The garden was very bare when we first went to Mandridrano, and I remember my father planting many trees. He had some roses sent out from England, and we planted one in front of his study window, that turned out to be a most beautiful large pink rose of which "Marchioness of Londonderry" reminds me now—father and I christened this tree "Mother." My father built a little summer house where we used to keep many special plants in pots, and whenever he went away into the forest—when we went to the Sanatorium for a holiday—on his return I used at once to hunt in his pockets, not for sweets as



Hannah Storer

English children would do, but for orchids and plants for the summer house. We used to hang the orchids up in the trees. Now I believe the trees are quite beautiful at Mandridrano. I remember specially a row of lovely tuberose flowers that we planted not far from the summer house, so that when mother was sitting out there in the shade she might have their sweet scent not far from her. Below the house there was a spring with a small natural basin, from which flowed a little stream forming a pond lower down, and near the stream I helped my father to plant some tomato seeds. We watched these plants very tenderly, and they grew tremendously and spread so much they became a weed, and the number of tomatoes we had was enormous—father laughed when we remembered with what care we treasured the first seeds.

At the time when the Cape gooseberries were ripe, I went with my father and mother to pick them—we had a large patch of them near, and we always picked them for jam.

Father spent as much time as he could spare in the garden, and I often went with him ; he used to tell me about the English flowers and the primroses and the butter-

cup, and the flowers we did not get—how we planned to get surprises for mother, and how we tried to grow mignonette because she was so fond of it, and even now when I smell mignonette the smell reminds me so much of the happy days at Mandridrano.

I had no lessons and used to wander about with my father, and he used to talk to me, and though his life was a very busy one and he was often away from home, I must have been with him as much as possible, as I can remember so many of my first impressions of animals and flowers and people, all coming from his lips.

The cottage hospital was quite near us, and I remember going to talk to the patients sometimes: they would tell me what wonderful hands my father had. The people used to come in from the country for medicines in great numbers—there were times when the whole house would be crowded with people; they would sleep in the dining-room and in the pantry and in the surgery—of course each patient who came brought a good many relations, and they would cook their rice outside. I remember once the house was specially full, and I thought “Oh dear, how dreadful

this is ! ” and I looked at my father’s and mother’s faces, and I saw them looking quite happy and as if it were quite the usual thing to have one’s house crowded with people : I do not think they ever felt put out or annoyed with these poor people, though now when I am older and look back on this time, I often wonder how they could have managed.

Sunday was always a very happy day ; generally, my father was out in the morning and afternoon, but he always came back in the late afternoon before it was dark, and then in the drawing-room we used to sing a hymn, and there were certain little treasures that were brought out and looked at, and the dear ones far away in England were talked of. I remember specially a beautifully carved Swiss donkey and cow, and the treat it was to have them in my hand, and to hear about the time when they were given to my father when he was a little boy. He loved all the things connected with his dear ones, and loved to talk about the home in England.

There were the long journeys to the Sakalava and uninhabited country ; once he was away six weeks, and we did not hear

a word from him, and in my childish way I remember how I used to feel for my mother being left alone with two little children. I knew the danger he was running by going among the wild people of that district, and I remember specially once when he was away we heard of a village not far off being sacked and burnt by part of the very tribe to which we knew he had gone. It was whilst I was with my mother in the garden that the news came to us, and I shall never forget the look in her face as she hurried to her room and shut herself in, and I remember my father's words at parting had been "Good-bye little Meddy, God will take care of you, and God will take care of me if we ask Him, and remember He loves us." I remember the joy when the house boy came tearing up to us to tell us that the first bearers had come back with the news that father was not far behind, and how the palanquins were brought out, and mother and the servants and children all started out to meet him, and I can see him now coming along with his helmet soiled and his face so red, and a beard!—he had not had time to shave, and oh! we were so happy to have

him home again, it seemed to drown everything else. Then he told us all he had been through, how he had gone to the Chief, and how he had sat down to rice with six of them, and there was one bowl of rice and one bowl of meat and one spoon, and how they had solemnly passed the spoon round each one in turn taking a spoonful of rice and then dipping it into the meat, and I remember exclaiming "Oh father! did you have to eat out of the same spoon as they did?" and how he laughed at me, and said he would do far more than that to win their souls for Jesus—and how one of them had taken a fancy to his dressing gown, and he had given it to him, and I remember telling him I was so pleased because it was such an ugly one. Then he told how one Chief had listened to him and decided to give up his own gods, and to show father that he really was in earnest, he gave him the charm from his neck; the charm was a long string of white beads and hard black seeds from a sacred tree. My father gave me this charm, and I have kept it ever since as one of my most treasured possessions.

It was either on the journey just mentioned, or on another, that the people in the



villages refused his men food, and they had to go into the forest and dig up and prepare arrowroot (a most troublesome job) for father and themselves till they could get a supply of food and rice.

It was after one journey (I cannot remember which) he came back and was very ill with fever, and whilst he was lying ill we were very much bothered with the "witches." These were natives who came out at night to frighten people, and I remember so well how they would come in the middle of the night and tap on our windows to try and cause the evil spirit to take away the life of the white man. How indignant our servants were, and they would sit up all night pacing round the house to keep off the witches—they would fire off blank cartridges at intervals—the cook was specially devoted, and felt quite sure he was doing a great deal for us in firing at these witches.

At birthdays, and other times of rejoicing, we used to go picnics. Not very far from us there was a beautiful hill, where I remember the maidenhair fern grew in such lovely profusion; and when we had visitors we used to go up for a picnic to this

hill. We sometimes went to Lake Itasy, where we found crocodiles' eggs. I remember once going with Mrs. Johnson to an island in this lake, and there in the warm sand by some beautiful bamboos we found a large nest of crocodiles' eggs; we brought a good many home, and our cook spent many hours blowing them, and I put some near the kitchen stove hoping they would hatch out little crocodiles.

Sometimes we used to go out on the lake with two canoes, tied together for fear of the crocodiles, to spear fish—a delicious black flat fish.

My father got together a very good collection of Malagasy birds—he used to skin them and preserve them himself, and I remember standing by helping! I remember specially one day he brought home a most beautiful stork with lovely grey plumage and gorgeous scarlet head feathers and another time he brought home a pair of birds—they were rather small size, perfectly black with beautiful crests of black feathers on their heads: he told us he had brought them back himself because the natives thought he would surely die as he had killed a sacred bird.

He shot a crocodile once, I think it was twenty feet long ; it was hung up on the verandah, and when the skin was taken off the natives came from far and near to beg a piece of crocodile fat, as to them it has some secret power—everybody who came and asked had a piece.

One day the men brought home a little crocodile, and we put it in our pond and it became quite tame, but the natives considered it unlucky and one day we found it dead—the result of devotion to us on the part of one of our servants. My father skinned it, and my grandmother now has the skin.

Once a party of gold diggers came. I do not think I ever remember seeing a more utterly downcast, miserable set of men—they had lost their bullocks, they had found no gold ; they stayed the night, and went away with bullocks in the morning ; I remember specially a dear black one that was given or lent to them, for I went to kiss his soft nose before he left, as I felt he would never return. They left us with bright faces, and with hope in their hearts ; for they had met a man with a sunny nature, a beautiful spirit, and one who

always looked at life, even at its darkest, bravely and full of hope.

On Christmas morning my father left early, before I was awake, to go to some distant church to preach. Mother and Mary and I opened the parcels which Santa Claus had not forgotten to leave even in that far off land, and though I do not recollect much more, I can remember looking and waiting and watching for the dear white helmet to appear above the dry grass ; at last it came and even in that awful heat I can remember rushing to the gate to meet my father and to wish him "A Happy Christmas." It was too hot for a Christmas tree, but I remember sitting on his knee, and hearing of the Christmas at home, of the lights and the joys of the Christmas tree, and oh ! how happy we four were. Father promised me that when the cooler weather came we should have a Christmas tree, and he and I would get it up and invite the others to it—this was our great secret, and how often and often we would whisper about it together, and how mother would pretend to try and find it out. And then when the little Christmas tree did come, I wonder what child

would care for it compared to the Christmas trees we have now, but it was all so beautiful and so lovely to me ! We made ornaments from the tinfoil off some chocolates, and father got some candles, and my nurse and I made some tiny muslin bags which were filled with pretty coloured sweets and tied up with coloured ribbon—that was all that it was, on the branch of some tropical tree, but to me, and perhaps to him, it was the most beautiful Christmas tree I had ever seen. We invited some of the Malagasy to come, and it was a very merry little party that gathered in the nursery that night.

I remember very vividly when the house was struck with lightning ; there was a terrific flash, instantly followed by an awful peal of thunder—one felt too dazed even to scream, but, oh ! it was a relief to find myself in my father's arms the next moment, and to be told that all was well.

I remember some of the servants came in one day with the news that the head of the village nearest to us had ordered a woman to be punished (for stealing, I think), and the punishment was that she should stand in the pond near the village up to her head in water for twelve hours. I at once rushed

with horror to tell my father, who was seeing some patients in the surgery, and he went straight away to the head man of the village; though I do not remember what happened, I know the woman was taken out of the water, and I remember her afterwards as being quite attached to us.

We returned to the Capital about May, and on the journey up, in the tapia forest there came on a tremendous storm, hail, and thunder and lightning, and we sheltered under a huge rock. I remember father came galloping up to my palanquin, and finding it drenched, took off his own mackintosh and wrapped me up in it. I begged him at the time not to do it, because it meant he would have to sit on his horse without a mackintosh, and of course, he was drenched to the skin in a few minutes, but he insisted on doing it, and went galloping off in the rain to see if he could find my sister, leaving mother and me and our bearers sheltering under the big rock. While we were sitting under this big rock, a huge tree fell not far from us. The storm cleared off and we went on to the next village where our bearers had arrived, and where there was a little house ready

for us. It was getting late, and still no signs of Mary and Neny (the nurse). Father at once changed his clothes and set off again with some men and lanterns to see if they could find them. It seemed to me after a very long time, and long after dark, they at last came back with the palanquin, the bearers of which had missed the path and lost their way, but Mary had slept soundly the whole time in Neny's arms.

Life at the Capital was very different from what it had been in Mandridrano. I went to a little kindergarten school, and though I saw my father in the evenings, still I was not his companion as I had been. He still went on the same long journeys away from us, and it was always a very great joy to welcome him home again.

We left the Capital for England in September, 1890.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SAKALAVA—1884-1890

The adventurous journey to the Sakalava which is referred to in the previous chapter was not the first which William Wilson paid to this high-spirited and dangerous people. The dormant possibilities which they longed to see enlisted on the side of Christianity had always made a strong appeal to the missionaries, and as early as 1884 William Wilson made his first start, and in the following year he rode over the hundred miles of desolate "efitra" to visit them.

Mrs. Wilson writes :

My husband started out on three occasions to visit the Sakalava, the wild tribe lying to the west of Mandridrano, the district three days' journey from the Capital where we lived for two years.

On the first occasion he was accompanied by Dr. J. T. Fox, but, alas ! owing to the illness of the latter, they only reached the borders of the uninhabited country which



stretches for miles some six days' journey from Mandridrano.

They left Antananarivo early in December, 1884, accompanied by Rafaralahy and his wife, the first evangelist sent out by the missionary society composed of all the congregations under the care of the F.F.M.A. in Madagascar. The serious illness of Dr. Fox prevented them from going beyond Mandridrano, where they separated, one party going east and the other west, each not a little anxious as to how it would fare with them on the road. This illness of Dr. Fox's was a great strain upon my husband. Dr. Fox was taken to the nearest mission station occupied by a L.M.S. missionary and his wife. Here, assisted by Mrs. Fox, he nursed him night and day for eight days ; then came the long weary journey of nine hours to the Capital, followed by weeks of anxious work and watching before the doctor could be sent into the country for a change.

The second journey to the Sakalava country is described in the following extracts from a letter written by William Wilson to his mother, 30th October, 1885.

I have always looked upon my work in Mandridrano as a stepping stone to further

work amongst the heathen and wild tribes which lie in a direct line west.

Leaving the Capital on August 13th, two days' journey brought me to a group of seven scattered congregations, where we were to have a meeting to discuss the affairs of the church. Another one of a similar kind amongst another set of twenty-six congregations, was held the next day but one, some fifteen miles further west.

The mornings and evenings, and any other spare moments were filled up with attending to the needs of the sick, to me a most enjoyable occupation. In doing work of this description, the first week passed, and on Wednesday, August 19th, I was awaiting the arrival of Mr. Clark in Mandridrano.

The next morning we started a little before eight, and after a very hot ride, reached the small military outpost of Ankisabe about five p.m.

We found our old friends still here, and all just as it was a year ago. There appears, however, some sign of improvement in the amount of land under cultivation. This astonishes me more than anything else, and I am somewhat encouraged to find that most of it had been undertaken in accordance with advice given by me a year ago.

As soon as our belongings were all put straight, and a small house made ready for

our accommodation, I was tempted out to try for some guinea-fowl whilst our men were preparing the evening meal. A number of birds were reported feeding on locusts quite near at hand, and easily seen as the tall grass had been fired the previous day. Dinner over, the Governor of this desolate place was announced. He came, bringing with him three-quarters of a moderate-sized pig as a present for his guests. Perhaps our men appreciated the gift more than we did ; at any rate all was soon in their stew pots.

Friday, August 21st.—Breakfast over we gathered on the patch of greensward outside the enclosure, for a short service—probably the only time during the year that the message of the gospel had been heard amongst these poor, benighted people.

Three hours after leaving Ankisabe another stockaded outpost was reached ; this town of Antamponala was a great improvement on the one we had just left. The usual hedges of prickly pear, two or three deep, surrounded about thirty houses and a large cattle pen, and that is practically the whole place. The women and children were fairly numerous, giving one the impression that here was a small, though flourishing colony.

The soil round about yields most abundant crops, and unlimited pasture for cattle ; very little indeed is required to procure the necessaries of life, but where there are only a few decrepit old men left what can be expected ? Before we entered the village a ceremony had to be observed, and in consequence we were kept waiting whilst a few soldiers were marshalled into order. Upon our entry the usual enquiries were made after the Queen's health, the state of the Capital, and a host of minor personages and places.

This done, one of the better houses in the village was put at our disposal, in which we were thankful to rest, as the mid-day sun was getting a little warm.

Soon after three o'clock the Governor turned up with a live pig and a couple of baskets of rice, for which we thanked him. After a suitable interval we both proceeded to the big man's house. He was seated ready to receive us. He seemed an ignorant, bumptious old fellow, evidently king in his own little world, and apparently about as great a heathen as any we had then come across.

He showed himself very agreeable to have a church in the village, and also that a teacher should be sent to reside amongst them, if one could be found sufficiently

self-denying to submit to partial banishment. A few presents were given and accepted, a Bible, a Testament, one or two simple lesson sheets, a couple of cakes of scented soap, a pair of scissors for the wife.

August 22nd.—Up soon after 5 a.m., to make an early start. Our party now swelled to forty-four, five of these being guides. As all food had to be carried we tried to reduce the number of guides to two, but they would not hear of being separated. Certainly without them we could not have proceeded, the road we took being simply the tracks made by the wild cattle among the tall grass. Frequently we were taken across country to strike another track, as we might be swerving either too much to the right or left. About noon we struck the river Sakay, which gave us both difficulty and amusement in fording. Crocodiles were abundant and not over-fed, so it behoved us to be cautious, especially with my horse. After wandering up and down the banks for some little time, a ford was found, all getting safely across. We pitched our tents a little before 5 p.m. A beautiful valley lined with an abundance of large timber afforded all that we wanted in the way of fuel and water. But it also provided us with an innumerable host of mosquitos.

August 24th.—We made an early start so that a good stretch of country could be covered during the day. Alas, for our good intentions; some wild cattle were sighted not far off. The whole party was halted, and some dozen or more of us tried to surround the animals. They were too much for us and we failed to get within gun-shot. Towards evening a large bull was seen grazing all alone. He was stalked carefully to within fifty or sixty yards. My cook and I fired simultaneously from different points; his ball hit one of the fore feet, and mine lodged in the neck, just missing the shoulder. Immediately after we fired, the men who had hitherto lain hidden by the thick grass, yelled and gesticulated to turn him towards us where we were waiting to give the old fellow another ball or so. We were again foiled, however, for he broke straight off from the long line of men, paying no attention to stones, yells, or anything else that we gave freely for his benefit.

August 25th. Disappointed and tired with the previous day's want of success, we were somewhat late before starting. Our guns had failed to give us a supply of beef, but by the forethought of two guides, who put down lines during the night, we procured a couple of eels, each of which

weighed about two-and-a-half pounds. These we enjoyed after the ever recurring rice.

*August 26th.*—By a long and semi-forced march, we got into Manandaza late in the evening. Now we had done with the “No-man’s land” and were in the Sakalava country, this being the town at which our evangelist is stationed. Our arrival took everyone by surprise ; indeed, we were very nearly getting right up to the gates of the town, but that our cook could not resist the temptation of shooting some parrots which were screeching in numbers in the trees.

The frequent reports of the gun drew the attention of the guards of an outlying village, who supposed that some cattle lifters were at their usual practice, and came hurrying out somewhat excited. Imagine their consternation when a string of luggage bearers, two solemn missionaries and a horse, fearful beast that had never been seen before in this out-of-the-way part of the world, came in sight.

Our road down from the high ground, 2,000 feet above sea level, to the plain on which Manandaza stands (400 feet), deserves one word. For stones, both large and small, it can be backed against any in either this or any other land. Besides the constant

danger of getting feet and legs between rocks, I scarcely knew whether my horse's legs would not go snap at any moment. The sharp quartz pebbles and splinters were terrible, and had not the men been well shod with sandals of raw cowhide, I doubt whether we could have travelled half the distance in the same time.

In due time we entered the town to find a shrivelled up old man, nearly bent double with infirmity, as the Government representative. He had evidently bestowed some attention upon his own toilet and that of his second in command. A pair of scarlet cotton trousers graced his legs, the red reaching up to within about four inches of the loin, where the bright material suddenly came to an end, the deficiency being supplied by common unbleached calico. A swallow-tailed coat added not a little to the general effect. The "second" sat bolt upright on a chair at some little distance from this worthy veteran of the Government (he had been there fourteen years), dressed in what we afterwards discovered to be the old man's second-best coat, borrowed for the occasion.

The gift made in the name of the Queen and Prime Minister was a handsome one—between nine and ten bushels of rice and a cow. The faces of our men beamed with



delight as the rice was given out to them, and they also looked forward with pleasure to the fresh beef to be enjoyed on the morrow.

Cattle amongst the Sakalava are wonderfully cheap, and a man's wealth is reckoned by his cattle, for which he will barter anything. Money is never used among them, so that an endless process of barter is the only way of buying and selling—cattle being the chief medium. Both Hova and Sakalava are continually stealing each others' cattle.

The Hova use their official power as a garrison in a but partially subdued country, to cheat and extort fines for outrages which are but the retaliation of former acts of injustice. As yet, of course, we were only on the eastern edge of the vast country of the Sakalava. It stretches away some hundred miles, till you reach the Mozambique Channel. This town of Manandaza is the most westerly point hitherto subjugated to the Hova power.

The record is continued in Wilson's diary.

*Saturday, August 29th.*—A troupe of Taimoro, a tribe from the South, arrived, one hundred and thirty strong. They were not admitted into the town as it was alleged that we had already filled it.

*Sunday, August 30th.*—In the morning H. E. Clark stayed to preach in Manandaza while I went to a neighbouring village, where a church had been recently established. About four o'clock we again assembled in the church here, the service was short and the congregation small, the Sakalava, who had stayed for it, mostly waiting outside the building. The service over we strolled down to the Taimoro, who had camped under the shade of two large tamarind trees. These people seem to be extremely well-behaved, being willing to work hard for their living and seeking employment in every possible way. Their food for two days was only bananas boiled together with a little manioc—poor fare, but they seemed content. They go about in bands for trading and their trustworthiness seemed proverbial in these parts. They don't appear to carry any weapons save a spear and those they had plenty of. We asked the leader if we might hold a little service with them. At first they were all evidently very vexed at not being let go into the town. The happy thought occurred to me to ask if the old man had any pounded rice, and finding he had not, I went myself and procured a little from our store and gave it to him.

Suspicion and distrust immediately

vanished, and whereas before our "Praying" was only looked upon as something sent to them from the authorities, now they began to take an interest in things.

*Friday, September 11th.*—At Andranandriana we were greatly astonished at the clean appearance of the people, especially the women and children.

*Saturday, September 12th.*—The day was devoted to seeing the sick, thirty-two receiving relief, whilst there were others whom I could not assist. Among the patients it was very gratifying to see four or five Sakalava eager to obtain medicine. One stalwart young fellow, whom I advised not to drink or steal cattle, burst out passionately that if it was absolutely necessary he could abstain for two, three or six months or even a year, but that if he must never touch spirits again he would have nothing to do with the foreigner or his medicine, and he could on no account desist from cattle-stealing, for that is how he got his living, and how he hoped to become rich.

*Monday, September 14th.*—Early in the morning H. E. Clark seemed far from well, and it was not long before he was in a high fever, so that my time was spent going backwards and forwards from the sick natives to him. Soon after noon I had to close the dispensary as things were getting

serious with H. E. Clark, and it was not till after 6 p.m. that his temperature went down and my mind got a little easier.

*Tuesday, September 15th.*—As H. E. Clark was free from fever we decided to begin our journey. Starting on a journey of 200 miles with a sick man, three days of which is in an uninhabited country, with nothing procurable except grass, is not a pleasant prospect.

*Wednesday, September 16th.*—Things turned out better than we expected. H. E. Clark was able to travel at a moderate pace; the terrible climb of Marobiteika was accomplished in two hours.

*Monday, September 21st.*—We were unable to get beyond Moratsiazo, for two more men were down with fever; we expect that most will be in for it before we reach the Capital. H. E. Clark, however, continues to get stronger every day.

This journal ends abruptly as W. Wilson was taken ill with a severe attack of fever at this place, and was with difficulty got up to the Capital.

Five years later, late in May 1890, he started on a third journey to the Sakalava country, setting off from Antananarivo on horseback accompanied by a native

evangelist riding a donkey. This journey he considered his most successful attempt at gaining an entrance among those independent and untamed warriors, for he was to visit Itoera, king of the Sakalava, who had promised his evangelist to grant the missionary an interview. Great preparations had been made beforehand ; stores of attractive articles for barter had been packed, nails, needles, cotton, beads, native knives, and rough bay salt such as the missionaries ground down to use in their own cookery, and which was difficult to procure in the interior of the island ; presents, including an umbrella, had also been selected to carry to the king. The rice and other necessaries for the travellers' own use were to be bought in Mandridrano as they passed, and such outposts as came within their line of travel to be visited.

Away they rode in hope and bright expectations, and the journey thus filled with varied interest was pleasant and prosperous until they had reached to within a day's ride of the village where the Sakalava king was living. Early that day they arrived at a village whose chief was well known to the evangelist. This old man met and

welcomed them heartily, but as they rode past the huts they noticed that nearly every housewife was busy at her still, making native rum. An undercurrent of excitement pervaded the whole place, which increased as the day wore on, but it was early evening before the cause was revealed. About five o'clock appeared a wild and excited troop of men and animals, the men of the village who had been off on a raiding expedition returning with large booty. All was now given over to feasting and drunkenness. Cattle were killed, rum freely imbibed, and by ten o'clock the population was divided into two noisy factions, beating drums, quarrelling, losing all control of themselves. William Wilson and the evangelist, in their tent outside the village, were startled towards morning by the sound of firearms, and found, to their discomfort, that the ridge pole of their tent was serving as a target. Things were becoming too lively for repose, so they turned out to take precautions, not, as it proved, a moment too soon. The donkey had been speared to death, and a group of men were busily occupied in pulling out the mane and tail of Dick, the horse. One man had indeed

levelled his gun to shoot, and the unfortunate Dick would have died the death, had not the old chief opportunely arrived on the scene and knocked the fellow's gun up as he aimed.

The chief, however, begged William Wilson to leave the place, as it might be three days before he could restore order, and meantime serious harm might be done. Missionary and evangelist felt it right to accede to this reasonable request.

They turned homewards therefore, but were waylaid before they had gone far, and would have been robbed of their baggage had not the kindly old chief, suspecting evil designs, sent trusty men with them who dispersed the thieves. The travellers were obliged after this to confine their efforts to visits to villages on the border of the Sakalava country. Meantime at Antananarivo, nothing was known of William Wilson's movements, as during this entire journey Mrs. Wilson had been unable to receive any news from her husband. Her first intimation that he was safe and well, after six weeks of anxious suspense, came by his walking into the house

and giving with his own lips the details of his tantalizing expedition.

This closed W. Wilson's pioneer effort to reach the Sakalava, which was afterwards followed up by others in some degree. But with the exception of a few native evangelists who have made their way among them, little has yet been accomplished in winning these sturdy warriors, who still await the challenge of their divine Captain.



## CHAPTER VI

### AT THE OUTPOSTS

1888-1894

“THESE young people must have great hearts to remain in their strange home, so far away from kith and kin. But ‘this in the LORD’S doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes.’ . . . There is a vein of sturdy contentment that runs through their letters and makes them such good reading. Their words sound like the startling story of the hunter with all his difficulty and adventure, yet with a greater hope, the hope that they shall catch men.”

These are the words of their devoted friend, Mr. Wingfield. It is perfectly true that to some anxious breadwinners at home, facing the strain and competition of life, the proverbial troubles of the missionary with his competence and position assured, his interesting and inspiring career, may seem a little over-rated. No



*Photo. by]*

*[Dr. S. B. Fenn.*

HOUSE BUILT BY DR. WILSON IN MANDRIDRANO.  
Dr. Wilson and his little daughter Emmeline in corner verandah.

doubt there was much in his calling that must have appealed to a man of Wilson's calibre. Still there were elements that demanded very genuine self-denial, as the letters which follow will show.

The chief event in the year 1888 was the removal in May to Mandridrano. Upon this William Wilson writes :

We were not allowed to remain idle on our arrival at the new station ; and the welcome we received from all quarters was hearty and sincere. We arrived at a time when sickness was very prevalent, and so numerous were the applications for relief that it was with difficulty that we found time to get our house in order.

Early in July a little amusement was afforded to our native friends on the occasion of our "house warming." This is looked upon as indispensable in Madagascar when occupying a new house, and we felt disposed to indulge the native taste in this matter, as a little recognition of the warm welcome they had one and all given us. A magic lantern exhibition in the school-room, with singing of hymns and prayer formed the first part of the entertainment. Fruit and buns were distributed as our guests went away, and the few currants,

which were playing hide and seek in the latter, were the last mystery of a day of wonders. Some indeed would have none of them as they were sure they were only dead flies.

Our arrival in the country in May was a good time from the health point of view, but not from the housekeeping. It was impossible to buy milk or vegetables—not even potatoes, at that time of year. We bought our own cows, but the calves died, after which the cows refused to give their milk, and for some months we could scarcely get enough for our two children to drink. Flour was scarce, and had to be sparingly used. We had plenty of sago and tapioca brought out from England, and these boiled with water and some fresh fruit formed our only pudding for four months. We had no mutton and could only get beef once a week, unless we sent to a distant market for it, so that it was not difficult to tell the cook what he was to do, as it was generally rice and fowls for three meals each day. But through it all we were very busy and very happy. The station was close to a large market held every Monday, and we had many visitors, who were very unceremonious, and would walk into the house and come upstairs into the bedroom to find you.

FROM MRS. WILSON.

*September, 1888.*

My husband was always fully engaged with his work and patients, and I often had to go and fetch him home to a meal, as even breakfast was forgotten if he went out very early. Every other Saturday was looked upon as a holiday and, if fine, the whole family including servants often went for a picnic. When the rains came the garden occupied all our spare time; this and the collecting of waterfowl and other birds' skins were his chief, if not only forms of recreation. A nightly visit was always paid to the horses and cows to see that they were fed properly.

*Mandridrano, October, 1888.*

My husband has been building two cottage hospitals of two rooms each. One house is quite finished and already occupied. In one room is a man with double pneumonia, and in the other a boy with malarial fever.

Last night you would have been amused if you could have looked in upon us as we went round making sleeping arrangements for the night; we were sixty-five in number, and it was quite a work planning for all. In our house were my husband, baby and self in one room. Mrs. Johnson in our spare

room, Emmie with two servants in the nursery, two more servants on the landing upstairs. Razay, my assistant, in the bathroom ; downstairs our school teacher in the sitting room ; the husband of a sick woman with his two little girls in the study ; his wife, her mother and a little baby in the kitchen ; in our wash-house a family of eight with a baby that appeared to be ill with typhoid fever—and the rest located in five small houses on the premises.

One poor woman came in late last night in the midst of driving rain, in terrible suffering ; she has a poor little baby seven weeks old, I cannot tell you how tiny, but certainly a breakfast cup would cover its head and face easily. We are feeding it by the bottle, and it certainly does enjoy its food.

For the last three days we have scarcely been able to sit down for five minutes, what with making poultices, putting on hot fomentations, and giving medicine and food to the babies ! Our patients are all doing nicely and I feel quite rejoiced, especially as my husband has to go away for several days on church business, and will not be within reach as he is going a day's journey through the *efitra* to visit two Hova outposts where there are churches and schools.

FROM WILLIAM WILSON.

*Mandridrano, January 5th, 1889.*

Soon after settling in our new home in this recently established country station we felt the need for the erection of a few cottages in which we might nurse the sick. The buildings are of the simplest construction and consist of two small rooms, one for living in and one, about half the size, for cooking. One or two relatives accompany the sick and provide all the food. Of course when special food is needed like milk food, beef-tea, chicken-broth, etc., we have them cooked. All this is not done from choice, but from necessity.

One would like to have everything spick and span as in an English hospital, but we have not the means for one thing, and then too the people here in the country would not understand such scrupulous treatment. In the Capital there is always that mysterious dread in the patient's mind when going into the hospital that prevails so much in England. The isolation from all known friends seems more than can be borne, especially when the body is weakened by disease. This in the country would be quite fatal to the usefulness of a small hospital, none would come probably, so we have to give way a good deal to their prejudices and weakness, and strive to do what good we

can. A good deal can be done by insisting upon cleanliness, and by regular and systematic treatment.

I am hoping in a couple of months or so to have a trained nurse and her husband from the Analakely hospital.

In the first house we have a young man and his wife, the latter suffering from acute rheumatism ; she was quite unable to stand, and was suffering a good deal of pain ; she had been ill for more than three months before coming here, during which time all the native quacks near her home had taken her in hand and she only grew worse.

In such cases the usual native plan is to consult the diviner who now very generally sends them to try what can be done here. It is quite amusing the number of people sent to us in this way.

In the next cottage is a young man who has been wandering about and has come here as a last resource. He will require to be under treatment for some weeks, during which time I trust by God's help to point out to him the Saviour who came to save sinners, and of whom he seems to have little knowledge at present.

In the third cottage is the wife of one of the teachers in the district. She was brought in what appeared to be a dying condition, and at first my wife, who in my



absence had to turn doctor for the occasion, was at her wit's end to know how to restore consciousness. Her case is still a very serious one.

In the fourth house is a young slave boy who leaves us to-morrow. He had been badly gored by a bull, and the cottage hospital has been to him, under God's hand, the means of saving his life. Accidents of this sort are often happening in this cattle-rearing district, but seldom hitherto has a case been known to recover.

FROM MRS WILSON.

*Mandridrano, January 17th, 1889.*

We were obliged to let the last mail go to England without anything from us on account of the swollen rivers. There are no boats on many of the rivers, and the natives are afraid to swim them when they are full and the currents are strong.

We find it a great change from the capital, but we are getting used to it now. We are very glad to be here, and we already see signs of improvement amongst these people. They are very superstitious, and have a strong and strange belief in witches. They say there are not so many since we came to live amongst them, and they have a story, which many of them firmly believe,

that my husband goes about at night all over Mandridrano trying to catch witches. He had been seen coming home rather late once or twice which has no doubt given rise to the tale.

FROM WILLIAM WILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

*In the efitra, 34 miles west  
of Mandridrano.*

*January 11th, 1889.*

The above will need an explanation, else you will be puzzled to know what brings me here. The "Efitra" is the large uninhabited tract of country to the west of our district, in which are stationed a few military outposts. This one is the furthest off and is called Antamponala.

Some two months ago a large band of cattle-lifters made a raid on the place and succeeded in carrying off the whole of the cattle belonging to the poor wretches stationed here. There were at least four hundred and fifty head, exclusive of calves. What could the poor people do? They fought as well as they could, but were soon forced by the opposing numbers to retreat within their stockade. Here they were penned until all the beasts were driven off. The place had not been robbed for three years and consequently there was little suspicion or fear.

Without cattle it is almost impossible to work up the rice fields. This is on account of the tremendous growth of grass and weeds which I have seen a foot and a half high. This makes the labour of the spade something terrible, especially in swampy ground, so cattle are depended upon to tread down all this, and at the same time to tread the rice-ground to a soft pulp. The weeds then rot in a few days and the young rice plants are transplanted into the plots.

Knowing all this, I felt how badly off the poorer soldiers would be, who having no help would be obliged to leave their rice-grounds this year, and trust to chance and anything else that might turn up. By dint of persevering begging from one or another of my friends for the loan of a couple of bullocks or so, I got together about forty animals. When I first began I did not dare to dream of getting more than twenty. I brought the subject up at a meeting of the congregations of the district, and a little help was obtained in that way. Two young fellows volunteered to accompany me; others made a small subscription which amounted to about six shillings in all. All helped, so I think the year will get tided over without any very great hardship to anyone.

During the five days we have been here we have worked up something like twenty-four acres of land. The people are extremely grateful. It takes us practically two days to get home again, as the rains come on so early in the afternoon and one does not care to get drenched oftener than is necessary!

You will be glad to hear that the boy who was gored by the bull has made a splendid recovery. The wound looked very ugly at one time, and made me very discouraged, but care and patient attention have done much for him. He will have been in the hospital seven weeks. This is an instance that one cannot hesitate over—it meant certain death in a few days with fearful agony; but by God's mercy he has been saved. Had we had no place where he could have been nursed with quiet and perfectly free from all noise, he would humanly speaking have had no chance.

In another of the houses we had a whole family. The mother was brought in, more dead than alive, in severe pain which came on in paroxysms. There were complications arising from fever and malarial poison. With her came her little grandson with sub-acute bronchitis, and a little baby slave boy. All went out just before I left, but the little slave boy is to return when I get home.

In the third house are a teacher and his wife who crawled into the compound one day, having taken three days to get a short half-day's journey. They came utterly exhausted. However in three days they were bright and cheerful and left within the week, well and strong, cured for the time. You see this Malagasy fever is liable to return at any time and very generally when it is most inconvenient!

In the fourth cottage I left a young girl who was brought in for rheumatism. Fortunately it had not gone far when they brought her in, so I am in hopes of a quick recovery for her.

But perhaps the most striking to outsiders here was the case of the chief of police in a large village just a little to the north of us. The man, who is stupid and idiotic in many of his ways, had been ill for a few days, but either from idleness or by way of showing his importance, he did not himself come to me, but sent his subordinates with verbal messages as to his condition. This is of course very objectionable, and may lead to serious mistakes if not carefully guarded against. However I sent him some medicine. That same night his wife and friends seem to have had an anxious time of it, and gave him up for dying. Long before cock-crow next morning, the man,

helpless, but still retaining his reason unimpaired, was carried off to his own little property some six miles away. He is an influential man, takes a prominent part in all the affairs of the church, and is a member ; but this was too much for the little *real* Christianity he and his wife possessed,—someone was bewitching him—of this they were certain. When once the slender barrier of imperfect faith and trust in God had been broken down by the evil one, in rushed a whole flood of superstition and ignorance, made doubly worse, perhaps, by the little light that had once been allowed to shine.

I heard of his having been taken off in this way, and being unable to go myself, I sent two young fellows whom I could trust, gave them medicines and a few simple but efficient remedies to restore consciousness, and very decided instructions to have the man brought to me at any cost. The relatives were found performing all kinds of incantations and every kind of tomfoolery possible, of which they were heartily ashamed when seen, and were moreover very intractable about bringing the sick man to me. The day did not suit, since it was unlucky ! they dare not pass by certain roads ! and, what was downright untruth, there were no men to carry, they said ! By patience and determination

he was brought to us and on Christmas day left us well and strong.

His relatives were so sure of his death that they gave him out as dead, and made their preparations accordingly. This has been a lesson to them, as we were able to point them to the Master who has rescued them from their own folly and ignorance. May they go on to know more and more of His patience in dealing with us poor human creatures.

FROM WILLIAM WILSON.

*September 4th, 1889.*

Now for our patients. One a gun accident. There was a general jollification going on amongst the villages, because a small baby boy, the grandson of a wealthy man, had had his hair cut ; with Malagasy baby boys this is a great event, and festivities are indulged in according to the wealth of the parents or grandparents ; bullocks and pigs are killed and meat distributed ; guns are fired off (few things delight the native rustic in these parts so much as the blazing away of a little powder), and dancing and singing freely indulged in.

The slave who is our patient was standing over the carcase of a bullock when a shot was fired. The gun was loaded, unknown to its owner, with two iron balls. I was

naturally very chary to amputate the wounded arm, which was terribly shattered, and I am thankful I did not, as he is making good progress after five weeks in one of our cottage hospitals.

Two years were spent at Mandridrano, which were very happy ones. The work was progressing, the community becoming more and more settled; and the pretty home with its bright garden where the sweet English roses were tended alongside of the brilliant tropical flowers; the farmyard near, with all the animals and home pets; and the kindly, faithful servants made a real homestead of pleasant, Christian life.

After two years in this pleasant spot, the time came for furlough, and Wilson and his wife and their three children, for a baby boy, William Alexander, had just been added to their family, spent four years in England.

There were reasons for this long absence, among them the carrying out of the important plan of taking his M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. degrees. The necessary examinations and training were completed in the time, and Dr. Wilson was a qualified medical



man when he returned to Madagascar in 1894.

During this absence there had been many happenings in the Island. The first year was one of encouragement. Revivals of spiritual life took place in the Capital, first among the young people, and then all seemed to be sharing a fresh impulse of devotion and love. But while the workers were rejoicing in this encouragement, various disasters threatened and finally culminated in a tempest indeed.

The first thing was a terrible visitation of sickness, small-pox and influenza, which not only decimated the people but had a miserable result in driving them back to their pitiful heathen incantations and practices which proved as fatal as the diseases themselves. Floods, hurricanes, a conspiracy at the Capital and divisions in the native Church added to the general troubles; and in Mandridrano there were raids from the Sakalava, who carried away men, women and cattle, to the terror of those who were left. Then came a general conscription, which swept the schools, and frightened away many who were not laid hold of by the recruiting officers.

All these things were bad enough, but far worse was to come. A great anxiety hung over the people, owing to the political condition of the Island, and now the situation between the French and the Queen and her government was becoming more and more strained.

Finally matters came to a head. The French resident general, who had been sent at the close of the former Franco-Malagasy war, was recalled, and a special Mission was dispatched to the Malagasy Government with the threat of an expedition behind if they did not accept the ultimatum. There never seemed to be any serious attempt to come to terms, and after a week of formalities the French envoy hauled down the French flag and departed, and a time of suspense followed.

It was just at this juncture that Dr. Wilson returned. He and Mrs. Wilson and their baby boy, Basil, accompanied by Miss Ethel M. Clark, took passage on the *Hawarden Castle* and trans-shipped on to the *Pembroke Castle*, in the autumn of 1894.

Their other three children were left behind in England.

The following letter describes a day spent at Cape Town :—

*November 19th, 1894.*

One of our fellow passengers on the *Hawarden Castle* was a Mr. Pipkins. Having to stay in Cape Town for a few days on business, he proposed to take Miss Clark and ourselves for a drive.

By appointment we came up by train from our host's house at Rondebosch. We had expressed a wish for a "Cape cart," so we had one. They are like large dog carts, capable of holding nine people, including the driver; seats all facing the horses. They are very strong and somewhat heavy, and although only two-wheeled, two horses are put in; the weight is hung on to a cross-bar from the centre pole and carried from the horses' necks.

On long journeys with these Cape carts, when there is luggage, etc., they have four and six horses if the road is heavy, and the distances great. They all have hoods which are open at the sides and back.

The first part of the drive was by the coast. I ought to say at first that the whole of this road has been made by the Cape Government—almost entirely the work of the convicts. It runs round Table Mountain and is said to be one of the finest drives in the world.

The road in some places has been cut clean out of the sides of the mountain so that the sudden twists and turns are constantly giving you fresh views. In several of the bays the water looked most delightful.

We jogged on, rising higher and higher, the sea breakers booming away forty, fifty and a hundred feet below us, wave after wave, as blue as could be, dashing up apparently for our sole enjoyment. After fourteen miles of sea-coast scenery, the road turned inland over a narrow neck of land and down the other side of the bluff into the valley. The quietude and absence of all stir except of insect life was very marked. At the bottom, a mile away from our road, stretched a pretty vineyard with all the vines just coming into bloom; stretching up the valley on the opposite side was a row of one-storied labourers' (all darkies) cottages which from a distance had a snow-white appearance. All the houses are white, made so, somehow or other.

The wild geraniums grew in huge bunches, the size of gooseberry bushes, and were at their best, they and the wild gladiolus vieing with each other in their efforts to make the hillside gorgeous.

At times the blaze of colour was very fine. I was very much struck by the beauty and the quality of the gladioli. They

stood from two feet to two feet nine inches, (and some possibly higher) and on one I counted fourteen blooms well out together besides several buds still to flower.

The Cape heather was almost over, but there was one large *Erica* well out, also a beautiful crimson flower, the corollas measuring one-and-three-quarter inches in length! There were several very brilliant flowers, yellow, crimson and magenta, that looked like giant portulacas.

Soon after 11 a.m. we pulled up at the Royal Hotel, where the horses were taken out. As soon as the harness was off, halters were put on, and in the square they were allowed to refresh themselves with a roll, and when they rose to their feet all covered with sand, one or two lusty shakes soon shook it off again; then they frisked and capered about, heels in the air, as if they had just risen from their beds.

We had lunch, and strolled about this quiet nook called Hout's Bay. We did not stay on the beach for very long as the sand is so very *white*, not yellow and brown,—white silver sand, and very trying to the eyes.

We left again and had a very good climb for two or three miles, a lovely road, no shelter, but the hillside covered with wild flowers, all giving colour and beauty to the

landscape, and above all the towering hills rugged and rough in the extreme. They all seemed to be white granite ; in some places decaying granite, and so were very crumbly. At the top of the pass, we passed through a little ravine or kloof. The view from this point was very good. A well-wooded and well-watered valley, stretching away for twenty miles or so, full of vineyards and farmyards, and at the further end the fashionable suburbs of Cape Town.

We had driven round the Table Mountain. We did enjoy it, and certainly it was a drive to be remembered.

*Tamatave, November 26th, 1894.*

We landed yesterday morning and are thankful for all our many blessings. We were surprised to find that there were forty-two men waiting for us, sent down by our friends in the Capital.

They have come down in spite of all risks and we are off to-morrow with what luggage we can carry, and we shall leave the rest in the hands of our agents to send on as best they may.

In spite of the confusion of the country, the party arrived safely at the Capital, and were warmly welcomed by their friends.

It was not very long after their return to Madagascar that the father and mother, whose hearts were still sore at parting from their children in England, had to pass through one of the greatest sorrows of their lives.

The little Basil, whom they had brought with them, contracted malarial fever on the journey from the coast, and after days of high fever died shortly after reaching the Capital. He was laid to rest beside his little brother who had died eight years before.

For the first time Dr. and Mrs. Wilson were parted from all their children, and it was not till 1899 that their youngest child, Kenneth, came to gladden their home.

#### DR. WILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

*Antananarivo, December 27th, 1894.*

I am going now to see my old station in Mandridrano just for a few days. I am longing to see my people, and from all accounts they are wanting to see me.

I am anxious to get to work as time is getting on. There is a lot of work to be done at the Hospital with a great deal of teaching of the students there—hence I am

just paying this visit to see the work at the station in Mandridrano before settling down for three months' work at the hospital.

Through all this you will be wondering how things are here politically. Everything is extremely quiet, and for all we see or hear there might be no trouble hanging over this nation at all. All the missionaries in the interior go about their work as usual, and so far as we can see there will be very little stir. Indeed, my own conviction is that some arrangement will be come to by the French.

This hope of Dr. Wilson's was not to be realized. Before many months were over affairs in Madagascar had drifted to a crisis, resulting, after a brief and ineffectual struggle for Queen and nation, in the loss of their country to the French.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE THICK OF THE FIGHT

1895

THERE is nothing very heroic about the last stand of the Malagasy as an independent nation. The poor Queen had to contend with divided counsels amongst her nobles and a Prime Minister who had his own ends to serve. The people lacked enthusiasm, and the army was officered by men who were not all loyal to their country. There were vague superstitious hopes that the French would never reach the Capital; and, as a matter of fact, the five or six months' progress of their troops from the coast was a terribly fatal one. Forest and fever claimed thousands of victims. Eventually, however, they were within twenty-five miles of Tananarive.\* The lurid glare of the camp fires was seen on

\* After the French occupancy the name of the Capital was changed from Antananarivo to Tananarive.

the horizon at night-fall. The helplessness of the people was intensified. The women and children gathered night and morning to sing their *Mirary*, the plaintive prayer-song, that their fathers and sons might be spared from the enemy. The Queen, like Hezekiah of old, weeping and praying in her palace chapel, agonized over the useless bloodshed of her people.

Very little could be done in the city, for the schools were all closed, and the risk of bombardment was imminent. Shortly before the French arrived at the Capital, the missionaries from the various societies near gathered at the hospital, which was a little distance away, though it afterwards proved to be in the direct line of fire from French guns. Others remained at their posts, in the remoter country districts, among them Mr. and Mrs. Standing and Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of the Friends' Mission.

But even when the foe was close at their doors the Malagasy hesitated to surrender. In fact, it was on the hillsides round the Capital that the fiercest resistance was made. Hour by hour their flag still waved over the Palace. General Duchesne grew impatient and part of the French force was

sent round to a position that commanded the city. A shell was thrown from thence into the palace garden, where hundreds of nobles with their slaves were assembled. The awful explosion and havoc amongst them struck horror and despair amongst the survivors. The poor Queen could bear it no longer. She had long urged her advisers to make terms and save bloodshed. Crying, "My people are being slaughtered to no purpose," she insisted on her orders being carried out. The flag was lowered, and Madagascar owned her defeat. Very soon, two parties each bearing a white flag, one led by Prince Ramahatra, descended the steep road from the palace and made their way to the French camp. The General received them, and the French that evening entered the city along three lines.

This terrible day, the 30th of September, 1895, was never to be forgotten by the watchers at the hospital. By what they all believed to be a miracle, the shells and bullets flew over the roof of the building and did very little mischief beyond the nerve-shaking experience it could not fail to prove. The hospital was already full

with many sick folk, but it was shortly to be strained to its utmost capacity.

The story is further unfolded in the following letters.

DR. WILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

*The New Hospital,  
Isoavinandriana,  
May 12th, 1895.*

My work here at this large hospital is not quite what I expected to be doing when I left you all. The hospital can accommodate seventy-five or eighty patients, besides which we have a separate building for infectious cases to the number of twelve.

Part of the work, which needs a good deal of thought and preparation at times, is the care with Dr. Moss of some thirty students. These will be the doctors of the future, and, besides having a means of livelihood, they will with their medical knowledge be able to break down many customs of superstition that still have a deep hold on the country people and which still do untold harm.

We sadly miss the newspapers and periodicals which the French will not allow to come through the post at Tamatave. Here all our letters are read by some Malagasy official appointed by the government. So that necessarily the knowledge of this fact



HOSPITAL AT THE CAPITAL, MADAGASCAR

From Photograph taken in 1895 just after the arrival of the French. Dr. Wilson's house is indicated by a x on roof.

rather stifles any freedom of thought or feeling passing between us.

*Tananarive, July 8th, 1895.*

We had no news of any kind for eight weeks so were naturally very eager for the letters when they did arrive.

Many ladies have left, especially those with little children, as it was thought that for safety's sake they would be best out of the way.

*Tananarive, October 17th, 1895.*

You will, I know, be anxiously awaiting news of us.

Long before the French reached here our hands were full trying to make such arrangements as we could to accommodate both natives and Europeans who might wish to take advantage of our large premises.

During the whole time we have had over fifty sick in the hospital to attend to.

Even the mere detail of providing food during a possible state of siege takes time, when it means the feeding of over a hundred people a day. This included nurses and hospital servants as well as the sick. For months past it has seemed the right thing that five or six families of missionaries should prepare to retire here at any critical time.

You see we are just a little way out of the town, yet very close to the Capital. So, when the French got within twenty miles or so, this place became fairly full up. We had for three days twenty-one Europeans with their servants ; and on the Saturday night (the town was bombarded on September 30th, Monday), I was curious enough to take a census of those sleeping on the compound, and found that we numbered four hundred and eighty-three in all, the greater number of these being women and children, who had taken shelter with us.

We thought that our position was a favourable one, and so we stayed at our posts. When however the troops came up, it was all around us that the hardest fighting took place. Indeed, we could hardly have been in a more central position.

Three shells dropped and burst in the compound ; rifle bullets dropped there, but not very many, and yet no one was hurt or in the least injured, and no more property was injured than four tiles on the roof of the house of Miss Byam, the lady Superintendent, where part of a shell dropped.

Looking back on that day, Sept. 30th, our hearts almost sink within us to think of the danger that lay around us. The whizzing

of the shells above our heads, and the crack ! crack ! of the rifles close around was exceedingly trying.

Soon after the Hova flag was hauled down and all hostilities ceased, a message came to us from the French general, practically though politely requisitioning the hospital for the sick and wounded.

We were willing and pleased to do all that we could for the sick, and we still retain a good third of the hospital for the Malagasy.

Now we have, I think, the most heterogeneous collection of sick that any hospital ever contained—French, Algerians (black and white), Senegalese, Dahomians, Malagasy from out-lying tribes, followers of the French, and our own patients as usual.

The first night, with two hours' notice, we took in fifty-one wounded and provided thirty-five of them with mattresses on the floor. I cleared our large lecture-room on the ground-floor and put down a quantity of dry grass, and with mats over it, it served admirably for their sick black troops. The second night we had eighty to provide for ! It put us all to the test ; and for the first few days our chief trouble was the fact that our poor Malagasy servants found it very hard work



indeed to bring themselves to do things for the "enemies."

This we did not wonder at, but we had to overcome it, and now we are getting on very nicely.

The French medical men are genial and pleasant now that they are beginning to understand a little that "the Methodist Missionaries," as they style us, are not such a bad lot after all.

Amongst our Malagasy patients, we have only some seventeen or so wounded. The explanation of this is clear. The great majority of the people took their wounded off and fled into the country as far as they could go, as they fully believed there would be a general massacre. Not only so, but we were so close to the main body of the French, that many were too much afraid to come to us.

It is our first experience of wounds from shells and bullets, and I trust in some ways it may be the last.

Our patients are all doing well now, however. I wish I could say the same of the French sick and wounded. The latter die off very rapidly, and their casualties from malarial fever and dysentery must be very heavy indeed. I believe I am near the truth when I say that out of twenty thousand troops and followers

they have lost six thousand from sickness alone.

The percentage of wounded is very small, as very little fighting has taken place. All agree that the hardest fight was just round the Capital.

The bloodshed was very little to what it would have been had the Malagasy held out much longer. Now the settling down and the arranging of the details of the administration is going on. The old Prime Minister has been put on one side, and another man put in his place.

A short breathing space followed after all these excitements. The missionaries returned to their usual routine, which had only been left for the briefest period. The Capital, where the people had been too distracted and terrified to think of anything but the impending calamity of war and defeat, now put on quite a gay and busy aspect. The smart uniforms of the French mingled with the lambas of the crowd which thronged the streets. Trade was busy, colleges and schools re-opened.

But, as historians teach us, there is often a terrible return of trouble after the close of a war. The frenzied and miserable people, feeling vaguely their humiliation, wreaked

their vengeance in their own blind and desperate way, and many considerations served to raise the storm in poor Madagascar.

They had been betrayed by their Ministers, and as they thought deserted and punished by their gods. They must now do something to repair the mistakes of the past, and drive out the foreign faith and the foreigners themselves from their midst.

The whisper spread, "Christianity has brought this trouble."

The tragedies of the next few weeks it is then easy to understand. We remember the awful excesses of the Commune in France, and of the Boxer rising in China, each in its way a blind reaction after a time of disaster. How much more can we understand the bewildered fury of the child-like Malagasy? And understanding, one can forgive, for as we are told, "tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." But alas, nothing could stay the anguish, the heartbreak, the disappointment, that love and life poured out for others could meet with so terrible a requital.

The country districts were in a turbulent and unsettled condition. Among the rest-

less clans there was a very large and powerful one called the *Zanak'antitra*, who were devoted to their idol god *Ravololona*.

When, in the year 1869, the worship of idols had been forbidden by law and idols publicly burned, the warriors of the *Zanak'antitra* stood aghast. Christianity, which to many of them was little more than a name, had taught them little, and they felt that nothing now could deliver them from the spears and bullets of their enemies.

So if the precious idol was buried for a time it was soon resuscitated, and secretly, or in times of dire trouble, as sickness or war, openly worshipped. No wonder that the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, who were working with tender love and patience amongst this difficult people, seemed to meet with a cool and indifferent response.

The Government could no longer assert order. Moreover, there were fears as to what further ills might befall them as a conquered people. Their families might be sold; their warriors murdered, as was the custom between tribe and tribe on the Island. As time went on, irregular armed bands of excited men wandered from village to village threatening mischief and

displaying the charms of their great heathen god.

The missionaries however knew, they thought, the devotion of their people, and they trusted them. Though repeatedly warned by faithful Christian natives they refused to leave their country stations and go into the city.

These then were the conditions when some six weeks after the fall of Tananarive Dr. Wilson received a message telling him that the wife of one of these country missionaries, Mrs. Standing, was suffering severely from fever. Mr. and Mrs. Standing and their three children were living in Mandridrano, the old home of the Wilsons. The journey involved risk ; of that there was no doubt, but Dr. Wilson was ready to face it.

Before starting he scribbled a note in haste to his wife who was not at home at the time. "How far I get on towards Mandridrano to-day," he says, "I do not know, but I mean to have a try for a long run." How long that run was to be neither he nor his trusty little horse, Merrylegs, had any idea, as they set off in the dark on the morning of the 22nd of November and

made their way through the sleeping villages in the direction of Arivonimamo, the station of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, which he would have to pass on his way and where he intended to breakfast.

What followed may be gathered from his own words extracted from an official report written at the request of the Acting Vice-Consul, Mr. T. P. Porter.

Nothing of note occurred on the way, nor indeed did I notice anything out of the ordinary until I reached Ambohimpanompo (a mountain about five miles from Arivonimamo). I had nearly arrived at the summit of the pass over this mountain, when a woman in an excited manner warned me not to proceed, as she said two neighbouring clans were waging war upon one another.

On rounding the summit of the hill at 8.45 a.m. I was astonished to see an enormous crowd of people in and around the mission compound, and the school room and the cottage hospital in flames.

It was the market day of the district and usually by that hour the market place would have been crowded. As it was, very few indeed were there, but the country side in all directions was studded over with groups

of people intending to go thither, but evidently afraid of what was happening.

Without hesitation I pushed on, thinking that any help at such a time would be acceptable to my fellow missionary.

On reaching a small stream about five or six minutes' easy ride from the mission house, I was met by a young man who knew me. He at once implored me to return with all possible haste as my only chance of safety lay in immediate flight. This I refused to do, and went forward but he would not let me pass.

His statement that Mr. Johnson had just been killed was confirmed by another man, who at that moment joined him. My friend begged me to retire a little distance off until the house had been looted, and when the gang of thieves had cleared off he hoped we might be able to go and look round.

On gaining some higher ground I saw a long line of men and women carrying away furniture from the house. I was not long left in doubt as to the danger I was in, for I heard a hue and cry raised, and presently I saw six or seven men armed with long knives coming straight for me. At the same moment the little group of men that had gathered round to render me some assistance, suddenly dispersed.

Then follows the experience of a lifetime.

Merrylegs had already travelled twenty-seven miles that morning, when Dr. Wilson turned him round with his pursuers close behind. A muddy ditch lay in his path with rice-fields on both sides. For some time the pony refused to take the ditch; at last he took it with a plunge and floundered through the rice-field and on to the hillside. But time had been lost, and the men who had already shed blood and were thirsting for more, gained on him. At one time they were only six or eight yards away. They yelled "Azonay, Azonay!" "We have him now!" And indeed, if they had taken up stones, a very common mode of attack, they could easily have stunned him. But Dr. Wilson knew a little-used road up the hill, and fortunately the pony gained on the rebels, as he galloped up the rough path; and after four or more miles of hot pursuit (for the Malagasy are splendid runners) they gave up the chase. They had however captured two men who were with Dr. Wilson and robbed them of all they had, including his umbrella and handbag.

Meanwhile what were the terrible events



that were taking place just below in the peaceful missionary home ?

About half past seven o'clock on that radiant summer morning, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and their sweet little daughter, "Blossom," who was just over five years old, were about to sit down to breakfast. They were almost alone in the house, and it must have been with some tightening of heart that the parents and their all-unconscious little one prepared for their last meal, for earlier in the morning a faithful native evangelist had galloped up on horseback with alarming news. Some hundreds of armed and furious men who had already come into collision with troops sent down from the Capital, were on their way to the missionary home. He implored Mr. and Mrs. Johnson to escape. "It is not our place to fly," was Mr. Johnson's calm answer. "But all of you go," he said to the natives and servants of the household; and all fled except one faithful servant woman, and a sick student who hid himself in the roof.

Then on this strange tension of calm broke the storm. The shouts of the excited rabble drew nearer, they rushed into the

compound, poured over the garden which loving hands had made beautiful, and dashed into the house.

And then it was proved that the courage which had had for many years its stay in the Unseen, the tender love which had borne so long the burden of these dark souls, did not fail in this hour of bitterest need. We know something of the horror of what followed. We know how first the husband was struck down and killed, that the devoted native servant tried to save her beloved lady and the dear little girl, and that when they too lay murdered among the trees she covered them with her own lamba.

These things we know. We do not know what springs of heavenly power were given at this moment, what unseen ministerings, as life ebbed away, what comfort, as the mortal, in mortal weakness and suffering, was merged in immortality.

We know that in that furnace these three were not alone, and they were not forsaken.

We must now go back to Dr. Wilson, who had just outdistanced his pursuers and, safe for the moment, but full of grief and foreboding, reflected what he could do to

help his friends, if help could still be given them. Continuing the report from which we have already quoted he says :

I retired to a village called Fonenana, about nine miles away, the people of which were well known to me, and where I received the kindest treatment. Here I stayed and procured food for myself and horse, and gathered such information as I could glean from passers by.

By sundown I had persuaded a few young fellows, including two of our teachers, to accompany me back to the mission station. I started on foot disguised as a Malagasy, intending if possible to see for myself what had actually occurred. Above all I hoped to find Mrs. Johnson and the child still alive, as up to that time I had no certain information of their deaths. There were eight of us altogether, and it was thought best that three of our number should go on ahead and report any possible danger, as discovery would have certainly meant death to the whole party. We had not proceeded far before we found that my presence in the neighbourhood was known and the utmost caution would be necessary.

On our way we met a dozen or more men, carrying doors, windows, flooring boards, and other timber which they had procured

from the house. They were known to one of our number, so we ascertained from them that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and their child had been murdered early in the day, and that the mission house and all the adjoining buildings had been stripped of everything it was possible to remove, even to doors and door frames, window sashes, etc.

After walking about nine miles and finding it impossible to reach the station without being discovered, we deemed it prudent to return. The three spies also ascertained that the bodies had been buried close to the house by some of the servants.

It was 12.30 a.m. when we arrived at the village where I had left my horse. Here I hoped to obtain a few hours' rest, but at 2.30 a.m. two of my friends came to report that word had been sent all over the eastern portion of the district to waylay and kill me wherever I might be found; and that all the roads leading to the Capital were to be guarded at daybreak. This necessitated my leaving at once. Every village and hamlet had to be carefully avoided, so my friends led me by some roundabout paths and thus enabled me to escape.

Travelling all night, avoiding the roads, and cautiously cutting across ditches and rice-fields, Dr. Wilson with one trusty

servant reached Tananarive after these thirty hours of stress and strain, involving in actual exertion about fifty miles on horseback and eighteen on foot. Here the missionary party thankfully greeted him.

A second narrow escape from the rebels is recorded in the following letter.

DR. WILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

*Tananarive, November 27th, 1895.*

Little did we know how the evil had spread, and to what an extent the rising had maddened the people. And so innocently enough we made preparations for going down to Arivonimamo, to recover if possible the remains of our loved friends.

My fellow missionary, J. F. Radley and I at once prepared to leave again early on Sunday morning and follow the French troops, whom the authorities were sending down. That there would be any fighting never entered our thoughts. The natives had shown no fight against the French, so we concluded (wrongly enough I admit now) that there was no fight in them. Not so however. The whole place was aroused. The older and still heathenish people were only too glad to have a chance of re-establishing idol worship, and they at

once revived an idol that used to be sacred to the tribe. When the French troops advanced they soon found themselves confronted by about three thousand men armed with knives, clubs and a few guns, but with an enthusiasm born of desperation and revengefulness which would compensate to a large degree for the enormous inferiority in weapons.

Mr. Radley started early in the morning and followed close on the troops. I had several things here at the hospital to see to and wished to complete the arrangements for our return journey, so did not leave till mid-day. However, about 4.30 p.m., as I was just on a hill not far from the camp, we were startled by someone running away. Soon we had to look to ourselves, for we noticed some very suspicious movements on the part of some twenty or more people. These ultimately proved to be insurgents who had closed round the troops and having seen me had divided into three parties and attempted to cut us off. Indeed they nearly succeeded, and we had a race for life again. This time I was being carried by bearers, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I prevented them from utterly deserting me. Tired as I was I kept on my legs for about a mile, and it proved the most exhausting race I have ever had. Oh!

how I wished for my trusty Merrylegs! However, it is over now. I slept that night at a village just a few miles out of town, as it was dark and raining when we arrived there. All that afternoon (Sunday) and Monday the French troops were fighting—some three thousand people attacked them again and again, all of whom were trusting in the power of this idol which they had exalted. The keeper of this thing put himself on some high ground away to the west, and all who went to fight were sent to him to be sprinkled with “holy water” from this idol. This made them “bullet-proof,” so they said. Hence their heavy charges right in the face of a heavy fire from repeating rifles! The French officers acknowledge frankly that there was no fighting at all comparable to it all the way from the coast to the capital!

To the grief for the dead was added anxiety for the living. It will be remembered that the journey of Dr. Wilson on that eventful day was taken to try and reach Mrs. Herbert Standing, the sick wife of another missionary, who lived at Mandridrano. These days were terrible ones for them. The same messenger who bore the news of the death of their dear

friends, brought also an urgent warning that they must flee at once as they would almost certainly be the next to be attacked. This was a serious undertaking with three little children and a sick wife. But with great calm the arrangements were made ; letters were written to the children in England, and as soon as it was dark, with blackened faces and native dress they crept out and left the home they never expected to see again. With a party of trusty servants and a few friends, fifteen in all, they made their way to distant villages, fleeing from one to the other, lying in an upper room during the day and facing the stormy nights, finding their way by flashes of lightning or stooping to feel the steps on the steep roads. Often the slightest sound might mean discovery and instant death.

After days of intense strain the crisis of danger seemed over and they turned their faces home again, and to their joy found that nothing had been injured, though the peril had been a very real one, and their escape at one time seemed to their friends, anxiously waiting for news in the Capital, as almost impossible. Great was therefore the comfort and joy when they eventually



made their way thither, joining an escort of some hundred soldiers and experiencing many trials on the road. Some of their friends in the other missionary societies had however yet more exciting and painful experiences, though their lives were spared.

The time of testing had come to the little band in Madagascar, and they found their Lord did not forsake them ; living or dying they belonged to Him.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RECONSTRUCTION

1896-1900

THERE are many sides to the history of the next few months in Madagascar. It was a complex situation. On the one hand a weak, irregular native government was exchanged for the disciplined rule of one of the first nations of the world. At the Capital this soon showed itself. Many abuses were remedied, reforms were set on foot. One fine event was the abolition of slavery accomplished by a veritable *coup d'état* of M. Laroche, who, during his last days of office, shut up the printers in the palace till they had finished printing the necessary decrees. The decrees were published on Sunday, the 27th of September, 1896, and the next day he was superseded by General Gallieni.

But though schools were re-opening and order was superficially observed there was a

ferment of unrest away from the Capital. The resistance in the Imano district was more desperate during this time than any that had been made by the Malagasy in the defence of their country. There is something pathetic in the fact that they were fighting for their old religion ; it was for them the last stand of paganism. This poor people endured the loss of Queen and country, but clung with returning zeal to their old customs, and feeble charms ; a strange, perverted loyalty to a perverted faith, a faith that in worthier causes and with holier ends has built up the churches throughout the ages.

The unsettlement in the country districts was so dangerous that the missionaries stayed in the capital. They however did from time to time make short visits to some of the old stations. One memorable visit was paid to the scene of the late tragedies. The moment was favourable for a remarkable demonstration.

A reaction in favour of the foreign " Praying " was in the air ; and on a platform, erected among the ruins of the devastated home of their friends, the missionaries again appealed to the consciences of the

people. A few days later, with honour and great reverence, the remains of the martyred family were conveyed to their resting-place in Tananarive, the procession which accompanied in sorrow and remorse numbering thousands before they entered the Capital.

But long months and years followed before the effect of this dark time passed away. The situation was extremely difficult, and blow after blow fell upon the different missions.

The French Protestant Mission sent a deputation to the Island with excellent results. Not, however, so acceptable or helpful was the return of Jesuit priests whose efforts caused serious complications. And a great calamity befell the medical mission when they were required by the French Government to give up their large and valuable hospital with other mission buildings to the ruling powers.

Notwithstanding these many trials to themselves personally, to their work and to their faith, the missionaries bravely pressed on and apparently did not

. . . bate one jot  
Of heart or hope.

But if we would attempt to realize something of the darkness of this time we must remember the great strain on strength and nervous energy, the crushing disappointment to their faith in the native character, and the inward questioning as to whether all the wealth of love and life was going to be poured out in vain on behalf of this unhappy people. But Dr. Wilson never lost faith in them and if there are occasional signs of such thoughts in the letters of the period, they do not contain one word of anything but renewed determination to gather up all the energies that were left to help back this poor nation to its Saviour.

The story of reconstruction is continued in the following letters.

DR. WILSON TO WATSON GRACE.

*Tananarive, May 25th, 1896.*

The hospital work continues pretty much as usual as far as the Malagasy are concerned ; but we have had a great run of Europeans of all sorts and nationalities.

First of all we had a host of miners, fellows hardy and tough, who had flocked up here from Johannesburg in the hope of getting work. Many of them hoped to make their

fortune straight away, and did not bring a *sou* with them. After walking up from the coast in the rainy season of course all got fever, and we have had some twenty of them at different times in hospital.

Some were very bad indeed and most that came in were impecunious. Still we have done them a very good turn, and on the whole we have not lost by it.

Yes! the committee has been loading me pretty well of late; Arivonimamo forty-seven churches; Mahabo eleven churches; Ambohitantely town congregation; North Ankaratra to come to me in a few weeks! These items besides work at the hospital! Can it be done?

Here above all we miss William Johnson's beneficent influence! Ah! such a loss too. I am glad to say however that on all sides the people have come and told me how glad they were that I had come to them.

TO THE SAME.

*Tananarive, July 9th, 1896.*

We are busy cleaning and whitewashing the hospital. It needs it especially where the black troops have been. By the filthiness of some of the walls you would think the black came off every time they touched them! They are dirty fellows, these

Dahomians! . . . The political situation is not a pleasant one. J. F. Radley was practically escorted down country by soldiers, and now J. Sims and wife will come up under their protection.

*Tananarive, August 9th, 1896.*

Our position at the hospital has been a trying one lately. We have been in serious danger for several nights now. On Wednesday night we were all called up before 3 a.m. as an attack was imminent.

A band of marauders, which has been constantly increasing in number, attacked a village only three miles away and was reported to be coming on here.

Our position was a serious one, as this hospital is peculiarly unsafe if an attack was made upon us. . . It is dreadful that nearly ten months after the French occupation the country is in almost every way in a worse condition than it was before the termination of the war. Especially has discontent and rebellion increased during the last two months.

The marauders are daily increasing. . . Only last night news came from Arivonimamo that a band of men had entered the district from the north and that some six or seven of our churches were burnt by them.

## TO THE SAME.

*Medical Mission Hospital,  
August 23rd, 1896.*

You will be glad to hear that up to the present the district of Mandridrano has not joined the rebels. They have remained firm as a whole—only two villages on the north border joined some outlaws from a distance and made an attempt upon the Governor and his followers. However they did not effect anything, and two of the worst characters were caught and are now in prison.

I have not myself the slightest fear of the people there, and I would at any time trust myself there far sooner than here in town. I know them and they know me, and up to the present they have justified the confidence I have placed in them.

The rebels in the north and east are still as bad as ever, and all goods from the coast have to come up under military escort.

My wife has been helping Miss Hinchliffe to examine the schools of the Near District. They have been out two or three times a week, and although some of the long distances were rather trying I think they have done very satisfactorily.



Notwithstanding all sorts of rumours at times, they kept steadily at work, and never found any cause for regret, and not the slightest molestation.

A great blow fell upon the Medical Mission in Madagascar, when the English hospital was requisitioned by the French military authorities in November, 1896.

The Medical Academy which for ten years had been carried on by the English and Norwegian doctors was broken up. This work appealed very much to Dr. Wilson, and in writing home he says :

The Medical Mission Academy has been closed, but the good that it has accomplished in the past, in the training of more than thirty native medical men, who, scattered over the country far and wide, are to-day bringing relief to thousands of suffering creatures, is in itself a splendid memorial to its work.

After the taking of the hospital by the French, Dr. Wilson went to live in Tananarive, and busied himself with dispensary work, visiting European and Malagasy patients in their own homes and doing medical work in the country.

Dr. Wilson writes in December, 1896 :

Much time is taken up with visiting patients about town, and I find that my visits to and consultations with my European *clientèle* number eight hundred.

This work is very much after the character of an ordinary private practice.

During my hurried visits to the country I have seen and treated one thousand four hundred patients, and although I have never forewarned the people of my coming it has always been as much as I could do to cope with the work ; the news quickly spread that I was about, and early and late my doors were literally besieged.

Another very pleasant part of my work has been the gratuitous distribution of medicine, specially prepared and sent to missionaries and evangelists in distant places for the poor and suffering.

In many districts, owing to the rebellion of last year, food has been very scarce, and the people in consequence have been forced to subsist on roots and leaves, and they have only too easily fallen victims to disease.

Of the dispensary work Dr. Wilson writes :

When the work in the country necessitated my leaving town, my place was always taken by my native assistant, Dr. Raso-

manana. I should like to record here the great service he has rendered our Mission especially in this respect. He has by steady work and kindly manner thoroughly won the respect of those attending our dispensary and, as I am not unfrequently called off to attend to urgent cases, I am able to feel that everything will go on as usual.

By this time the French Government had a competent staff of medical men of its own in Tananarive, so Dr. Wilson felt very thankful that he was able to continue his work without hindrance.

“This,” he says, “was undoubtedly due to the courtesy and consideration of the Governor-General, General Gallieni, and his officers both in town and country.”

On two distinct occasions he was asked to co-operate with the Government in measures undertaken by the sanitary authorities. His assistance was asked when smallpox was prevalent in and around the capital; and again when the plague was discovered at Tamatave and it became advisable to improve to the utmost the sanitary conditions of Tananarive in case of any serious outbreak, he was

invited to unite with the government medical officers in the task of inspection. For this a certain quarter of the town was allotted to Dr. Wilson, and he felt glad of the opportunity thus given him of rendering a service to the State and at the same time visiting the people in their homes with so good an object in view.

His heart however was in the country districts, and he was glad when an opportunity arrived to pay them a visit.

TO WATSON GRACE.

*Mandridrano, March 28th, 1897.*

We arrived here none too soon I assure you. The people are a little grieved and sore at our long absence from them, but in time I think they will get all right again. They have not been afraid of us. We have had presents, nineteen fowls, two turkeys, forty-nine eggs, a great deal of rice, etc. This does not look as if the folk had lost affection for us.

We had a small examination of the children that Rasamoely has been teaching, and it was surprising how well they answered. He certainly has taught them well and quickly too. I am delighted.

Dr. Wilson then refers to the Catholic influence here and elsewhere, but adds :

So far, however, religious liberty has been fairly well proclaimed. The people have become more emboldened to believe in it, although in the more distant places they do not understand it, yet they accept the fact that they will not be molested if they remain Protestant.

*Tananarive, April 12th, 1897.*

I returned yesterday from Mandridrano and the west. J. C. Kingzett and I went down together. No large meetings or indeed gatherings on any scale at all, but just going into a village and being content with quiet unostentatious talk with the people, dealing out encouragement to them and explaining the altered condition of things. Our visit was well-timed, and the people were simply delighted to see us.

The compulsory teaching of French will for a time throw general education back rather, but we shall not spare ourselves in the effort to keep up our schools to their former efficiency. The need of our mission is more men for our country districts.

God grant us His grace to keep our hearts ever aglow with His love for souls, and I have little fear for the result.

## TO THE SAME.

*Tananarive, April 13th, 1897.*

The feelings of thankfulness and praise that the station in Mandridrano is still preserved to us, so well up in my heart that I cannot refrain from giving expression to them. This especially comes over one when on the return journey in passing by Arivonimamo the ruins of our house stare one in the face.

When I had a few quiet moments free from visitors, which I assure you were rare, as the delight of all people to see me amongst them was touching, I quietly strolled round and took stock of all the earth-works thrown up to protect the houses. I was astounded as they must have entailed a very great deal of work. The bank was about nine feet high and had a double line of trenches outside it, the spaces between which and the approaches to the trenches were thickly planted with prickly pear. There the whole thing stands, a memorial to the energy and forethought and devotion of our teachers and adherents.

All the organization which existed through more than three months was carried out by Doctor Ramorasata, who was the leader and soul of the whole movement, and his untiring energy has kept the place intact. He worked night and day only

being able to snatch moments for sleep during the daytime.

I unhesitatingly say that to him far above any one else do we owe our station at Mandridrano. But for him the whole place would have been destroyed, as time and again the most determined efforts were made by the rebels to set fire to the houses. Not only so but the whole district was, by his enthusiasm, saved from joining in a futile and heathenish rebellion. For it is here that the whole movement centred. It was those who abandoned their trust and belief in the "Praying" that made their attacks upon what they considered to be the stronghold of Christianity, *viz.*, the station, to them the outward and visible sign of a system which they refused to accept because they knew little of all that it meant.

The whole thing is an answer to those who scoff at the Malagasy Christians, and say that they cannot do anything for us in times of difficulty.

#### DR. WILSON TO HIS MOTHER.

*Mandridrano, August 9th, 1897.*

I am afraid you will wonder why you have not received a letter lately. We heard that one set of mails, by which we sent you

a long letter, was recently thrown away by the carriers when passing through the forests.

We came out here some time ago and when the last letters were sent out we were at a village where we were trying to build up some new work. To push things on a little we have been establishing some new schools for the senior scholars of our village schools under the name of "Écoles Supérieurs," which we hope to make the centre of small districts so that we can the better cope with our large districts of over one hundred and forty schools and congregations. We stayed a week at one such centre, a place called Amboniriana; "above the falls" is the meaning of the word, referring to a weir just at the foot of the hill or knoll on which the village stands.

It was rather cramped kind of work living there, when one room about seventeen feet by fifteen had to serve as bedroom, sitting-room and dining-room, consulting-room and dispensary, and general meeting-room for all who came to see us. Still our wants were not very numerous and we existed there very well. We generally felt very tired and dusty and grimy as the fine dust from the red earth walls and floors was always on the go.



Our chief teacher is a fine, earnest, capable fellow, and wins his way with the people splendidly, and has a way of attaching to himself the older scholars which enables him to deal with them personally.

Nearly all our travelling is now done on horse or mule-back. Since the slaves have been liberated it has become increasingly difficult to procure bearers without engaging them some time before, and wages too have risen more than a hundred per cent. The French too have made travelling easier by insisting on good roads being made to connect all the principal towns and villages.

We are in our old home once more and amongst our own folk so to speak.

To-day was the large weekly market, when people gather from all parts round, and the greetings and salutations that went on were quite bewildering.

The poverty-stricken condition of the people from the adjacent districts which were over-run with the rebels is most pitiable. During all these years in Madagascar I have never seen anything like it.

There have been two fairly severe earthquakes since our arrival. One night I counted five shocks, quite strong enough to rattle the doors and windows fairly violently.

A few nights ago we were awakened to find that the house of our evangelist, who is living on the station, was quite burnt down. Fortunately we had a great number of students on the premises, and they saved nearly all the things in the house.

DR. WILSON TO WATSON GRACE.

*Mandridrano, August 8th, 1897.*

I know you will be on the look out for a letter telling of our visit here.

My wife and I got off on Wednesday afternoon, July 21st. We only had a short stage to Miss Hinchliffe's old station at Ambohimiadana where we spent the first night.

Next day we reached Arivonimamo. It was the first time my wife had seen the place since the terrible disaster of '95. It is always a shock to one's feelings to see desolation and ruin where one has been wont to see a flourishing station and to associate with the place all the kindness and love which always awaited those who were fortunate enough to visit the Johnsons. Still the brightness and true Christian example of that home of the three dear ones can never be forgotten.

During our stay there we organized a few sports for the scholars of the four adjacent

schools. It was great fun, and the races—three-legged race, egg and spoon race, blind-fold race, long race for older scholars, about half a mile, together with other things that were quite new to them—were greatly appreciated.

The prizes too were eagerly competed for, and our stores of things from the Missionary Helpers' Union made many a heart glad that day. Indeed the delight of the recipients was worth seeing. One or two dolls were especially the delight of the crowd and were carried off as great trophies. Lest any should be disappointed, all who did not obtain prizes were presented with a bright new "two centimes piece" (a little less than a farthing) and all went home happy and delighted with the day's outing.

Before leaving, however, the inevitable meal of rice and meat was served out, and including parents we fed some five hundred people. It all entailed a great deal of work, but the pleasure it gave was worth it all.

On the following Tuesday we came on here. It is deplorable to see how much damage the rebellion has done in these parts, and those who remained loyal to the French through it all are reaping the benefit, and making money fast.

To-day, Sunday, August 8th, we were greatly pleased with the gathering of Sunday

School children from the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of the station. Some four hundred children were gathered together, and repeated texts both in French and Malagasy. This feature of our work gives me great encouragement.

Our station school is in good order. We have some eighty or ninety scholars in regular attendance.

I have been putting in the foundations of the walls of a new church. During the rebellion this church was allowed to go to ruin all for the want of a little repairing, and when the heavy rains came two walls fell and brought the roof down with them.

By visiting amongst the people I persuaded them to put up fresh walls, and in order to somewhat lessen the work, as the building season has so far advanced, we decreased the size of the place. It was a great work getting them started, but by dint of working myself, very soon several got spades and began to move and carry stones and do other work, and in a few hours we had a good deal done.

Our good Governor, General Gallieni, is anxious for us to undertake a mission to the Sakalava, and says he is willing to help us. He sees that where we go the place progresses; and it is a fact which cannot

be gainsaid that the little district of Mandridrano is now practically supplying the whole of Imerina with rice, or at least nearly so. Yes, the very rice that was planted during and in spite of the rebellion. It was planted amidst tremendous difficulties, the people having to take it in turns to go to the rice fields whilst the others stayed and kept watch against the rebels.

*Tananarive, May 27th, 1898.*

I have got my garden started at Amboniriana. I have a plot of nine and a half acres which contains a variety of ground, some good and some but poor, and I am now endeavouring to obtain a concession (the government grant land good and bad alike at two francs an acre, absolute freehold) of fifty acres or so for some Malagasy to start on—a few who are anxious to rear stock. They will have to begin in a small way at first. Any way our aim is to find profitable employment for a number of our people.

My difficulty is that I am superintending and directing a garden forty miles away. But I am most fortunate in having a native evangelist who is really fond of gardening, and has a taste for it. Indeed it is only because I can count on his services that I am bold enough to undertake it at all.



VILLAGE OF AMBONIRIANA.  
Forty-two miles west of the Capital, Madagascar.

*Tananarive, November 26th, 1898.*

You will be glad to hear that I got my school-room roofed in safely before the rains came down. It will be a very nice place and is now nearly finished, but as I have already rather exceeded the grant which the committee made I shall have to leave one item undone for a little while—and that is the glass for the windows. But the whole thing is one of great encouragement to me, because the people themselves have so largely contributed to the expense, not only in subscriptions but also in labour given freely and willingly; and without such help of course the place could not have been erected. How I long to get out to the people and make our home amongst them!

The missionary overshadowed the doctor in the character of William Wilson, and we are glad to find that this hunger of spirit for the souls of men, this soldier's energy to be at close quarters with the work was soon to be gratified. Arrangements were made for him and his wife to open a permanent station at Amboniriana, a centre where there were already some twenty-four congregations. It was in a line with the other country stations between their late

home in Mandridrano and the old home of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson at Arivonimamo. At this time throughout the districts that had been harried by the rebels the building of churches and schools was going on apace. The people vied with each other in helping on the good work and furnished in some cases the material, so anxious were they to have their old friends back again.

Here then, on the somewhat bare uplands of the little native village, they once more started an English home. There is an unmistakable ring of good spirits now running through the home letters which testifies to the satisfaction at the change of life. Fortunately no cloud of speedy separation from the beloved land, which was far nearer than anyone then imagined, marred the sunshine of their arrival in their new home.

Dr. Wilson was ably helped by a fresh comrade, Albert F. Pim, who joined them at the station a week after their arrival.

DR. WILSON TO WILLIAM A. CADBURY.

*Amboniriana, November 11th, 1899.*

We left town on Tuesday last after a very busy time in packing up and finishing



off all the odds and ends that accumulate in one's hands when the time comes to move.

We slept two nights on the road, as the first day we only went about seven miles to one of our stations. Thence a six hours' ride brought us to Arivonimamo.

It is here that we are re-building the mission-house that was destroyed during the rebellion, and of course there was plenty to see after and to keep going. Then, too, I was obliged by courtesy to pay a visit to the French officials in the town, and formally tell them that we had come to live in their jurisdiction. Next day again we made a fairly early start, and about one o'clock arrived here.

The whole district turned out to welcome us, and we found between three hundred and fifty and four hundred of our school children gathered on the premises ready to greet us.

We have been receiving sundry presents of fowls, turkeys, rice, etc. It is a Malagasy custom, so they drop in and offer their congratulations and express their welcome, and say they have brought a fowl to make broth or soup with to take away any fatigue we may have felt on the journey. To refuse a gift brought to the "seer" in this way would cause the greatest offence and grief.

Our leaving town was rather hard for us, and some of our friends with whom we have lived and worked for the last five years, and perhaps few felt the departure more than the town congregation which we had charge of.

*Amboniriana, February 10th, 1900.*

We have got our schools classified on the first category which grants exemption from the military service and from the yearly presentation, on the conditions that we have classes both practical and theoretical in agriculture, etc., also in carpenter's shops for practical instruction.

It is a means to an end, and surely to have classes of fifty or sixty young fellows from day to day is no mean affair. Pim and I mean to see that these young fellows get more than a mere education. It has been a little bit of an ordeal, but the Inspector, who is a fair-minded man, saw plainly that we intended to benefit the natives who came to us and he gave us the utmost credit for our intentions.

We are getting very fond of the people here, and find plenty to do of all sorts.

In May, 1900, a rather important departure was taken in the mission in the shape of a conference, the first of the kind,

which had been held, and which was now needful for the consideration of various points of church discipline.

*Amboniriana, May 10th, 1900.*

We are in the midst of preparing for our visitors for the conference. We shall have to put up twelve Europeans if they all come, and put out in native houses some thirty-six or forty Malagasy.

We have two ideas in holding this conference :

First, we want to find out by discussing things freely, how far our work is efficient in gaining the ends we have in view.

Second, we very much wish, as a means of making our work more efficient, to get nearer to our evangelists and chief workers, to understand them better, and so be better able to use them as channels of instruction.

After a short year of delightful labour, in the school with its garden and carpenter's shop, in the dispensary, among the patients, visiting sometimes as many as eighty a day over a wide range of country, preaching in the many little congregations, and the thousand and one duties of a resident missionary, after a year of happy toil amongst his people, the time

came for the furlough to England and in July they broke up their home and turned toward the coast. "Many could not control their feelings at parting with those they had learned to love and trust," writes Dr. Wilson's colleague, Albert F. Pim. At the Capital their fellow missionaries put on record their regret at losing them for the time. The experiences of the last years had drawn these fellow-workers together. The events of the time had revealed unknown depths of courage and energy. It was with no ordinary grief that the band of workers said "God speed" to their comrades on their homeward way.

## CHAPTER IX

### AT THE CENTRE

1900-1909

A MISSIONARY who comes home on furlough is like a ship which brings rich cargo to port. His committee at home are awaiting with interest for his reserves of information on many points in question. They hope much from his first-hand knowledge, and his enthusiasm in the work of opening doors of opportunity which to them have been impervious. Home claims him, and what eager anticipations of years are waiting glad fulfilment by the children who have been famishing on letters only for so long.

Then, as in the case of Dr. Wilson, a man of all-round experience and tactful sympathy and judgment is often an invaluable delegate to another field, should the time come for a visit there from the church at home.

So it came about that after six months the request came that Dr. Wilson should join a deputation to the Friends' mission station at Brumana, in Syria. This mountain village stands in a position of unique interest and charm. On the majestic slopes of Lebanon, with the snowy ridges of its great chain of mountains stretching northward and the dazzling blue of the Mediterranean at its base, the dark rock pines breaking the line of the near horizon and the white villages nestling on the steep hill sides, it would be difficult to find a spot more enchanting in natural beauty and more appealing to the heart of the visitor, through tradition and history.

Nor does the interest end here. For every year which develops the hitherto unfathomed recesses of the East, increases the importance of this wonderful country which has had such a remarkable part to play in the story of the past, and which probably may have to figure with still more prominence in the unknown future. As the gate between East and West, Syria forms a strategic position which the Church of to-day may well desire wisely to occupy.

The work of the Friends is a modest one,

mainly concerned to help and elevate some of the mountain villagers. It has however a valuable hospital and important schools which are doing their work with efficiency. From thence go girls to bring illumination to some dull eastern home, while the boys occupy posts of influence in various cities, or, as is more often the case, leave their native land altogether to find wider scope in Egypt or America.

This visit of the deputation was timely and helpful. The deputation consisted of three members of the Mission Board and the secretary of the Association, Watson Grace. On their return journey, Dr. Wilson was joined by his wife and other friends from England, and they passed a memorable fortnight in the Holy Land, returning through Egypt.

This journey which was so full of interest and promise ended in great sorrow. On reaching home Mr. Grace, who had been taken ill on the voyage, became rapidly worse and died just a week after their return. In the prime of life, with a devotion and sympathy for his work that few could equal, his passing was a heavy blow to the Association.

When the time came to consider who could be asked to carry on the work, the choice of the Board fell on Dr. Wilson. After much prayerful thought he consented to accept the post, on the understanding that the appointment should be re-considered at the end of two years. When that time was reached, the Board were fully convinced that he was the right man in the right place.

We know that this decision was not arrived at by Dr. and Mrs. Wilson without much sacrifice as regards their work in Madagascar. In spite of all the sorrows of their life there, that land held their hearts and continued to do so, though it was made clear to them that the home duty now stood first, and they were conscious that with enlarged scope for service in connection with the five fields, it was all one work and the same Master whom they would still serve.

The minutes which record the appointment show clearly how well their friends understood the divided issues which were before them at this time.

“ We fully realize,” it runs, “ the special value of the service which Dr. and Mrs.



Wilson have given and can give to Madagascar, and it is no easy matter to contemplate their withdrawal from the mission field. . . .

“Nevertheless it is clear to us that the welfare of the work as a whole and the maintenance of its efficiency in every field require that the best man at our disposal should hold the position of secretary. . . .

“We trust all will recognize that in thus serving the Association Dr. Wilson is no less a missionary than if he were in Madagascar.”

Results justified the decision. From the dull little office in the heart of the city, the energies, which had hitherto been busied in organizing churches and in healing and comforting the physically sick in Madagascar, had now to face a changed but by no means more easy or less responsible service. Probably there are few posts requiring more tact, courage and wisdom than that of the secretary of a missionary society who attempts to guide from afar the complicated work of various fields, and though the responsibility rests ultimately on the Board through its various field committees, yet there must inevitably fall on the

secretary a considerable amount of stress, none the less heavy because often unrealized by others.

Those who know what it means to spend long hours day after day in the dingy rooms of a London office, with the needful dull routine of work year in and year out, can imagine what it was to his colleagues and helpers to have his bright and cheery "Good-morning." He would come in from his country home at Hitchin with hands full of flowers or fruit, fresh from the garden he himself so enjoyed, anxious to share with them its beauty and fragrance. Through all the busy hours of the day, his thoughtfulness for the personal interest and concerns of each one was also a great bond of union.

No wonder that a member of the office staff could write :—

As our chief, he was always extremely considerate. Censure was practically an unknown thing—not because mistakes and errors of judgment did not occur, but because Dr. Wilson had such a kindly way of pointing them out that in doing so he almost seemed to make us feel that he was under an obligation to us. Within our

respective spheres of duty he trusted us ; and he did this in such a way as to call forth our very best. There was no " drive " about Dr. Wilson ; he led us, and we were eager to be led. But above all the business relations with him, he extended to us also that great fund of personal sympathy which was his. He was a colleague rather than a chief ; a friend, one would say, rather than a colleague. We loved him. It was a pleasure to work with him and for him.

Herbert H. Catford adds his testimony in the following words :—

Looking back upon his work in the office, the things that stand out most are his unfailing courtesy, his resourcefulness, and the faculty he had of rapidly arriving at a principle behind what, to others, seemed only a mass of detail. He had the gift also of winning the confidence of those with whom he was associated, and many a lonely missionary mourns his loss, not only as secretary but as a warm personal friend.

It was the highest form of friendship between fellow-workers which, giving its best in tactful, loving courtesy, drew out the best in those that worked with him.

This applied not only to the office staff but to the missionaries of the F.F.M.A. His letters to them were greatly valued, and contained much wise and helpful counsel.

The following will show his brotherly interest in the men on the field :

DR. WILSON TO A YOUNG MISSIONARY.

15, *Devonshire Street,*

*October, 1905.*

I hope you will strive to be diligent ; without giving the appearance of being proud, don't be familiar, for the natives don't understand or respect a man who is. Show without stint a loving desire to help and to know them, and they will respond I am convinced.

A patient, listening ear at all times goes a long way towards wearying the flesh, but it is an enormous factor in ultimately getting an insight into the native character, besides being a help to many a soul who cannot and will not unbend in a hurry. And if I were asked where I thought most missionaries failed, I should say here—in not practically at all times being willing to listen to every native who came to talk and consult with them. A great deal, judged by direct outcome, is indeed a waste of time, but every

now and then you accomplish things and hear things and understand things which are absolutely hidden and unknown to the bustling busy man, who may even appear to his companions and to his Board at home to be such a valuable missionary.

Wisdom and shrewd common sense (almost worldly sense) are needed, but, above all, a loving heart abounding in charity and strong enough to resist all discouraging disappointments, rich also in an optimistic faith which can know nothing less than *ultimate victory* in Christ.

It is delightful to hear of the continued progress of the work in the Amboniriana district. I know you have a hard post, but it is one that is continually on my mind and heart.

The place and all its associations can never be anything else but dear to us. We feel that we have not only lived there but our strength and substance were spent there with the hope of reaching many with the love of God.

Nothing would have delighted me more than to have gone back there and lived among the people whom we quickly learned to love.

I must not be drawn on however to write more on this line. The thought that is pressing heavily on us at the present moment

is the curtailment in our work which we must carry out. It will, I fear, affect you in Madagascar very much indeed, and one feels especially sorry that it should come at this time, as probably if any of our schools are closed it will mean that they are closed for ever so far as we are concerned. Still, we can but work with the means that God gives us.

Friends are nobly responding to the appeal that has been already made, and I think that the retrenchments we are about to suggest to the Board will have the further effect of rousing many to a sense of duty in this matter.

If our work is to prosper, it must be conducted on sound lines, and to habitually overspend our income cannot be sound and to my mind is not justifiable. We shall try our best to raise the income, and it may be with God's blessing after a few years we may see our way clearer to make a substantial advance once more.

Dr. Wilson's happy relations with his colleagues in the office are described by one of them, Philip H. Butler, in the following terms :

When we consider the man of strength that he proved himself to be in the secretariat, it is strange to think that Dr. Wilson

entered upon it with certain misgivings as to his own qualifications. He has more than once remarked to the writer—"You see, I have never had a business or office training. I do not know from experience how these things ought to be done." Such remarks were evidently made in all sincerity, and there is no doubt that at times, in his modesty, Dr. Wilson felt that this so-called want of business training was a handicap to him. If it were literally correct that Dr. Wilson lacked the training referred to, it is certain that its absence was largely to the advantage of his work as secretary of the F.F.M.A. Breadth of vision, a wide experience of men and things, strict adherence to principle, a faculty for seeing just what wanted to be done, and perhaps a more than ordinary amount of common sense, enabled Dr. Wilson to arrive at judgments that had behind them a weight greater than any mere business training would have afforded. One would say that it was an excellent thing for the F.F.M.A. that Dr. Wilson was not tied down by bureaucratic traditions. He was pre-eminently a statesman; at once a man of caution and a man of courage. His was a large, a noble heart, and all his purposes and aims were born of it; but in their fulfilment he allowed himself to be guided by his head.

Dr. Wilson was a man of strong convictions, largely the result of his adherence to principle. A logical conclusion would not always appeal to him, but one based upon principle did ; and once he was convinced that a certain course of action was right, he would hold tenaciously to his opinion against great odds. His views were sometimes startling in their audacity, but at least one felt that they had not been arrived at without reason. In his hands difficult and intricate questions seemed to resolve themselves into their elements, until the real foundation principle (not always easy to discover) was laid bare. Then he would begin to reconstruct his data by the measure of that principle, and the solution to the problem began to appear. But though this method of appealing to principle was to him as natural as breathing, it was applied neither narrowly nor hastily. It was his nature to take a long view of things ; he had no sympathy with anything savouring of mere expediency, or of living from hand to mouth.

Joseph Taylor, of the Friends' India Mission, writes :

Dr. Wilson was gifted with the faculty of wide outlook, and the agreeable manner in personal intercourse, that are essential to



the good statesman. He also was endowed with the capacity for attention to details which is the qualification of the successful general. In his consideration of the many questions, arising both at home and in the field, he brought these qualities into full play. His own natural spirit of generosity led him to devise plans in a generous way, and to discountenance mean or petty projects. He could be obstinate with a righteous obstinacy for what he believed to be right; but if, for want of full information, he was mistaken in his judgment on a particular point, nothing could exceed the prompt and generous candour with which this was acknowledged when found out.

A friend of many years standing, Henry Stanley Newman, says :

His shrewd common-sense and excellent mental balance made him invaluable at the head of affairs, while his warm sympathy and loving comradeship endeared him to all the missionaries and to every member of our Board.

Besides the daily routine of correspondence which fell to the business of the secretary, there was the constant pressure

of problems old and new calling for adequate solution.

To accomplish his end Dr. Wilson strove with all his strength, nor was his influence lost either at home or abroad.

The Friends' Foreign Mission Association is one of the youngest of the British missionary societies. The outcome in the first place of an individual enthusiasm of some of its members for the nations beyond, it has been steadily growing in the appreciation of the Society of Friends as a whole.

Year by year with the widening interest and deeper responsibility there has come into the Association not only enthusiasm for the extensive, but for the intensive side of that work ; the desire to do it in a more workmanlike manner, not only with the zeal of the servant but with the wisdom of the trained "merchantman." So while it is evident that the organization is still in the making there is a wider welcome given to the abilities of men and women in various directions, some of whom possibly have become aware only latterly what it lay in their power to give, in the way of consecrated intellectual or business capacity.

With the important addition of this fresh dedicated ability, with the awakening of many young people to their fine share in this great spiritual Argosy, with, above all, the keen sense of spiritual responsibility which is being brought home to the Church at large, we may hope in the near future to see our work much consolidated and extended. There are practical points needing consideration ; the adequacy of the home base, the strengthening of the staff abroad, the wise employment of missionaries on furlough.

Perhaps most important of all the training of the young candidates needs method and precision. This is the more possible as a new Training Home well equipped has lately been given to us ; and also a new home for the little children of the missionaries in the field, a sacred charge for the home church, and many a missionary has thanked Dr. Wilson for his continual care of his children. This much for the base of operations. If we are half a century behind our sister societies, at least we are not handicapped by some of the difficulties which they have had to meet in experiment. We should be able to "rise on the stepping-

stones" of their discoveries in pioneer work to "higher things." Here, as was truly said of Dr. Wilson, we "had a man with the true vision of the end to be attained, and of the means to be used toward the attainment of that end."

What of our five fields of work and their outlook? Here, as Dr. Wilson laboured to show, is need and increasing need for good generalship. Our staff in the fields invariably is inadequate to the work that the claims around them demand. They are continually appealing for reinforcement, as they see the developing needs stretching out beyond their reach. It is easy to point out where we have failed in the past. It would be more satisfactory and practical perhaps to suggest how we can best direct our forces in the future.

We must assume that in this work, and perhaps in this work pre-eminently, there are strategic points demanding special attention, and that there are special opportunities to be "taken at the flood." With our limited means in money and men, it becomes a serious consideration how far there should be a focussing of energy on special points which present at the moment

the fields for most effective development ; which in a word show the most distinct appeal for the special service that we as Friends can give.

With the rapid linking up of country with country, not only by railroad and telegraph and cable, but by the intimate interchange of commercial needs, and nearer still of political relationships, every year brings the far East more nearly into the inner circle of the nations.

In our Universities the alert and intelligent young Chinaman with his extraordinary capacity of adaptation and his quiet native dignity, is working his way into the inwardness of modern civilization and modern methods.

The keen inscrutable face of the Hindu looks up in the lecture room beside those of his English fellow subjects. Behind his calm exterior thoughts are passing, opinions are forming, thoughts and opinions which he and his fellows will take back with them to their native palaces and try to square with their Indian life, social and political ; and hence arise developments demanding possibly the greatest wisdom and the greatest faith from the ruling powers that

have ever been called for from a governing race.

In the playing field, on the river, there are the youth from Japan, from Burmah, from Ceylon, winning their records, taking their cue from the mighty nations of the west. And in the great centres of commerce, in the labour market, among the shipping, this work of growing homogeneity, this blending of races proceeds day by day.

What does all this portend for the future ? How soon will arrive the great moment when these vast incoherent forces will come into their own, will claim their place, as they have indeed already begun to claim it, in the grand opportunities of the world ?

Trade, politics, education, all have played their part ; but there is yet another factor to be considered, without which all the forces of the world are but as a rope of sand. The mystic East has its heritage of faith and aspiration, its yearning and disillusion. To-day we are told that its vast systems of religion are crumbling to decay. We are told that many of the noblest of their adherents own to misgiving that the reserves of their faith are not equal to supply their widening and deepening need ; and that,

as they have to endure the impact with the religions of the West, they have realized the danger of bankruptcy where they needed most enrichment.

Warning voices reach us from those who have lived long among the seeking peoples of a broken faith.

“The old religions and old morals are steadily losing their hold and nothing has yet arisen to take their place,” writes Count Okuma of Japan; and the same holds good of other countries. The situation strongly resembles that which faced the early Christians in the first century. The old heroic fables and the worn-out creeds then had had their day. The same energy which was shown then is needed now, the same courage, the same faith. “As we have received this ministry by the mercy of God we faint not!” cried Paul. And in that spirit he went forth to win the world for Christ. In that spirit we too have the promise of victory.

The late Edinburgh Missionary Conference has dealt most ably with the question as to how the gospel can be presented to the eastern minds, whose attitude and training are so different from our own.

It is suggestive to note how much stress is laid on the presentment of the mystic side of our faith as distinct from the ceremonial or sacramental. How prepared is the mind of the Indian, for instance, to accept contemplative and devotional teaching. And again the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and the distinctly social and ethical side of the New Testament is likely to win the Chinese or Japanese rather than the exposition of doctrine. Stress is laid on life and conduct, and the higher teaching of unity with the Divine.

It is given to all our Protestant brethren to preach these truths. But it must occur to many of us who have been trained in Quaker truths, that we have in these waiting souls potential brothers and sisters in the faith, who are ready for the verities which are the initial teaching of our church.

If we, through the mercy of God, can rise to this stupendous opportunity, our message may indeed become a Gospel. History supplies a striking evidence of what can be done when a sturdy faith is planted in a new sphere. America to this day shows the influence of her Puritan Fathers. Would that we with equal faith and courage



might plant a lasting and persistent belief amongst our Eastern brothers, in its essence a new Quakerism over the sea.

And is this our last word? Far from it. Loyal as we are to that pure and simple heritage handed down to us we should be disloyal to it and to its great creed if we did no more than follow a denominational ambition, however high that may be. In the name of that gallant band of men and women and little children of our body whose lives poured out for their faith, like beacons light us on; in the name of the great army of martyrs of all creeds and time; in the name of the great multitude whom no man can number now before the Throne; in the Name which is above every name, we would press on to carry back to Asia the great Asian book and the great Asian faith, which shall reveal to her too at long last, the Saviour of the world.

## CHAPTER X

### IN JOURNEYINGS OFT

1903-1909

Two years after his first visit to Syria, Dr. Wilson left home once more, in October, 1903. This time his goal was China, where the Friends' Foreign Mission Association has stations in the westernmost province of the Empire.

Friends' work in China was begun in 1884, when Miss Henrietta Green went out to Hankow. Two years later she was followed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Davidson who are still active workers in the China field.

In consultation with members of the China Inland Mission, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson decided to enter Sz-chwan, the largest and the most prosperous of the eighteen provinces of China. After an ineffectual attempt to gain a footing in the city of Tungchwan, they settled early in 1890

in Chungking, a densely populous city built on a crowded promontory at the junction of the Chialing river with the mighty Yangtse.

Chungking may be regarded commercially as the key to Western China and is hence a point of vantage for the missionary enterprise. By the year 1903 the Friends' Mission in Sz-chwan was staffed by twenty missionaries, of whom twelve were in Chungking. It was clear that the time had come for the distribution of forces, and under these conditions the Board set apart a deputation to visit the field.

Dr. Wilson's colleagues were Albert J. Crosfield, a member of the Mission Board, and Marshall N. Fox, who is now working in Syria. As a travelling companion they had Robert J. Davidson, who was returning to China after his furlough, whose most efficient help made the journey easy and pleasant for the rest.

The little party travelled eastward by the Siberian railway, after short halts in Berlin and Moscow. Sixteen days and fourteen nights in the train between Moscow and Tientsin proved by no means irksome, for there were many points to discuss in con-

nection with the work that lay before them, and one of the four at least discovered for the first time that Dr. Wilson was a man of well-nigh universal knowledge, not in the learning of the schools and the universities, but in the common things of life whether animal, vegetable or mineral. Nor did their spirits flag, for each had a stock of anecdotes new to the rest, and often the compartment which was their home for the time being resounded with merry laughter.

Those were the days just before the Russo-Japanese war. The train they travelled by carried towards Vladivostock several Russian officers who had been called away from their homes at a few hours' notice, some of them never to return.

At that time it was needful to cross Lake Baikal by steamer, and bitter was the north wind on its shore.

As they halted at Mukden and Liao Yang they little dreamed of the bloodshed that was so soon to deluge those peaceful scenes.

A few busy days were spent in Tientsin, Peking, and Tungchow, gathering hints from missionaries of experience such as Dr. Sheffield, Dr. Lavington Hart, Dr. Lowry and others; searching the stores

for specimens of china ware for which Dr. Wilson showed an amateur's affection with more than an ordinary amateur's knowledge; visiting the Temple of Heaven, and Temple of Confucius; everywhere drinking in knowledge, as was his wont under all the changing circumstances of life.

Shanghai was reached by sea, and then began the forty days' journey up the Yangtse, eight days by steamer and thirty-two by house-boat.

Many travellers have described the grandeur of the gorges and the perils of the rapids. The newcomer is at first inclined to under-rate the latter, but when he has seen the cotton yarn from wreck after wreck spread out to dry and has felt his own boat swept downstream towards dangerous reefs of rock, he begins to take them more seriously. The record for one day was half a mile upstream and half a mile downstream. That was at the foot of the Yie t'an rapid, where a good part of two days was lost awaiting a turn amongst two or three hundred boats. The actual passage of the rapid occupied twenty-four minutes.

The following is an extract from a letter written by Dr. Wilson on the houseboat.

*December 3rd.*—We left our moorings this morning about seven, and all seemed in great spirits as a fair wind had sprung up, which was just what we had been hoping for. We had now a difficult piece of work before us. The breeze had stiffened considerably, and all the junks had lowered their sails, and ours were somewhat grudgingly lowered too. Our junk is very steady though, and to-day has proved that she can carry a fair amount of canvas if only the wind is steady. This last rapid is rather more a succession of small rapids than one long one, and the strong breeze in our favour gave the pilot the chance to make two or three tacks. We tumbled about a little as we sped over the gurgling, swirling water, and the rush on our bow seemed as if it would sweep us away as we bravely breasted the full force of some part of the rapid, now broken and turbulent by the very wind which carried us on. The trackers were delighted, and told R. J. Davidson that if this wind continued they would take a present of "bean-curd," and offer it to the gods for all this help. No wonder they felt grateful, when it is remembered that the ground covered to-day with very little tracking often takes them more than two days of hard and continuous work.

About luncheon time we pulled into a small bay to allow of food being served out, and we nearly had an accident. How it exactly happened no one seemed to know, but instead of our boat being held steadily on the line by which she was being moored, she swung round with the current and then was let go. Things looked grave for a moment, for she was quickly drifting and not under control. A large junk which had just come up was about forty yards or so behind us, and we bore down upon her full tilt and expected a smash. We did collide, but no harm was done. For a moment or so things looked very ugly, and even then when we got back, the wind, which was furious, drove us on to a rock. Still we came out unscathed, and soon crossed the river to land the trackers. From here they ran and tracked the rope over a rocky point about 50 ft. high, and hauled us across and out. By means of our "bow-sweep" and helm together we kept well out from the rocks and rounded the point in safety. It is often dangerous work stemming the full force of the current round these projecting points, as, if the rope breaks or the trackers are too feeble or few to sustain the heavy strain as they pull steadily inch by inch, your craft is left at the mercy of an eight to ten-knot current with

unpleasant-looking rocks on all sides. For about an hour we went quietly forward, and then we again put out the trackers on the right bank to haul us round what is now known as Roller Point.

One night Dr. Wilson woke up to hear river pirates trying to enter the house boat, but they soon made off when he struck a light.

The daily walks on shore were enlivened by the birds and flowers and crops, in all of which he took a keen interest. If the progress was slow and the journey tedious there were at least compensations. Even when Chungking was reached the journey was not at an end, for Dr. Wilson and his colleagues took a round of five hundred miles over the inland paths of Sz-chwan, that they might see for themselves the cities where it was intended to open new stations for their mission work.

The most important of these is Chengtu, the seat of the Viceroy, a vast city where greasy Mongols from the north jostle rough Tibetans and Tartars from the west ; and where Chinese from the outlying provinces of the Empire meet for trade and barter. Since the visit of the deputation, ten



missionaries of the F.F.M.A. have worked in Chengtu, and the Association is a partner in the Union University of West China, which was opened on the 11th of March, 1910. Friends' share in this successful issue owed much to Dr. Wilson's courageous foresight. We may well believe that it will have a far-reaching effect on the future of the Empire. Three days' journey from Chengtu over the paved footpaths by chair or on horseback, amid busy throngs of coolies and other travellers, brought Dr. Wilson and his companions to Tungchwan, a city which escaped unhurt from Boxer troops who came right up to its walls. Here a women's hospital was opened, and the girls' boarding school was provided with new premises as an outcome of the visit.

In three days' journey south from Tungchwan the important city of Suining was reached. The Methodist Episcopal Church already had a station in the city, but the deputation, after consultation with the committee of missionaries, decided to place a missionary and his wife outside the city walls.

Still journeying southward they halted at Tungliang, where it was decided to

open a fifth station. A considerable number of converts have been gathered in this district, especially in and around Tatsu, which even before Boxer days was the scene of a serious rebellion. Some of the former rebels are now members or adherents of the Christian Church.

Following on the deputation's visit a High School for boys was built on the hills on the side of the Yangtse opposite Chungking.

During nearly twenty years the business men of Chungking scarcely felt the influence of the missions, but recently an Institute has been opened by Friends in the business part of the city which promises to serve as an important link between the merchant and the missionary.

The time of Dr. Wilson's visit to China was one of great stirring. The giant empire was rousing herself from the sleep of centuries. Events have marched rapidly since 1903. Woman's emancipation is at least begun. The cruel practice of foot-binding has been condemned. A fight such as few nations have ever known has been waged against the opium curse. The great cities of Chengtu and Chungking have cleansed their streets from the former filthiness.

Electric light and telephones have been introduced and railways are being extended rapidly. The old examination halls have been swept away and western learning for boys and girls has taken the place of the old system. Shall Christ or materialism have the upper hand? As a contribution to the answer to that question, Dr. Wilson's efforts were put forth. It is little that any one man can do, but the great Father of all is still taking that which, in itself, is of no account and making it mighty in carrying out His purposes of love and redemption.

Ten days sufficed for the down-river journey by houseboat to Ichang; and in nine days more Shanghai was reached, after two days' stay at Nanking, where a cheering visit was paid to the American Friends' Mission. Everywhere Dr. Wilson left behind him sunny memories.

The homeward journey was made by the French steamer *Sydney*, as far as Colombo, calling at Hong Kong, Saigon and Singapore.

The following extract from Dr. Wilson's journal letter tells of a few hours spent at Saigon in Cochin China, where the heat was intense.

We drove to the botanical gardens which were interesting as an amateur zoological collection was thrown in. The aviaries were very good, and the monkey houses exceedingly bad. The birds were merry though, and the trees looked vigorous and healthy.

It was pleasing to see the curious and often rare plants of Kew and Regent's Park growing and flowering freely in the open, as if life were joyous. Especially handsome was a large pond full of water lilies, beautiful large, delicate, salmon-coloured flowers opening to the blaze of the tropical sun.

In the centre of the large pond was an island with an arbour, so we went thither to rest and take things in with ease and joy. I felt like a schoolboy let loose; I often do, I fear, when there is some enjoyment of nature to be had.

But the place was already occupied by a sedate and fat couple, who began at once to show ominous signs of their disapproval of our intrusion. But alas, as I went and stood near them to admire their shapely forms they both began to open their mouths at us, and so far as we could understand they warned us off in no very complimentary fashion, for they kept a constant "yap, yap" which did not show them off to advantage.

Like everyone else, for it was a broiling hot day, they were in white and very handsome they looked. The old lady (I really could not say what their ages were, and naturally I did not enquire) had little touches of black on the sides of her dress, and a pretty bit of pale fawn-colour at her breast, like a bow of pretty chiffon daintily tucked in. I think indeed they both "fancied" themselves and without doubt there was a certain grace and charm about them. But their feet were ugly and large and their faces seemed out of proportion somehow, and each had an enormous bag in which to carry food, I believe ; and when they walked they waddled, which showed plainly that they hadn't been drilled properly in their early days. And Madame's voice was harsh and rasping which is an unpardonable fault in a lady. Oh ! I had better tell Kenneth who they were, for we found out, indeed, we could not be mistaken. They were Mr. Pelican and his wife, Mrs. Pelican, and a fine pair of old birds they were ; such beaks they had and pouches.

The deputation spent a fortnight in Ceylon, as the Friends' Foreign Mission Association has missionaries in two districts in the south of the Island. One of

these, known as the Mirigama district, is in the low country, on the line of railway between Colombo and Kandy. Here a number of converts have been gathered from Buddhism in the many scattered villages buried amidst the groves of coconut palms.

The larger district lies in the hill country to the north of Kandy. Its base is at the small town of Matale, the railway terminus. It stretches for nearly thirty miles along the North Road, where now-a-days bullock carts of ancient pattern mingle with modern motors; the district is a very prosperous one in these days of tea, cocoa and rubber plantations, and there is a large village population of Sinhalese and Tamils, whilst some villages are peopled by Moslems locally known as Moormen, relics of invading hordes who brought to a close the most prosperous days of Buddhism and overthrew the great city of Anuradhapura, in its day probably the largest city in the world. Mission work is complicated by two distinct languages and three distinct religions, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

The Friends' Foreign Mission Association has been at work in Ceylon since 1896,

when Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Malcomson first settled there.

In a letter written on the homeward voyage Dr. Wilson sums up his impressions of Ceylon in the words : " The future indeed looks most hopeful and the possibilities before us are immense. This work flourishes and increases because God's blessing is upon it."

Home was reached early in May, 1904, after an absence of seven months. It was no little gain to the Association for its secretary to have seen with his own eyes two more of the fields in which lay the work under his charge.

It will be remembered that when Dr. and Mrs. Wilson left Madagascar in 1900, they fully expected to return there at the end of their furlough. When Dr. Wilson accepted the secretaryship of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association they still looked forward to paying a farewell visit to the land they had loved and worked and striven for for twenty years, the land of joy and sorrow, of trouble and triumph, where many spiritual sons and daughters loved them with devotion and prayed daily that they might see them again.

In the summer of 1905 these hopes were realized. The stormy Indian ocean was crossed once more and four months were spent amongst the old familiar scenes.

Many changes had come over the Island during their absence. The days of tedious travel by chair with an army of bearers and porters were gone ; steamer, rail and motor now convey the traveller direct to the Capital.

In Tananarive the British Consulate, where Dr. and Mrs. Wilson were entertained, was surrounded daily from early morn till late in the evening by Malagasy, who sat patiently in the garden and awaited their turn to go indoors and talk with their friends. Each one was sure of a hearty handshake and the display of a lively interest in all that concerned him.

When they left the Capital and trod once more the oft-traversed roads to their old country homes, their journey was like the march of some triumphant warrior. Nor was the welcome that awaited them prompted by a mere love of display ; genuine love and gratitude welled up in the heart of many a former colleague, pupil or patient ; and as the Doctor and his wife



turned away at the end of the allotted time, the Malagasy sorrowed most of all because they would see their faces no more.

So the four months in the island passed like a dream, but left more solid results than dreams leave behind them. The band of missionaries had had in their midst a friend in council ; the younger men amongst them had drawn upon a fund of experience of incalculable value for long years to come ; succour had come to scores of sick folk ; and many who were spiritually sick had been pointed to the great Healer of men.

All this meant that Dr. Wilson had not spared himself. Often he scarce found time for the needed food and sleep.

Nor on their departure from Madagascar was his toil at an end. The Syrian mission claimed a second hurried visit, packed full with the consideration of problems wherein advice was needed. The homeward voyage accordingly was broken at Port Said, and a few days were spent with the mission circle on Mount Lebanon.

When thinking of the last few years of Dr. Wilson's life, one calls to mind the

motto of Johan van Olden Barneveldt "Repos ailleurs." For Dr. Wilson there seemed to be no resting place. As we have seen he had studied on the spot the problems of four out of the five fields in which the Friends' Foreign Mission Association carries on its work. But India was still unknown to him. Again and again the India missionaries had pleaded with him that he should come and see for himself how the land lay. They thought he might come on his way home from Madagascar, but characteristically, Dr. Wilson was unwilling to come to India at the close of another exacting journey. He must see India under conditions favourable to his throwing his whole energy and thought into the one object. Nor was he willing to come to the field of labour of his own society without first seeing the work of older and more experienced missionaries in various parts of the great empire.

At last in 1908 the Board set him free to devote the coming winter to the enterprise, and Dr. Wilson left home in October accompanied by John William Hoyland, the head of the Friends' Missionary Training Home at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

But before starting for the East a hurried visit must be paid to the West, in the interests of the scheme for a Union University for West China. With three Board members and Dr. Henry T. Hodgkin, who was at home on a short furlough from West China, Dr. Wilson crossed the Atlantic, and spent a busy week in New York in conference with representatives of two American and one Canadian Society, who are partners with the F.F.M.A. in the University in Chengtu. Even the outward voyage was a time of close application to work as the constitution of the University had to be gone over, and series of resolutions framed to save time and labour in New York. Within a month from starting he again landed in England, and set about preparation for his long Eastern journey.

The first point reached was Colombo where some of the Ceylon missionaries met the travellers and important business was transacted. Dr. Wilson and J. W. Hoyland then crossed over to southern India, and were soon face to face with the great Christian communities in Tinnevely. On their first Sunday in India they worshipped with

a congregation of 600 Christians at Palamcotta, and in the afternoon Dr. Wilson preached, through a Tamil interpreter, at a Church of England service.

The six weeks that followed were weeks of hard travelling and hard work. After visits to Madura and Calicut they worked northward through Madras to Calcutta, and then called in rapid succession at Allahabad, Benares, Agra, Delhi and Jeypore. In the course of their journey they were able to examine missionary enterprise of varied types; hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages, industrial works, and farm colonies came under close observation; and the problems relating to them were discussed with men who could bring many years' experience to bear. In at least one centre Indian brethren were found at the head of affairs, the European missionary having deliberately subordinated himself to his Indian colleague; a state of affairs which missionary societies keep before them as a goal to be attained, but which few as yet have reached in actual practice.

Dr. Wilson and J. W. Hoyland were greatly struck with the skilful planning and thorough organization, patient but

In the train between  
Allahabad and Lucknow  
15. Dec. 1908.

My dear Ken,

We've got a long stop at a junction so I'm writing thee a letter, as perhaps I might not get it finished if I wait. And I know thou dost not like to be forgotten, dost thou?

Yesterday at the Hotel a man came round with 2 monkeys and a goat and made them do all sorts of tricks. The monkeys danced and turned themselves backwards & forwards & begged & came & licked my feet, by way of saluting me. So I gave the man a little money and the monkey themselves I gave fruit. They did enjoy it all. Then another man came with a black Bear. He had a muzzle on as I expect he was not safe without it. He danced and begged made his bows or 'Salams' as the people say here. Several times he put his feet forward on the ground in front of us which is a common way with the beggars. That is "putting their head in the dust" is it not?

The people here are great beggars. They like to do anything in the way of begging rather than work hard to get money. We often see a man rolling himself in the dust in the road & perhaps even eating the dust, just to make people pity him & give him money or presents of food. There are such a lot of lazy people in this land! The other day we saw one man sitting on a bed with a quantity of iron spikes sticking up in it. He too was begging!

I could not finish this yesterday in the train as we did not stop often long. It was too shaky to write whilst it was going. Goodbye & adieu. This is all I can write this time. It brings very much love to thee & thy boy.

Ever thy loving father, William Wilson

persistent, of the American Board of Missions in Madura, where the whole city of 106,000 inhabitants is mapped out, and every house is visited by Bible women and reported on.

At Calicut much was learned from the Basel Mission with its tile works, dyeing, spinning and weaving. The agricultural developments at Chingleput, near Madras, were suggestive of what may be done in the establishment of Christian colonies on the land, as the experiment has there been tried with marked success.

Similar work carried on at the gaol at Allahabad aroused Dr. Wilson's keenest interest, and he there gleaned many hints likely to be serviceable in his own mission, in the work of settling on the land young men and women from the orphanages.

In his letters home Dr. Wilson drew vivid pictures of the almost unendurable railway journeys, which proved to be a decided strain upon him, owing to the terrible joltings in the heat, which on some lines made reading or writing impossible and gave him many broken nights.

It was no small relief to reach Bombay, where on the 1st of January, 1909, they

were joined by Albert J. Crosfield, who came out from England to serve on the deputation to mission stations in Central India, under the care of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association.

India was the first field to be entered by the F.F.M.A. ; for in 1866 a single woman, Miss Rachel Metcalfe, went out under a sense of the divine call, with no more ambitious aim than to spend the remainder of her life in teaching sewing to the women and girls of India, and in telling them of a Saviour's love.

The first cities to be occupied by Friends in the Central Provinces were Sohagpur and Hoshangabad, and to these have been added seven other stations, two of them being in the native state of Bhopal. The district is in the Narbada Valley on the main line of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, about twelve hours' journey from Bombay, and includes Itarsi, the junction for the line which runs northward through Bhopal to Delhi and the Punjab.

Each of these nine stations was visited, and Dr. Wilson examined minutely into a hundred questions, and was ready with advice about buildings, gardening, agri-

culture, bullocks, etc., to say nothing of questions of health, organization, the management of schools and orphanages and the care of the native church.

Not the least interesting incident was an interview with the Begum, or reigning Queen of the State of Bhopal. The Begum received her guests in a suite of rooms in her palace, furnished in European style, but, being a Mohammedan, she was shut off from their view by a bamboo curtain hung over a doorway. The conversation was carried on in English and touched upon the responsibilities which this enlightened ruler is seeking conscientiously to discharge in the provision of girls' schools in Bhopal, and in other ways. She feelingly acknowledged her need of wisdom from on high to enable her rightly to direct the affairs of her State.

The record of the India Mission is a story of heroic though too often unequal struggle against adverse surroundings; plague, small-pox, malaria and famine have claimed their victims; but a still harder foe to contend with is the grinding tyranny of the caste system. Dr. Wilson formed the deliberate opinion that India is the hardest



of the five fields in which the F.F.M.A. is at work.

The famines of 1897 and 1900 were a terrible strain upon the Central Provinces. The missionaries were forced to lay aside their usual work and to devote their whole strength to fight death on every hand ; a sacrifice which was acknowledged by the presentation of the Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal to one of them. Village communities were scattered. Husbands left their wives and children, and wandered aimlessly in search of food. Broadly speaking, we may say that the old communal life of the people was disintegrated. Scores of villages were deserted and have not been re-occupied. The work of the last ten years has largely been to repair the wastage of those terrible times. Over nine hundred orphan boys and girls were thrown on to the hands of the missionaries of the Friends' Association, who have since been to them " father and mother."

A heavy percentage of these little ones died through the seeds of disease implanted in them in the time of want. To-day those who survive form very largely the raw material of the mission. The problem of

their future is still an acute one. They must have a start in life. In India, where ninety per cent. of the people live on the land, agriculture is the natural opening for most of them. But the common modes of agriculture are not good enough. They result in the barest returns even in good years, and helpless misery when the rains fail.

Dr. Wilson's enquiries opened out many ways in which the returns from the land could be greatly improved. With good land and wise agriculture an Indian family can live on the produce of from ten to fifteen acres. It is hoped that a Farm Colony may soon be started on these lines.

Other resources for the young men and women are provided in the Industrial Works, where carpentry, smith's work, furniture-making and allied trades are carried on ; and in hand-loom weaving.

The winter visitor to India often gazes upon a lovely scene under a brilliant sunshine, hot enough to be welcome, and not so hot as to be a snare. He may easily fail to realize the days and nights of torrid heat when animal and vegetable life alike droop and when the joy of living is exchanged for long patient endurance.

Amongst the developments approved by the deputation in consultation with the Committee of Missionaries, the most prominent were the Farm Colony already named, a Hospital, a Boys' High School, enlargement of the Training School for teachers and evangelists and of the Girls' Boarding School. All these and other advances it is hoped will be carried out in the near future, but experience proves that things move slowly in the East, be the missionaries and the Board at home ever so eager to push them forward.

We add two brief reminiscences of Dr. Wilson's more spiritual labours in India.

Nathu Lall, the senior evangelist at Hoshangabad writes :

“ We gratefully remember his visit to India and specially his last address from Joshua's last message to the people of Israel, and I well remember his touching words when he said ‘ As far as I know you will never hear my voice again, but I would like to impress upon you that you should serve the Lord with your whole heart.’ ”

Again Mrs. Butler from Sohagpur writes :

“ I shall never forget how he prayed for the little group of girls about to make their

confession, just as a loving father for his own children."

After seven weeks of close work amongst the Friends' mission stations, the little party left for Bombay and took the steamer to Colombo.

During a fortnight spent in Ceylon, the Friends' mission stations were re-visited and long conferences were held with the missionaries and the Sinhalese and Tamil brethren.

The influence Dr. Wilson left behind him is summed up in the words written after his decease, by Sidney Long : " Here each one says, ' He was a personal friend of mine.' "

Dr. Wilson's stay in Ceylon was overclouded by a few days of severe illness, and when he started on the homeward voyage he showed unmistakable signs of the strain upon his system which the long journeys in the heat and constant press of business had entailed. However, as a cooler climate was reached he revived and he seemed to be in good health when he re-joined his loved ones early in April, 1909.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOME

1909

“GOD said : Yes, you have done much good work for ME, so now you may go and visit India, after that, enough, you may come to My house next.”

—*Spoken of Dr Wilson by an Indian carpenter.*

FROM all these vast fields our secretary came back to his work, eager to unfold to his colleagues some of the projects which the travellers had discussed and considered as the result of their investigations. Graduated in the region of experience he was even more fitted to take up the task before him. Horizons lifted and we all hoped much for the future.

An intimate friend, Sir George Newman, writes :

Out of his journeys he was accumulating an invaluable store of knowledge and experience that he might the better fulfil



DR. WILSON'S ROCK GARDEN AT "OTTERBURN," HITCHIN.

the high duties to which he had been called. Even to the casual observer his was a growing and expanding mind, a mind every year becoming fuller of wisdom and understanding, more able to survey a wide field, more tolerant of those who differed from him, riper, richer, deeper, more catholic; aye, and yet with it all and above it all, and in spite of counter claims and subtle voices demanding to be obeyed, more consecrated to the highest and more solemnly devoted to his ideal and his calling.

Saved he was from traitor's meanness,  
Filled with joys of holy keenness ;  
*Strong are those that drink of love ;*  
Oh, what wine is there like love.

In telling the story of Dr. Wilson's life we have naturally dwelt most on his work as a missionary and latterly as mission secretary. The latter post involved responsibilities that might have sufficed to occupy the full attention of an active man; but Dr. Wilson's interests took a wider range. He served on the Friends' Central Education Committee; on the Committee of Ackworth School; on the Board of Livingstone College; on temperance and peace organizations; and he belonged to several medical associations.

In his own town of Hitchin he took a leading part in the Friends' meeting and warmly interested himself in the Adult Schools and kindred organizations. During the last months of his life he threw himself heartily into the work of preparation for the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, wherein his services were acknowledged in a kindly note from Sir Andrew Fraser, late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, with whom he was closely associated in the work.

No wonder that a friend who had constant opportunities of seeing what he was doing wrote :

I have known for months that Dr. Wilson was rapidly wearing himself out, and others have known it ; but remonstrances were wholly in vain. He must needs press on, doing with his might what his hand found to do.

But thou wouldst not *alone*  
Be saved, . . . *alone*  
Conquer and come to thy goal,  
Leaving the rest in the wild.

Other men have fallen in the unequal fight long before old age was reached ; but their lives were not thrown away. We think they might have lived longer if they had



taken more care of themselves. But it was not in them to stay their hands when work was to be done.

Still there were breaks in the busy life, and a companion describes a trip taken with the Doctor to Achill Island, on the west coast of Ireland, in the summer of 1906, in search of eggs. After a narrow escape from death from a falling stone, Dr. Wilson was calm and collected. In reply to his friend's remark, "That was a narrow shave," he quietly said, "Yes, it would have been a change of life." The writer adds:—"He was a man of deep experience of things both human and divine," and he quotes Dr. Wilson's own words: "There is little to be done in raising humanity, unless, like Christ, we are prepared to spend and be spent in our work for Him."

There are many ways of trying to raise humanity, some very futile and some that meet with a response with almost startling directness. "It came about," writes Sir George Newman, "that wherever he went he was full of tenderness and sympathy to all people, rich and poor, who seemed to need it. He took upon himself the

burden of their need, the fellowship of their sufferings."

All people, rich and poor, in all climes, we might add, as well as all peoples. Thus out of the mass of correspondence before us we choose four letters ; one is from China, one from Madagascar, one is written by a Frenchman, and the fourth by a fellow subject, Dr. Wardlaw Thompson.

This comes from China, from one who loved Dr. Wilson devotedly :

As I write I think of what a rare gentleman he was ; of his wonderful discretion and tactfulness ; his overflowing generosity, his complete unselfishness, and of his warm, tender big-heartedness.

A similar echo comes from Madagascar, from his old friend, Dr. Ramorasata :

If we examine into his character we see that he was a strong man, but I and many others know that he was full of love. He never gave anyone up as too bad until he had done his utmost for him, and for this I have sometimes heard him blamed, though he was only labouring to bring people to Christ.

His great generosity also surprised us Malagasy ; some said, " He has plenty to give " ; I say, " He had the heart to give."

Dr. R. Wardlaw Thompson, of the London Missionary Society, writes to Mrs. Wilson :

For myself I can truly say that from the day when I first met him, on my visit to Madagascar, I was drawn to him by his frank and lovable disposition, and as I have had further opportunities of seeing him in his secretarial capacity, I have learned his strength and have increasingly rejoiced that our sister society had such an able and attractive leader.

Nor must we omit the following tribute from a very different quarter :

*République Française,*  
*Paris, 14th Nov., 1909.*

My dear Sir,

I heard with deep sorrow of the heavy loss your Association sustained in the person of Doctor Wilson. I remember that, when I was in Madagascar, your friend brought me the best suggestions to regulate certain difficulties and to help me in our work of *assistance médicale indigène*. I appreciated him very much, and I regret him.

Yours faithfully,

GALLIENI.

Gouverneur-Général de Madagascar.

To all and sundry it was the *bon camarade* that shone out in generous cheery helpfulness.

But it was in the home that these traits were strongest, and in the pleasant neighbourly circle of which it was the centre.

“He was a great garden lover,” writes a friend, “and his garden grew in beauty year by year under his fostering care. One of his chief pleasures was to take visitors round, and few left empty handed, as it was his delight to give flowers and cuttings for propagation. Several of us living in the neighbourhood have lasting evidence of his skill, in little rock gardens formed under his direction, and many more are the gardens enriched from his own.”

And again :

“Dr. Wilson had a keen sense of colour-blending in flowers. From the bunches of roses he would bring to the office he would take the individual specimen and criticize its form and odour. But, perhaps his passion for flowers showed itself most in rock gardening ; it was a science with him. My own rockery reflects the sweetest memories of him ; nearly all the plants are those he propagated and chose. How careful he was to give me minute directions

as to planting, soil and position ; and the beauty of the plants to-day perpetuates his memory."

It is with a sense of sweet and tender satisfaction that in taking the last glance of our friend, we do not see him in the midst of exciting turmoil, nor in the scenes of distant lands, but in the quiet framework of his own home and among his own people. It was from the simple and blessed circle of his family on earth that he was suddenly wrapped away to take his place in the family of Heaven.

This home life, and how entirely he was the centre of it, is shown us once more by the same loving hand who wrote of the Madagascar home.

His daughter Emmeline tells us :

I wish I could make you realize how much our father was the centre of the home. We joined with mother in our dependence on him ; in our little secrets, in our joys, in our games, and even in the matter of dolls' frocks he was consulted. And then, too, we used to love to turn to him when in pain, whether it was bodily pain or only something that had hurt our minds, to him we went, and our trust and love were never misplaced,

and somehow the little medicines that came out of the old black case always did us good, and the kind words and loving kiss that ever followed did us still more good. And so in every turn of life, in every piece of the way, there was the ready hand and the kind heart always there. Oh! the romps we have had, the lovely games he invented for us, the glorious walks, and, perhaps most of all, the rides we have had together over the moors at Allendale, where those broad hill-sides and beautiful expanse of sky always seem to speak to me of him and his wonderful nature-loving spirit.

I wish I could give you an idea of the nearness and unity between my father and mother, they were so absolutely one; her sweetness and gentleness seemed to blend so beautifully with his strong sunny nature, and it seems so hard to realize that one has to stand without the other, though we know his loving spirit can never leave her, and the thought of his courage and the way he so bravely faced the world sustains and helps her now. Hand in hand they walked through life together, sharing the deep sorrows that came to them in the death of my two little brothers, and hand in hand they shared the joys which came to us, and perhaps most of all to me, as they welcomed my little children into the world. He was

so happy when we were with him, and though the foreign mission work and all that it meant was so near and so dear to him, we always felt that we had the first and the best place in his heart, and it makes us long to be truly worthy of him and of the one that we have still left to us.

In the midst of all this sunshine the shadow fell, a brief, sharp illness, which assailed him in the midst of his work. Some few days of keen anxiety, followed by a brief reprieve, when life which had retreated into distance, apparently drew near again, and the daily pleasures of garden and loved ones, and the needs of the office (his last action was to sign a cheque for the mission) held again their natural happy sway. Then in a moment the brave heart stopped; *mors janua vitæ*, the door suddenly opened into the radiant new world, the armour was laid aside and the fight was over.

We have already quoted from Sir George Newman's tribute to his friend\* and we can find no words more fitting to close this record than his:

\* *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, October, 1909.

And then suddenly, like a thief in the night Death came and snatched him from us. It is not, I suppose, too much to say that he died at his work and because of his work, or rather because he would never spare himself or leave himself any margin whatever of reserve strength. In the happy summer time, in the time of the harvest and of flower and fruit, at the crown of the year, he left us. It seemed like an accident. But it was not so.

Leaves have their time to fall,

And flowers to wither at the North-wind's breath,  
And stars to set—but all,

Thou hast *all* seasons for thine own, O Death!

The Malagasy had him for twenty years. We have had him here in England for eight. In some quarters he was underestimated, in none was he over-estimated. He had his limitations, but they were very few. He made no doubt plenty of mistakes, as do all men who achieve anything. But he was a man who would have been equal to almost any task where leadership was required. He was one of those who had the greatness of a life well spent and the goodness of being what he was. What was he? He was a man of love and courage and a sound mind—and, most of all, of Love.

Out of his love sprang his tenderness and gentleness, his courtesy and sympathy.



He had a fine feeling for all those who were suffering or down-trodden or wandering in darkness. From the day when as a boy he heard speak of the persecution of the early Christians in Madagascar he became a fighter for, and a defender of, the oppressed of whatever kind. I have seen him get very angry at anything in the nature of injustice, and no subtle arguments and no appeal to the nature of things or to human frailty calmed him or led him captive. His touch of anger was a sure index, not always of sound judgment but of the certainty of injustice. It was an issue of his love. You might be quite sure there was something wrong somewhere when Wilson was angry. How I loved to see it! His face would flush up and he would march up and down the room pouring out his feelings in a perfect torrent of conviction. Then he would suddenly stop and come up to one's side with a gentleness that was winsome beyond words, and he would say, "You are laughing at me! But I feel that this is all very, *very* wrong." Then he would settle down to reason about it, a flow of steady solid reason, but at the end he would set all logic aside and come back once more to clear moral issues of right and wrong and the plain path of duty. Courtesy and chivalry came naturally from

him. For this men admired him who did not agree with him, and for this women loved him. It is true that he poured out his love on his friends and was devoted to them. But he received it all back again, *every bit of it*—and so he went through his life, a strong, practical man, loving and beloved, and clothed in shining armour.

Then he had courage. Dr. Wilson was a brave man—brave at sudden emergencies, brave, too, when he saw danger coming far ahead, deliberately and quietly brave and fearless. He had courage in his medical work, and without that he would never have carried it all through as he did. He died suddenly, unexpectedly, in a moment, but if it had been otherwise he would have faced death, I think, quite fearlessly, glad, so long as it was the will of God.

Then, lastly, he had a sound mind. In him this saving grace revealed itself in common-sense and thoroughness. His education had not been all he would have desired ; he often deplored his limitations of knowledge and wished he had time for this and that study. But he made the best of all this and reduced it to invisibility *by doing what he could do very well*. No pains, no trouble, no worry was too great for him. He was never content unless everything possible was attempted. His policy was

*thorough*. "Good enough is never good," might well have been his motto. Over quite little things, details, he would come and talk that they might be the better handled. Many is the time he has helped a missionary candidate or an old missionary by his devotion and helpfulness—and all quite simply done, without fuss or ostentation but with common-sense and thoroughness. I do not think he suffered fools gladly, and I sometimes felt regret that a man of his worth should have been troubled and delayed by all sorts of humdrum work which the rest of us might have done.

When we look back over life and count up our blessings there are many of us who will count in as among the best our friendship with this man of the sweet, sunny nature and the courageous heart, and the sound mind and the great love :

Who comprehends his trust and to the same  
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim  
And therefore does not stoop nor lie in wait . . .  
Whom we must follow . . .  
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife  
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,  
A constant influence, a peculiar grace ;  
But who, if he be called upon to face  
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined  
Great issues, good or bad, for human kind,  
*Is happy as a lover : and attired*  
*With sudden brightness, like a man inspired ;*

Or if an unexpected call succeed,  
Come when it will, is equal to the need.

This is the happy Warrior ; this is he  
That every man in arms should wish to be.

So, comrade and friend, who never turned your back but marched breast forward, we must say what we did not want to say for many a long day yet : we must say "Good-bye." And here and now at the noonday, in the bustle of man's work time, we must try and greet the Unseen with a cheer, as you did. And for you ? we must bid you forward, breast and back as either should be, and we will cry :—

Speed ! fight on, fare ever  
There as here.

## APPENDIX.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH WRITTEN BY THE REV. J. PEILL, WHO WAS FOR MANY YEARS A MISSIONARY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN MADAGASCAR.

THE third largest island in the world, situated in the Indian Ocean, off the South East coast of Africa, from which the Mozambique channel separates it, Madagascar is about 300 miles from the nearest African shore, about 1,800 miles from the Cape, and 500 miles from the British colony of Mauritius; it is 978 miles in length and 350 miles at its widest part, having an area of 230,000 square miles; it is thus considerably larger than France, of which it is now a colony, and four times the size of England and Wales. The total population of the Island is three to four millions; that of Tananarive, the capital, 4,500 feet about the sea, being about 60,000.

The interior of Madagascar is an elevated plateau of from 3,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea level, covering nearly half the total area of the Island. Towering above this tableland again, the great mountains of the Ankaratra range reach an altitude of about 9,000 feet. Madagascar is, for the greater part of its length, within the tropics; the climate of the interior is sub-tropical on account of its elevation, a bright sunny land, without ice or snow,—heart troubles and malaria being the chief troubles of the European settler. The general conformation of the

country is curiously similar to that of the continent of Africa, of which it may be said to be an epitome.

Though so near to Africa, the present inhabitants of Madagascar, curiously enough, are not Africans. With a considerable African admixture, especially on the coast, the main stock is Malayo-Polynesian, originally therefore of Asiatic origin. The Hovas, inhabiting the Central Province of Imerina, are much the most intelligent and civilized tribe, and were, until the recent French conquest, the ruling race of the island.

The language of the Malagasy throughout the island is one, but with great diversities and dialectic differences. It was reduced to writing, and its grammatical formation was worked out by the first missionaries of the London Missionary Society, in the early years of the nineteenth century. The Malagasy is a soft, mellifluous language, full of open vowel sounds with a rich vocabulary, though not readily lending itself to the expression of abstract ideas.

Madagascar was known to the Arabs a thousand years ago; was discovered by the Portuguese as early as the year 1506 A.D.; and was also known to the early Dutch explorers. The French had settlements at intervals on the East Coast for nearly 200 years, but never gained a permanent footing on the main land till 1885, when the Bay of Diego Suarez, in the extreme north, was ceded to them by Queen Ranaivalona III., and in 1895 the island was finally conquered by them, and the following year proclaimed a French colony.

But to return, the politics of Madagascar emerge into the light of history with the Hova king Andrianimpoinimerina early in 1800. He, and his son and successor, Radama I., subdued the greater part of the country to their sway. It was during the reign of Radama that the exportation of Malagasy captives sold into slavery ceased, by agreement with the

British Governor of Mauritius ; and in 1818 the first English missionaries landed at Tamatave, and later, in 1820, established a mission station at the capital, Antananarivo, 200 miles inland, with the king's hearty approval.

Radama was an enlightened ruler and was anxious that his people should be taught. As soon therefore as the missionaries could teach in the new language there was no lack of scholars, and schools were quickly established in the capital and at the chief centres of population around it. Artizan missionaries also taught the people many useful arts, improved methods of working in stone, wood and iron, brick and soap-making, printing and book-binding, etc. The Scriptures were gradually translated and printed at the mission press, hymns were written, the Gospel preached, and a church called out of heathendom.

Radama was succeeded by his wife, Ranavalona I. She was a remarkable woman, strong-willed and intensely conservative, a woman of the type of the late Dowager Empress of China. She would have none of the new religion, nor should her people either if she could prevent it. In 1836 the last missionaries had to leave the country, having just completed the printing of the whole Bible in the Malagasy language, and for twenty-five years persecution raged. Christian men and women were burnt at the stake, hurled over a precipice to the west of the capital, speared to death, stoned, poisoned, sold as slaves, heavily fined, reduced to the ranks—no indignity that an enraged heathen monarch could invent was spared them. But the fire, lit by the Spirit of God in the hearts of the people, was not stamped out.

During these dark days the Rev. W. Ellis paid three short visits to Madagascar, and was able quietly to encourage the Christians, and distribute copies of the Scriptures and other Christian literature in the Malagasy tongue, but no missionary was permitted to

remain in the country. These visits and the books Mr. Ellis wrote—"Three Visits to Madagascar," "The Martyr Church of Madagascar," etc., awakened great interest in England, and to a less extent in America, in the fate of the Malagasy Christians, and it was through them that Friends first became keenly interested in the work there.

After a reign of thirty-three years, the Queen Ranavalona I. died in 1861, and in the following year the L.M.S. Mission was recommenced, the country being once more opened to foreigners. Two sovereigns followed in quick succession, while Christianity was slowly spreading and permeating the thoughts of the best people in the country. Then in 1868 Ranavalona II., the first Christian Queen, was crowned. Over her throne at the Coronation was a scarlet canopy with an inscription in letters of gold: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men," and on her right hand, in sight of thousands of her subjects, she had a copy of the Bible placed. That these were no empty symbols soon became evident, for on Sunday, October 28th, 1868, a religious service was begun in the Palace for the benefit of the Queen and Prime Minister (her husband) and their attendants; on February 21st, in the following year, the Queen and the Prime Minister were publicly baptized; and on July 20th, the foundation stone of a Chapel Royal was laid within the Palace enclosure.

The Queen had frequently, since her accession, publicly said "I rest my kingdom upon God," and on September 8th, 1869, the principal royal idol, called Kelimalaza, was burnt by the royal command, others being at the same time "turned into smoke" as the Malagasy phrase has it, and then, through the remainder of September, a general burning of idols and charms, the household gods of the people, took place, and the majority of the people of Imerina, following the lead of their Queen, gave up idolatry



and placed themselves under instruction in the Christian religion. These events marked the commencement of a new era in Madagascar, and innumerable opportunities for Christian missionary effort opened out immediately on every hand.

We speak of the "coming of the Friars" to this country. I must now tell of the coming of the missionary societies to Madagascar. Hitherto we have told of the work of the London Missionary Society alone.

The French Roman Catholics had long had missionaries on the coast of Madagascar, and in the adjacent islands. In 1862 they established a mission in Antananarivo, which was from time to time strengthened and extended to the surrounding districts and southward to the Betsileo Country, as well as eastward to the Betsimisaraka tribe. They gave much attention to education, and from their mission press issued chiefly works of a devotional and educational character.

In 1864, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had one missionary in Tamatave, and the Church Missionary Society three on the East Coast. An agreement was entered into between the C.M.S. and the L.M.S. that to prevent overlapping the former would confine its work to the coast region, while the latter concentrated its forces in the interior of the Island. When the S.P.G. decided not only to start a mission in Antananarivo, but to send out an Anglican Bishop to live there, the C.M.S. withdrew all its missionaries and sent them to strengthen its work in Japan.

The Norwegian Lutheran Mission sent out two missionaries to Madagascar in 1866. These have been succeeded by many more, and with a representative church in the Capital, have established a large mission, for the most part in districts outside the sphere occupied by the L.M.S. workers. With the

exception perhaps of the Roman Catholics, the Norwegian staff includes more European and American workers than that of any other mission in the island to-day.

It was in June, 1867, that the first three Friends came to the aid of the L.M.S., *viz.*, Joseph S. Sewell and Louis and Sarah Street. Joseph S. Sewell was a nephew of Mrs. Ellis, and had long been keenly interested in Madagascar. Mr. and Mrs. Street were American Friends. Their special sphere was that of education, and before long a Boys' High School and a Girls' High School were established under their charge in the Capital; and then, as the need for evangelistic work pressed and they had a strong concern to take an active part in it, a large district to the west of the Capital was taken over from the L.M.S. by the Friends' Mission. Soon Helen Gilpin, Henry E. and Rachel M. Clark and William and Lucy Johnson joined the staff in Madagascar, others following as the work extended, and the call for more workers became increasingly clamant. Among these new workers came William Wilson then, as he loved to call himself, "a youth in his teens," and looking even younger than he was.

To complete the political *résumé* briefly, here it must be stated that there was an old unwritten understanding between the French and the English Governments that they should exercise a benevolent neutrality with regard to the native government of Madagascar, and that neither of them would interfere with the independence of that island without the consent of the other. For many years this understanding was faithfully adhered to, and the country was allowed to develop on its own lines without foreign interference.

Difficulties arose between the French and the Malagasy however, in the early eighties, and in 1883 a state of war existed between them, carried on in a desultory fashion for over two years. Bombardments

of the coast towns by French warships were frequent, but without much result, and for a long time Tamatave was occupied by a French force who, however, failed to pierce into the interior. A treaty was at length signed, ceding the magnificent harbour of Diego Suarez, in the extreme north, to France for a naval station; a French resident was established in the Capital with a small military escort, and several revenue officers at the chief ports, on account of a money loan made by France to the Malagasy government.

It was but a temporary respite. Disputes arose as to the reading of the text of the treaty, difficulties with regard to the terms upon which the land might be held by foreigners complicated matters, and when in 1890 Lord Salisbury's Government handed over Heligoland to Germany, as a *quid pro quo* for certain concessions made by Germany to England in Zanzibar, and a treaty between France and England was signed, giving the former a free hand in Madagascar, it became evident that sooner or later the Malagasy would be called upon to defend their independence once more.

Matters came to a head in 1894. Early in 1895 a French expeditionary force was landed at Majunga, on the north-west coast, and on September 30th of that year the Capital was taken, and Madagascar came under the suzerainty of France. M. Laroche was appointed first Resident-General of Madagascar, and too soon as it proved for safety most of the troops were withdrawn. In 1896 a widespread rebellion broke out, and a determined attempt was made to drive out the conquerors and re-establish pagan worship. Fresh troops were hurried out to suppress this revolt. General Gallieni took the place of the civilian Resident and the country was proclaimed a Colony of France. The rebellion was put down with a strong hand, famine succeeded war in the

disaffected parts of the country, and each had its holocaust of victims ; the Queen Ranavalona III. was banished to Réunion and ultimately to Algiers, where she still remains a hostage of France.

From the very first, Dr. Wilson was a *persona grata* to the French officers, and later to the French community in general, his cheery, confident manner, and engaging personality speedily killing prejudice and gaining their confidence. His judgment was so sane, his skill as a doctor so marked, his manner so polite and genial, and his spirit so genuinely unselfish. Amid the many and grave difficulties that arose with the French authorities he was a tower of strength to his own and the other Protestant missions in the island.

It was with a keen sense of loss then, that the news of his appointment to succeed Mr. Watson Grace in the Secretariat of the F.F.M.A. in London was received in Madagascar ; for all, natives and Europeans alike, felt that this was the close of his fruitful work among them.

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#### A FRENCH APPRECIATION.

[The following is translated from the *Journal des Missions Évangéliques*.]

The work of missions has sustained a great loss, the news of which awakes in our hearts an echo of profound sorrow.

It was in Madagascar, at the very beginning of our work in that great island, that the bonds were knit between Dr. Wilson and us, which time could only strengthen. As a medical missionary he was then serving the Quaker Mission, which was suffering so sadly from the first effects of the Fahavalo riots. Their missionary, William Johnson, with his wife and child, had been surprised and killed.

Dr. Wilson, also attacked by the assassins, owed his safety to his presence of mind and the quickness of his horse. Our first delegates, M. H. Lauga, F. H. Kruger, and B. Escande, and our missionaries received from him the most brotherly welcome.

Our missionaries were not alone in recognising the exceptional value of Dr. Wilson. The representatives of our country, particularly General Gallieni, knew how to appreciate, in the course of delicate negotiations, all the moral height of his character. It was the same with the members of the French colony, of whom some, and among others the director of the Comptoir d'Escompte, although Catholic, would have no other doctor than he.

Later, when our Society judged it wise to send a second delegation to Madagascar, its members had again to praise the cordial support given them by Dr. Wilson; the one of them who writes these lines preserves a touching and grateful memory of interviews wherein he drew, with valuable information, the encouragement and strength the secret of which belongs to Christian friendship.

But the moment came when the exceptional abilities of Dr. Wilson indicated him to his Society for a post still more difficult than the one which he had occupied in Madagascar, that of secretary to the association, a post equivalent in English and American missions to that which we call the direction.

There too, our friend had occasion to display the special qualities with which God had endowed him, and above all the rare gift of personal action in which the task of a director culminates. In this connection the exceptional gifts of Dr. Wilson were largely used by the Quakers' Association; during his short period of office he accomplished no less (if we remember right) than three long journeys in order to inspect their mission fields, and settle difficult questions.

Our relations with Dr. Wilson during these last years were not limited by correspondence or friendly meetings : the interests of our work in Madagascar led to more than one exchange of views and services between us. To give a single illustration : it was a consultation with Dr. Wilson which removed all the objections to the departure of M. and Mme. Bianquis for Madagascar, and the event has shown that in declaring our general secretary and his wife able to bear a tropical climate, our friend was not mistaken.

We express to Mrs. Wilson and the Missionary Association of the Friends our lively sympathy and our deep regret. May God Himself fill the void which will be left in the ranks of the missionary army by this warm-hearted man of pure and virile character, this shining and chivalrous personality, in one word this Christian hero.

Extracts from letter from Mr. A. Boegner, Director of "La Société des Missions Évangéliques," dated from Rothau, Alsace, 18th August, 1909, to Mrs. Wilson.

The fact is that few men in my long years of missionary service have made upon my mind and heart such an impression as Dr. Wilson. I was not the first in our Mission who appreciated him to his value. You know, perhaps, how the lamented Paul Minault had spoken of him in his letters. He called him an angel of God. When first I saw Dr. Wilson I fully understood Minault's impression, although I should have expressed it otherwise.

For me Dr. Wilson was first a *man* with all which is implied in that name ; but at once I must add a man of seldom strength, wisdom, tenderness and purity. You remember how rapidly I felt attracted to him ; how entirely I gave him my confidence, how

thankfully I received his advice. Oh! the beautiful and comforting hours I was allowed to spend with him, in his study at Faravohitra. And since, however, we could not meet frequently it was always with the same pleasure and thankfulness. I was so glad to be able to see him as he left for India, so sorry to miss him at the Gare de Lyon, where I had been with M. Bianquis to meet him at his coming back to England.

## LETTER FROM MISSIONARIES IN MADAGASCAR.

*Tananarive, 30th July, 1909.*

DEAR FRIEND, MRS. WILSON :—

At our prayer meeting this evening, held an hour earlier than usual so as to coincide with the time of interment, it was unanimously decided to send you and your family a message of loving sympathy by cable and to supplement the same by a letter.

Our meeting was held in the house so long occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and was largely attended. There were present, beside the British Consul and his family, representatives of the F.F.M.A., L.M.S. and S.P.G., together with Dr. and Mrs. Ranaivo. Miss Anderssen, of the N.M.S. had desired to be present, but was unavoidably prevented; Dr. and Mrs. Borchgrevink being absent from town.

The meeting was one of devout thanksgiving to God for the grace so abundantly given to His servant, Dr. Wilson, whereby he was enabled through so many years to forward the Redeemer's Kingdom in Madagascar. Loving reference was made to his deep affection for the Malagasy and to his signal work as a Medical Missionary.

We could desire nothing more for ourselves than that the same grace should be given to us to make our lives capable of similar whole-hearted devotion and service.

Our hearts are drawn out to you and the children in sincerest sympathy. Fervent prayers were offered that at this time of your sore bereavement the consolations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ might be made to abound towards you.

The burden of the loss sustained by the F.F.M.A. in general and the Madagascar Mission in particular, lay heavily upon us, and we prayed that God would raise up someone to worthily carry on the work to which your dear husband and our beloved brother gave so much of his life.

Assuring you once more, dear Mrs. Wilson, of our loving sympathy with you in this heavy trial,

We are,

Your affectionate friends.

#### FRIENDS' FOREIGN MISSION ASSOCIATION.

*Minute of Board Meeting held in London, 2nd September,  
1909.*

This Board has met under the sense of a great loss, in the passing away of our beloved Secretary, Dr. William Wilson, on the 27th July last. We have sought to bow before our Lord, and to learn in humility what He would teach us by this event.

Dr. Wilson spent thirty-two years in the service of Christ in connection with this Association, more than twenty of them in Madagascar, in charge of districts and in medical work, and eight years of continuous labour as Secretary at home. His service was whole-hearted, and he was ever unsparing of himself. He was a loyal colleague, and to many of us, and to the Missionaries, much more than a colleague—a dear friend. His knowledge of our fields abroad was based on personal touch, for he had visited them all in turn. His work was done in a kindly, loving spirit, and he



ever looked forward with hope into the future, aiming with wise foresight for higher and better things than in the past.

When we think of the loss we have sustained—as it falls upon this Board and its various Committees, upon his colleagues in the office, and upon the Missionaries abroad, with whom, himself a Missionary, he had such true sympathy—our hearts almost fail us, for we had looked to his help during many years to come. Yet we would that the prevailing note at this time should be one of thankfulness to our Father in Heaven for Dr. Wilson's life. That life and service have, we believe, a completeness which we may not fully see as yet. He has laid foundations upon which others may build, and we desire that all of us who have the great cause at heart may be strong to take our part in the work.

To our friend Hannah Wilson, a true helper through all Dr. Wilson's years of labour, we offer our heartfelt sympathy. His memory remains as a precious heritage to her, and to her children. May they also have the joy of seeing the work that he has done, carried forward and crowned with larger and fuller blessing, in bringing to men the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

MINUTE OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF MISSIONARIES,  
OF THE F.F.M.A.

*Held at Tananarive, 1st September, 1909.*

Impressed with the desirability of not waiting till the meeting of the Committee of Missionaries in October before sending to the Field Committee a Minute relating to the sudden death of Dr. Wilson, we have decided to hold a special Committee for the purpose of expressing to the members of Dr. Wilson's family, the Field Committee, and the Board, our

heartfelt regret and deepest sympathy in connection with that sad event.

The brief announcement, contained in the cable sent to and received by us on the 28th July, that our dear friend had succumbed the day previous, after an operation for appendicitis, was received with deep consternation and sorrow, which have been fully shared by all here, and they are many, who knew Dr. Wilson and loved him for the sterling Christian character he so uniformly showed during the twenty-four years of his missionary work in this country.

On Dr. Wilson's arrival in Madagascar in 1877, he at once took up work in connection with our Teachers' Training Department. With a keen instinct for the appreciation of good, earnest work, Dr. Wilson was able to awaken some degree of enthusiasm in his students, and, owing doubtless to the powerful influence of their teacher, many of these men afterwards did yeoman service for our Mission, when they returned to the country.

Though our friend had had no experience of evangelistic work in England, the work in our then very benighted country district was ever much on his heart, and to it he unreservedly gave the best of his efforts. How he regarded his work in the country, and what the ideal he set himself therein was, may best be learned from an expression he once used in connection therewith, in which he speaks of it as the "turning of men to God, and by the Holy Spirit's power making them new creatures in Jesus Christ." Never content with merely sowing the seed, he sought to deepen any influence for good his preaching may have exercised by private conversation, and though this was not infrequently attended with weariness and fatigue for himself, he took no account thereof, being fully persuaded that a little personal inconvenience might well be borne for the sake of Him who bore so much for us.

Any description of the work done by our friend, whose loss we now mourn, would be very incomplete were no mention to be made of his medical knowledge and skill. When in the country people came from far and near to procure medicine from him. He looked upon his efforts to alleviate the sufferings around him as being sermons, far more powerful in reaching the ignorant than any spoken word could be. His work at our hospital at Analakely before qualification, and at Isoavinandriana after he had taken his degrees, was highly successful; and there are many, natives and foreigners, who remember with reverent gratitude his skill as a physician.

When appointed General Secretary in 1901, it was, we believe, a source of regret to him that the acceptance of that very important and responsible position involved the relinquishment of his mission work here. No motive, we are persuaded, but that of obedience to the call of his Divine Master and Lord, would have been deemed weighty enough to cause him to resign his position as a missionary.

In the death of our colleague, Dr. Wilson, we mourn the loss of an indefatigable missionary, a skilful physician, and a loving sympathetic friend. We praise our God for his life and work; and, rejoicing in the belief that a spirit so full of energy and loving service on behalf of others must have abundant scope for its exercise in the life beyond, we pray that grace may daily be given us diligently to follow in his steps, in so far as he followed Christ.

We ask the Field Committee and the Board to accept our sincere sympathy with them in all that Dr. Wilson's death involves for the work of the F.F.M.A., both at home and abroad, and we desire to assure them of our prayers that Divine guidance may be granted them from day to day in all their deliberations respecting the future of our work.

The Secretary of the C.O.M. [Committee of Missionaries] is asked to send a copy of this minute to Mrs. Wilson, with a request that she will kindly communicate the same to the members of her own and Dr. Wilson's family.

(Signed), J. SIMS,  
Secretary, C.O.M.

*Livingstone College,  
Leyton, E.*

*September 14th, 1909.*

The members of the Finance Committee of Livingstone College, meeting for the first time since the lamented death of their valued colleague, Dr. William Wilson, desire to place on record their sincere appreciation of the valuable services rendered by Dr. Wilson to Livingstone College, both as an active member of the Committee, which he attended last on the day before he was taken ill, and in many other ways. They consider that the loss of a man of sound judgment and wide experience in missionary affairs, such as Dr. Wilson, is a loss to the whole missionary cause. They desire to convey to Mrs. Wilson and to members of her family, their very sincere sympathy in their bereavement, and also to express to the Friends' Foreign Mission Association a message of sympathy in the loss which that Association has sustained.

ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

*53, Devonshire Street,  
London, W.*

At the Meeting of the Association of Medical Officers of Missionary Societies held on Tuesday, October 19th, 1909, at the Church Missionary House, very great regret and sorrow were expressed at the unexpected

loss which the Association had sustained in July by the death of Dr. William Wilson, of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, and the Honorary Secretary was asked to convey to Mrs. Wilson and family a message conveying their most sincere sympathy and sorrow with them in their loss, and to express their great appreciation of Dr. Wilson's sterling Christian character, and of his valued services and work as a Christian medical man on behalf of Foreign Mission work.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

146, *Queen Victoria Street,*

*London, E.C.*

*17th August, 1909.*

Mrs. Wilson, Otterburn, Hitchin, Herts.

DEAR MRS. WILSON,—

At yesterday's meeting of our Committee a report was presented of the sad death of your dear husband, and I am requested to convey to you a very sincere expression of sympathy and condolence in the loss which you have sustained.

It has been the happy experience of the Bible Society to have enjoyed since its formation a special degree of intimacy with the members of the Society of Friends, and more especially those who have been associated with its Foreign Mission. For this cause we feel that we too may be permitted to express the sense of loss which has fallen upon all those who had the privilege of knowing your husband, and of being in touch with his work. We would like to say with all simplicity how much we appreciated him personally, and how greatly in our opinion he contributed to the strength of the Mission cause.

We would also assure you and your children of the sympathy which we feel for you in your bereavement.

May it please our Heavenly Father to give you at this time and always such comfort and strength as will enable you to wait patiently for the time when you will be reunited in the Father's home.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

A. TAYLOR,

*Secretary.*

MINUTE OF HERTFORD AND HITCHIN MONTHLY  
MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, RESPECT-  
ING WILLIAM WILSON, A MINISTER, DECEASED.

Whilst sorrowing for the loss of our friend, William Wilson we desire to place on record our thankfulness for his life, which ended suddenly after a short illness, at his home in Hitchin on the 27th July, 1909.

Dr. Wilson was resident in our midst for nearly six years, and during this time he endeared himself to his fellow-members by his geniality of manner, his courtesy and his generosity in giving of his possessions, whether of time and talents or in more tangible tokens of good-will. Whilst we were often thankful for his spoken words in our Meetings for Worship we felt it was the ministry of his whole life which gave force to the message.

The very gentlest of all human natures  
He joined to courage strong,  
And love outreaching unto all God's creatures  
With sturdy hate of wrong.

It was this love which was the impelling force that led William Wilson, soon after joining the Society of Friends, to offer for Missionary service in Madagascar, and he reached that island for the first time in 1877, before he was twenty years of age; the same love, ever widening and deepening, kept him through the remaining thirty-two years of his life faithfully serving the missionary cause—whether as Christian

teacher, medical student and practitioner, or as secretary of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association. To this last-named post Dr. Wilson was unexpectedly called in 1901, in succession to our late Friend, Watson Grace, with whom he had been associated in a visit to the mission stations of Friends on Mount Lebanon.

Of William Wilson's work as Foreign Mission Secretary, including as it did, journeys to China, Madagascar, Syria, Ceylon, India and America, we shall not here speak in detail : of our Friend it might be truly said, " Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve."

Though so many years of William Wilson's life were spent abroad he had not on this account lost the ability to enter into the work of the Church at home, and he brought to the consideration of every subject a freshness of outlook and a firmness in grappling with difficulties which, together with his powers of resource, made his help sought for not only in the business meetings of Friends but in philanthropic and missionary work outside our own borders. At the time of his death he had filled for several years the position of President of the Hitchin Total Abstinence Society, the Temperance cause being one very near his heart from boyhood's days.

His whole life exemplified George Herbert's thought,

Be useful where thou livest, that they may  
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.

. . . . .  
. . . . . Find out men's wants and will,  
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less  
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

#### A VOICE FROM MADAGASCAR.

My first impressions on seeing William Wilson were of strength and strenuousness. I met him first at Waterford, in 1881, when he added fuel to my desire,

first kindled by Henry E. Clark, to go out to Madagascar.

Soon after coming here, I went to stay in Mandri-drano. There I saw him, living on the top of his high hill, among his own people. All his energies could have free play. He went long journeys on his powerful horse, and would come back an hour or two after sundown, full of the Church meeting he had been to, and fighting his battles over again with us. He was essentially combative, and with his hatred of shams, deceit and oppression, aroused a most wholesome uncomfortableness in this fatalist and conservative race. Yet he was loved even when he hit hard, for he had a marvellous command of Malagasy, a sympathy with native instincts and traditions, and was scrupulously observant of all forms of native politeness.

A man of wide tastes, he made these subservient to the interests of his high calling, which was to preach and show forth the Gospel and teach "all things civil and useful in the creation." He would show his people how to improve the strain of their beasts, he had his farm-yard and well-planted kitchen garden. He was always faultlessly dressed and well mounted. A man among men, he appealed to all, and had no need to uphold his character by professionalism. In the Sakalava country he could provide food for himself and his followers with his gun. He once travelled up to town—seventy miles—in one day, by relays of bearers and horses. Even after many years I hear his voice as he read to me the chariot race scene in "Ben Hur."

He had a genius for friendship, "grappling his friends to his soul with hoops of steel." But, unlike another great man of whom we have been told, he not only gave to us but required from us. We felt that we were necessary to him, and he gratified us by accepting our sympathy. And how wide was the



circle of his friends ! It embraced all ranks and races of men, and he stamped his impress on the most varied characters. There is no doubt that the insurrection of 1895 was prevented from spreading to the west by the prompt action of one of his old boys. He got the best out of us ; indeed, if there were any latent possibilities in a man, a horse, or a dog, William Wilson would bring them out if he had a chance. His friendship mingled generosity with ingenious, apologetic tact ; in giving a handsomely bound Bible he wrote, " The Two-Version Bible may or may not commend itself to you, but I thought it was rather a nice thing to have." In one of our journeys together he fancied I had fever, and he insisted on my riding his horse which had the smoothest action of any here, while he took my jolting mule for twenty miles. Many a poor fellow who had come here in search of gold, but had found fever and ill-luck, was taken in hand and sent away with a fresh belief in life.

Nothing he did was done perfunctorily. His cottage-hospital in the old country days was managed as conscientiously as many a sumptuous place at home. Once, in examining a country school, he found that a little boy of nine (now M.D. of Paris, and well known to English Friends) had made a mistake in spelling. Instead of simply taking off a mark he tried to find out whether the boy had been taught that spelling or not.

It was a great blow to him to leave Mandridrano, but he recognized the justice of our contention that his place was at Isoavinandriana. In the last days before the conquest he thought of every possibility, provided mounts for all the Mission who might need them, and with Miss Byam's and Mrs. Wilson's co-operation, received nineteen missionaries of three Missions, with many Malagasy, into the hospital buildings. The story of the 30th September, 1895, has been told. When an officer appeared at the gate

to ask in the name of the general-in-chief that the sick and wounded of the expedition might be admitted, he at once replied "yes," and set about making his arrangements without any fuss. That night fifty French soldiers and officers, not to mention Malagasy wounded, were comfortably housed, fed and tended, although the place was fairly full already. Thus the peace-loving Quaker united under his hospital roof the wounded soldiers of both forces, and many a friendship was formed between him and French officers. He gave every facility to the ambulance of the expedition to re-organize its exhausted resources.

On the receipt at Tananarive of the cablegram announcing the hour of interment, it was resolved to hold the usual Friday evening prayer meeting an hour earlier, so that we might meet in spirit with those around the grave at Hitchin. There was a large attendance from the different Missions and it was a solemn, "tendering" time. Mr. Blair, of the S.P.G. told how Bishop King appreciated the keen missionary, always so cheery, to talk with whom did one good, and expressed his sense of the privilege of meeting under the shadow of a common loss, which hushed our differences. Truly, "there is not anything but love."

JOSEPH F. RADLEY.

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