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Yours true till the Glory  
John MacNeil

# JOHN MACNEIL

LATE EVANGELIST IN AUSTRALIA, AND AUTHOR OF  
"THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE."

A MEMOIR BY HIS WIFE

Introduction by

REV. D. S. McEACHRAN

Edited by

REV. H. B. MACARTNEY

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## P R E F A C E

“A MAN—sent from God—whose name was John.” The following pages tell the Life Story of one more, in that long honourable list of those “sent from God,” and named John, who, coming *from* God, and having finished each his own piece of service, have gone back *to* God.

My husband was widely known by his Christian name, and, since the visit of Rev. John McNeill, of Scotland, to Australia, when it became necessary to make some distinction between the two men, his intimate friends have been accustomed to speak of him more affectionately as “Our John” or “Our own John.”

The phrase is expressive of the appropriating love which has led so many families to write: “We are mourning as though one had gone out of our own immediate circle.”

That so many people should feel in this way about him is not surprising, when we remember that he was seldom the inmate of a house for a week without leaving behind at least one child whom he had lovingly led to Christ. Often, indeed, was the entire family, including the servant, converted to God



## ▼ PREFACE

during his visit. It is this kind of work that wins for a man tender and grateful love. "It iss myself," says a Highlander, "that iss the grateful man to John MacNeil. My wife and myself and my seven children, we all sits down at the table of the Lord together. Mother and myself, we wass the Lord's before, but my children hass all been brought to Christ through John MacNeil. Is it any wonder that I loves him so much?"

It was not my original intention to compile this biography. There was a friend, true, faithful, and loyal for many a long year, into whose hands I meant to commit the writing of it, did he feel himself strong enough for the task,—but he too was called Home only a few weeks after his beloved. I feel strongly that although for many reasons a wife should make the best of biographers, for reasons equally obvious she is not likely to succeed as well as another. She may either be too manifestly biased in her husband's favour, or so afraid of this bias that she will swing to the opposite extreme. The fact, however, that Mr. MacNeil's diaries and half his letters to me were written in an obsolete shorthand finally decided me to make the attempt. I am conscious of its defects, but in this respect I can challenge criticism—I have not painted the picture in colours too glowing. It has been a continual joy to know, whilst writing, that there was not one shadow in his story, nothing to conceal, no skeleton to

lock away; no, nothing but transparency, singleness of purpose, and strenuous endeavour. My principal difficulty has been in selecting from a superabundance of material. The book might easily have been doubled in size, had I not wished that all the *poor* friends who cherish his memory might be able to possess a copy. Newspaper paragraphs have been almost entirely left out. They may mean so much or so little! Diaries are barely touched. Even the letters which I publish have been considerably shortened.

My thanks are due to many friends: to Rev. D. S. McEachran, who has written the Introduction; to my husband's friend and my own friend, Rev. H. B. Macartney, M.A., who has spared neither time nor trouble in helping me, whose advice has been freely given and gratefully received, and who has now crowned all his other kindness by offering to revise my MS., and to see the book safely through the press in London; and, lastly, to the many others whose names appear in the book, who have assisted by sending letters, and incidents which would otherwise have been forgotten. That the blessing which everywhere followed my husband's ministry may be continued through reading this narrative, is my one, only object in putting it into print.

HANNAH MACNEIL.

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## NOTE BY THE EDITOR

**M**Y share in this work is just completed, and my heart is full to overflowing. I thought that I knew John MacNeil well, but, whilst reading the following pages for the first time, it seemed as if I had hardly known him at all. I had heard him preach and pray; I used now and then to get his sunny, delightful letters; I thanked God for him day and night; but I never knew till lately that the altar-fire had been burning in his breast so fiercely, so lovingly, and so long.

It was on Saturday, May 22nd, that his beloved and devoted widow came on board the SS. "Polynésien" at the Port Melbourne pier, just as I was about to sail for England, and handed me her husband's biography in her own handwriting. It was quite a revelation. Four months of incessant movement and incessant infirmity have passed over my head since then, but whenever I have had time or strength to go on preparing it for press, it has been more than a joy to me—it has been humbling and inspiring.

Mrs. MacNeil gave me on that occasion absolute control over the book, both as to its language and

as to its length. I have had, therefore, in order to meet the requirements of the ordinary reader, to interpret a good deal that might otherwise be easily misunderstood; and in order to meet the requirements of the publisher and of the busy public, I have had now and then to curtail. The facts, however, and the sentiments remain untouched, and I now commit them to God.

Prayer is being offered up in Victoria that this volume may be circulated and blessed in some such manner as the memoir of McCheyne—a story to which it forms, doctrinally and practically, a most important supplement. To Christians it cannot fail to be interesting. They will find here a conversion and a decision; a call to study, to open-air work, and to ordination; an anointing of the Holy Ghost for service, and a most remarkable bodily healing; a career of revival, and a sudden summons to glory!

To the outside world, moreover, it will present many features of attraction. A Highland bairn, and a youthful emigrant; a Colonial boy, and a University man; a railway overseer, engine-driver, and mechanic; a horsebreaker, a cyclist, a traveller, and an enthusiastic lover of nature; an author, a singer, an elocutionist, a humourist, and—in everything a hero!

Let no one stumble at John MacNeil's singularity or at his manner of speech; all that is over now,

and was perfectly artless and natural. I sighed when my revision of the manuscript came to an end, and when I had to turn to other duties. May you too sigh, dear reader, when you lay down this book, —sigh to be more God-like, sigh to be holy.

H. B. MACARTNEY.

*25 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin.*

*Oct. 19th, 1897.*

## INTRODUCTION

I HAVE been asked to write an Introduction to the memoir of my departed friend, and I have a sad pleasure in doing so. But as I may not anticipate the details of the biography, my remarks must be brief and general.

I consider that John MacNeil was a great gift from Christ to His Church in this land. By his gifts and graces, as well as by his providential training, he was called to do the work of an evangelist, and in the doing of that work he was greatly owned of God. He has left the fruits and seals of his ministry in converted men and women all over Australia. Seldom, if ever, did he conduct a mission that was not followed by good fruit, but sometimes the power which attended his addresses was very remarkable. The Holy Spirit seemed gently to descend on his audience, opening their eyes to realise things unseen and eternal, and convincing them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The result was that many remained to be spoken to about their souls, and that not a few passed from death to life, as their changed lives afterwards shewed. Nor was that all, but seed was



at the same time sown in many a heart which afterwards sprung up and brought forth fruit unto perfection.

There was nothing novel in Mr. MacNeil's preaching. He preached no new gospel. He kept closely to the old paths. What was novel about him was not what he preached, but the unusual power that accompanied his preaching. And the secret of that power is, I think, not far to seek. He was a man of much prayer. He lived under the powers of the world to come. He vividly realised the awful condition of the unconverted on the one hand, and the glorious sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour on the other. These two great fundamental truths of the gospel had taken a deep and powerful hold of his own soul, and he spoke because he believed. Those who have heard him preach will remember his tender and sometimes awful appeals to the unconverted, and they will also remember how he delighted to hold up Christ as "All and in all." He was consumed with the desire to save souls. He longed and laboured for conversions. His constant aim was to awaken the careless, to arouse the lukewarm and self-satisfied, and to guide the anxious to the Saviour. Of this last part of his work he never wearied. He was at great pains to make plain the way of salvation, and to remove the difficulties and mistakes of the anxious inquirer; and in particular was he at great

pains clearly to set forth the sufficiency of Christ's one sacrifice, and the free, full, and immediate salvation which is to be had by simply trusting in Him. And while he held forth Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, and did his utmost to make it plain to his hearers that they were to be saved simply by believing on Him, he at the same time was careful to warn them that there must also be a complete surrender of themselves to Him, and that they must take Him to save them not only from hell but also from sin.

But while his great aim was to bring sinners to the Saviour, he was not satisfied with that; he sought to stir up believers to a sense of their high privileges, and to impress on them the exceeding importance of their pressing on to higher attainments in the divine life. The little book which he published a short time before his death, and which is entitled "The Spirit-filled Life," will shew how in his afternoon addresses he sought to gain this great end. And what he sought for others he also sought for himself. He was one of a band of ministers who used regularly to meet for prayer in Collins Street, Melbourne, and he was Secretary of the Convention in Geelong, which has been so helpful to many Christians in the Colony, and the first meeting of which was accompanied by such a remarkable outburst of Christian love and of missionary zeal and liberality.

To some of Mr. MacNeil's methods some good people could not be reconciled; but we may not shut our eyes to the great honour which God, Who distributes His gifts severally as He will, conferred on him. It was touching to see old ministers of other demoninations standing by his grave, and speaking of him as "Dear John." But no wonder. There are faithful and useful pastors in all the Churches, and their services can never be dispensed with; but in this Continent I know of no other man who in God's hand has been made the instrument of saving so many souls. May the Lord of the harvest send forth many such labourers into His harvest!

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

DUNCAN S. MCEACHRAN.

St. Andrew's Manse,  
Carlton, Victoria,  
*May 21st, 1897.*

## CHAPTER I

### *BIRTH. EMIGRATION. EARLY EDUCATION*

#### Copy of Certificate in the Parish Register.

1854.

Born, 19th October.		NEIL MCNEIL		
Baptized, 26th November.	JOHN	ELIZABETH URQUHART	Builder.	Dingwall.

THAT 19th day of October, 1854, was a joyful one in Dingwall, Scotland. The first-born son, whose nativity is recorded as above, brought to his earthly home gladness and gratitude and pride. An event so important had to be celebrated in some extraordinary way; the works had to be closed; the workmen had to be given a holiday and the means of enjoying it. They chose, alas! their own method of "enjoyment," for a friend arriving in the evening remarked, "A bonnie piece of work your son has done the day! Not one of your men have I seen sober!"

It was fitting, however, that a life so full of sunshine in itself, and carrying brightness to so many thousands of other lives, should be ushered in with some sort of general festivity; and as soon as the gift was received from the Lord, it was handed back with a mother's unspoken prayer that the child might be a "standard bearer" in the army of

the Lord of Hosts. He was called "John" in the hope that the grand, unflinching faithfulness of the Baptist and the heavenly spirit of the Evangelist might find their counterpart in him,—a hope that had in it no slight touch of prophecy. He was baptized by the famous Dr. John Kennedy, whose name was an "open sesame" to the hearts of all Free Kirk Highlanders. Happy the child, thought they, who had the hands of Dr. Kennedy laid on him in the ordinance, and his blessing spoken over him in prayer.

For a little while all went on smoothly, but when the baby was about four months old a sickness seized upon him which would yield to no remedy. Dr. Kennedy stepped in one day to find the house in great distress; leeches had been applied to the little head, and now the bleeding could not be stopped! Every corner had been searched for a cobweb, but (to the credit of the housekeeping be it said) not one could be found. Instantly the doctor came to the rescue with the long nap from his black silk hat, and with this unusual *hæmostatic* the danger was averted. "Ah, doctor," said the mother, "I am afraid we shall lose him after all!" "No," said he, "I think not; when I saw you bringing him in your arms to me for baptism a beautiful verse came into my mind, and I felt that here was one for whom the Lord had a great work to do." This is very striking in the light of subsequent events, but at the time it was forgotten by all except the mother, who, like Mary, "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

From this time until he was six, and when Dingwall was left for Australia, he devoted himself—childlike and mainly—to growing and asking questions! The bonnie boy, with his big blue eyes and curly hair, was a living note of interrogation,—at once the pride and dismay of his grandfather, whose

head often grew dizzy over the depths to which one small mind could penetrate, and who had often to fly from another inquisition. Once, through the carelessness of either nurse or chemist, he was poisoned with calomel, but recovered because it proved to be an overdose,—or rather because this little barque was to outride all such storms, and to have a more glorious entrance into the desired haven.

In 1859, Mr. MacNeil, sen., left for Australia. Mrs. MacNeil followed with her three children in 1860, and landed in 1861. Their ship was the well-known clipper "Marco Polo." The inevitable discomforts of such a voyage with a young family need no description here. Wearisome and often dangerous, how marked a contrast do they present to the speedy, safe, and luxurious travelling of to-day! The monotony of the sea was not altogether unbroken, for once there was a sudden alarm, and the awful cry of "Fire!" ran from man to man. "Fire" in mid-ocean! could anything be more appalling? At once Mrs. MacNeil gathered her children together, stationed them at the ship's side, and resolved, should death be unavoidable, to throw them first into the water, and then to leap in after them herself. The fire, however, was got under; this danger was past; but now "little Johnny," as he was called, began to droop. Without being actually ill he gradually lost strength, till his mother prayed in her agony: "Lord, spare my child until I get to land, that I may at least possess his grave." The prayer was answered; she *does* possess his grave, but instead of its being the last resting place of a little boy, it is a spot where many meet to weep, and where they pray that the spirit of him whose body sleeps there may descend on them.

At last Australia was sighted and Melbourne reached, and, after two or three weeks at Geelong,

the family removed to Ballarat, which became their home until 1878. Mr. MacNeil used often to speak of himself as "a Ballarat boy," yet he never forgot that he was a Highlander born, and never lost the pride of having begun life among the sturdy spirits, lovely scenery, and bracing winds of Ross.

After two or three years at the State School, Mr. MacNeil's father took him (aged ten) and his younger brother to Mr. McCoy of the Ballarat College, who gave John the credit of being the smartest new boy at arithmetic that he had ever taught, and who continued to instruct him until he had passed for Matriculation. During those six years he began to show his tremendous capacity for work; lessons were most faithfully learned; and with all his love for fun, and his merry energetic disposition, he was emphatically "good."

To be photographed was an event of importance in those early days, and when wanted one day at dinner-time to have his likeness taken, he was only discovered after a long search, locked up in the school-room, and hard at work at his books. Once, however, a passing disgust with school made this model boy, with his little brother, decide to play truant. They spent the day in a mud-hole catching bull-frogs; but by the time school was over, and they were free to return home, their minds were fully made up that, bad as school might be, playing truant was worse, and that the game was not worth the candle! It was the first time—and the last.

A most affectionate, thoughtful boy he must have been. Coming home from school sometimes, and seeing his mother looking pale and worried, he would say cheerily, "Bad head, Mother? sit still for a little; I'll get something to do you good." Then slipping quietly into the kitchen, he would soon re-appear with the tea and toast, which, without

troubling the servant, he had prepared himself.

It was a settled principle with his father to let his sons know nothing of idleness. Every hour of the day was filled up with work of different kinds. There is a tradition of a lad who once went to spend a holiday with the MacNeils. He had his own ideas of "holidaying," and when he found that the boys were expected to rise early—and he of course with them—to clean harness, and otherwise to make themselves "generally useful," he soon departed. The boys themselves, however, never grumbled; they had few holidays, but enjoyed what they had to the full. Saturday afternoon was usually spent in football or cricket with the boy next door. Their forenoon duties were generally done before his, and in answer to their eager call "Come along, H., and have a game," H., who was not such an early riser, would sometimes reply moodily, "Look at all that wood I've got to chop!" "Oh, we'll help you," they would cry, and jumping over the dividing fence, would set to work with such a will that the pile would speedily disappear. There is little doubt that the instantaneous obedience, and the steady discipline demanded in those days made him all the better fitted to "command" when his time came.

It is extremely improbable that he ever saw the inside of a Sunday School until he left Ballarat for the Melbourne University. Lessons were always said at home; the "Shorter Catechism" was a weekly acquaintance, and soon became an intimate friend, being known as friends seldom are—through and through, proofs and all. Long chapters of the Bible were committed to memory, and altogether the day savoured much of the old, severe Scottish Sabbath. Yet I never heard him complain of it; on the contrary, he thought himself much the better for that training. Years afterwards, when preparing



a Bible Reading, texts bearing on the subject, learned long ago, would, without any conscious effort, marshal themselves before his mind. It was thus, that while yet a child, his wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures began to be acquired. Inclined, however, to things that were good, and sincerely anxious to know himself a child of God, he was yet ignorant of the way to Christ. He knew intellectually the plan of salvation, but could not see how it was to be fitted to his own case.

Concerning this time he often spoke of himself afterwards as "groping" after light, and he used to say how much doubt and darkness he might have been spared, had there only been someone to put his hand upon his shoulder, and to say: "My lad, do you want to be a Christian?" His own minister was excellent in many respects, but the idea of going to him for a personal talk was not to be thought of. Probably the good man would have gladly welcomed him, but he never gave the invitation. The memory of those days of perplexity made him always careful to make himself approachable. Fearing lest in some happy-looking youth, whom he happened to see, there might be a "troubled spirit," he would lovingly offer the help which he himself had longed after in vain. "I shall never forget," says a rising professional man, "how he put his arm around me one afternoon, and asked me so affectionately if I were a Christian. I was only a lad then, but the gate by which we stood, the tone of his voice, the loving glance of his eye are all indelibly impressed upon my mind; his words are fresh in my memory, as on the day they were spoken."

It is quite possible that he was a child of God for some time before he realised salvation. One day he got some light when reading "Another lily gathered," by Robert McCheyne. Going over the steps which lead to salvation, he said to himself,

“Well, I believe that, and that, and that!” Following the matter out to its logical conclusion, in the same way in which he afterwards led along many another soul, he added, “If anyone else took those steps he would be saved; then, why should not I be saved too?” He stepped out cautiously and obtained some degree of rest, but it was not until he had gone to Melbourne, and was sitting under the ministry of Rev. D. S. McEachran, that he entered upon the full assurance of faith. “It was in a back seat,” he said, “in St. Andrew’s Church that I first found the light.” This matter once settled, he said good-bye to doubts and fears, and had little to do with them again. Planting his feet firmly on the Word of God, and feeling that thus they were set upon a rock, he began to sing the “new song,” a melody which rang on through the remainder of his life with ever-increasing volume.

He never grudged the time or labour spent in bringing a doubting Christian into fuller life. Among his own dear Highlanders he found many an old man and woman who were as true believers in Christ as he himself, but whose modesty or timidity had prevented them from ever being able to say, “I am a Christian.” Sitting down, taking their hands in his, placing himself beside them as a fellow-sinner, he would cautiously but firmly take them on step by step—they hardly understanding whither he was leading, until he had them fairly “cornered”; they must either doubt the word of God—“call God a liar” (as he forcibly put it), or acknowledge that they had a right to liberty. One must understand the Highland temperament in order to know that, constitutionally, they are prone to “doubt” rather than to “shout.” “They were worth the trouble,” he used to think, for once a Highlander gets to shouting point he rarely goes back to doubting.

John's salvation must have taken place when he was about sixteen. Great interest always attaches to the conversion of an eminent servant of God. People like to know—How? and When? and Where? In this case, the Spirit of God led on so gently that he himself could not indicate the precise moment, or the exact truth that made him free. He only knew that in that back seat in St. Andrew's Church, Melbourne, he first ceased to "see men as trees walking."

## CHAPTER II

### *THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY*

IT is always an exciting time in the history of a family when the first boy leaves for a University. To the uninitiated there is something of mystery, with an undercurrent of awe and reverence, attached to the cap and gown of a student at Alma Mater. Most of us can remember the time when we thought an undergraduate altogether superior to ordinary young men,—an opinion which we are forced to modify when we note how much “human nature” a student can carry through his University career. Just now, however, we must suppose ourselves at the reverential stage, and the boy of sixteen, invested with a new importance, is leaving home for the first time, to encounter the difficulties and temptations of University life. The “difficulties” John was prepared to surmount, for he meant to work hard; and over a hardworking student “temptations” exercise but little power. He had a strong confidence that if he did his best he would succeed, but he never left anything to chance. Chance was an element in which he had not the slightest faith. The following description is supplied by his old friend, Mr. Alex. Sutherland, M.A., and gives a good idea of how he appeared to his fellow students:—

“When John MacNeil joined the University in 1871, he was a tall and somewhat shapely lad.

He had a ruddy colour, and his manners had a certain frankness and heartiness in keeping with his appearance. A downy fringe on cheeks and chin went well with a clear and honest mirthfulness of eye to suggest that interesting but all too rare description of youth who can pass from boyhood to manhood without becoming self-assertive and conceited on the one hand, or preternaturally wise and solemn on the other. To an earnest manner and sincere conversation he was able to join much of joyousness, and a gaiety, which, in suitable times and places, bubbled up in fun and frolic. From an Academic point of view, he rose little above the average standard of ability; he made no figure on the Honor Lists, and had little chance of success against the crack students of our year. But in our life of those times, whether that of the lecture-room, field, or quadrangle, he told with strong effect by reason of a fine personality. He held his own in the society of the cleverest students, and was welcomed by them on account of a charm not easily described, arising from the union of a manly uprightness and earnestness of character with a boyish and breezy simplicity.

Dr. Hearn and he were great friends,—the learned man finding much pleasure in addressing his most interesting points and his creamiest jokes to the receptive mind of the student who used to sit with a bright and eager eye fixed very steadfastly upon him. At that time the Professor was taking not only his own subjects, History and Political Economy, but also the classical work, after the resignation of Professor Irving. Thus for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years, MacNeil was almost constantly under the influence of his well-stored and suggestive mind. Some of us had a larger proportion of mathematics or science, but it was well for all of us to be to so large an extent under the same influence. Mac-

Neil always sat in the front row, and he and the Professor were on a very familiar footing. His name caused him to be always selected as the type of a Scotchman. 'Now, MacNeil,' Dr. Hearn would say, 'You ought to understand the history of that word. At the time when your ancestors were bare-legged robbers, helping themselves to their neighbours' cattle, they used to use this word,' and so on. His rosy face and hearty laugh were provocative of a cheerful tone in the lecturer, and MacNeil, in a humorous but respectful way, sometimes paid the Doctor back in his own coin.

Mr. H. B. Higgins, the well-known barrister, Mr. Richard Hodgson, now of some eminence in psychological circles in England, together with MacNeil and myself formed a student-set most intimately bound together; but Dr. Bride, long at the head of our Public Library, and Mr. W. Thwaites, now Chief Engineer of the Metropolitan Board of Works, were more or less associated with us, and I should add Mr. John F. Stretch, now a Bishop in Queensland, and Mr. E. L. Backhouse. The first four of us were on special terms of friendliness, and saw a great deal of each other, not only at the University, but in long country walks and occasional expeditions. At all times MacNeil impressed me by his mingling of boyish exuberance with manly purpose. We all took our B.A. degree in 1874, and then MacNeil started on his theological course, while we scattered out on different paths. I saw him from time to time for a few years, but the old intimacy was greatly broken, and a very pleasant student friendship failed (as is so often the case) to ripen into one more permanent. But his memory and his influence are still vivid through all the intervening years, and I shall never cease to remember him as a fine feature in a very happy part of my early life."

Bishop Stretch, above referred to, writes thus:—

“I must have been within a few yards, so to speak, of your husband in Brisbane, when his sharp and sudden summons came. I have never met him to speak to since our University days, though I have often seen his name when he was busy with his mission work, and I long ago came to the conclusion that he must be the same. In those days very few students lived at Trinity—the only College that then was, and which was still in its infancy; consequently we saw very little of one another, except at lectures. He was one of a few men who came to the University with the full intention of studying hard, and of making the very best of their advantages. He was always bright and cheery, and was a constant contradiction to the silly saying that a Scotchman cannot enjoy a joke. He and I were almost constantly exchanging pleasantries.

My recollections of him are not extensive, but such as I have are vivid. He did not impress me as a brilliant man, but looking back, one can see that he was far better—faithful, earnest, thorough. These qualities, I think, he has shown all through his life, and God has sealed them with His approval and acceptance. He was a very clean-minded fellow, and always shrank from anything coarse. What he did, he did unostentatiously. I did not realise that he was what one would call religious, but his influence went for what was pure and honourable.”

The first twelvemonths' work was particularly arduous, for through some misunderstanding John did not know that Greek was compulsory. He did not even know his Greek alphabet, and yet in nine months time he must pass in it or lose his year. It involved hard study for a boy who had no intention of failing. I once heard him say that he had spent eight successive hours over his first few lines of Greek

translation. Rev. Lithgow Tait was his "coach" in this department; possibly some of his friends lent a helping hand; and his room companion remembers that the first sight and sound of each morning was John standing at his desk and committing his notes to memory. Nothing on earth had power to tempt him from his fixed hours of study; but when he was free, not one of his year could show a lighter pair of heels, or enjoy a heartier laugh.

Before me, as I write, there lies a sheet of paper, yellow with age and worn with handling. It has been cherished by his mother for many a day, for on it is written, in boyish character, his wish to become a minister of the Gospel. Part of it runs thus:—

CARLTON,

*May 18th, 1871.*

My dear Father, Mother, Sisters, and Brothers,

There is but one wish I have—to get your assent to the course I wish to study for. It is the dearest wish of my heart to study for the Holy Ministry. I do trust I will get your assents, and last but not least, your blessings. It is true, it is an awfully responsible office, but the best answer to that is in Mr. McCheyne's own words—'The Grace is so full, the Reward so glorious. 'Tis grace that makes us all what we are.' May God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, pour forth His Holy Spirit on us, and bless you all.

The reverent way in which he speaks of the Ministry shows his attitude toward the whole question. To be a minister of Jesus Christ was to him at once the most solemn as well as the most joyful thing in the whole world. He did much in after life which made some of his brethren look askance at him, as being derogatory to "the cloth"; but his life was singularly free from anything that could reflect upon his order. "I magnify mine office," he used to say emphatically. He considered that his calling, and especially his title of "Evangelist," conferred more honour upon him than that



of King or Emperor. One of the severest rebukes he ever administered was given to a preacher who was doing his duty in a manifestly negligent way. On leaving the place, Mr. MacNeil, who had been holding a mission there, wrote him a straight letter about the manner in which he was doing the Lord's work, and advised him to give up preaching, and to do something else to gain "an honest living."

Whenever it was suggested to him that a Christian physician could do nearly, or quite, or (according to some people) even more good than a minister, his ire would be aroused: "Nonsense, man!" he would reply sharply, "To be a Christian doctor is a grand thing, and I wish there were more of them; but he deals with sick and dying men and I with the living: how *can* you compare the two?" Having entered upon this "awful responsibility" in the full realisation of what he was about to do, he trusted on for "the Grace which is so full," and so, to-day, he enjoys the "Reward which is so glorious."

It was probably some time in 1871 that John joined St. Andrew's Church as a communicant. He had worshipped there ever since coming to Melbourne at the beginning of that year, and regularly attended Mr. John Tait's Bible Class every Sabbath afternoon. Mr. Tait's note book, in which is recorded his impressions of his scholars, shows against the name of John MacNeil such entries as—"very promising scholar," "promises to be a very useful man," &c. There is a pretty story of his interview with Mr. McEachran, when he saw him with a view to Church membership, and it is characteristic of them both. Taking the lad's hand and shaking it warmly, the minister said, "Well, John! well John! and what do you think of Christ?" "Oh," said the young student, with beaming face, "He's Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." "That's right, John! that's

right!" said Mr. McEachran, for he felt that the root of the matter was there. Between these two—the elder saint full of years and honor, and the fiery young herald of the cross—there always existed the truest friendship, and John, when writing to his old minister, usually signed himself "Your son in the Gospel." He revered him with all the loyal love of which he was capable, and Mr. McEachran, with equal loyalty, fought many an ecclesiastical battle for his most impetuous and often misunderstood child. Some of the friendships formed at this time have lasted through life. Saturday and Sunday afternoons used to be devoted to visiting the sick. John would read and pray, and his friend, Mr. William Howat, would sing. He himself was not then master of that wonderful ministry of song which later on brightened so many chambers of pain, and left its echoes in each sufferer's heart. One could almost wish to have stood behind the door to hear how this pair of boys tried in their own way to be a blessing to the poor.

I have two or three letters by me which may prove of some interest:—

BALLARAE.

*June 14th, 1872.*

My Dear Mr. Sutherland,

I hope you are well and taking plenty of exercise. I know you are getting on flying with your work! With me it is not quite so. I am a little behind, but will soon make up for lost time. . . . Will you have the kindness to go to the place where I was lodging last term, get the books which I left there, and bring them to your domicile till I come again. If this you will do, I shall be for ever obliged. Of course this will make me look out for fresh lodgings. I should like to go to Miss F.'s very much, but I fear she charges too much for poor me. If she could accommodate me for 21s. per week I certainly should take up my quarters there.

Ever yours

J. MACN.

MELBOURNE,

*June 18th, 1872.*

My Dear MacNeil,

I received your note of the 14th, and went up this evening to bring the books away. My mother saw Miss F. on Saturday, and spoke of what you mentioned. I will get her address before I post this, so that you may write. It would be difficult to find a more suitable place. She loves to have everything in perfect order, yet lives well, and loves to make herself and everyone else comfortable. Her mother is very old, but takes a great interest in young folks, and would be quite delighted to have anyone like you about the house to make it a little more cheerful. I saw our new Professor last Thursday. He is a tall, delicate young man, very white, and a little consumptive looking—effects of hard study, no doubt. I am very sorry to say that he is an Englishman! However, it is not so bad as it looks at first sight, for he has lived many years in Glasgow; and a man of sense, such as he is, will have made good use of his time, and made up for the misfortune of his birth! I have not seen Hodgson during the holidays, but have several times seen an inch or two of Higgins appearing from behind gigantic piles of law reports on one of the small tables of the University Library. Of course I could not recognise him from this alone, but the voice holding forth about contracts, pledges, bonds, etc., was quite unmistakable. Let me advise you never to take up law, Part I. I believe I knew what a contract was until I heard him read a definition of it; since then I must confess that my ideas on the subject are rather hazy. . . . I subscribe myself,

Yours most affectionately,

A. S.

BALLARAT,

*June 24th, 1872.*

My Dear Mr. Sutherland,

I have just laid aside that charming book, *Æschylus*, so of course you will excuse any incoherent, rambling expressions which may occur in this note. I received yours on Saturday, and laughed ever so much over it. My grateful thanks. I have now a good idea of what Prof. Strong is, or at least should be! In a little over a week I shall see him. I hope we will all pull together. I bow with submission to your advice about Law, Part I. Believe me, yours faithfully,

J. MACN.

MELBOURNE,

Dec. 31st, 1873.

My Dear MacNeil,

Allow me to congratulate you! Passed flying, "*ut vulgus profanum dicere solet*"! The lists were posted on Saturday. I thought Mr. S. would have written to you, so I left it till this morning to learn what were the subjects you succeeded in. Poor — has been plucked; it cast a damper over our party on Saturday. I shall send you an account of the Honor Examinations, and give you a blowing up for not waiting to go in for them. What a pity it is you do not live in Melbourne; we scarcely ever see each other while University work is going on. We'll take it easier next year, I suppose.

Believe me,

Your very affectionate friend,

A. S.

This last letter, properly speaking, marks the end of my husband's University career, but I must insert one other, written to his friend, Mr. Arthur Buley, between whom and John, representing the Arminian and Calvinistic sides of doctrine, many a hard, though friendly contest took place. These battles were always "drawn"; neither convinced the other; yet they worked together lovingly in all aggressive service, and continued friends to the end.

3A ELGIN STREET,

August 16th, 1872.

Dear Arthur,

. . . In a little over two weeks I shall have no new ground to go over except Ovid. There is a meeting of the Students' Missionary Association held every Saturday morning in connection with the Theological Hall, for which I sometimes prepare a paper on Missionary Work, and this takes up time. Every afternoon this week I have been running about on my Father's business, so that I have done very little. You ask me to tell you something about myself. What have I to tell? What but that I am a vile, weak worm, the lesser of the two least of the saints,—yea, I dare scarcely use the word, but by far the chiefest of sinners; yet how glorious!—"Tis for the chiefest of sinners, Christ Jesus came and died." My earnest and constant prayer is, "Lord teach me to pray without

ceasing." This command, "Pray without ceasing," is a glorious one, though hard for me to keep, worldly-minded as I am; therefore ought I to lean more on God's Almighty Arm. The other command, "Rejoice evermore," is so refreshing. Who is it that is to rejoice? Are *you* a child of God? Then this applies to *you*, not to the children of disobedience. Nor to those who are living at their ease does this apply, for they, if they continue so, will "*wail evermore.*"

I am afraid you are going wrong in trying to settle the doctrine of election. I think you have a fixed idea in your head, and *this* you try to work into the Bible, instead of putting your own ideas aside and working an idea out of the Bible. I think that this latter is the right way. Another thing put *reason* out of the question; do not make reason your standard, but the Bible. If you make reason your standard, how can you explain "The Triune God," as well as many other things? So also, I assure you, my dear friend, that if you make *reason* your bar in regard to election, you will never come to a Biblical conclusion. You ask me, "Does it not seem unjust that God should do so-and-so?" I answer in the words which St. Paul penned in answer to the same question, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

And again, "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*"

"Is it right that God should do so?" is not the question, but—"Does God do so?" For if HE does do it, we must say "Amen; it is well; it must be just, because Thou doest it." 1 Cor. ix. 27 is perfectly reconcilable with election. St. Paul could speak thus, and could also say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." When he was shipwrecked, did he not say to the captain, sailors, and soldiers, "There shall be no loss of life among you?" Now, he knew quite well that that was true; he knew that no one would be drowned; yet, when the sailors were going to row away and leave the ship, he had not the slightest hesitation in adding, "Except these abide in the ship, *ye cannot be saved.*" Unless an athlete made a proper use of *means* he would *certainly* be a "castaway" in the Olympic games, and unless I make the proper use of the means of grace I will *certainly* perish. But God will give me grace as He did to the Apostle, who *knew* that He was to be saved. . . . Let me know whether you study the Bible regularly. We feed our bodies three times a day; surely twice a day will not be too often to feed our souls in the rich pastures of God's Word! Write to me soon. Meantime believe me to remain,

Your soul's well wisher,

JOHN MACNEIL

The inexorable demands of study during term-time left little leisure for directly spiritual work, beyond sick visiting and a little help given to Mr. W. Thomson, who is now Presbyterian minister at Camperdown, but was then Missionary for St. Andrew's, and holding services in a little iron church in Carlton. Mr. Thomson laboured principally among the poor, and non-church-going Presbyterians. John sometimes visited with him, or did a little on his own account, but as a rule he filled the humble capacity of doorkeeper at the Mission Hall, and was well pleased to distribute books or help in any trifling way. Years afterwards, when introducing Mr. Thomson to a friend, he said: "This is the man who first set me to work for Christ." On one occasion, having undertaken to relieve a fellow teacher for a few Sundays of a class of disorderly lads, the following incident occurred. A boy volunteered the statement during lesson time, that there was a lot in the Bible that was not true; whereupon John said: "You may search for a month, and if at the end of that time, you find one word that is not true, I'll give you five pounds." The boy replied that he didn't know anything about it; it was his father who said there was a lot in the Bible that was all rubbish. "I wonder how your father could say such a thing," said John. "Why doesn't he come and see Mr. McEachran about it, and fight it out?" Instantly a very forward youth enquired: "Would Mr. McEachran stand up to his father and fight it out?" "Of course he would," said John, thinking of an argumentative conflict, and sure both of the ability and courage of his minister. "Well, I wouldn't advise him," was the response, "for that chap's father is a champion heavy-weight boxer!"

On April 11th, 1874, all the little band of friends were "capped" together, and John, at the age of 19, became possessed of a B.A. degree. "Aren't you

proud of your son?" said a friend to his mother. "I wouldn't like to say I was proud," was her reply, truly Scotch in its caution and modesty, "but I'm very thankful." He took no honors in his course, simply because he did not try for them. His vacations were spent in helping his father in his railway contracts, so that he had little leisure for books, and we know that very few take a high place on honor lists who do not press into the service part, at least, of the long vacation.

It now seemed a little doubtful whether he would be able to pursue his theological studies. He thought he would not be able to afford it. "But Willie," he said to a friend, "I'll be a minister yet! I'll get the money somehow! And if my coat gets threadbare, and I can't get another, I'll lift my arm (suiting the action to the word) and say: 'Feythur, it's no very creditable to Thee to see Thy bairn going about so shabby!'"

## CHAPTER III

### *RAILWAY DAYS*

FROM a lecture room in the University to the foot-plate of a locomotive seems a "far cry," but John MacNeil had been kept in touch with his father's work all through his course, and entered into this life as though he had been born for it. It was a life of action, and that suited him at all times. Those who heard him allude in his meetings to his "old railway days" will be glad to hear more of his manner of life during the two years in which he lived by the labour of his hands. Stories of railway life invariably arouse an unusual degree of interest, and men of the world always feel their respect for an ordinary minister increase when they understand that he knows a little about "business."

When afterwards he used to get out and travel for some miles on the engine, in order to speak to the driver and stoker about their souls, it did not make them less inclined to listen when they found that he could run it himself. He sometimes feared that to be thus engaged, instead of pushing on at once into the ministry, was a kind of waste of time, but he afterwards acknowledged (as did everybody else) that he gained incalculably through this discipline. He developed a splendid physique, gained a knowledge of men, and accumulated a fund of illustration which he could have acquired



in no other way. Just after leaving the University, he thus writes to his friend Mr. Howat:—

BALLARAT,

*December 13th, 1873.*

Dear William,

I have been waiting for a fortnight to get an hour to write to you, and this is just to show that you are not forgotten. Every day I think of you, and oft-times I pray. I will try hard next week to write respectably. But from 6 a.m. till between 12 and 3 at night I have no time to spare. Many days I am either driving or in the saddle for eleven hours, and I know what it is to be weary in body now. . . . Didn't I tell you that I would never be sorry for trusting the result of the examination to God. Kindest love to everybody that I know, and whom you love.

Ever truly yours,

JOHN MACNEIL.

The first few months of 1874 were spent on a section of railway leading out from Ballarat, and John entered on the work with the same tremendous energy and enthusiasm that he had carried to his books, and that he afterwards carried into his preaching. His imperturbable good humour, and his utter absence of false pride, together with a frank and hearty manner, made him very popular with the men, who greatly loved "Maister John." At the same time they knew that he would not be trifled with, and that woe would betide any unfortunate who was disobedient to orders. He was no less an adept in "dressing down" a recalcitrant navy than he afterwards showed himself to be in putting an impudent hearer through the same process.

"No play in work-time!" was his motto for himself, and the men who came under his rule soon found that he expected them also to act up to this adage. Never could they depend on "Maister John" being safely out of the way, for his horses had a trick of getting over the ground in double-quick time, and just at the wrong moment an apparition of "boss" might prove decidedly upsetting to their nerves! Work

over, however, he would sit familiarly with them at their camp fires, and get to know for himself that, rough as they might be, they were thinking and feeling men, and not mere machines. It soon got about among the navvies "what manner of man" he was. "Why don't the boss swear?" said a new-comer one day, when something especially aggravating had occurred. "Why, don't you know?" was the answer, "he's a Christian—he don't swear."

His spirituality of tone did not now decline. He complains, however, in the words of another, "that the influence of crowded secular work is very deadening," but adds, "Thanks be to our Father that there is an antidote to the poison—open for us all." "You may ask," he writes, "'whatever can you be doing?'" That query I can hardly answer. Sometimes I am in the saddle at 3.30 a.m., and not home till 11.0 at night. Sometimes I have no breakfast till 2 p.m., and when at last home is reached I am too tired for tea. From 5 a.m. till 9 p.m. are the usual hours out of doors, and then there is generally writing to do. Oh, that I had more time for meditating in the Scriptures! I didn't prize my opportunities enough when I had them in Melbourne; but the little reading one does get *each day* is oft-times very sweet."

Note my italics, for it is remarkable, and should be impressed on the reader's mind, that although the morning's hurry was occasionally too great to wait for breakfast, and the fatigue of evening sometimes made bed more acceptable than supper, yet the day was *never* begun nor ended without reading and prayer. When questioned about it afterwards, he said that he could not remember one occasion on which he had acted differently. Here, without doubt, is the "antidote" to the "deadening influences" of crowded secular work.

On March 4th, 1874, he writes to Mr. Howat:—

On Saturday night when I went home I received your letter containing matter of very great interest to me. I have done with it as Hezekiah did with Sennacherib's letter in by-gone days. I spread it before the Lord, and have asked that I may hear His voice behind me saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Mr. T——, you say, advises me to go home and carry on my studies there. This advice I would most gladly follow, but as yet I cannot, for the door is shut. Neither can I prosecute my studies here. So I believe it is my Master's will that I should wait until He either sends me home, or sends out a man for our Hall. Mr. T. wants a student this year, but such I fear I cannot be. Most gladly would I give myself to this glorious work, although I am so very unfit; but we know and believe, blessed be God, that there is a Helper for the helpless, and One Whose strength is made perfect in weakness. Now, my dear William, you see what my answer is. It is undecided whether I go home or stay here; if I get an opportunity of going home before we get a Professor at the Hall I will go; but if the Professor comes first I will stay. You will have the goodness to thank Mr. T. for his kindness so exceeding great to one so undeserving.

There was a very interesting Missionary Meeting in our church last night for the Chinese and Aborigines. The work is not being supported as it ought to be. Everybody wants stirring up. Lord pour out the Spirit! Let us *Pray, pray, PRAY*. . . . I had a ride of about twenty-five miles yesterday, for the most part alone,—yet not alone. Had I had your old black horse by my side with its usual burden on its back, I would have been happier still. We would have been talking of the "Better World," where "Sin and woe are done away." . . . Mr. Paton has not visited us yet, but surely the time will come, and may the Spirit of the Highest come too, and anoint us all afresh. I long to see the noble old soldier. To live in a place favoured by God with faithful watchmen—oh, how you ought to prize that. Would that I had prized it more while I had it. Do you know what it is to have no love for souls? yes, even for souls that are going down surely to destruction? I don't think *you* could have such a heart of stone, but such a heart have I. There have been times when I could weep for the perishing, but oh! how seldom do I feel so now. Lord God, be pleased to show us what Eternity is! Help me, William, by your prayers, so that the time may soon come when I shall have a heart tender and loving like our Master's. I had a letter from L—— last mail; he is getting

along well ; he wants me home very badly ; but, you know, it is God that has to send me. I remember your reciting a verse of a hymn one night :—

“Oh Lord, my God, and can it be,  
That mercy still remains for me !”

When my mind is perplexed I can sing, although I cannot think much. Your letter kept me meditating the rest of the day, and much as I liked the hymn “Jerusalem my happy home” before, I like it better now. I started singing it that day, and I have not finished yet. Many a time since July 6th the plains and lonely woods have resounded with its lovely words. Does not singing it help you to fix your eyes upward, and now and again to pause and think—especially over the verse

“Apostles, Martyrs, Prophets, there  
Around my Saviour stand” ?

Even by faith, how gloriously grand a sight, but oh, what must it be to see it with these eyes ! Let our watchword ever be, “Upward and onward.” . . . Good news about your class ! Forward, my comrade, in the strength of the Lord.

BALLARAT,

*September 4th, 1874.*

My Dear William,

I received Miss H.'s letter of August 29th, with a few sad particulars of your accident. I am writing in a Government office, in company with my brother and a clerk. They are checking our final measurements, and I am a kind of umpire. Every now and again they appeal to me to settle disputes, so I suppose there will be a good many breaks before I have done (there have been two or three already). My feelings when I heard the news about you can be better imagined than described. Jesus in His new commandment says, “Love one another” ; and we obey this commandment, don't we ? “Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another” is an axiom in geometry. Now turn this and it will read, “Things (or persons) that love the same thing love one another.” This is the great secret of Christian affection . we love Jesus, the great Centre of Attraction. I was reading Robert McCheyne's Memoir last Sabbath. and met the passage, “‘Lord, I will run and work,’ said I. ‘No ! thou shall lie there and suffer and pray,’ said the Lord.” Thus his Master was to be glorified.

Ever yours whilst here below,

JOHN MACNEIL.

One day Mr. Buley took this young disciple—

yearning after deeper spiritual life, and panting for some outlet for the energies of his soul—to the Town-Mission Hall in Ballarat East, where a grand work was being carried on by a remarkable man, a Mr. Martin Hosking, who was Town-Missionary there for 21 years, who was known everywhere, and widely respected. Although humble and poor, he was a mighty man with God. John fairly “jumped” at what he found there—warm, hearty, spiritual life; prayer which dealt directly with God about specific needs; an atmosphere which encouraged growth instead of nipping it with frost; and an ever-widening circle of new-born believers. He became a most regular attendant at the early Sabbath morning prayer meeting, and it was at this Hall that he made his first attempt at taking a service. He began cautiously by using a sermon of Spurgeon’s, but reading was soon thrown aside. On Saturday evenings he used to attend a class for young men at the Lydiard Street or Barclay Street Church, the latter conducted by Mr. (now Hon.) David Ham, but it was somewhat mixed, being made up of several denominations; and although John used to tell the Methodists that he had once been a member of a “class meeting,” it did not take the form of a properly constituted “society” class. His mother, however, seeing him joining so constantly with the Wesleyans, and alarmed lest his loyalty to his own Church should be undermined, wrote to him of her apprehensions, and this is his answer:—

DANDENONG,

*February 8th, 1875.*

My Dear Mother,

I’ve just read your letter, and hasten to send a line in reply, to try and drive away all your groundless fears. I am very sorry you have been so put about for me, especially as I see no reason for it. People say queer things sometimes, and one of those queer things is that I am going to be a Wesleyan. Their saying this, however, won’t make me one. The doctrines

of my Church are too precious to me to be bartered away, and by my Master's help, I would at any moment drain my heart's blood rather than renounce those of them with which I am acquainted. But I love anyone who loves the Lord. Be he Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Greek, freeman, or slave, it is all the same to me; and my authority for so doing is that my Master loves them all. At the same time I have a leaning to the church of my fathers, although Presbyterians in Victoria are nearly all asleep and need waking up. It seems, however, as if they don't want to be awaked. Asleep! when Eternity is at hand! Oh, what madness! People who talk much about this or that particular sect are of very little account, in my opinion. They think and care very little about the Great Future; they think little about it in regard to themselves, and still less in regard to others. They say, "You must come to heaven my way or else stop out."

You say in your letter that it would be better to "cry to the Lord to breathe upon the dry bones that they may live." This is very true, but you forget that Ezekiel was told also to "prophesy to the dry bones" themselves, and to do the one without the other would be very wrong; and if Mr. — or an angel from heaven were to tell me to do the one without the other, they would have to get my old Bible altered before I would do it. I should like to be like the Master, always going about doing good. It was His rule to be instant in season and out of season. Look at Him at Samaria's well. I should like to be like McCheyne, dropping a word for his Lord wherever he could; never would he let an opportunity slip. I am sure he is none the worse for it now. I want to be like William Burns and Duncan Matheson, than whom nobler men never trod the earth. They didn't care what this man or that woman said. All their concern was "What would my Saviour have me to do?" So I care not what anyone outside may say of me,—only I would not do anything that would cause just grief to you or my father. I joined that band in Ballarat, composed of Wesleyans chiefly but not altogether, because there was life among its members. Any of them will tell you how firmly I stood by the doctrines of my church. Although a staunch Presbyterian, I will join hands with anyone who is willing to work in the Master's vineyard. See what McCheyne says on page 548 of his Memoirs.

Yours ever,

JOHN MACNEIL.

On November 6th, 1874, he wrote from Ballarat to Mr. Howat:—

Dear William,

I was joyful with exceeding joy when I got your MS. of October 24th. I was struck by my unworthiness of the honour you conferred upon me by writing to me, the first of all your friends, but I know why it is. The Master saw that I needed stirring up most, because I have been, and alas! still am, very sleepy, when there is such a lot to do. A prod in the ribs like that which you give me would be very acceptable every day. I am thankful that you have the assurance that your hand will be all right in time; at any rate you had better get it well before I meet you; else I may wring it a little bit too hard! It is a good thing, William, that we find opposition in worldly matters, because this shows clearly that we are pulling against the stream. And oh! with His Almighty arm we'll soon land in safety at the much-wished-for Haven. Then, then, no more struggling against the stream, but floating with the tide! I have news to tell you which will make your heart rejoice. Jesus has lately been making the people willing to be His, and His Kingdom is spreading far. This work is being carried on chiefly through our Town Mission, where as gallant a soldier as ever stood by the Captain's side under the blood-red banner is in charge. His name is Martin Hosking; if you will never meet him here, it will not be hard for you to distinguish him yonder. He will be among the stars, but I don't think he will be able to wear his crown, for he will be constantly casting it at his glorious Master's feet! He is an unlearned man; but men "take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus." Many, many souls have been born from above, and are bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, while God's sovereign Spirit is still moving among bones that are very many and very dry.

Our wily adversary is awfully busy, not only in trying to keep his own, but in tormenting and overturning those whom he has lost. But, glory to the Lamb, no man, not even the devil himself, can pluck one of Christ's people out of His hand. There is a band of between twenty and thirty of us—all ranks, ages, and sizes—bound together by that strong cement—the love of Christ. We are a happy, praying company; we all try to help one another; some of us are basking in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; a few are downcast, and them we try to cheer.

One of us was tempted very sorely; in an evil hour he quitted the Captain's side, entered the lists himself, and was overpowered; for twelve days he vainly tried to fill his belly with husks; but this day week my Master sent me to call in another comrade, and then sent both of us to our fallen brother. I had a buggy with me, and the three of us went out of the town to a paddock. Jesus was with us, and soon He graciously revealed

Himself to the backslider. We went home rejoicing, and singing all the way. People thought that we were mad, but with what feeling did we sing "Depth of mercy!" I will never forget that afternoon. My companion and I were firing our guns steadily, as the Captain loaded them for us, till at length the last shot was discharged, and Satan fled! With his whole soul beaming in his eyes, our brother exclaimed, "Thank God! I'm right! Give me your hands." His fall was an impressive lesson to us, for he had been a follower of Jesus, and what's more, a worker for Jesus, for four years. Satan does not trouble a sleepy Christian much, does he? No; he says, "He is not doing me any great harm; therefore I'll let him alone."

How willing God is to bless our work for Him, and how sweet that work is! There are meetings at the Mission Hall every night, and every night the Master calls for me. It is so sweet for me to be able to say, "Here am I." God is blessing me already ten thousand times more than my proud heart deserves, but by His grace I will give Him no rest till He writes the seventeen names that are in my roll book in the Lamb's Book of Life. Just think of *one* soul to meet us at God's right hand, whom we have been enabled to lead to Jesus! and if one, why not ten thousand? There's plenty of room for them all in Him.

Ever yours till the daybreak,

JOHN MACNEIL.

The Ballarat contract was finished towards the end of 1874, and my father-in-law's tender for a section of the Gippsland railway having been accepted, the family moved to Dandenong for twelve months. It was hard work for them all while the line was being carried out, and many days of hard riding through Gippsland Scrub, and toilsome journeys in search of railway material fell to my husband's lot. He and his brother were always splendidly mounted, and being thorough Australian riders, they caused considerable excitement in the little country town by their feats of horsemanship. Everybody did not approve, and Mr. Morton, the Presbyterian minister, who settled in Dandenong some little time after the MacNeils, was one day called in by an old Scotch woman, who said with much anxiety that she wanted



"a few words wi' him." "I just want to speak to you," she continued, "about thae young MacNeils, especially that eldest one. I'm afraid he's ganging to the de'il as fast as he can gang." "Whatever makes you think so?" said Mr. Morton, considerably astonished at hearing this report of one of his staunchest supporters. "Why," said she, "he rides so fast; the way he tears through the country is something awfu'; they just gang like wild men, the two of them jumping over the fences; ah, I'm afraid they'll both come to a sad end!"

The little town was quite stirred one day when John appeared driving a team of thirty harnessed horses with the contractor's engine. Of this engine he took the special oversight, sometimes even taking the driver's place altogether, if he happened to be disabled, for he liked not only to oversee the men, but to be able to do as they did. Many of the old hands who followed Mr. MacNeil from camp to camp, were fond of and proud of both the brothers. Years afterwards an old Irishwoman in Gippsland, who used to follow the camp as a boarding-house keeper, seeing on a poster that "Rev. John MacNeil" was to preach at a certain place, said to her daughter, "I believe that's Mистер Jan! we'll go and hear him." When the preacher entered the pulpit she did not recognise him, and said disappointedly, "It's not Mистер Jan at all!" but when he began by saying, "I know the wilds of Gippsland as well as any man of you! Many an hour have I spent on horseback, scouring through the scrub in my old railway days," she gave her child a tremendous nudge, whispering excitedly, "It *is* Mистер Jan! it *is* Mистер Jan!"

It was this same woman who one day appeared at our door in East Melbourne, announcing that she had come to see what kind of a lady "Mистер Jan" had married! The results of that examination were

never made known. It was a great delight to John when his friend, Rev. W. L. Morton, settled at Dandenong. A friendship begun before was cemented there, and continued only to strengthen until one of them had run his course. Ought we to say of friendship, "Till death us do part"? Surely those who are friends in Christ Jesus, are friends for ever and for aye.

LETTER TO REV. W. L. MORTON.

RAILWAY CAMP,  
DANDENONG,  
Dec. 1875.

Beloved Comrade,

Mr. H., one of our leading Churchmen, and I have been going round this afternoon seeing what we could do in Church matters. . . . I doubt not but that with the Almighty going before us as the Disposer of all things, the Ruler of men's hearts, and the Opener of their purses, we won't get on so badly. We will manage to get some one to come and work up this district, and to win some precious jewels for our Redeemer's diadem. A very worldly man, who gave us a donation, said, "I wouldn't care about going to hear most of those fellows you had, but there was one young chap,—I tell you I'd go again to hear him." Do you know who that is?

I tell you, fellow soldier, men *will* muster when you unfurl that grand old Flag which has for six thousand years braved the battle and the breeze! People *will* come to hear the plain unvarnished story of the Cross. There is something so fascinating about it, isn't there? At any rate there's something very fascinating in it to you and to me—but there! I've been running away again from my proper track; I couldn't help it; the truth is, brother, the people here are all in love with "MacNeil's friend"—that's the name most of them have got for you. Now I want you to go and ask the Lord Jesus your Master if He would be pleased to let you come here to feed these immortal souls, at least for a season. For my own part I want a fellow to come who has got some life in him, who will set us all on fire (for we have been nearly frozen to death lately), who will be an enthusiast in the eyes of the world. Methinks this holy enthusiasm is most likely to be found amongst some of you recruits. This way, then, O thou Heavensent one, whoever thou art! Comrade, think over it—pray well—answer quickly.

I am, yours in Christ Jesus,  
JOHN MACNEIL.

Mr. Morton remembers well the first evening that he preached in Dandenong. John walked home with him after service, and they had their first prayer meeting under a large gum tree. "He astonished me by the boldness of his faith, for in that prayer he thanked God for souls won at the service, although I had seen no evidences to warrant such a conclusion. I was doubtful as to whether I had taken the right subject for the morning, and told him so in the afternoon. He immediately asked me if I had not sought special direction before preaching, and, if I had, surely it was unbelief to doubt whether I had been guided aright. . . . He once actually rode forty miles on his fine grey charger (a noble animal of which he was justly proud), just to attend a prayer meeting."

Soon after Mr. Morton's arrival, a Sabbath School was started, and John became the first Superintendent. Some of the rough boys conceived a wonderful love for him, and Mr. Morton says that they would gladly have laid down their lives for him. An undated letter, somewhere about this time, reads thus:—

DANDENONG,

*Sabbath Night.*

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Morton,

"Carpe diem" is my motto and excuse. Dear, godly Mr. Paton has come, has worked faithfully and has gone. He is a man every inch of him. Pat Downs, our groom, and one of the wagoners came to the school to hear him, and again to the church at night. "Ah," Pat says, "He's a foine gintleman that! I could understand every word he said! but I couldn't stand to see him cry at all; he's passed through some queer things these eighteen years!" Then, he added, "I must go and hear Mr. Morton now; he stopped me in the market one day and shook hands with me; he's a nice fellow."

Fair congregations. Mr. Paton fired us all to-day,—*me* at any rate. How earnestly he pleaded with us, first for ourselves, to be *sure* that we were born again. "My friends, God can do without you, but you cannot do without Him." It was thought advisable to give Mr. Paton all the time, so I got

the children together, scattered the teachers amongst them, and then got them to pass a unanimous resolution that they would listen attentively! I was so busy listening myself that I forgot to count, but about eighty or ninety scholars were present, and twenty teachers and visitors. Mr. Paton asked them to buy a "share" in the "Dayspring." It would be best to have a little box for each class, and thus there would be a spirit of emulation, a healthy spirit I think. The increase in scholars has run away with my stock of hymn books, so I'm bankrupt now; but "Jehovah Jireh." Pat said, "The children sang fine to-day." Don't send a milk-and-water man next Sabbath. Trusting that you are sitting in the shade of the apple tree,

Truly yours in Jesus,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. JAMES REED.

MOUNT ARARAT,

July 8th, 1875.

My dear James,

On the summit of this lovely mountain I have just been thinking that I must show you that I have, as you say, some writing paper to spare! . . . Alas for my noble steed! After working faithfully and well here for about three months he got bad in his legs again, was sent to Melbourne, and sold for—for—I believe 4s. 6d.! Wasn't that scandalous? I have been gathering for you, from the heights of Ararat, some samples of ferns and a few leaves of a gigantic eucalyptus.

Many a time do these beautiful woods echo the praises of our God, coming from these polluted lips of mine. I can't help singing. I wish you were within a radius of 10 miles; we would have some glorious times amidst these glorious scenes looking up "through Nature unto Nature's God." There is no human being to enjoy these sights with me, so I talk and ride alone with Jesus. I was giving away some books to the children at a camp to-day, when a man, a little light in the head, came and asked for one. As I gave it he said, "My word, Johnny, you *are* rich!" Ah, how this simple remark lifted my heart to my Father in Heaven! With very joy I burst out laughing, and said, "Oh yes, Jimmy, I *am* rich: few are richer than I."

Yours in a mighty Saviour,

JOHN MACNEIL.

While looking after others, his own men were not neglected. In July, 1875, he writes:—

I trust, and have good reason to hope—nay, I will believe, that the firing of the Gospel gun, which the Captain of our salvation has committed to my charge, is not without result. I have prayed that a thirst after holy things might be created and quickened amongst my men, and the great Hearer of prayer has proved Himself again to be the great Answerer. Men go from one camp to another hunting after “something to read.” In answer to the question, “Have you read the papers I gave you?” they will say to me, “Ah, my word, yes sir, and I’ll thank you for some more.” One man on receiving some, said (lasting shame, therefore, be on me), “we have been wishing for these a good while.” Really it does my cruel, ice-cold heart good to see their thankful look, and to hear their “Thank you, sir.” Oh God of mercy! look in compassion on my poor dear men, and visit them with Thy salvation for the Saviour’s sake. Amen and Amen.

One of the bullock drivers, working on the line, used to vex my husband very much by his constant use of profane language. Having expostulated with him, he was met with a look of pity at the “boss’s” ignorance. “Why, Marse John,” said the driver, “you couldn’t get no work at all out of them bullocks if you didn’t swaar at them.” John retired, silenced but not convinced, and, one day, when Tom was taken ill, and his team being badly needed, “Marse John” determined to turn bullock driver himself, and to put Tom’s theory to the test. For three days he drove the bullocks, needless to say, without an oath, and on the fourth day handed back the long whip to Tom, remarking: “Now then Tom, I’ve driven those animals for three days, and I have got as much work out of them as ever you did, or more; never let me hear you swear again.” I cannot say whether Tom was completely cured or not, but his master’s ears were never offended again by his profanity.

One day he came across a number of men who were putting in a culvert. The specifications provided for a coat of tar on all the wood

under ground. He unexpectedly found the culvert in its place, and asked if it had been tarred. One of the men replied, with a twinkle in his eye: "Well sir, you see, it was all ready, and it seemed a pity to wait for tar, so we just tumbled it in as it was." "Oh, indeed!" John replied, "well, you can just tumbled it out again."

To the end of his life he could never see a tent without having his heart warmed towards it. He would almost always stop to speak to the occupant if he was in, or if he was out he would leave a silent messenger to greet him on his return. He calls himself "cold-hearted and careless," but I do not think that his men would have called him so. He writes thus to his friend, Mr. Howat:—

I have run out of tracts, papers, etc., for the men. May God forgive me for being so long idle. You might be able to send me out some "shot"—just a little till I can get to town myself. Do this, and I will thank you and love you all the more, and some poor soul may be eternally grateful to you. Above all, the Master will give you a rich reward. Enclosed find London Chartered Bank note to cover expenses.

My husband was seldom to be found without tracts in his pocket. In all my knowledge of him the "locker" was scarcely ever empty. Leaflets would be put out at railway crossings, left on the top of gates, and fastened in every conspicuous place. Wayside travellers had one dropped into their hands with a hearty "Read that, my friend; it will do you good." School-children were bidden to take them home to their mothers. Nobody was passed by, no opportunity lost. He drove one night from Melbourne to Dandenong, followed, unawares, by two from his own camp. As he let his cards fly, the pair behind picked them up, thinking that he was losing his "bits of tickets." This was "wayside sowing" with a vengeance—the "fowls of the air" speedily "catching up" the scattered grain! In the morning the sower was presented with all his

seed by the triumphant "birds." "There's ivery wan of your little tickets, sir; we havn't missed anny of them."

## CHAPTER IV

NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH, 1876-1879.

REV. R. BALLANTYNE, who is now Minister at Peebles, and who signs himself Mr. MacNeil's "Class-mate and Friend," writes as follows:—

On a dull November morning in 1876, at the opening of the winter session at the New College, the class of "first year" students was augmented by several "foreigners," and one of these was John MacNeil, from Australia. He was genial and frank in manner, and soon became a favourite with all. He was known at first as the "Colonial," then as the "Australian," then as the "Bushranger." These were not nick-names, but pet designations, always used with a warm, brotherly esteem. Perhaps I had better put my hurried reminiscences in order, so I will speak of him

(1) *As a Friend.*—As a friend he was one among a thousand, genuine to the core and true as steel. He was moreover genial and brotherly; and having travelled greatly, and always with an open eye, his companionship was informative, and his criticisms incisive on men, theories, and institutions. While he may be said to have been a universal favorite, alike with students and professors, there was an inner circle of friends in his student years where he was held in high regard. This consisted of five—Rev. John MacNeil, B.A., Australia; Rev. G. E. Troup, M.A., Broughty Ferry; William Fairweather, M.A., Dunnikier; J. J. Mackay, M.A., Hull; and the writer of these notes. They met in turn in each other's "diggings" on Saturday afternoons; they had tea, social intercourse, and then a season of prayer. Many precious and hallowed memories hang around those meetings.

(2) *As a Student.*—He was clear-headed, able, and painstaking in his work; on examination days he came well to the front, and if not actually first, not far from the first group. Through all his studies there was one aim never lost sight of—the goal to be reached at all costs—that he was



to be a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, an Evangelist, a soul-winner. All that helped towards this was welcomed; whatever interfered with it was left severely alone. Any line of study, no matter how intricate or difficult, if it gave promise of making him a more powerful instrument in the hand of Christ, was cheerfully pursued. He had all the parts that go to make a real orator—a man who sways the assembly of his fellow men as the summer breezes sway the standing corn. This was seen in the class of elocution under Mr. Moxey. At the close of the session there came on a great field day, when after public recital from Shakespeare and Longfellow, the prize was to be awarded by the votes of the assembled students. Many competitors entered, but the prize was awarded to John MacNeil, who revealed on that great occasion a power and resource of dramatic oratory that astonished and delighted his friends. Along with his studies two things may be mentioned as having powerfully affected him at this stage:—First, Dr. Whyte's prayer meeting in Free St. George's on Tuesday evenings, where the Doctor was at his best—analysing human experience with searching power, applying divine truth with unerring aim, and where John MacNeil (or "Jonathan" as he was sometimes now called) would sit with notes in hand, spell-bound, delighted, and pleased beyond measure. Secondly, Dr. John Ker's class in the U. P. Divinity Hall, where that wonderful man poured forth his treasures of knowledge and experience to a crowded class. Here John MacNeil was found drinking in with open eye and ear all the good man gave, and storing it in his note-book for further study and assimilation.

(3). *As a Christian Worker.*—His energy as a worker found two main outlets in Edinburgh:—

(a) He was an indefatigable coadjutor at the free breakfast in the Drill Hall every Sabbath morning. He threw himself into this work with red-hot enthusiasm. The poor victims of sin and vice of every form drawn within those walls in thousands from the slums of Edinburgh by the prospect of at least one warm, hearty meal a week, had for him a resistless attraction. He used to be up and away at the stroke of 6 o'clock, wet or fair, in fierce blizzard-storm of sleet and snow, or in keen biting frost. Nor did he rest satisfied with helping in the hall itself; he used to get the names and addresses of those with whom he came personally in contact, follow them to their homes, and there, by every art that a holy ingenuity could devise, he sought to win them to Christ, to holiness, and heaven.

(b) As time wore on he came to be recognised among his

fellow students as an Evangelist *par excellence*, so that when the office of leader in the Students' Mission became vacant he was voted to the post by acclamation. Here he found a new field for his unwearied energy. The Students' Mission, it must be remembered, is in the Pleasance, not far from the famous Canongate of Edinburgh. It was specially selected by the students with a two-fold object; first, because it was in the line of their profession,—it was to the Divinity student what the infirmary and hospital are to the Medical student, a sphere in which religion should be brought to bear as an applied science; and secondly, it was selected for its own sake,—for the sake of winning souls and carrying Gospel blessing to the poor and wretched in the lowest parts of the city.

In this new position John MacNeil found himself quite at home. His fine, open, frank manner won the hearts of the most depraved and prejudiced; his ready wit and quick retorts carried the day with the clever ones; and his native Australian shrewdness stood him in good stead with the sharks of society. In this way they were drawn out to the meetings, and once there their attention was riveted. His addresses were clear and pointed, aiming directly at the conscience and the heart. His delivery was dramatic and telling. Possessed of a fine voice and knowing how to use it, he held his audience by a magnetism all his own. He was, too, pictorial and vivid. One day he determined to take as his text, "We all do fade as a leaf," and walking out to the country on Saturday afternoon he gathered a few leaves of various tints and in different stages of decay. Taking them with him to the platform on the Sabbath evening, he held up one after another as each point in his address came on, and thus illustrated with thrilling power the exquisite delicacy of the human mechanism and the frailty of human life.

But now the severe winters of 1876-7 and 1878-9 began to tell even on his strong Herculean frame; again and again he caught cold, and though he was never reckless, yet each attack was so severe that, when beginning his last session, he was told by his medical adviser that another winter in Scotland would probably undermine his constitution, and that he must leave at once for the sunny south. It was a great regret to him, but it was inexorable; and so one day soon after, a band of students were gathered around the "Flying Scotsman" at the Caledonian Station to take farewell of their friend. Hearts were sore, but feelings were buoyant, as is always the case with students, and after many a hearty handshake and stirring hymn, the train steamed slowly off amid ringing "Hallelujahs," and John MacNeil was *en route* for Australia.

About August or September, 1876, my husband had embarked in the "Agamemnon." All difficulties had been overcome, and he was to have his "one wish" gratified. On reaching London he at once took train to Edinburgh, and arrived on November 2nd. "I can assure you," he writes, "that my time has been fully occupied. The classes had begun work, and I shall have to buckle to in order to keep up, and not to bring disgrace upon the land from which I come, and the honor of which has been well kept up by my predecessors! I have no time to tell you now all that I want to tell you, but the mail closes in a little. We were 112 days out from pier to dock, and no harm happened; it was a fearfully rough passage; I had pleasant work among passengers and crew, and I look forward to meeting men, women, and children up above who were led by the gracious Spirit to look to the Crucified One whilst aboard the 'Agamemnon.' I am very well and in capital spirits."

He soon settled in lodgings at 10 Brougham Street. The number will make its own appeal to any New College man who may happen to read this. It was a typical students' lodging—one room, with a Scotch box-bed. A good dinner was secured to the students every day at the "Seat of Learning," but they had to provide their own breakfast and tea. These meals varied, possibly, both in quality and quantity according to the number of books which the student wanted to buy. Given a limited income, it stands to reason that when the books were in the provisions were out! The Free College possesses the peculiarly interesting feature that it is attended by so many foreign students. Colonies and Countries are both represented here, for it is highly cosmopolitan. For two and a half years John applied himself vigorously to theology under Principal Rainy, Professor Davidson, Professor Blaikie, Pro-

fessor Duff and others, together with Dr. Ker and Principal Cairns at the U. P. One student's life necessarily resembles that of another in most particulars, although in after life one star may differ from another star in glory; so it is chiefly his work as "Students' Missionary" that makes this period of any peculiar interest. Mr. Ballantyne has already described that mission, and the Report of the "New College Missionary Society" for 1878 tells us that "Early in the Session" (*i.e.*, about November, 1877), the Committee recommended to the Society not only the appointment of a Missionary, but also of an Assistant Missionary, to overtake the spiritual destitution of the district. This recommendation was adopted by the Society, and accordingly Mr. J. C. Grant, M.A. was elected "Missionary," and my husband "Assistant Missionary." "With the warmest expression of the Society's sympathy they entered upon their work,"—a work which had all the charm of novelty, for its conditions were altogether new, and which was commenced with such tremendous enthusiasm that traditions of it hang about the Pleasance to this very day, and have supplied one novelist at least with material for a character. Ten years afterwards, another Students' Missionary found John's portrait on shelves in the Pleasance, and his memory cherished there.

In Australia a man's house may be small; it may consist of only one room, or be a tent; still the slate, shingle, or canvas shelters his own family only: whereas in the Pleasance a parish of some 20 to 30 families dwelt under one roof, and could only be reached by a single flight of stairs. Among these crowded human beings our Missionary made himself as much at home as among his navvies. He went in and out among them, by some warmly welcomed at once, only tolerated by others, often eyed with suspicion or openly abused, but gradually he won

his way, and was soon honored and respected by them all. He had been accustomed to preaching out-of-doors, but here he was introduced to an altogether new experience. An older worker took him to a sort of open space with houses all round, seven, eight, nine, and even ten stories high, and placing the Assistant Missionary in the centre said, "Now fire away!" Now John had no objection whatever to firing, but he liked a target. "What in the world am I to preach to? there's not a soul in sight; I can't preach to bricks!" "That's just what you *must* do. Behind those windows there are large congregations. You will not see them, but they will hear you. Now give them the Gospel!" Strange it seemed at first, but he soon became better at it than his instructor, for he possessed a voice which left not even the highest story "out of range."

I find among his papers a cutting from an Edinburgh "Daily," concerning some of his friends who were arrested, tried, and fined for street preaching. He himself was not present on that occasion, but his diary on November 8th, 1878, contains the following:—

Was going to the streets to-night, but was detained by a meeting of the Five Lamps' band at Fowler's, in Tarvit Street, to consider what action is to be taken to-morrow at the court with Wilson, Hardie, and Crockett.

He would adopt any method of gathering a congregation. Many a meeting he *rang up* by borrowing a dinner bell to call sinners to the Gospel feast. He had a great affection for Mr. Grant, whose assistant he was, but I can only deal with my husband's part of the work just now. One day, when addressing a crowd in the open-air, a brigade engine dashed by, scattering his audience or drawing them in its train. John stood on his stool, —that most forlorn of individuals, a street-preacher without a hearer. For a moment he was non-

plussed, but pulling himself together he put his hands to his lips and shouted "Fire! Fire! Fire!" The crowd stopped and rushed back to this new excitement. "It hasn't fallen yet," said he with ready wit, "but it's on the way. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The Drill Hall, of which Mr. Ballantyne speaks, had a great fascination for him. He had seen poverty before, but never such wretched, abject specimens of humanity, and in such numbers. His heart went out in the purest pity to the shivering, hungry men, women, and children, whose only ample meal, perhaps, was on Sabbath mornings. Nor was it simply the feeding of the hungry that entailed labour. There was the beating up in the early morning. This meant real self-sacrifice. The streets of Edinburgh at 6 a.m. in winter, amid snow or sleet or Scotch mist, must be a splendid field in which to learn how to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Workers—booted, coated, muffled up, and barely keeping warm as they stamped up and down the streets—would come across a miserable man, thinly-clad, half-starved, and altogether hopeless, and, inviting him to the free breakfast, would warn him not to be too late. Passing along, a little shoeless, ragged urchin would next be found, whose eyes would glisten at the mention of bread and beef and hot tea, and "plenty of it."

So on they went. Occasionally No. 1, starting off in good faith for the breakfast, but having unfortunately one coin in his pocket, would have to pass on his way a "skeechn" shop—"skeechn" being, I believe, the dregs of all the drinks sold through the week, mixed together, and sold at a "ruinous reduction" on Sunday mornings. The poor wretch, slipping in for a farthing's worth of this luxury, might by this delay lose his morning's

breakfast, since the doors must be closed punctually at 8 o'clock. Then, the hall being full, and those on the right side of the door rejoicing in substantial sandwiches and mugs of hot tea, a tremendous din might be heard at the front. Sometimes a worker would slip round to see who was there, and would find a crowd equally needy and just as miserable as those inside, but alas, "Ye cannot enter now."

Subjoined are some reminiscences of my husband by Rev. W. S. Macqueen, of Ballarat, who was one of what was known as the "Corstorphine Band," who came to Australia after John, and who succeeded him in his charge at Jamestown, South Australia. The latter part comes in a little too soon for our story, but it would be a pity to divide the narrative.

#### REMINISCENCES OF JOHN MACNEIL.

I first met John MacNeil when he was a student of Divinity in the New College, Edinburgh. A number of young men, for the most part connected with the Drill Hall Free Breakfast, had formed themselves into a "band" for the purpose of visiting a number of villages round about the city on Saturday afternoons, to hold open-air services, or do such evangelistic work as might open up. It was while waiting along with some other members of this "band" near the Haymarket Station on Saturday afternoon that I saw one of our number approaching, having along with him a young man who was strange to me. The new comer was introduced as a Mr. MacNeil from Australia, a student of Divinity. To us who only knew of Australia as a blot of colour on the map, or from some stirring tale of digging days, the fact that a man came from Australia was quite sufficient to make us willing to pay him a deference we might have been slow to offer to others; but when in addition to this the new comer showed that he was not only fitted for friendship but for command — the kind of man whom young men would naturally follow, we instinctively gave him the leadership of our company without a word, and never had any reason to regret our action.

Our Saturday afternoon work, from one cause and another, came to have its permanent habitation in the village of Corstorphine, some three miles from Edinburgh, where some eight or ten of us would appear each week, first, to hold an

open-air service for the inhabitants, who, if they gathered round at first with amazement, did so at last with interest; and, secondly, to conduct service in a Philanthropic Institution in the village.

Those Saturday afternoons will be remembered by the men who took part in them while life lasts. To us the world was young. The work we were engaged in was the one absorbing interest of life. We were in some sort Red Cross Knights engaged in a holy war, and we pursued it with vigour. Many of the villagers, moreover, retain to the present day recollections of the band of youths whom they at first tolerated and at last welcomed; and of John MacNeil they will ever have kindly thoughts. I have seen him going along the village street ringing a bell and shouting "Herrings for nothing!"—a gaping crowd following, who did not appear to be much put out when they discovered that instead of herrings to sell, the bellman had only a story! Again he would be seen charging down upon the village drunkard, who waited the attack just once, having loudly vaunted what he would do, but who was speedily put to flight by this militant Christian, and who ever afterwards would run in most inglorious fashion when he saw MacNeil upon his trail. Again he would have a crowd of round-faced, sunburnt village children about his knees as he distributed some gaily-coloured booklets. Again with his powerful voice he would sweep the village from end to end, as in the spirit and language of the Desert Prophet he besought men to "flee from the wrath to come."

During a portion of the time spent in Edinburgh he occupied the position of Students' Missionary in the Pleasance—not a Missionary to Students, but one supported by them. In this part of his work I did not come much into contact with him, but *two* scenes live:—

(1) A cold dark drizzling night; women half clad; children in rags standing in small groups; gas-lamps shedding a sickly light for a few yards round; here and there a drunken man; the whole a picture of woe! Suddenly from round the corner a voice is heard—"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" It is MacNeil. He has been prowling about his district, and the misery of it has so eaten into his soul that he must tell them of the only way in which earth's miseries may be cured. There he stands alone. A disconsolate dog eyes him wistfully, but other apparent listener he has none. He knows, however, that there are hundreds hearing every word he says, and that behind those windows which stretch tier upon tier above him, there are some in whose breasts his words may awaken the resolve, "I will arise and go to my Father."

(2) I have promised to give an address at his "Children's



Church," and according to arrangement I arrive just in time for my own part of the service. I look quietly in and see how MacNeil is getting on. The children are among the roughest "gamins" of the city, and on this day, at any rate, the Missionary had no one to assist him in keeping order. His Australian wit, however, is equal to the occasion. He stands on the platform wielding a stick as long as a clothes-prop, with which potent sceptre he enforces the demands which he makes upon his little subjects. He who rebels is immediately brought to submission as he sees this weapon of offence hovering over his head, and threatening "to dash him in pieces like a potter's vessel." The question of the maintenance of discipline in Sabbath Schools is one that exercises the minds of many a worker. I cannot say whether this was MacNeil's usual method, but I can vouch for it that on this occasion it was completely successful.

It was in connection with the Sabbath Morning Free Breakfast that most men came to know MacNeil. There were but a few of us connected with the Saturday Band, but connected with the free breakfast there was a large staff of workers, and when MacNeil dropped into the midst of us, he very speedily was beloved of us all. At that time the free breakfast work was most energetically conducted under the leadership of Mr. Robert Wilson. Each worker was in his place, each duty was promptly performed, while a fine enthusiasm bound all together. One of the duties of the Drill Hall worker was to perambulate the Cowgate, Canongate, Grassmarket and adjacent parts for the purpose of inviting poor battered human creatures to come in. For this work (as there was some slight risk connected with it) we used to go out two and two. Occasionally, for some good reason, MacNeil's appointed companion would fail to appear, and then there would be great competition as to who should accompany him, as we were pretty sure that our experiences for that morning would be out of the ordinary! Who that was ever present at the prayer meetings, held in the side hall, during the time when the assembled multitude were being addressed, will ever forget the fervour and felicity of MacNeil's prayers!

In connection with the Midnight Mission, I have very vivid recollections of his hearty service. The work not only required great tact in order to manage those we sought to rescue (often young men hopelessly drunk), but also considerable physical strength, both to withstand the inclemency of the wintry weather, and to ward off "certain evil birds of night" who would have made short work of us and our missionary efforts had they considered themselves equal to the attack. In con-

nection with this work we had many a curious adventure. One night a surly constable would threaten to "run us in." Next night there would be an encounter with some of the dwellers in these dens of iniquity, and so on. Should anyone who reads these papers know of a locality off Leith Walk, popularly called "The Dungeon," he knows the spot where often long after the hour of midnight we waged war with the powers of darkness.

One night there was an adventure which resulted in some little bloodshed. About 12.0, MacNeil accosted a man who was walking hurriedly along the street and offered him a tract, and no doubt along with it some very excellent advice. The man, evidently taken aback, and thinking this full-bearded gospeller to be some new kind of highwayman, struck out right lustily, with the result that when a few minutes later two of us came round that way we discovered the deliverer of tracts most diligently occupied in endeavouring to staunch the crimson flow from his nose, while the person he had accosted had fled, and aroused the police with a fearsome tale of blood and wounds and suffering dire. How to get out of the dilemma was the question, but we solved the difficulty by sending J. M. and his companion away to patrol our district while we remained at his post. When, therefore, the aggrieved and affrighted citizen returned in company with a policeman, he found two men of most guileless demeanour instead of the cut-throat he had complained of. These two guileless (?) ones, on being interrogated as to any person resembling a highwayman, declared that they had seen no such person. The citizen had to go upon his way without satisfaction, while some streets off the highwayman had succeeded by the aid of a street pump in restoring himself to respectability! Many a hearty laugh did we have in after days over that night's experience. It was not only our friend's service while actually going the round of certain points of the city that made his connection with this work so important, but also the way in which he followed up the cases he met. Many a man has reason to-day to thank God that when, as a young fellow, he was going like an ox to the slaughter, he was talked to and turned by John MacNeil.

It was, I think, early in 1879 that MacNeil first told us that the severity of our climate was telling upon him in such a way that the doctor had ordered him not to risk another Scottish winter, and that he was going to return to Australia very soon. There was mourning on all hands; but with that buoyant helpfulness which is the resource of young men, we put the best face we could on the matter, sent him off with hearty good wishes, and hoped that we might soon meet again. Yet the world seemed emptier that day, for a strong soul on whom

some of us were wont to lean had fared him forth to other lands, and we felt the uneasiness of having to rely upon ourselves.

For some time I knew no more of him than was to be gathered from his letters, in which he gave most graphic pen-pictures of the incidents of his voyage and of his reception. These letters being full of details, and opening up, as they did, a kind of life with which we were totally unacquainted, fired some of us with the desire to see the Colonies for ourselves, so that when I was asked by the Free Church of Scotland to proceed to South Australia, there to engage in Evangelistic work for a time, and when along with this offer there came a characteristic letter from MacNeil himself beseeching me to come to his help, and assuring me that we would often be together, it did not take me very long to decide what I would do. The necessary arrangements were speedily made, and in a short time I was on my way toward the Southern Cross.

On arriving at Adelaide he was almost the first person to slip on board. He scarcely took time to introduce me to the Clerk of Presbytery, who had kindly come to welcome me, but plunged into a description of the work we were going to do—and to do at once. The Presbytery of Adelaide had appointed me to go to his assistance for some months, and having made a long journey in order to meet me, he was all impatience to get me to the field of operations. When it was mildly suggested that it would be well to spend a few days in Adelaide, that I might accustom myself to my surroundings, he would have none of it. Was there not an Agricultural Show at Jamestown (his parish) on Wednesday? And had he not made arrangements that we should preach there? Such an opportunity would not come again for twelve months. Go we must, and we went! Having arrived at Jamestown, and the day of the Show having come, he was all eagerness to be at work. To me the whole scene was strange. Landscape and sky, town and people so impressed me with a sense of newness that I was lost in an endeavour to adjust myself to new conditions, and was paying small attention to the movements of my companion; but at last having arrived upon the scene, and being made to comprehend that the thing on wheels, which he called a "buggy" (a means of travel I had never seen before), was to be the pulpit, and when I saw that in the shafts was a strong young horse, firmly held by two stout farmers, I began to feel that if this crowd inside the show-yard fence became lively, there might be "times." I was not disappointed. I had spoken from many a curious pulpit, but never from one that might bolt, and was not without fear that we might involuntarily add a new attraction to the many side-shows

that were in full blast that day. During the first part of the service the crowd was orderly, evidently not knowing what to make of us; but when the speaking began, every available missile was hurled at us. A fruit-hawker's stall was looted, oranges and apples were speedily turned into weapons of offence, and some of the enemy aimed well. MacNeil was in his element, and went through it all with great good humour, catching the fruit as it flew about his head and handing it down to those of us who were seated below. At the end of the day we came off battered but victorious, lacking some skin but covered with glory. That night we had a feast, and regaled ourselves on the enemy's munitions of war. Some may say: "What possible good could such a service do?" This, if no other—it gave us an introduction to the people such as, perhaps, no other means would have done. Often in after days we found ourselves recognized by and welcomed to the houses of men who lived at great distances from the scene of that day's strife.

Jamestown was the centre of his work, and was a splendid base from which to evangelise. Within a few miles there were numerous sheep stations, each of which at shearing time gave occupation to a large number of men. The work of preaching the Gospel at these stations lay heavily on his heart, and right earnestly did he strive to perform what he deemed to be his duty. Many such expeditions were undertaken, and as one of us had to be at home for Sabbath duty, he undertook them mostly alone. Leaving me to care for his parish, he would strap hymn books and tracts upon his saddle, and disappear into regions beyond. For weeks he would be gone, no one knowing whither, and then some mid-night the wanderer would return. I would be awakened from sleep, either by the sound of his horse's hoofs, or by the cheery tones of his voice as he sang to himself while galloping up the road. Next day, having got a fresh steed, he would be off again on some similar embassy. Some of these expeditions we undertook in company, preaching at a new shed each night, and thus reaching a large number of men, many of whom rarely, if ever, came into touch with the story of the Cross. Arriving at the owner's or manager's house, after a long day's drive in the burning sun, our first work was to obtain permission to address the men—a permission, so far as I know, never refused. Our next was to interview the cook, and to arrange with him that as soon as tea was over he would clear away speedily. Sometimes the cook was not so easy to manage. The men having had tea, and the tables being cleared, MacNeil's cheery "Roll up! Roll up!"

would be heard. In case any might have escaped, their huts were faithfully searched, and all were invited to the service. This thing I will say for these men, that tired as they were with their day's work, and often having preparations to make for the day following, it was only on rare occasions that any of them refused to come.

The scene in the kitchen when the men were assembled was always weird. Slush lamps shed a dull light over a motley crowd, while an ill-savoured tallow candle stuck in a whisky bottle gave light to the preacher. As the lamps sent their light only a very short distance, the assembled company seemed framed in the surrounding darkness, while at the end of the room the great cooking fire spread a strange red glow. All being ready, a hymn would be sung and a portion of Scripture read; then the whole company would bow in prayer; then another hymn, a short address from each of us pressing the claims of Christ upon the individual, and the benediction; so the short service ended. Next morning we were off to the next Station.

In doing all this work, Mr. MacNeil by no means neglected his own parish. Never did congregation have a more faithful minister. Of him it might truly be said that he warned them "night and day with tears." He did a work in his congregation that stands to this day to do him honour, and there are men and women connected with it whose hearts warm at the sound of his name, and who mourn him with sincere sorrow.

W. S. M.

John's Scotch vacations were spent in his birthplace, where lived his old grandmother, immensely proud and fond of her Australian grandson. Here he sat under Dr. Kennedy, preached sometimes, and, together with some other young men, started a mission called "The Boggan Meeting," which is still carried on, and has been blessed to many. This is how they spoke of him in Dingwall sixteen years afterwards:—

#### SIXTEEN YEARS OF MISSION WORK IN DINGWALL.

At the "watch-meeting" conducted on New Year's Eve, 1894, in the Temperance Hall, Mr. Lewis Munro delivered the following address, appropriate to the occasion:—

"EBENEZER"—A RETROSPECT.

On Sunday morning, 29th December, 1878—just sixteen

years ago yesterday—the Boggan Mission, or the West End Mission, as it has, more euphemistically, now come to be called, came into existence. I remember it all so well, for the events connected with the origin of our Mission impressed themselves fadelessly on my memory. Dear Mr. (now Rev.) John MacNeil, the distinguished Australian evangelist, was that Sunday morning in the chair at the meeting of our Y.M.C.A. He was home from College on a brief New Year visit to his aged grandmother, and on that occasion, as also during the various summer vacations which he spent among us here, his heart was aflame with burning zeal for the promotion of his Master's kingdom; and no place lay more heavily on his heart than the Boggan district of our town. The Boggan was not then the eminently respectable locality the great improvements of recent years have since made it. At that time the back parts of that locality were a rookery of poverty, and the recognised home of the tramping fraternity, and worse. Mr. MacNeil, in closing his address that morning, made an impassioned appeal to the young men before him to enter in and possess that district for Christ.

#### GOD WAS IN THAT MEETING.

A divine enthusiasm filled the hearts of all, and I find from the minutes of the Y.M.C.A. of that date, that there and then intimation was given that next (Monday) evening a business meeting of the Association would be held "anent forming a Mission in the Boggan—west end." But our hearts were warm, and our eagerness outran the slowly passing hours. It was the last Sunday our friend was to be with us, and we were desirous that the opening meeting of the Mission would be conducted by him—necessarily on some week day evening. Some one—I think it was Mr. Arras—suggested that we should there and then adjourn to my house to pray over the matter, and, if possible, take time by the forelock. All were agreed, and on our way—a goodly and united band we were—we called for our good and ever reliable friend and father, Mr. Ogilvie, and he, too, joined us. And on that morning, and in those circumstances, the Boggan Mission came into existence.

With minds already made up, a meeting of the Y.M.C.A. was held next evening, and a resolution was passed to begin operations at once—the arrangements to be left in the hands of the office-bearers. We must have "meant business" on that occasion, for I find that Mr. P. J. Dewar, who had for years taken charge of the tract distribution in town, asked the Association to relieve him of his duties; "but on several members volunteering their services to aid Mr. Dewar, it was thought better to continue to leave the matter in his hands";

and the minute concludes thus : " Mr. John MacNeil closed the meeting with prayer." Yes, and that was the last occasion, I think, in which we had formal conference with our loved friend, the founder of this Mission. A few present undertook to search through the Boggan for a suitable room, or rather, the use of a room, to be granted for one hour a week, for

WE BEGAN IN A VERY LOWLY WAY INDEED.

Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, my brother and myself were the seekers-out, and at the first door at which we knocked we had a favourable reception ; but, unfortunately, we could not get admission till Sunday evening, and before then Mr. MacNeil had to leave for Edinburgh. Before going, however, a number of us met together, and Mr. MacNeil committed ourselves and our enterprise to God in prayer. Dear manly, noble-hearted John MacNeil ! in the hearts of those who knew him well, his memory has a deathless fragrance. For the world-reputed work he now does for the Master on the Australian continent not a few hearts in Dingwall and in Edinburgh give God frequent thanks, and make many intercessions.

One or two letters written to Australian friends will find a place here :—

TO MR. A. BULEY.

DINGWALL,

*June 27th, 1877*

My very dear Arthur,

Allow me to congratulate you on your B.A. ! Although this is the first time I am writing to you, it is not the first time I have thought of you. Many, many a time have I sent a message to the Throne on your behalf. I feel just now all the old feelings toward you stirred up within my soul, a hugable sort of a feeling you know ; it isn't describable. You have heard all about my passage, so I needn't say any more about it ; but I can never tell till I examine the Archives of Heaven how great has been the effect of that earnest, trusting prayer that you poured out into Jehovah's ear as we bowed together before Him in my little cabin when the " Agamemnon " was riding at anchor in Hobson's Bay. Ah ! that will be an interesting day when you and I meet on high. I think I'll be there before you, so I'll have all the extracts ready, and I'll be bound you'll be astonished. Why there must have been a whole detachment of angels after us all the way (Ps. xxxiv. 7), and they did their work well. I mind you asking that I should not be afraid to own my Saviour ; God graciously answered ; everybody knew Whose I was, and Whom I was

trying to serve. It sometimes was a little hard, but, *Gloria Deo*, my colours once up I never hauled them down, and, for aught I know, they are flying on the "Agamemnon" yet. I think there was only one man who hated me; he used to call me "the Devil!" but even he smoothed down before we parted at London. There was an infidel among them; he was thunderstruck to hear me give him my word of honor that "I *felt* Christianity to be true." I cannot tell how many out of these 127 souls will yet ride at anchor in the harbour, when all the King's Fleet is called in (oh, what a muster!), but I do know that there will be some. Aye, more than faithless Jack is dreaming of; but I won't be astonished. I have my eye on some yet, they are standing away fairly; but of the most I have lost sight, never to signal again till we heave in sight of the Great White Throne.

I have not found the spiritual life here all that I expected. I like my work at College, but everywhere people are asleep! Eternity is tearing on apace, and soon, yes, very soon, we will be swallowed up in it. Oh, shame on us! I am the biggest vagabond of the lot. How heartily shall I be ashamed of myself when I stand before my Redeemer yonder! He will ask me, "This I did for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" Oh, whatever shall I answer? I will be ready to drop with vexation as I think of my life of emptiness. I hope you are doing work for Eternity, my dear old mate. Work for God is the only work that lasts. It will last when the sun's eye has grown dim, and when the mountains have changed their covering of everlasting snow for a winding-sheet of flame. Do get a hold of all in your class. Be crafty and catch them with guile. Take them home one by one to tea with you. I hope you are bearing a hand at the Mission still. If any of the fellows are going to sleep, give them a dig under the fifth rib, and tell them to book it to my account. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Wake them up with that! I hope that Dr. A. Somerville, the evangelist, will visit Ballarat, and that multitudes may be won for Christ. I am trying to preach a little; had two services last Sabbath; the evening was the most solemn I was ever at. Oh, God's presence among the people was awful like.

Yours till Jesus comes,  
JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

DINGWALL,

December 31st, 1877.

I wish you were sitting at one end of a telephone and I at the other; then we might do business. It is a pity that



you are not absolutely decided what course you are going to steer. I venture to say, brother, that you are not making much progress. The "Agamemnon's" quarter-master always had his course given him, and when the ship's head was lying on her course we always made progress. At other times the wind was contrary, and then the order was, "By the wind," but we made little headway at such seasons. Oh, man, get the Captain to give you a course, and then the breezes will so blow that you will be always able to make headway. I am glad to hear of the Band meetings; any news about their prosperity is welcome. You do well to count me as one of your number. I think I may say that at nearly all (if not all) of your meetings I am present, though you can't see me.

I am glad to hear of dear Mr. Campbell.\* I learned a lot about him at home here from unexpected quarters. He is such a splendid leader that you should stick close round him, for I know he can say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." 'Tis "leaders" that are wanted now-a-days, not "*Ite*" men, but "*Venite*." I trust that free grace will make such a man of me. I have been wondrously refreshed by hearing of Dr. Somerville and his work. . . . Keep your feet firmly planted on the Rock of Ages; put that weak hand of yours into the Almighty Father's hand; then go and ask the "Why and the Wherefore" of anything you like. "Reason" is a very nice gymnastic bar to exercise on on a sunny day, but it is a sorry peg for one to hang his all upon in the day when the clay tabernacle comes tumbling down about the ears of one's soul, and when the soul begins to peer out through the ruins into the great future. . . . If you are a Christian, do your duty as a Christian. It is not by a Wesleyan, or by a Presbyterian either, that God is going to save the world, but it is by each believer doing his duty. I am not under-rating principles; when a man gets them let him stick to them; but when Christ has put it into a man's heart to be a soldier, it is not his duty to stand scratching his head all his life, saying, "Dear me, I don't know which regiment to join." Nine hundred millions of our dying race have never heard the sound of Jesus' name. "Up, lads, and at them!" is our Captain's cry. Jehovah be your Shield and your exceeding great Reward.

TO THE SAME.

10 BROUGHAM STREET,  
EDINBURGH,

October 16th, 1878.

I am sorry I can't begin my letter with such a pretentious tone as you began yours—"I'm going to tell you all

\*Hon. James Campbell,

the news of Ballarat." I can't give you all the news of Edinburgh, for even if I had the inclination I haven't got the time. You are right in saying "Ballarat, the very name has a charm for you." Ah, would that I were there now telling out the story of Redeeming Love. I am cheered to think that you all mind me in your prayers; you could not find a surer way to my heart than that. Brothers, still pray on, and verily you shall not lose your reward. Don't be at all alarmed at my attainments in Theology. I assure you they are harmless. Anything practical goes down splendidly with me, and I think I can say (not boastingly) that I have been making some attainments in experience. . . . The cold weather will soon begin, but as yet it has not shut me up any night from being out in the streets. I suppose you have not got on that length yet—I mean to get out into the streets and lanes and slums, and to raise your voice, trying to compel sinners to come in to the Gospel feast. Glorious work! Work in which the Son of God spent His precious life. Man, didn't He expire in the very act of preaching a full and free and "finished" salvation in the open air? That cry first heard from the expiring Son of God on the little hill of Calvary was echoed all round the Judæan Hills and through the Galilean Valleys; it has struck the Himalayas, and they have sent it rolling on across Australia, until it has actually been heard on the streets of Ballarat. It has rolled up the Mediterranean too, and striking on the Alps has been scattered all around. It is the same sweet cry that we have got when we go out into the High Street, Cowgate, and Canongate of Edinburgh.

You seem to be afraid of the criticism to which ministers of the Gospel are subjected. What of that, since God declares "It is required of a steward that a man be found faithful" |—not eloquent or learned, or imaginative or attractive, but simply faithful. I want to aim at the "Well done, good and faithful servant," and if I get that, I can turn round and laugh at all my critics. By the *grace of God* I will be found *faithful*. Oh, man, I wish I could get a tighter hold of life. What is life? What is it to live here? What are we living for? "I seek to live and work for Eternity, and not for time." Would that this were our motto. Most people fritter away their life; they think it a toy to be played with. I am not wholly guiltless of this most atrocious crime. 'Tis a fine thing to have *solidarity* about one. I would like to be such a one as that anybody coming into my company, even for fifteen minutes, would go away sensibly bettered, solemnized, made to feel that life is earnest, and eternity close at hand. Are there any conversions under your preaching? Don't rest satisfied short of that, remember!

I hear the bugle-call that summons me to the fray. I must rise and arm me for the fight ; it is time I was down in the Pleasance, my Mission district, battling with sin and the devil for our common Lord. Farewell my comrade. Hold the fort, and storm other forts where you are, and I'll try and do the same here.

TO REV. THOMAS GRAY  
(then a Student at Glasgow).

DINGWALL,

October 22nd, 1877.

My dear Thomas,

It does not seem long since you piloted me across the Clyde to the Maryhill Road ! I have not been idle since I came here, whatever you have been since I left you ; but really, I can't see much behind me that I've done. I'll be ashamed thoroughly when my day of reckoning comes that I cheated my loving Master so thoroughly, and have been so great a loss to Him. I would like to do work for the glorious wages I am getting, but it beats me somehow ; something or other keeps me back, I can't keep up to the mark. I have fairly to break down sometimes, just crying " Oh, wretched man that I am ! is there no deliverance ? " It would be good for me to lay hold on the help there is in Israel's Helper, but my heart doesn't lay hold on Him as it ought ; the wretched thing only repels ; repulsion seems to be a law of its nature. When I can, I work at Hebrew, Latin, Theology, Greek Testament, and Hodge. What are you at ? I hope you have made more headway than I—else I pity you. There has more work fallen on my shoulders here than I expected by a long long way. I have been evangelising a good deal. . . I mourn that with all the great realities of eternity ahead I am so little in earnest, so callous and indifferent. Let us plead for grace lest we be converted into icebergs (there are plenty of them knocking about just now)—for grace that we may move on in the warm Gulf Stream of God's mercy.

Yours beneath the Banner,  
JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

DINGWALL,

October 22nd, 1877.

My dear old Wallaby-tracker,

Co—o—ey ! How are ye getting on down there in Glasgow ? I'm afraid you spoke of me in too flattering terms at the beginning of your last letter ; hence I became conceited,



*Yours Sincerely  
Hannah MacNeil*

and did not answer sooner. But oh man, I've been tremendously busy lately. I've been trying to preach every Sabbath ; not that I sought the work ; it came to me, and I was forced into it. I forget when I had a quiet Sabbath. But oh, what am I saying ? I ought never to have a quiet Sabbath till I reach the land of the eternal Sabbath. Ah ! it will be peaceful and happy there, but dear me, we will lack one privilege—that of preaching Christ crucified, for there won't be a sinner there that will need our preaching. I am persuaded that it is a sweet privilege to preach Christ, although last night it seemed to me anything but a sweet privilege. I somehow brought myself into bondage, and when trying to speak to men about their shameful neglect of a sorrowing Saviour, my heart was harder than the nether mill-stone ! Woe is me ! I know not how ever I'll look into the face of the Crucified One when He brings me home to Glory. I tried to bring the people down to "sad Gethsemane," but I could not lead them. I could hardly say "Go." Do you ever feel thus ? I am afraid of my heart ; I cannot get round its deceit. . . . Wishing you the unction from the Holy One,

Yours in the Service,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO REV. W. L. MORTON.

DINGWALL,

May 29th, 1877.

My dear Lockhart,

I have not heard how the work of the Lord is coming on with you. All I can do is to pray and hope that you are not left without visible tokens of the Master's gracious presence. I hope, dear brother, that your own soul prospers, that it is like a well-watered garden, that the north wind often blows upon it, causing the spices thereof to flow out. They have made you a keeper of vineyards, and you have good cause to be thankful for that ; but above all keep your own vineyard ; prepare your heart by prayer ; yes, plough it over, deeper and deeper, and into this prepared soil work the Word. Get the Bible worked into your soul, and then you'll be the "staying" minister ; you'll hold out to be evergreen ; two hours systematic study of God's Word every day would pay us wonderfully well. I hope you will be able to tell me about this one and that one falling under the arrows of Divine Truth. I am sure, dear L., you are not one of that class of ministers who are content to work on day after day without looking for results. If you have joined that class, it must have been since I said good-bye to you ; but I know you have not ; only look more

closely, and if you can't see much fruit, tell the Master. Ask Him, "Why, O Lord? How long?" We would do well to obey the drill-instructor's orders to the riflemen, "Take aim; Fire; Keep your eye on the object to see the result."

N.B.—I have no special work this summer, only study, but when I get the chance I stand up for my Master. Last Sabbath I took a full service for the first time in my life. I hope the Sabbath School prospers. Love to my dear scholars of whom I often think, and for whom I often pray. I trust many of them are growing up to be Pillars in the Temple of our God. Love also to the teachers. I wish some of them would drop me a note; they could all put them in one envelope, and that would be grand for a poor exile like me.

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. W. HOWAT.

EDINBURGH,

Nov. 12th, 1877.

My Dear William,

I feel inclined to-night to take a flying jump over to William St., and have a talk with you in that old room upstairs. but Time, Time, oh precious Time, I have none of thee to spare just now! You can't guess how my weary soul was refreshed by hearing of the work of grace amongst you under Dr. Somerville. How strange that I shall miss the work here, and then miss the work there in my own beloved land. I didn't know how much I loved the Colonies till lately. The Colonies for Christ! Aye, the whole of them. Humanly speaking, would not I like to have been with you! and yet I don't want to say, "I would like." I like to do what and be where my Master likes. If He will, I shall be in some great awakening yet. When His time comes I shall get into the midst of some great battle, where it is raging the hottest. Just now I am only hearing the booming of the cannon in the distance. I trust there is work going on in our midst, but it is hidden. We don't *see* sinners fleeing as doves to their windows, but blessed be God, we can't say that there are none fleeing. There is plenty of room here yet for Jehovah of Hosts to work. I used to think there would be no corn left standing after Moody's sickle. What a mistake! for every stalk that fell I think the devil raised up two. Perhaps you would like to know what I have been doing in summer. Well, Dingwall was my headquarters, and there I studied when not out preaching. I did a little visiting on my own account among Dr. Kennedy's people, and hope that some of the tough trees at which I have been hewing will soon fall, if not down already, and that I shall yet

see them as polished shafts. By God's grace I have been enabled to do a good deal of evangelising in the Highlands. I've been scouring the mosses for souls like the old Moss Trooper for plunder. Last night I had a solemn gathering; my work was to get the people to "Flee from the wrath to come." Oh, William, I wish I was fit to be entrusted with success!

JOHN MACNEIL.

In March, 1879, Mr. MacNeil left Scotland, seven months earlier than he should have done, his health not permitting him to finish his theological course. He had taken a good place, although he had not made a brilliant record, but he had made himself so marked a man that his old friends at home followed his career with unceasing interest, sure that something unusual would be the outcome of such a combination of gifts and of such a fiery zeal as he possessed. He had made a very decided mark in elocution, and had easily carried off the champion prize of the College by giving to his hearers a new idea of "The Charge of the Light Brigade." When Dr. Moxey had announced the poem chosen for competition, he remarked, "As I told you what you were to recite, one of you felt 'I can do that.'" "That's me," thought John MacNeil. The same evening another aspirant to elocutionary honors came round to the lodgings of the Australian student to ask if he would kindly coach him for the piece. The help asked was generously and honestly given, although they were rivals. The following extract is taken from his diary:—

*Tuesday, March 18th, 1879, 5.20 a.m.*

Have not been in bed yet, and suppose will not be. I have been packing up my last two boxes; they are now almost done, and very soon I will be actually moving homewards! Oh my soul! look back and bless the Lord at the remembrance of His mercies to thee since the day when first I put a pen on this book. Two-and-a-half years His hand hath gently guided me, and by that good hand upon me I shall soon be again in Australia preaching the unsearchable riches. Rose at 6.45 on Monday, read and prayed; labelled and sent off three boxes

of books. Heard only Dr. Ker to-day, and he finished my Edinburgh course. At dinner I was shocked at being told that I was required to make a speech. Dr. Blaikie laid on the butter too thick. When I rose, the way the dear chaps cheered and applauded poor foolish me went to my heart. Every face was beaming. I stammered out something, and sat down saying "Come over and help us." Then began hand-shaking till my arm ached; men from all parts of the world were saying "Good-bye." Dr. Cairns almost swallowed me. God bless him, and my other Professors at F. C. and U. P. My heart was crushed to see how the students followed me with presents of books. God reward them all. I know not why Thou hast touched their breasts like this. Dr. Moxey had a gathering of the students at 27, Rutland-street, to bid me God-speed, and a pleasant and profitable two hours I spent there. Dr. M. was crying like a bairn. He said too many good things about me, but I hope I was kept humble. At 8 o'clock I had my last meeting at the Drill Hall; then came more good-byes. Bandmates walked home with me through the Pleasance; saw the street missionaries; God bless them. At home I found H. and A. and A. C. S., and soon G. G. T. We had a hymn, R. A. prayed, and I prayed as never before. Ah, it was fearful work saying good-bye to my dear chaps at the head of the stair. I kissed them all, the Lord bless them; ——— is quite broken down, sobbing like a child; he is thanking God that I helped him on to work for Christ. Bless the Lord if I did. Tired now, but my heart is a little tender. . . . Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit, O God of Truth.

This is the last entry in my husband's Scottish diary. Dr. Moxey and he kept up an interesting correspondence for years. I am sorry that owing to the Doctor's death, which took place about eighteen months ago, I cannot procure some valuable letters which he would probably have kept.

FROM "THE CHRISTIAN WEEK," April 20th, 1881.

About two years ago there was a scene on the platform of the Caledonian Railway Station, Princes Street, which those who witnessed it will not soon forget. A Free Church Student Missionary in the Pleasance, and known as "Captain" of a band of earnest students associated with him in Christian work, was leaving for Australia, and his companions, to the number of about 50, assembled to bid him God-speed. After hearty farewells had been spoken, and the



"Captain" had taken his seat in the train, his fellow-students struck up the sacred song, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," and not a head was seen uncovered on the platform while the hymn was sung. The words had hardly ceased to sound in his ears, when the young man found work to do for his Master. In the same compartment of the carriage with him were two female passengers, one a Christian lady, and the other a stranger to both, and a stranger also to the life in Jesus. The two servants of Christ soon made themselves acquainted with the condition of their fellow traveller, and during the two or three hours they were together spoke and prayed with her. The woman became deeply impressed, and before she left the train gave evidence which satisfied her fellow travellers that she had become partaker of the same grace with themselves.

The following letter, which appeared in a Dingwall newspaper, was written to a correspondent there, and was published by him. It describes the leave taking and the journey home :—

S.S. "DECCAN,"

*April 14th, 1879.*

I left Edinburgh on the Tuesday morning, but left my bed on the Monday morning. Monday night I was busy doing my last piece of work in Edinburgh for the Master Whom I love, and Whose service I have found to be perfect freedom. This was in the Moray Church in connection with the Drill Hall. Thereafter my bandmates accompanied me home—comrades who had stood bravely by me in

PLACES WHERE FEW WOULD CARE TO GO,  
 lads redeemed by precious blood, whose great delight is to make Satan turn and to see him run. We had our last prayer-meeting together; I need not describe this to you. On bidding them farewell for the last time as their captain, no wonder that I broke down and wept like a child. The God of Israel bless and shield them all. After they had gone, it took me till about eight o'clock on Tuesday morning before I was strapped up all ready for the road, and as the train left at ten I had not much time to spare. You should have seen the glorious Bible the Drill Hall workers gave me at a tea meeting on the Friday night. It is a sword that will last me as long as I have a hand to use it. It is a Bagster, A1, I assure you, and such an inscription! I never saw anything so neat in all my life. With it they gave me a Baedeker's Guide-book for Palestine, as I intended visiting Jerusalem on my way home, but in God's providence "*have been let.*" As they said

they gave me a "Guide to the earthly and a Guide to the Heavenly Jerusalem." It was

AMUSING AND PERPLEXING TO ME

to see the way gifts were coming in up to the last moment. Three actually came when I was in the carriage of the train, moving off. I did not know when I was packed; indeed, I had to keep my box always open. It was not enough for them to give me a present of thirty-two volumes in a heap, but many students had to give an individual gift besides. They have rigged me up a splendid library, and thus have laid the Australian Continent under obligation! The meeting at the station was something unique altogether. If it may do you half the good it has done me, I'll recite it and be well paid. About twenty minutes to ten o'clock the students began to muster, and then some of the Drill Hall workers. Some having to be in their offices could not wait, so they just called to have a parting shake, and to give my heart an extra wrench. By five minutes to ten there was a band of about sixty. Saluting these one by one as they rolled up soon taxed my strong right arm to the utmost. I was soon in the carriage, and then the good-byes began. The look some of them wore on their faces is frozen into my heart.

THE TEARS CAME BURSTING INTO THEIR EYES.

Suddenly I was alarmed by "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross" breaking in tones of thunder on my ears. It was struck up, I soon found, by one of my bandsmen, and soon the whole company was lifting the roof of the poor Caledonian station. Guards, porters, engine men, etc., were standing on the outskirts looking on in amazement. I could hardly manage to keep in the carriage. The hymn is ringing through my heart yet. Whenever I am slacking, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus" comes rolling in and rallies me. When wearied and tempted to steady a bit, the words strike home, "This day the noise of battle, The next the victor's song." May God bless them to you as He has blessed them to me. The hymn had not been long finished when the train moved off, but ere this they drew themselves up in single file at the far-off end of the platform, and so I passed away from Edinburgh

THROUGH CHEER PROLONGED UPON CHEER,

coming from friends as true-hearted as ever man had. "I love to think of the heavenly land; There'll be no partings there." This it was that kept me afloat all through that heavy day. The Master was near me, and I will be disappointed at the last if I find that I did not win one soul, at least, who was travelling

with me—an elderly woman, but a stranger to Him Who is “altogether lovely.” In Paris, Turin, Genoa, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Syracuse, and Malta, I have had my eyes opened and my sympathies widened, and have learned much, for which I bless God. I could perhaps give you some information that would be of service to you, but I know not what to select, and therefore let it alone. I have tracked the Apostle Paul pretty well over land and sea, poor old fellow! I stayed eight days in Malta, preached on Sabbath and Good Friday, and the Lord was working wondrously, chiefly among H.M. bluejackets and soldiers. I’ll never forget what God so graciously did for me there, and some of the

#### MEN WILL LOOK BACK TO THOSE DAYS

as the beginning of days. Oh, help me to shout glory to our risen and highly-exalted Lord Jesus. And the strangest thing about it is, I never dreamt of being at Malta! I intended going from Naples to Jaffa; but the Lord said, “No; go from Naples to Malta.” Jaffa, the port of Jerusalem, was closed under quarantine regulations on account of the plague just three days before I got to Naples, and hence my stoppage and disappointment. I would like to have seen Jerusalem, but which would you rather see: Jerusalem? or many men awakened to think about starting for the Heavenly Jerusalem through your instrumentality, and some actually bravely stepping out? Which? I know your answer; you needn’t tell me, and yours is mine, my brother. This is the way God steers his servants; oh, grace unspeakable, that I should be the subject of His guiding care! We expect to be at Port Said to-morrow morning, D.V., where I post. We will be at Galle on May 3rd, and Australia on the 20th. I am grieved that this ship is manned by a Lascar crew; my chief congregation is wanting, as I can do nothing among them.

#### THE BOGGAN MEETING MUST BE HURTING THE DEVIL

beautifully; how busy he will be pointing a gun at it, trying to drop a shell into the midst to scatter you; but watch him, watch him, for we are not ignorant of his devices.

JOHN MACNEIL.

#### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN TO MR. R. ALEXANDEI ON THE VOYAGE OUT.

S.S. “MARSEILLES,”

NEWHAVEN,

*March 17th, 1877.*

In a short time I shall be casting off from Britain’s shores, and my bandsmen will be far behind. Ah me! I feel like

"greetin'" at the cruel thought. I'd rather command the Edinburgh Hallelujah Band than a company of H.M. Guards. May the souls Christ Jesus will get through me on the move be more than those won in camp. Hold, you Edinburgh lads, and with my Captain at my side I'll hold the whole line of forts between Newhaven and Adelaide. Don't I talk big! But I mean, by grace, to work big too. That "Stand up, stand up" hymn is a classical one to me now. Yes, His grace assisting, I mean to stand up for Jesus as long as I have two legs to stand on, and two hands to fight with; and when one leg goes I'll stand on the other; and when one arm carries away I'll still fight on with the other. I'll show the "stand up" posture as long as I can see the tracks of an enemy in the field. You, dear old fellow, were the last man I saw in Edinburgh. I thought my heart would burst as I fell back into the carriage seat. Tell Captain — from J.M. to be *wise* for Christ,—to be *hot*,—to be *humble*,—to *run with patience*,—to be a *fool* for Christ's sake,—to be *faithful*. Be sure and keep the colors up.

S.S. "DECCAN,"

April 17th, 1877.

Ah me! I don't know what to say. I do wish it were possible for me to send to you all my love hermetically sealed. Oh those photos! Oh that letter! Oh that sermon of Dr. Whyte's! Never got a feast like that since the Sabbath before I left, so you may guess I'm pretty hungry. Grace! Grace! What a glorious theme. That page of your letter is worth more than its weight in gold. Many, many thanks for your kindness, your forethought, and your patience in giving it to me. In Naples the sinners wanted to starve me altogether, for they stolē my Bible out of my pocket in the street—*not your Drill Hall one*, but a little one my father gave me. Fortunately I found a bookseller selling Bibles, from whom I got a Testament with the Psalms in prose. I was out for some time on Thursday night at Malta, working at the old rescue work down in the abandoned parts of the citadel. What a hell! Edinburgh is a paradise to it. I had no mate. I would have shouted "Hallelujah," had I seen I— or W— heave in sight that night I can tell you. I went hither and thither, with tracts and warning words, among my poor blue jackets. Would to God that a band, every man like a flame, were sent to Malta. Ah devil! thou'rt cock o' the ring there! Some of the dear men were crying when we said "good-bye;" others of them hired a boat and pulled away to see me again on board my ship, and stayed with me till the last moment, following the ship some distance, till we left them far in the rear. I hope they'll be *up* at the finish. Some of them got their photos taken in a hurry to give me—men of the

"Invincible." . . . . We want to be, as Rowley Hill says, "like birds ever ready to take wing,"—not always flying, it is true, but always, without much coaxing or forcing, "ready to take wing." Thus should it be with us and prayer; we can't be always in the very act, but it is the spirit that God wants. Lord give us grace for this, and we'll be giants, every one of us, men who will be special favorites of the devil, requiring a great deal of his attention! I was very sick after leaving Malta. I grieve to say that I am not working as I would like on board. The "Deccan" is manned with a Lascar crew; therefore my hands are lashed as far as *they* are concerned. It is very hard to get at the others, but if it is *possible*, never mind the *hardness*. I go up on deck at night, when men are supposed to be idle, and prow round, seeking for some one to lead to Christ. . . . I had a nice time alone on the fore-castle-head last night, as we were moored to the bank of the canal, surrounded by the desert sands. Away over there to the North East I saw the sky on which the Incarnate Creator often gazed as He turned His eyes upward in prayer to His Father. To the Incarnate One, Enthroned, I lifted my heart, and it was no difficult task, for He was drawing it up. I don't know how to thank you enough for the notes of the "long sermon." Let the bandsman who wants to work his way furthest into my heart send me Dr. Whyte's skeletons! Happy thought.

I can't be done looking at your letter. It is so neatly got up, as well as containing such splendid matter that it is worth framing. I hope to keep it as "the first epistle general of the Band to the stranger scattered abroad." Let each bandsman pray for Mac *every* day, that he may be kept up to the mark, for there is a tendency to drop back from the collar. In God's sight let us be true to each other.

TO REV. A. C. SMITH.

Got along all right through Paris, Turin (where I spent the first Sabbath), Genoa and Rome, where one gets his soul stirred within, if he has one to be stirred. Just fancy John MacNeil pacing the Forum with an imaginary audience before him! I tell you I felt the blood mantling to my forehead as I stood on the site of the old Janiculum, and set my fancy to work, seeing the old Consul and his party of men with axe and crowbar, whilst "brave Horatius" stood yonder in the narrow pass keeping the thousands at bay. The old Tiber has not changed his colour—as muddy as ever—but the Colosseum, the Mamertine, the Appian Way, and the Catacombs awakened deeper feelings still. . . . On reaching Albany, we struck out for the top of the highest hill, called Mount Clarence, where was a large oblong granite block, made a rush

mounted it with a cheer, unfurled and planted the banner, and took possession of the Continent in the name of "Victor Immanuel"! May I never furl that flag till I ground my arms. . . . Sat down among the bushes, and read St. Paul's dying charge to Timothy—my marching orders.

*Tuesday, May 20th.*—Stayed on deck all night, watching, praying, and fighting. Shall this night have been spent in vain? Spoke to every man I could lay hands on, or gave him a tract, as I shall never meet them again till the Great White Throne. About 3.0 Glenelg light showed in sight. I kept on praying for the past and for the future, and He Who slumbers not, but was watching with me, will answer. Shortly after 5.0 Captain Stewart gave the word, "Let go the anchor"! There was a splash and a rattle, and—my voyage was done! The Pilot brought us safe, all glory to His name.

An old friend of Mr. MacNeil's sends the following story of a meeting they held together:—

"John and I were told off to go to Costorphine Free Church. I spoke from Rev. iii., 20; and John from, "If I make my bed in Hell." He drew a most realistic picture of the misery of the lost, and of the fact that they had made their own bed and must lie on it for ever and ever. He warned the unsaved that the pit was bottomless, and it was for ever a descent to Hell from God, always away *from God*. Next day, my brother (now Rev. D. D.), was in the train, and met a labouring man going, like himself, into Edinburgh. The student fell a-talking with him of the things of God. The man said he had been at a 'gran' meetin' in the Free Kirk last night.' 'Yes—and what happened?' 'Eh, we had a wonnerfu' time. There was a young man there wha' spoke aboot Hell. I never heerd anything like it in a' my days. Dae ye ken, I thoct I cood see vera lowe o't an' smell the brumstane. Man, it was waesome abune a'.' My brother asked for the preacher's name. He did not know, but described your husband. My brother was naturally anxious to hear of his 'own John.' 'Oh,' said the man, 'the ither ane! I didna set ony store by him. He was yin o' thae meek fallies, a kin' o' drink o' caald watter. I didna think muckle o' him, but, losh! man, the little yin wis worth listenin' til."

[The writer being over 6ft. 2in., my friend might easily be spoken of as the "little yin" beside him.]

## CHAPTER V

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*LICENSE. ORDINATION. JAMESTOWN. SHEARING  
SHEDS.*

**B**EFORE proceeding with our narrative, it may perhaps be as well to pause a little and take a look at the eager young student, who, with his ambitious cry of "Australia for Christ," has just landed on Australian shores. He is tall and spare, though not thin, with brown hair and beard, a mobile mouth covering a magnificent set of teeth, honest blue eyes that can flash like lightning or melt into the kindest and most caressing of expressions, and a forehead not lofty but broad. His organs of perception are highly developed and stand out almost in a ridge, while the reflective organs, though also well developed, seem small by comparison. The portrait accompanying this book is excellent, but fails (as every portrait must necessarily fail) to convey the slightest idea of the wealth of expression lying in reserve behind. His features could change from grave to gay, from sorrow to sunshine, from storm to calm, with a naturalness and rapidity amazing to the beholder. From his father he had inherited a strong will, an iron constitution, and a boundless capacity for work. From his mother he inherited an open, generous, and unselfish nature, and a buoyancy of disposition

which rose above all wet-blanketing, and floated serenely over floods of cold water. To her also he owed his strong dramatic instinct and his gift of song. Her voice, still rich and beautiful, was a charm to her children. They used to gather round her knee beseeching her to sing the old Gaelic songs, and as her voice rose in the wailing minor melodies of "Lochaber no more," or "Farewell to Fiunary," tears would roll down the faces of singer and listeners alike.

Then again a "so-glad-to-see-you" would often make a chance meeting with him in the street send a friend along with a happier face and a lighter step; although at the same time it is to be feared that a little touch of free-and-easy Colonialism in his manner was somewhat scandalising to some who were sticklers for that conventionalism of which he had not a streak in his whole composition. To most ordinary people, however, his absence of self-consciousness and thorough naturalness were very grateful. Of his own abilities he had a very poor opinion, and he used to repeat with much relish a saying of one of his Professors, "It takes a long time to get a thing into your head, MacNeil; but once it is in, it is in for ever!" Nothing could be more true; his mind delighted in retention, and no one ever made a better use of his treasures "new and old." In doctrine he was a Calvinist to the back-bone, and a Presbyterian (so he said) "from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot." He, nevertheless, preached free grace with unbounded energy and *abandon*. A strong personality distinguished him from everybody else. "He was cast," said a friend, "in a different mould from us all," and this unlikeness to others was used of God in awakening interest wherever he went. A physiognomist of some fame remarked some years later—"This is the man to have led the Charge



of the Light Brigade at Balaclava; he would revel in heading a forlorn hope." Then he added, "I should like to have this man beside me in the hour of danger; instinctively he knows just the right thing to do in an emergency."

Mr. MacNeil landed from the s.s. "Assam" in a Scotch bonnet of which his sisters soon deprived him, and with a Scotch tongue of which he was not so easily divested. In a little while he was to begin a career of unhampered service, and like an arrow from the bow of a skilful marksman he whizzed straight and true—his momentum, moreover, increasing instead of lessening, until on August 27th, 1896, he reached his goal with a suddenness that sent a thrill throughout the land. John MacNeil had many gifts to qualify him for the work of an Evangelist, but he might have possessed them all and yet have had "nothing," had he not been, above everything else, a man of prayer. In season and out of season, by daylight and dark the tide of prayer constantly flowed, and this was the pivot upon which his whole life turned. Many a night when an audience had left the Church or Hall, delighted with the grand attendance, with the unflinching exposure of error, and with the faithful preaching of the gospel, the Evangelist himself would go to his own room, not to sleep, but to spend the whole night upon his face, because there had been so little result. When asked if he could not do with less prayer—praying being harder work than preaching—his answer was, "Other men may be able to do with less, but I cannot. God ties me down to this:—*for every soul born again through my ministry I must go through the travail.*" He believed that a man should live in the spirit of prayer, but he also believed it to be a device of the devil when "the spirit of prayer" was made to take the place of "seasons of prayer." Prayer in the morning

and preaching at night was the order of every day when evangelising at any stated place; and when long rides and drives were a necessity, he prayed as he went. Prayer first thing after rising, and last thing at night; *prayer* before leaving his room, and *prayer* on re-entering it; *prayer* as he wrote, and *prayer* as he read—until it came to be a habit that held him fast. When nearing a town in which he was to preach, his custom was to lift his hat as the first houses came in sight and to claim the town for Jesus. Passengers in train or coach might wonder what the raised covering and reverent attitude might mean; it was the renewal of a compact between the servant and the Master. I have many a time seen the palm of his left hand held open and upwards, while with his right hand he wrote down burning words of rebuke, or counsel, or encouragement. "Why do you hold your hand like that?" "I am *making a hollow*" was his reply. "I need wisdom just here, and have not time to pray. I hold it up as a sign to my Master that I am wanting help." Are any of my readers, attracted by the glamour of an Evangelist's life, looking only to the crowds and the popularity of the position? Before you enter on that path, count well the cost. Remember that it means tears and solitude and sore agony of soul. It means nights without sleep and days without comfort; it means "hardness" as a good soldier and "faithfulness" as a good steward. But if you *are* able to be baptized with this baptism, remember too, "Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing the measure of seed, he shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm cxxvi. 6. R.V.) Remember also, "He that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. ix. 6).

Now to resume the story. His own letters tell it most graphically.

## TWO OR THREE "DUMB SABBATHS" 91

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

CONTRACTOR'S OFFICE,  
HAYLEY BRIDGE,

July 9th, 1879.

My dear Richard,

I had a rare drink when the last mail came in, for I was getting very thirsty. Oh man, you dinna ken how greatly I feel myself indebted to you for your epistles. I am just now at my brother's camp on the railway. I came up yesterday, and am going back to Kingsford to-day to get ready for a month's evangelising in a district about 150 miles up north. This is as curious an office as ever you saw! One has to rest with hat and leggings on to keep himself warm, for it is mid-winter, and at night the poor candles do not live out half their time, the wind whistles about them so. I have not yet made a descent on the navvies as a body; all that I have hitherto done has been done "decently and in order." I have been fighting the devil according to ecclesiastical rules and regulations—preaching only where meetings have already been established. I don't want to be a prophet as to what I am going to do; it is better for me to act the part of an historian. About fifteen miles from the place in the north to which I am moving this week, there are a great number of new-chums camped on a railway. I hope the Lord will show me how to push my way in amongst them, as I suppose no man is caring for their souls. What would I give for dear old W. S. M. at hand with his ram's horn to muster the sinners to the Gospel feast. I assure you, Richard, the wish often goes up from my heart, when I see them all around me, "Oh, for three of David's mighty men!" Ask the Master to send me comrades. He can raise them up even from "these stones." After landing here I had two or three dumb Sabbaths. What an infliction! but now that I have opened fire, I hope my gun will never be *cola* any Sabbath till I reach the "Soldiers' Rest." Three engagements every Sabbath is to be the rule of the service as long as I am in it. Ministers of any kind are as scarce as guineas, and how many there are in the world to-day, who are as dumb dogs and who "cannot bark!" Thank God, I am in as good mood for barking as ever I was, and I'll bark as loud as I can, and as long as I can whilst there's an inch of air left in my lungs. . . . The Master has been graciously using me. Yes, I know that He is going to use me in every sermon, but He is not using me as much as He would wish, because I am not as holy as I should be. I don't wonder now at dear Alexander Whyte continually crying out for a new heart and a right spirit.

There are three vacant charges here at present, and if

I wanted to settle down quietly I would only have to say "Yes." "Ah, if he only had a wife we would have a better chance at him" said one canny person. You would be amused to hear the criticisms! An old lady said "He speaks like one who has been in the world, and not all his days at college." A very favourable criticism indeed! So you see that the Band work has done me good in counteracting the "elevating" influences of the New College. I see that I am to have a lot of driving and riding to do in Christ's service. I have been promoted from the infantry into the cavalry! As a mounted trooper I am going to scour South Australia for souls. The thought that I am a "dragoon" quite exhilarates me as I gallop along. I find that the great thing needed here is face to face preaching. Oh! that blessed Drill Hall! it has taught me many things, and this among the rest—How to preach Christ to individuals. I wish I could always mind the order, "Instant *out* of season." I would not like to be a minister after the stamp of those who open their lips for Christ only on Sabbaths, and *then* only in the pulpit. I would like to make a pulpit of my horse, and a book-board of my saddle-bow, preaching Christ thus 365 days out of 365 to every sinner at whom I can get the chance.

The S. A. Church is going to take me on trial for license next month, so that before you get this I may be a licensed minister of the Gospel. May *that* be a special season of grace to my soul! What a blessing that Christ Jesus licensed me years ago. Now, Dick, I must halt; but I feel like crying at having to stop. Talking days are coming—time for *that* by-and-bye! meantime to the fight! Say to the Band, "The Captain of Salvation expects every man to do his duty." May you all have plenty of sunlight.

Your fellow Soldier,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. W. HOWAT. \*

KINGSFORD, GAWLER,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

August 6th, 1879.

My dear, dear William,

I am so sorry to hear of your severe illness. But I need not be so sorry, for it was the Mediator Who mixed the cup, and Who Himself tasted it before He put it to your lips. Oh yes, all was, and all is well. The bitter as well as the sweet passes through the blessed Hands of Him Who alone is worthy to open the Book sealed with the seven seals. How did the land of Beulah look, my brother? Was the gate not a little ajar? Didn't you hear the music? When the crossing

day comes for you, Willie, you should manage the swelling Jordan in fine style, for you have had more than once a few experimental strokes at crossing. I suppose you are wondering what I am doing over here all this time. Well, I'm just trying hard to pull sinners like brands out of everlasting burnings, but woe! woe! the most of them seem determined to perish.

The Lord brought me here *en route* for Victoria, and I have seen the nakedness of the land. I see that there is heaps to be done, and I am going to stop for a time. God assisting me, I shall do some pioneering work before I pass on. It is a starvation sort of a place, salaries being £100 and £150 short of Victoria; still, as it is not money but souls I'm fishing for, and as there are lots of them about, the money will be enough and more than enough. When I saw what needed to be done, what was I that I should say to my Master, "Oh, get some one else to do it here; I want to go to Victoria, where I am known and where I am expected." Won't you help me in my work, Willie? You need never be idle; I exhort that you pray for John. The Presbytery are going to license me next month, Tuesday, September 2nd. *Be near the Throne that day especially.* I stood part of my trials yesterday. I did not know till then that I was a scholarly man! I would like to take a tour through my old haunts, but dare not leave till my Captain sends me.

Your fellow soldier,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. (NOW REV.) A. C. SMITH, M.A.

MANSE, JAMESTOWN,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

December 23rd, 1879.

I thank you for your quota of "news." You know I am very thirsty out here, and every cupful helps. Glad you are still trying to use the "Sword of the Spirit," and that you've actually been trying it on the hearts of adamant in the old Cowgate! Bravo! I'd give dear old Martin\* a thundering clap on the shoulder if I could, for getting you into work of that kind. Martin! his name and memory are very dear to me. Get close to that fellow if you can, and you'll be all the better when you leave Scotland. I have a most profound admiration and a most ardent love for that man. Taking him through and through, I am not worthy to stoop down and loose his shoe-latchet. *But*, when you get the chance, give him a spear-thrust under the fifth rib in your own

\*Rev. Alex. Martin, Professor of Apologetics, New College, Edinburgh.

way for entertaining the fear even for a moment that his Cow gate work is almost in vain ! Such rubbish !

You want to know about "myself." When I landed I was thinking of going on to Victoria, but the Presbytery here volunteered to take me under their wing, and on October 1st I was solemnly ordained as a Missionary. Three Churches wanted me, and I decided to come as pioneer to Jamestown, the capital of the Northern Areas. I opened a preaching station 25 miles north of this two months ago in a heathen country. Thus I am the most advanced in our regiment, breaking up new ground. It is work, for every sermon there costs me a fifty-miles ride, but the people roll up well at 10 a.m. on the Sunday morning. About 11.30 I am in my saddle and off to my next station, thirty miles distant, where I preach at 3 p.m. Man, it is *flying* through the air ! I keep two horses, and work them week about. They know what "express speed" is sometimes. I *must* hold the ground occupied as long as I can sit in my saddle. Oh that I may be able to continue till help comes. Three more men wanted. If I could only hear of any, would not I get the place warmed for them ! Do you know any soldier with the ring about him, that is willing to come and restrain an over-worked fellow-soldier from committing suicide ? If I were at home I am sure my tongue would be *so* eloquent in beseeching men to come and help ! I say it solemnly, that there are *hundreds of families* living around these areas in South Australia just like kangaroos—not living but existing ; no day of death for them—no Judgment—no Bible—no God—no Heaven—no hell ; and yet men will stay in Scotland treading on one-another's toes ! Oh for three of David's mighty men ! Oh for a band of self-denying, determined heroes ! Don't wait till you get into the Ministry before you begin working *in earnest* at the work of the Ministry. Now that I am a minister I don't feel a bit differently from what I did when working in the Pleasance, or as a Volunteer before I became Missionary. I have long looked on winning souls as my work, and that is exactly my work to-day. What would I give for fifteen minutes in the New College Missionary Society now on the day for Foreigners ! Some one's ears would tingle. If you are staying at the familiar "No. 10," kindest regards to all there.

JOHN MACNEIL.

The work already described in these letters one would suppose to be enough to satisfy any ordinary appetite, but satisfaction was a stage at which my husband never arrived. As long as unreached souls

lay beyond him, it was, "press on harder, faster; crowd on more sail; put on more steam;" until, as one thinks of it, the wonder is, not that his life was so short, but that it was so long. Away down in Spalding, one of the Jamestown out-stations, there lives a frail old man named John Macleod, who loved his gallant young minister with a devotion of which perhaps only a Highlander is capable. When the cause at Spalding was first started, the services were held in his house. The minister used to take his stand in the largest room, and when it was packed other rooms had to be filled, and the preacher's duty was to make all hear. Mr. Macleod likes to tell how that once when he had been busy finding a seat for everybody, he was standing in the door with his back the wrong way, when he was startled with, "Turn round, John! however can I preach to your back?" Another day, coming home at night after a hard day of searching on foot among his people, John showed the old man his boots, worn through with heavy walking. The minister went to bed and to sleep, but not so John Macleod, who sat up and mended his boots for the next day's labour. "A little thing," you say, "and very commonplace!" but the box that holds the ointment is not always made of alabaster. Several years afterwards, when he went back to the old parish for some evangelistic work, John Macleod came running out at the sound of the wheels, crying, "John MacNeil! John MacNeil! ta tevil tauld me that I would never see you any more, but here he iss proved a liar again, as he hass always been!" There were quite a number of Gaelic-speaking families in Spalding who had hardly any English, and it was a great grief to their Pastor that he could not speak to them in their native tongue. He did the best he could however, pressing his three Gaelic sentences into the service, and won their love, although his speech was to them almost

an unknown tongue. It was on his way to the little Gaelic Church beyond Spalding that he one day overtook a swagman. He stopped him as usual, and got his promise to attend the meeting. To relieve the man of his burden, and also to make doubly sure that he would keep his word, he took the "swag" from the poor fellow, and carried it on in his buggy, to be delivered at the Church. The day was warm, and a wayside public-house had to be passed. In went the swagman, and left it considerably intoxicated. He had not forgotten his promise, however, and reached the Church in the middle of the sermon. Leaning against the door-post, he waited for a pause in the sermon, and presently electrified the listeners by saying, "I say, parson, wh-where's that swag you stole?" Imagine the effect on a Presbyterian congregation! But the preacher was not in the least discomposed. "Swag you stole?" he repeated, with a kindly smile; "I stole no swag, my good man, but you have let the beer steal your senses and your good manners, too. Make room for another there, friends." The man found a seat; the preacher finished his sermon; the tramp got his swag, and went away more sober than when he arrived.

Everybody now knew the Presbyterian minister. The clatter of his horse's hoofs was to many the most delightful sound of the week, while a few regarded the sound as a signal to make themselves scarce. Nobody could regard him with indifference; his dealing was too personal. If he missed a hearer from Church, he went after him to bring him back. If a hearer was sick, Church was brought to him, and singing, prayer, reading, and expounding were resorted to. If he were indifferent, a few lashes were applied to his conscience. If openly abusive, stronger measures were called for. In short, it is sufficient to say that the Minister seldom left the field



a vanquished man. He rode down to an absentee one day, spying him at the end of a field. Reining in his horse, he said, "Good morning!" "Good morning!" was the reply. "I didn't see you in Church yesterday." "No, I suppose I'd have been there if you had." "Have you a soul?" The man looked surprised, wondered what was coming next, but felt safe in saying, "I suppose I have." "Then take care you don't lose it!" and before he had time to think of a reply, the rider was off. Years afterwards the same man related the incident to Mr. Gray, the Jamestown Minister.

A story of his praying in a ball-room flew round the country on the wings of the wind. It is described better in his own letter than anywhere else, and therefore it will be left for himself to tell it. "A strange man that MacNeil, a very strange man!" would be the verdict of those who knew him only by hearsay; yet to those who knew him well, nothing that he did ever appeared strange; indeed, it seemed the only right and natural thing for John MacNeil to do. What people thought of him when doing his Master's will never troubled him in the least, nor could he ever be induced to see why "the usual way of doing a thing" should be a reason for him to do it in the usual way. "Is that way effective?" "Well, I can't say that it is, but it is customary." "Then the sooner we alter the custom and try another way the better."

Rev. Joseph Nicholson says in his "Recollections":—

"It was in the Spring of 1880 that I first met John MacNeil. He was then a young man of twenty-five, and settled in his first pastoral charge at Jamestown, South Australia. Our friendship was intimate and cordial, for his affectionate nature won instant and loving response. He was a true minister of Christ from the start; his whole heart was aflame with love for souls; his zeal knew no bounds. It was my privilege to join him in his first united Evangelistic Mission. God set His approving seal on the work, and Mr. MacNeil in later life often referred to

those early successes. At Jamestown we engaged the Institute Hall, and preaching alternately, we were cheered by a number of conversions. I remember that we agreed to share the £7, which was the cost of the mission. When settling the account, he admitted, in that playful way so characteristic of him, that he had forgotten to ask his Heavenly Father to send in his half of the cost. 'Never mind,' said he, 'I deserve to be made to pay that out of my own pocket for my neglect; I clean forgot to ask Father anything about the money!' He then paid his £3 10s. as a kind of forfeit, with hilarious cheerfulness!

One of the greatest honours of my life came to me while labouring side by side with him in Jamestown. It happened thus: Mr. MacNeil came to me under the burden of a 'call' to sever his long pastoral tie, and to enter upon the work of an evangelist. I was led to refer to the 'endowment of power' as essential to an evangelist who should 'triumph in every place,' and reap every time he thrust in the sickle. This truth opened up a new world of thought and hope to John MacNeil. He was fascinated by its attractive possibilities and its divine sanctions. It was the very truth his soul yearned for. With characteristic decision and ardour he said, 'I will not rest till I get this blessing.' That night he took home an armful of books from my library on 'The higher Christian life,' and within a fortnight the blessing came. I had the joy of hearing him preach at a united service from the words 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' He then confessed to the 'anointing of the Holy Ghost.' Conversing on this epoch in his religious life, when last he was a guest in my home, he made special allusion to the help gained from a little book I had lent him—Earle's 'Bringing in the Sheaves.' When I placed the same volume in his hands after a lapse of fifteen years, he reverently kissed it, and then wrote under my name the words, 'A lamp to my feet in the darkness of 1880. John MacNeil.' As the years passed, the doctrine of 'Holiness' became more and more the delight of his life and the burden of his message to believers. On this theme he had wonderful resources of appeal and illustration. His book, 'The Spirit-filled Life,' is one of the clearest expositions of that Christian privilege. Practical difficulties are solved in the light of experience, and allurements to holiness are portrayed with attractive and Scriptural power. No wonder the book is running through edition after edition in many lands and in various languages."

#### DIARY.

*Dec. 12th, 1880.*—Eve, after service, visiting sick woman and then speaking with Nicholson in his Parsonage. Came

home with an armful of books—Earle, Taylor, Mahan, etc.

*Dec. 13th.*—"Forward with sealed orders." Spent this day writing, and reading up in general. Visited one family at night. Reading Earle's "Sheaves" and Taylor's "Model Preacher." This was my fast day; ate very sparingly, and was brought close at times in prayer; but, Lord, I am sensible of a great void within, which I must get filled up. Master gave me my marching orders for February to-day. I must go and seek the lost, doing the work of an evangelist; no salary guaranteed, but food and clothing. Ay, Ay, Lord, I am ready.

*Tuesday 14th.*—Reading nearly all day. Learned a few things from Taylor, and a lot from Earle. *That man had something that I have not got, but which I must get.* "Rest continuous," he says, "in the fulness of Christ's love." Oh that I had this blessed rest. I am sure that there is a higher platform of Christian life than the one I am living on. Oh merciful Christ, lift me up to it. I must receive the fulness of Christ's love into my soul, and then live in it, and I do hereby resolve that, grace assisting me, I will not give over asking this blessing night and day most earnestly till I obtain it. What would my preaching be like then, I wonder?

*Dec. 15th.*—Spent all day studying Asa Mahan's "Out of darkness into light." He has turned me upside down, glory be to God! He has by means of His servant's words carried away some of my old ideas like "nine pins." I have learned a lot about the Baptism of the Spirit. This endowment of power, this promise of the Father, has never yet been received by me, although it is offered me by Christ.

*Jan. 1st, 1881.*—The new year opened and found me on my knees asking the fulfilment of the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Wesleyan Watch-night service. Shall I not get what I ask? Shall I not be sensible of it when I receive it? This augurs to be the most remarkable year of my life, the year in which I have waked up and risen to my full privileges in Christ.

*Tuesday, Jan. 11th.*—Just now I have had a gracious season of melting in prayer, glory! He is telling me that I am coming nearer to the hour when my joy will be full. I have tacked a bit to-day. Instead of asking so much for the Holy Ghost, I have begun to ask for preparation for His reception. . . . He will not tarry a moment after I am fully ready. This preparation is His work too. Oh how gloriously dependent we are on free grace. Alleluia.

*Wednesday, Jan. 19th.*—Last night had some glorious glimpses, foretastes of coming glory.

*Saturday, Jan. 29th.*—I watched till 4.0 a.m., but my heart

was hard; the blessing comes not. Up at 8.30; spent this morning till nearly 3.0 p.m. reading the Bible and praying; asking for heart preparation.

*Sabbath, Jan. 30th.*—Thus ends my work in Belalie as pastor. Now Lord, take command: don't let me tarry long in that upper room, for I will not move till I get the word.

*\*Sabbath, Feb. 13th, 1881.*—Stayed in my room all the morning; prepared address for young men on, "The Lord's side"; began my work with them at 2.30. There was power, but not what I was expecting. This morning He told me, "You have the enduement." I believe Him. Alleluia, I believe Him.

### LETTERS.

#### TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE NEW COLLEGE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

JAMESTOWN,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

*Oct. 25th, 1880.*

Your late associate returns salutation and greeting. It was with feelings which those of you who know me will better imagine than I can describe, that I received at the beginning of this year, through your worthy corresponding secretary, Mr. R. Macintosh, the cheering assurance of your affectionate remembrance of me, and of your interest in the work which I am seeking to do for the Master in South Australia. I think myself happy, fellow students, because you have done me the honor of asking me to reply, giving you a taste of my experiences, and a "few words of counsel." It sounds so droll—MacNeil counselling the august Missionary Society of the New College. I am later than I anticipated for this Session, but you must excuse me, as I have lately been away in the interior, hunting up lost sheep, where I lost altogether the day of the month, and not infrequently the day of the week. I did not think that Session was quite so near. Now as to my experience. When I arrived here last year, the barbarous people showed me no little kindness! The Venerable the Presbytery of South Australia took me under their wing. After a brief course of study they tried me to see what kind of metal was in me; pronounced it good enough, and thereupon passed a vote of commendation on those who trained me in the school of the prophets. That's *one* for the Society! For one of the best trainers I had in Edinburgh was the New College Missionary Society. As soon as I was licensed "calls" came in, but I put them from me and asked the Church to set me aside for Missionary or Evangelistic work, so they sent me up

\* See page 117.

North to pioneer, and I undertook to resurrect and nurse an almost defunct charge in the Northern areas. Through the Master's good hand upon me, this work has been done successfully. The child is strong and fat, and is now able to run about. Oh that I had a man to take him out of my hands. The sheep are gathered; the work of the shepherd's dog is done. Where is the shepherd? My experience there has been very sweet. After the Sabbath day's three services as pastor, I often go away to spend a week in other districts as Evangelist, working from the township as a centre, and on Saturday I become converted into a pastor again. For the past month I have had a diversion, having just returned from the interior, where I have been telling the glad Evangel to those employed in the shearing sheds. . . . The service is hot, and short as possible. I can't afford to spend my few precious minutes reconciling contradictions, giving the correct exegesis of the Hebrew, or knocking over Arminius. But plain, and honest, and earnest must be one's talk, for there are those men before you, and in all probability they may never hear a sermon again.

Perhaps I have said enough as to experience. Now for a word of counsel, as I am desired. As a soldier every day under fire, I have three words of counsel to send from this field of battle home to the recruits still on the parade ground. The first is "visit"; and the second is "visit"; and the third is "visit." Oh, I wish I could enforce this counsel on every student in the College. I am quite famous in this Colony for the ready, in-offensive way I can begin to talk to any man about his soul. A poor divinity student wrote to me the other day for instructions how to manage this difficult important business. If I had the means of transporting him to Edinburgh, I would hand this aforesaid student over to the tender mercies of Messrs. B. and S., Professors of Practical Theology, and ask them to train him in their Pleasance school—that's where I was trained. The class I am most indebted to about the New College is the M.S. When I counsel you, gentlemen, to "visit," I just mean—go down to the battle field, and try your offensive and defensive armour in real fight. You'll often find down there in the Pleasance an old cobbler who'll teach you more apologetics in five minutes than it would be possible for Professor Blaikie to teach in an hour.

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

THE MANSE,  
JAMESTOWN.

*December 23rd, 1879.*

My dearly beloved and longed for,  
Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you.

I hope you got my flying despatch last mail; it was penned amid the smoke of battle, so that I could not see very well to write a long "screed." So glad to think that it is a man "greatly beloved" who is filling the post I tried to hold in Edinburgh. Look well to your motives, R., and then you will fill it better than I filled it. What is your great business in life? What? Write it here . . . . Then be *always* about that business. Oh that "being instant in season and out of season!" Would that it were burnt deeply into my heart. Last Monday week I was called out of my study to show a workman where to put up a fence around the house. His mate was with him, so I said to myself, "I'll see them again separately in my study about their souls." That day week he dropped down dead. I never saw him again, and now he is in eternity—another monument of MacNeil's carelessness. May I be washed from blood-guiltiness.

I have just this moment (8 p.m.) returned from a hunt for souls. My steed is unsaddled and having a bite to eat, as I must be on his back again to-night. As I was riding through the plains this afternoon, I was thinking of "faithfulness" in personal dealing. I find that I am stinking in the nostrils of some people here because I "question too closely." I came across the toes of one of my S.S. teachers for breaking the Sabbath. I came down on him gently and kindly, but *heavily*. "The impudence of the minister!" He has taken a hough (or huff, how do you spell it?) and left the S.S. Of course I'm not sorry. I would rather he had left his wicked way and kept to the S.S. Some others of my people spoke to me about it. I terrified them out of their wits by saying emphatically: "I'll be faithful to my Master as one of His watchmen, if I empty the Church." I declared that I would hold my ground against all Belalie. I have driven a family away through being faithful to my orders about the sacrament of baptism. But as a set off to this, I believe I have got another family, husband and wife, into the Gospel net thro the same process of faithful dealing. Instead of kicking against the pricks, they began seeking. Richard, don't I need more *wisdom* and grace than ever? Well, get it for me.

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

ADELAIDE,

March 20th, 1880.

My Dear Richard,

That last letter of yours was short, but it was very sweet. The sermon on Ps. cxix. 19 by dear Dr. Whyte was glorious. I put your notes through my mill the first Sabbath after receiving them. If it didn't do the people good it did the

missionary. The last sermon I wrote was on the “looking-glass,” Is. i. 23. Do you mind that night in St. George’s, when Dr. Whyte was on it? Perhaps he would not know his old sermon after passing through my hands. What a big account you fellows are running up, sitting under such a man.

No, no; I am not dead yet, though I believe the devil is wishing most heartily that I was. I have not time to give you a succinct account of my doings since last letter, as I am just now away again on another flying campaign to old battle-fields. When I am roaming thus from Dan to Beersheba, I have not much leisure for writing even to my old sweethearts in Edinburgh. Yes, you’re right, “the King’s business requireth haste.” Even my horses have learnt that text! And everybody says of me, “you’re always in a hurry.”

To speak of the present and future first: Last Sabbath preached at my usual stations—three times, driving sixty miles. Monday, left for the south. Tuesday, still further south—fifty miles—to Mount Barker; preached that night and three successive nights in the neighbourhood. One of these days was Show Day. That would spoil my meeting, so I was not to be disappointed, and went to the Show myself to try and drive a business for my Master. About 3,000 people present; mounted a buggy that was standing there at some distance from the main gate; struck up “Hold the Fort,” but the sinners wouldn’t gather. “I’ve beaten you!” said the devil; “beat a retreat.” “No, you haven’t; no, I won’t!” so I jumped down from the buggy, made for the main gate, saw a big spring dray, standing close by, jumped into it, and struck up “Hold the fort” No. 2. Will they, nill they, they *had* to hear then, and some young men and women gathered round. There was a “Cheap Jack” blazing away about twenty-five yards off, so I struck up as auctioneer too—“Buy gold and white raiment.” Many laughed; many rejoiced. God counted me worthy of only one stone, which struck me on the breast. I have open-air work nearly every week. Every Saturday, as I go to my far-away station for Sabbath morning, I call at the navvies’ camps by the way, and preach Christ to them. This day week as I was driving through a town up north at night, I saw that the place was wholly given to idolatry, and my spirit was stirred; I wheeled the horse round, and struck up “The Heavenly Bridegroom.” Got a splendid crowd, and preached to them from the footplate of my buggy for ten minutes. “Didn’t he roll it into us!” cried one critic. I have started “bill-sticking extraordinary” through the country, and am quite an expert at the work now. Came back to Adelaide this morning to preach Children’s Anniversary Sermons to-morrow. I’ll soon become “an Anni-

versary man," if they keep at me as they do just now. The pastor of this Church is at present in Scotland, his place being supplied by Rev. A. Knox, from Stirling, a sterling fellow. He wants me to come and conduct a month's special effort in this city, in May. I feel like a little child in the face of this great business, but if there is work to be done He can use a child, can't He? This, R., is the heart of this letter—the special work in Adelaide in May. I wish you would send a request to the Edinburgh noon prayer-meeting; keep it before them every day during the first week in May. You have no conception of the godlessness of this land. I am working hard, harder than ever I wrought in my life, but the people won't move. It wants a dead lift from the Omnipotent Spirit. You made my heart greet as you told me of Alexander Whyte. I think I hear him. I wonder if I shall ever sit under the great preacher of Repentance again.

Glad to get such encouraging reports from Edinburgh. I knew this would be a good year with you. It was a year the day before yesterday when I said good-bye to you all at the Railway Station. I left on March 18th, 1879. On 18th March, 1880, I was preaching Christ at the Agricultural Show yards. What a year of marvels, of mercies untold, and I firmly believe that there is a more wonderful year ahead. May the year soon come when I shall get thousands of souls for Jesus. I held my first communion on February 15th. Had public reception of eight new communicants on the Thursday before, a new thing. My last communion was with you in St. George's. I felt a little strange, but the Master of the feast was near me. It is better on before. My communion sermon was on Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. Fenced the tables from, "Friend, how camest thou in hither?" At night on: "There the weary be at rest." *So, so sweet: rest* (1) in the grave; (2) in Christ; (3) in yon bright land of glory. Then, on Tuesday, I struck off for a fortnight's Mission work, visiting every house right ahead, riding sometimes for nine hours, and preaching at night to those visited through the day. I landed on Saturday evening at Clare, where I had arranged to have a Mission Week. Sometimes we begin with meetings outside, as the place is full of R.C's. "Howld an," says one man, "see if I can get him aff the thrid,"—but he didn't get me off the thread, for I was trained on the battle-field. "Did ye iver hear of John Knax? that's wan of his discindants." That man did annoy me, so I thought it best to pay him off, and said: "My friends, you know that the devil cannot speak for himself, so he sometimes has to get an ass to do it for him." Thereupon the ass ceased braying.

There is a place four miles from this, where is a Jesuit College, a Colonial Rome, and only two Protestant families in



It. The Captain said: "Unfurl the banner at Seven Hills." I told the minister with whom I was staying where I was off to. "You'll get your head broken." "All right," I replied, and mounted Hero, and galloped away. The place in sight, I viewed the field and selected a hill in the centre of the village, on which to unlimber my gun. Then I mounted a stump, keeping Hero by my side in case of need, and opened with the hymn: "There is a better world." The people looked up; some gathered; others listened from the doors. I never had anything more quiet. I thanked them for their gentlemanly conduct, and as I rode away one cried: "We're not a bit toired of ye yet, sur." Had another open-air meeting on the way back to Clare, and then led away to the Church. The attendance and interest grew every night. After the last meeting, saddled Hero at 10 p.m., struck away for the north, and rode till 5 a.m. on Saturday; bill-sticking by the way. I reached the place where "Garry," my other horse was waiting for me. Rested for four hours; prepared a sermon before mid-day. I mounted "Garry" in the afternoon, and away again for Yongala, my northern station. This is hard work, but for souls' sake I must hold on till help comes. Oh, when can I sing "Reinforcements are appearing." . . . Amid this roar and din I fear that in spirituality of mind I am losing ground.

"Oh for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame."

To my shame I say it. It is sometimes hard work to pray in secret,—a bad symptom in an under-physician. I am a riddle to myself.

Yours in blessed service,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

JAMESTOWN MANSE, S.A.

*April 22nd, 1880.*

My dearest Richard,

Yours of March 11th I received on April 19th. I hasten to reply, as on mail day I will be buckling on my harness for the greatest battle of my life, in very idea my "Thermopylæ" (Please date your letters as I have done; it will help to keep our chronology somewhat straight.) Our General Assembly meets on May 4th in Adelaide. In the evening I am to make my first G.A. speech. Rev. A. Knox, a true soldier, speaks on the "Secret of spiritual power," and I on "Evangelistic work." This should make a good start for me in what begins immediately after. Glad of the news

in your donkey-gallop-like letter. The tidings of salvation cheers me; that work here is almost standing still, and this makes us prize even one fish when we catch him in the net. I wrote to you last from Adelaide; a deep impression was made on the Sabbath, and I have heard of one soul, a harum-scarum son of a Minister; he'll make a bandsman yet. The S.A. Church has funds by which to maintain a Missionary in the Islands. She would like an ordained man. I said to one of our ministers that we should take a layman rather than nobody. "Capital idea," he thought, "I will bring the matter before the Assembly, and ask them to sanction my calling one of your fellows." I would like to see you come, Dick: you have enough of Theology—bushels more than some. You don't want to go to the school of the Prophets; you have been in a better, but I would like you to have an idea of medicine; a session or two would be invaluable. I am not asking you to come, for I have no authority, but I will write after the Assembly.

I send you a copy of the "Dayspring" report. Make good use of it. I always feel ill after reading your letters: do you know the medicine that would cure me most quickly? If by a hop, step, and jump process, I could suddenly appear where you are writing. Oh, for another march—oh, for another battle with my Edinburgh comrades! Ah, perhaps we'll never fight together again, but I fancy we will triumph together, and that will make amends for all. Steady, Richard, steady my lad! it is only a few more weary marches, and then we pile arms at the gate of the Palace, and file in to see the King amid ringing shouts of victory. Hold on, pause, and try and drink this in, and it will do you good. I wonder which of us will be first at Home. I think I will. I hope so, for I would like to see my bandmates advancing to the Throne. I would like to see how they will look. Is it not refreshing now and then to rub the dust and powder out of your eyes, and turn them upward, meditating on the sweet rest we will yet be enjoying. I am afraid that when I reach home I won't be half weary enough, and that I'll be asking the Captain to let me off again for another campaign or two, till I would get properly tired out.

Many thanks for the books that are coming; I'll pay you when I get rich, and that will be when I reach my Mansion. If W. M. has not left, tell him to take as many tracts with him as he can carry—£5 or £10's worth. Oh, for 10,000 of those little slips you sent me. Perhaps we may start a printing press some day, à la Duncan Matheson. My movements have been very erratic since last letter. Just a taste for you: After

preaching in Adelaide that Sabbath, I left at 7 a.m. on Monday for Mount Pleasant, and preached for four nights in the district. The "Show" happened to be there, so I bought a cheap-jack's stand in the grounds for 2s. 6d., and mounting a barrow struck up "Hold the fort," and "Better World." Had an immense crowd; started to preach, when a committee man stopped me, asking had I any rights? "Yes, as much as any other cheap-jack on the ground; I have paid for my stand." Crestfallen, he fell back amid the the cheers of the people, and I continued. But a committee meeting was called, and they instructed the secretary to give me back my money and tell me to go, as they would not have it. Being a man of peace, I jumped out of the barrow, and told the people that I would finish outside the gate. A woman was there with an apple cart, so obtaining her permission, I mounted the cart, struck up singing again, and finished my sermon before a good gathering, giving the apple woman the 2s. 6d. for her kindness. Many people think that I am mad; others hate me perfectly; therefore I conclude that I am not far from the right way. Many others, however, are thanking God, and taking courage. Oh, Richard, I trust that grace has made me willing to be a fool for Christ's sake, if only I can save souls from the everlasting burnings. God helping me, I will bring out from world-intoxicated men the confession that there is something in Christ's religion after all.

A fortnight ago I had a week's mission among the settlers north of Jamestown. Riding straight ahead, visiting every house, and speaking to every soul, I fought many a battle with the sword of the Spirit while hunger was telling me to get a loaf of bread. But I am used to these things; it is no hardship to try and endure a little hardness. If one of my old band-mates looked in and saw their captain "camping out" some nights, what would they say? I was once turned out of a house in the dark as an impudent intruder, so I pushed on, and losing my way, reached a camp at 10 p.m. to find a brother in the Lord, the master of the house, gone to bed. Had to knock him up; turned poor Garry adrift into a paddock to pick up his supper for himself, whilst I lay down in a room with—— I Well, I had better not try to tell you of the window, and how big the cracks in the walls and roof were! Another night poor Garry had to be tied to a mallee tree, whilst I lay on the ground near him under a tarpaulin thrown over a stick. I wonder will it take long to break my curate into this kind of work? I don't think so, for love of the souls will drive men like him to do anything. Oh, the harrowing one's spirit gets! Of countless numbers I have to say, what I often said to

men in the Cowgate, "What a pity that they have souls."

It is 11.15 p.m., and I have yet to feed my soul, and to construct a sermon on "Son, remember." Give a comrade's greeting to all. Love to my dear namesake. To each bandsman you know what to say.

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. ARTHUR BULEY.

GAWLER, S.A.

*June 16th, 1880.*

My ancient friend Arthur,

I send you my congratulations on your elevation to the Collegiate Choir. Fill it my brother in the fear of the Lord. I have never ceased to pray for you. I need your prayers, for the work lying before me in this Colony is a great one. The house that I have to build for the King of Glory must be "exceeding magnificent," and who am I? A child in need of wisdom, a weakling in need of strength, a coward in need of courage.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO REV. R. MITCHELL.

JAMESTOWN,

*July 20th, 1880.*

My dear Mitchell,

I suppose the Presbytery meets next month. Are we going to get anything special done? What about our Devotional Meeting. Be revolving about the visiting deputies. What is to be done with the shearers this year? Would not a colporteur be better than an evangelist? I am persuaded that a preaching, live, red-hot colporteur with his wagon (being legs for Baxter, Bunyan, Moody, Bible, and the Press in general) would do tons of good in out of the way places. Could we not manage as a Church to get one? Come on now, wake up old fellow; Clare is not the only place in the colony; souls are perishing for lack of knowledge beyond the reach of your Gospel trumpet.

I have started again, and will not stop till I get through the areas,—nay the colony,—nay the colonies, if God give me time and strength.

JOHN MACNEIL.



REV. JOHN MACNEIL

*From a Photograph taken in 1881*

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

October, 1880.

I have resigned my charge in Jamestown. I have a comfortable home prepared for my successor, and three splendid congregations. The Church that twelve months ago was almost deserted is now crowded to the door. What hath God wrought! Down deep in people's hearts the Holy Ghost is working. I see it now as I am going round visiting. It is harvest time in this country, and I, as a spiritual farmer, am travelling through my crops, and am delighted to see how some of them are ripening under the Sun of Righteousness. Finances are coming on well, I think. Besides building churches for ourselves, we will raise between £80 and £100 for the South Seas. I want my successor to have £300 a year, and then I will be away to make another nest for somebody else, doing my special work, ever "pioneering." You will want to know something of my movements in the rambling line. I have fought through another shearing campaign; the great Captain Himself went forth at my head, so I need not say that it was to victory that He led me. During nearly six weeks, I travelled over 1150 miles, and fought I don't know how many battles. I was up several hundreds of miles into the interior, going over new ground, but He never let me go astray; I was always led by the right path. Sometimes I rode thirty miles, sometimes forty, sometimes fifty through the day to reach a shed at night.

Once I was nearly "done for." Take this as an example. I left Bimbowrie about 10 a.m. for Koonamore, 40 miles to the west. I wanted to get there by 7 p.m. "Easy work," I thought, so I stopped at huts on the way, preaching the Crucified. Towards dusk I hoped I was getting near the end, for poor Major, my horse, had been all day without food or drink. But it was no use "deeming" that I was near, for no station was in sight. I had no directions as to the road I had to take. I was just going on in faith; I was passing through scrub at the base of Mount Victor, where, years ago, brave Grant, one of our explorers, perished for want of water. His bones are lying now on the high mountain top. So with me it was, "On, on Major, my boy! on!" The road was heavy and unknown; my horse was weary, though his pluck would not allow him to show signs of giving in. Seven came, and still—; 7.30 came—the hour at which I should be beginning my service—but it was still, On, on! and quicker still, for I was loath to lose the opportunity after so long a ride, and I made up my mind for another half-hour, in hopes of reaching the shed in time, and if not at it by 8 o'clock, I would pull up and camp for the night. On,

\*Afterwards published in *The Christian*.

on! faster and faster, cheering him with hand and heel and voice. 7.45! no station yet. "Come on, Major," I said; "15 minutes more and we will camp." I was keeping my ears open for traces of life, and peering through the scrub, when suddenly, at 7.50, I saw something shining dead ahead. I rose in my stirrups to make sure. Yes, there is something! A strange chill crept through my frame as I sat to my saddle again and pushed on still faster. Presently I saw a light! It was a roof I had caught sight of. If ever I sang "Alleluia" from my heart it was then. Brought to the place within 15 minutes of the hour I had fixed on for giving up! My horse was well cared for, but I declare if the Manager did not refuse to allow me to muster the men! It was too late, he said. Not to be beaten, I stole away to the men, and asked them would they muster yet? "Yes, sir," they replied. Away I went and told him; with an oath he gave permission, and we had a rattling meeting, the men listening all the better because they saw I was just as I came from the saddle—dusty and hungry and tired, after a ride of fifty-two miles instead of forty. After the service I went up to the house, but the manager tried to demolish me by aiming a jug of water at my head. Like David from Saul, I fled from his presence, and hung about the house till 11 o'clock, hoping that I might get in. At last I had to seize a kangaroo-skin rug and make for a chaff-house, where I took refuge. Resting my head in between two bags and sheltered from the whistling wind by my rug, I slept till morning.

Another night, after a forty-five-mile ride, I was locked out of the station; no food for man or beast—nothing for it but to camp. I struck back for the bush, descended to the bottom of a creek close by, and scooped out a bed in the dry sand under lee of the rocks, using my saddle for my pillow and my mackintosh for my blanket. I lay down, with the moonlight sky above me, after saying the bairn's prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc., and repeating the 23rd Psalm, and slept soundly till near midnight, when I was wakened by the booming of heaven's artillery. I sprang up and found the sky above me as black as ink; a tremendous storm was making for me. Scarcely awake, I picked up my saddle and made for Major, resolving to gallop about two miles to the wool-shed for shelter. I saddled, and pressed on as fast as I could. The bush around me was bright as day with lightning. I got to the shed, unsaddled, and left poor Major in a yard to chew the cud of reflection while I retreated among the wool and sheep. *Immediately* the storm burst and the rain came pouring down. I passed that night under a bag on the wool table. Saddling at 4.30 a.m., hungry and tired, I pushed on for the next station,

stopping here and there on the road where there was any grass to let Major have a bite. We reached the station by breakfast time, where amends were made for all our hardships. Thus I ushered in October 19th, my twenty-sixth birthday!

In some places we are well cared for. At this station the cook asked me a question after service to which I could not give an answer which satisfied him. Before all the men he said, "Look here, guv'nor! do you mean to say that you go round preaching and don't know *that?* You take my advice; you'd better 'jack up' and go bushranging!"

Perhaps you will wonder at my resigning. Of course, if I was wanting a comfortable home, etc., etc., I would stay where I am, but I would do so at the cost of trifling with my Master's commission. He has told me to care for those for whom no man careth. Tell C. and M. and H. and I. H. A. to be "faithful unto death," for I want to see them yet with a crown of life upon their heads. The bugle sounds to "boot and saddle," and the trooper must obey. Don't forget to ask the Lord to make me great at soul-winning.

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

JAMESTOWN MANSE, S.A.

Dec. 2nd, 1880.

Dear, dear R.,

I got yours of October 19th yesterday, on returning to the Manse after a five days' ride southwards, literally seeking lost sheep "over the mountains wild and bare." Sic a screed as you have sent me! I could have hugged you like a bear when I saw what was awaiting me. I put it in my pouch, as I had to run away, and amid the bustle and uproar of a cattle sale I sat in a buggy and read these glorious sheets. . . . W. has said good-bye to me to-day, and single-handed very soon I must plunge into the battery smoke. If my saddle is emptied in the charge, you'll hear the shout of victory rolling up from the field where I fell. Oh, R. and J. and J. H., stand by me faithfully still! close in lads, close in better than ever. Don't let a day pass without rubbing shoulders with your old captain. I am sure—will make a rare parson, but as for myself I would not give David's sling for Goliath's sword. I see you wrote your letter on my birthday—the day I had the nap on the sand in the Creek, far up North, and thereafter in the wool-shed among the sheep, seeking shelter from the storm. Little did I think that you were under orders to cheer me then—that first you had to pray for me and then to sit down to write to me. Ah! 'tis just like



Him. He always sends the angel with bread and water when His Elijahs are in need, tho' it was not a Juniper tree, but a mallee bush, that I was sleeping under.

I am at no pains to stay the rumours of my eccentricity up country, for won't the folk roll up to see a madman! Others, again, say that I am a bit of a wizard. "He can do what he pleases; he has wonderful power in prayer; he prayed to God to kill a child, and the child was dead forthwith; he asked God to kill two horses, and sure enough they dropped dead in the paddock." So the canny ones say, "We had better take care, and not make that man angry." Did you ever think that Mac. was sic a powerfu' chap?

B. has commanded me to tell you one story, and I must obey. In August I was evangelising at Terowie township. I engaged the Institute Hall for a week, and through God's blessing on the open-air work, the hall at once filled. On the Wednesday night, however, I discovered that I was shut out of the hall by a quadrille party, who had a prior claim, but who refused to postpone their amusement for the benefit of the majority, so we had to beat a retreat to the chapel. "Hold on till I have done my service at the chapel," I said to one who was bemoaning, "and we'll see if we cannot steal a march on them." After a glorious time on John 1, "Behold the Lamb!" etc., I marched down to the Hall with my big waterproof on, and my sword and hymn book under my arm, and went upstairs alone to the room and stood on the stair head watching them for about ten minutes, much to their discomfort and disgust. I saw who were there. It was as good as a play to see the look of bewilderment on their faces as they saw me come up the stairs. As soon as that dance was over they filed past me and sat down to rest. *Now* was my time, so advancing a few paces I levelled my piece at every heart and cried, "*Let us pray.*" I dropped on my knees in the middle of the ball-room, and in a few, short, hot sentences I told the Lord all about them, and asked him to save their souls. Oh, what a rout! I was soon on my feet and retreated in good order, covering my retreat with "Prepare to meet thy God." Their enjoyment was riddled for that night, but, man! the next two nights the hall was not filled, but packed, stairs and all, with people looking up through the railings at the wild man on the platform. I got local brethren to carry on the work during the next week, while I pushed on to storm another township, at which I got news from Terowie that about thirty had decided for Christ,—many of the dancing party being now "clothed and in their right minds"—so wrote the minister. This story is galloping

through the land, and some churches are being closed against me through wrong versions of it. The Press tarred and feathered me, but little care I, since my Captain told me to do it, and then stamped it with His saving seal. If B. had not told me to tell you this, I would not have done it.

I rejoice to say that my congregational work goes on gloriously. It pays me well to study hard for my people; I can preach to them as I preach to no others. I have *not* been following the Smith case, for I have more than I can well do in following runaway sinners.

Poor — thinks more of ladies than he does of Christ. He chooses to please them rather than that Master Who bought him with His blood. Is it not strange that some men are ruined for service in this way? God never meant it, and I am confident that the ladies for the most part are not to blame; a girl with the love of Christ in her heart would rather stimulate than retard in service.

J. M.

#### DIARY.

*Feb., 1880. Sabbath.*—Up at 7 a.m.; good time in prayer in Macleod's chaff house. Powerless in the morning for the most part of my sermon. From Spalding to Belalie South, one hour and fifty minutes; better service there. Some sad good-byes; best time of all in Jamestown at night, but still there was not the power; I will never enter the pulpit again till I am endued. I knelt down at the desk after finishing and prayed. Such a church full! All buildings packed to-day. This ends my work as pastor in Belalie. What more would God have wrought if I only had had the Spirit!

TO REV. R. MITCHELL.

JAMESTOWN,

*January 19th, 1881.*

My dear Robert,

I will not have time to reply after meeting, as I go to-night Yougala-wards for a couple of days' hunting over my old hunting grounds,—otherwise you would get a treatise! I have not been "robed" yet, but oh, I need it badly. My Father sees my old jacket is out at the elbows, and I am persuaded it is not for His glory to see His bairn going about like that; 'deed it's no much to His credit. I keep telling Him this, and for very shame He'll have to give it to me soon. Even if it is all a *sham* I am grateful to the Lord for turning my attention to it, for I never prayed so much since I was born, and I am thinking it is not the devil that is driving us like that to the Throne of grace.

I am persuaded that the reception of the Holy Ghost is a blessed reality yet in store for me. The reason why I have not received it yet is simply because I have not been seeking with *all my heart*. Although I am earnest in seeking, I am conscious that I am not as earnest in the search as I ought to be. There are so many things about my work to draw away my attention. Hence the wisdom of the Master's command: "Go;" but "tarry till you are endued with power." I am painfully conscious that work has a drying up effect on my soul. When I *tarry*, my soul begins to melt, but some duty calls me away again, and immediately the waters cease to flow. I have written a sermon to-day on "The Love of Christ constraineth us,"—a searching time for myself. I know St. Paul and his grand secret better now. What a privilege to have brother — to run neck and neck with you. Run on, and you'll reach Beulah's heights if you don't flag, and I'll be up soon too. We are like Jacob at Jabbok, wanting to get into the Promised Land, but a man is resisting him, to keep him back. Still Jacob wins. Cheer up brothers! the Man that is opposing us is the Man that died for us. We are sure to succeed, for while He is beating us back with the one hand He is secretly supporting us with the other. Alleluia! I am *very near* getting the grand secret now,—  
"not many days hence."

JOHN MACNEIL.

## CHAPTER VI

### EVANGELISTIC WORK

#### DIARY

**M**OONTA, \**Sabbath, Feb. 13th, 1881*—Stayed in my room all the morning; prepared address for young men on, "The Lord's side"; began my work with them at 2.30. There was power, but not what I was expecting. This morning He told me, "You have the enduement." I believe Him. Alleluia, I believe Him. Preached in the Wesleyan Church, Moonta, in the evening; drove back to the mines, and at 7.30 had open-air meeting; about two thousand people; spoke from the buggy in the glorious moonlight; they were held spell-bound by the Holy Ghost; returned to the church and had prayer meeting till 9.30; church filled. I felt so helpless going into the pulpit, but spoke with power. This was my first day as *Evangelist*.

The first sermon that Mr. MacNeil's mother heard him preach was from the text "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and as she heard it, her heart sank a little. "Ah, laddie," she thought, "I'm sorry to hear you start with that! it would come better from an older man." The verse ran through her mind, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as him that putteth it off." Telling the story now, however, she says, "But didn't he endure hardness?" When the news was brought to her, on a wild stormy night last August (1896), that her firstborn son had entered before her into his rest, she said, "Every day I have prayed that my boy might keep the banner of the cross unstained to the end." Then raising her clasped hands and looking up to Heaven, she said, "And

Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard my prayer." Happy mother!

The following extract from a letter to Mr. Howat, written from Edinburgh in June, 1878, shows what was the motive power that pressed him on from town to town and from village to village. He could say like Jeremiah, "His Word was in my heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

Many thanks, brother, for your last short but sweet letter about Dr. Somerville. It was filled with matter that touched the apple of my eye, the spread of my never-enough-praised and admired Redeemer's glory.

"If the world my Saviour knew,

Sure the whole world would love Him too."

No wonder; they couldn't help themselves. How basely is He wronged, that Master of ours! Poor blinded sinners regard Him as the exact opposite of what He really is. How strange that men hate the "Standard-bearer of the host"! Hate Him who is all fair! head and shoulders above the rest of the people! How strange that they don't like the smell of Sharon's Rose! that they don't fall in love with the bonnie bonnie Lily of the Valley. Oh, I'm glad, so very glad, that many hundreds in the land I love have found out what fools they were, that the Fairest among the sons of men is being raised at last somewhere near the place He so richly deserves to have in their affections. But who among us can lift Him as high as He deserves to be lifted? My arms are too short by far. Come, ye archangels, help me to extol my Jesus! Take Him, bear Him aloft in your strong arms, set Him in the highest place in the Heaven of Heavens. Oh, we are straitened for the ways and means to exalt the Creator, Who for the love which He bore to you and to me became one of His own creatures, Who though He was the One in Whom the Father from eternity found everlasting and infinite pleasure, yet moved by His amazing love to the sons of men, entered the blackness of darkness, bearing our curse. Ah, that was a new experience for the Only-begotten, the Well-beloved! for from out the gloom we hear His plaintive, mournful cry, betokening the infinite horror through which His soul was passing. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Oh, W., breathe a sigh of relief, for the Princely Sufferer soon after cried, "It is finished." Good, good; all over now—and all this for me! I do not realise all this as I ought, else I would die of delight. No wonder

that the poor angels are almost breathless as they contemplate this mystery, "God manifest in the flesh," God as "a servant." Oh lift up this glorious Jesus; extol His matchless name. Praise Him! sun moon and stars! Ye fountains hymn His praises! Old ocean roar out the glories of your Creator's name. Angels, Archangels, and all ye Host of Heaven, cry on, cease not, through all the eternal day. Ye ransomed, blood-washed ones, that see His blessed and His gracious face, praise Him, serve Him; for ye are never weary! And I'll try to do the best I can while I am here; but when I join you there! ah! ye'll know that another sinner saved from everlasting burnings has joined your band. Loudest of the multitude I'll sing, "*Glory to His grace.*"

Considering that this was not a "flight" in a sermon, but the letter of one young man to another, it is not difficult to understand what "the love of Christ *constraineth* me" meant to him. Another entry in his diary reads:—

Went to see F. He spoke well to me about keeping up the "dignity" of my office; some weight in this. I must be more careful of my speech.

I fancy that this entry will bring a smile to the faces of other friends than F., who especially in those days took it upon themselves to try and reduce the young Evangelist to conventionality. If it was a man or woman in whom he had confidence, he would listen humbly to what they had to say, declare himself the greatest bungler the Master had in His service, and promise to be more circumspect in future. If it was a first attempt at taming the lion, the friend would go away delighted, and would enter the meeting at night ready to enjoy the service. Alas, for his security! If John was shut up one side, he would break out with redoubled force on the other. At the close of the "just-like-a-volcano" meeting, he would smile and say, "Now, old fellow, didn't I do better?" One could only laugh; it was of no use trying to pen up Vesuvius, and friends began to realise that he would be himself in spite of them all, and that it must be left to time and to the mellowing influences of the Holy Spirit, to

soften down what he himself called "excrescences."

It is impossible to follow him from place to place, but in March we find him in New South Wales, whence he writes to Dr. Moxey, his old teacher of elocution.

ASHFIELD, N.S.W.

March 30th, 1881.

My very dear Brother in Christ,

I wonder if you have forgotten that wild bushranger from Australia who used to sit in your New College Class. At any rate I have not forgotten you, and when I saw your name at the Northfield Convention, how my heart did leap for joy. From far Australia I send you ten thousand thanks for your notes. I have read and read and re-read. I have had Moody on "Power for Service" re-printed in our *Presbyterian*. What a pity you did not know when I left you what you know now, and I would have left Scotland better equipped. I fought on for eighteen months in the energy of the flesh, but in December, 1880, I was *run down*! God showed me that there was something lacking. I got on the trail, and have been on it ever since. I know what I need, even the gift of an "Enduement of Power for Service." Well, just about four weeks ago, as I was beginning a campaign in New South Wales, your papers came into my hands with that sermon by Moody, which put the matter in a nut-shell. I have some things set a little more clearly before my mind thereby.

I will now try and wake up Australia's workers to a sense of their dying need; but as yet I am only the finger-post pointing the road. I have not yet been along the pathway of power myself. I hope to be able to get a little Convention together at Easter week. But will you remember poor me at your Wednesday afternoon prayer meetings? You know what I want; and, oh! the work here is so great! The Master is sending *much* blessing here, but it is only as droppings compared with what we would have, had we received the "Robe of Power."

My cry is "Australia for Christ!" and verily the heathen in our midst would be compelled to acknowledge that there is a God in the earth, when we are equipped by the Great Master for service, in the complete glorious panoply He has so graciously provided for, and promised to us.

Ah brother, you in Edinburgh don't know how low spiritual life is here—such worldliness and formalism in the churches. Is it not time for the Spirit of the Lord to raise a standard?

People say, “Oh! that Moody would come here!” I tell them it is not Moody they want, but Moody’s God in the fulness of His power.

Brother, with all my heart and soul I cry, “DO HELP US.” Thus the purpose of this note is twofold—to convey thanks from a weary worker whom you have been the means of refreshing and strengthening, and to beg help; for you know there is a connection between that Wednesday prayer meeting in your house, and the Scottish Evangelist in Australia, *vid* the Throne of God. This week I am to advance, in the great Captain’s name, on a new gold-rush at Temora, where thousands are thoughtless, seeking gold that perisheth, and neglecting the imperishable treasure. Oh for such a hunger for the salvation of sinners as we see in John iii. 16.

The Lord of Sabaoth bless you, brother Moxey, and make you a mighty, mighty blessing, especially to my fellow-students. Tell them that Hebrew, and Greek, and Theology, and Eloquence won’t do as substitutes for the power of the Holy Ghost. Your fellow-labourer,

JOHN MACNEIL.

DR. MOXEY TO MR. MACNEIL.

27 RUTLAND STREET,  
EDINBURGH,  
August 9th, 1881.

My dear MacNeil,

You must not think because I have not written to you ere this that I have forgotten you. On the contrary, as soon as I received your most welcome letter, I sent copies of it to your old friend Mackay, to dear William Robertson of Carrubber’s Close, to my mother, to D. L. Moody at Northfield, to Major Whittle, to *The Christian, Word and Work*, and to *The Christian Week*. The latter published the letter nearly *in extenso*. It was so important, telling of important work in an important field, that in all cases I asked for urgent and instant prayer on your behalf. I expect to hear from you that God has answered these prayers. He *does* hear, and He *does* answer, praise His glorious name. When your letter reached me I was at work with my beloved friend, Major Whittle, at Belfast. I read it to him and to Mr. McGranahan and to all the earnest Christian ministers and workers with whom we were associated. They glorified God that He had called you out to such work, and that He had filled your soul with such longings after holiness. Just rest here for a minute on Matthew v. 6. Since coming home I have received the *Presbyterian*, and have sent copies to the *Christian World*, and to Moody and Whittle



at Northfield, asking them to bring the matter before the "Conference for Bible Study" now going on, and to have frequent and earnest prayer. I am sorry I did not do the same at Mildmay and Southampton, but I have been asked to Greenock and Perth, and will remember you there. . . . How I would enjoy working with you. I believe that God will give you "Australia for Christ," and bring you to old Scotland also; if so, you must be my guest, as dear Whittle was, and as I hope Moody will be this winter. I have a prophet's chamber, and my ambition is to have my house known as "The Evangelist's Home." . . . Ask God to use me with the students.

Ever yours in Him,

D. A. MOXEY.

April 1st, 1881, found my husband at Temora, a gold-rush in New South Wales.

TO MR. W. HOWAT.

TEMORA, N.S.W.

April 5th, 1881.

My very dear Willie,

I came to this Temora gold-rush last week. Not money hunger, but soul-hunger brought me. You would grieve to see the place. I can do nothing but sigh and cry; close on eighty hotels to about 4000 souls; Christ's little band scarce numbers thirty strong; and there is no minister! Satan's forces are well officered. Where are the soldiers of the living God? Man, the battle is hot. I have hired the theatre, and thus try to convert the devil's house into a soul trap.

I look to see a goodly little army ere I leave in a fortnight. If ever you prayed before, pray now, brother, that I may be endued with the *full* power of the Holy Ghost. Now I must close; the hour of battle draws nigh, and I must gird on my armour for the fight, and sharpen my weapons on the grindstone of prayer and meditation.

Yours in Jesus,

JOHN MACNEIL.

The few Christian workers who were struggling along at Temora against such overwhelming odds remember with what delight they received the news that my husband was coming. They rallied round him and worked their hardest, glad to have found such a leader. They had been holding open-air meetings regularly, and one of them tells me of the

first meeting at which John was present. About one hundred people had gathered, and the meeting was going on steadily, when he jumped up upon the speaker's chair, and, to their utter amazement, "Fish-O, Fish-O, Fish—O—O" rang down through every street. From public-house, private house, and tent the people swarmed out, until a crowd of 2,000 persons had gathered round, and then he began to speak to them from the text, "Herrings for nothing." The first meetings were held in a little hall scarcely larger than a room, which was tightly packed; outside the building men and boys would muster in a solid body, and the windows being open, everybody could hear. One man at least was transfixed by an arrow of gospel truth which flew through the casement. Since beginning to write I have received from a young fellow who found Christ on the last day of the Temora Mission a letter in which he says:—"Though over sixteen years have passed, that service and the faithful preacher's words are still fresh in my memory." The *Presbyterian* of April 23rd, 1881, contains the following report from the workers:—

TEMORA,

*April 18th, 1881.*

This morning Rev. J. MacNeil bade us farewell on his return to Sydney, and it is no mere matter of form to say that many, very many of us, deplore the separation. During the time Mr. MacNeil has been in Temora, he has given such abundant proof of entire devotion to his sacred calling, such untiring zeal in building up and strengthening Christianity, and in seeking to reclaim poor wanderers from the fold, that he has in an especial manner endeared himself to those who love to see God glorified and sinners saved.

The interest taken in the nightly services in Ward's Theatre continued to the close—the attendance last evening, when floor, gallery, and staircase were all packed, being the largest we have had; and, thank God, no evening has passed without proof being given that sinners had been awakened to a sense of their danger, and had fled from the wrath to come.

Our band of Christian workers, who have (notwithstanding

the persistent manner in which the churches have ignored (Temora) so nobly fought the enemy here, have been devoted in their assistance to Mr. MacNeil. Early morning and evening prayer-meetings, together with street-singing have been the order of the day, and the banner of the Cross has been manfully unfurled, despite the jeers of scoffers. Last evening Mr. MacNeil organised a band of tract distributors, and it is pleasing to know that those who have taken the work in hand are just the persons who will faithfully carry it out.

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

MELBOURNE,

June 6th, 1881.

My dearest Ritchie,

You said in your last that my letters always make you sad. Have I not been very considerate in sparing you for so many months! I used to think that I was busy in Jamestown, but since I became a rover, I am crowded out. I commenced rambling after rambling sinners in February, have been on the track ever since, and mean to keep on the track till I run in the last one; then I'll trust the Lord to take me Home out of the way. What possessed you to put my letter in *The Christian*? If it had stopped at home I would not have minded, but it has travelled out here, and the folk ken who it is. Well, God knows that my motives are clear. May the Master use it for His glory. Willie Macqueen holds my fort. Thank God for D—— L——'s prayers. I prize my brother's intercessions. Turn on as many as you can for *Australia*. Tell dear I—— H—— that I got his cheering letter. Next to a word from the Master Himself comes a word from my bandsmen. I have just come in from my first week-night service in Melbourne—trying to lift Christians up to the "Joy of Salvation."

How I prize your prayers. If it were put to me whether I would rather lose my dinner seven times a week or the prayers of the Drill Hallers, overboard would go the dinners, yes they would. Tell them I forget them not.

At the close of one of my services in Sydney, as I was moving round amongst the enquirers, I tumbled against a man looking far too happy for an enquirer, and a lady by his side with a smiling face. He stretched out his hand, saying "Hallo, No. 8! how are you?" I thought that a queer name for a fellow to give me whom I did not know. He laughed; I mused; I thought of 10 Brougham Street; I thought of No. 8 form in the Drill Hall—then I knew him; it was I—— F—— and his sister. Man, I thought my heart would jump out into the church. How No. 8 rang in my soul.

I have done no cavalry work worth speaking of since February; I have been an infantry soldier, but in my work there has been a great change. Since I wrote you last, the Lord has pulled me up and showed me that there has been a something lacking in my work. About the middle of December it began to dawn upon me that I wanted something I had not got. Luke xxiv. 49, and Acts i. 8 attracted my attention. I found out that I was obeying the "Go and preach" of Mark xvi., but had neglected the "tarry" of Luke. Oh, what an awful blunder! No wonder that so few souls were being saved. The Lord Jesus has done wonderful things for me since then. I have learnt many things. Such passages as "Abide in Me," "Walk in the light," "The blood *cleanseth*" (keeps clean), "The love of Christ constraineth" are all full of meaning to me now. Christ is *all*. I think I have a taste of the blessedness of a consecrated life. How few labourers are endued with power for witness-bearing! It is lamentable. Nobody ever spoke to me about this. It is a special function of the Indwelling Spirit to endue with power for service. Get it R.; tell all my mates to get it. Pray that I may have more of it. I began work in Moonta Copper Mines, South Australia, among Cornishmen. I saw the "new fashion" there—souls trooping in. Thence I went to Sydney for a week, but my week grew into three months, for the work closed in upon me. Pleased to know that —, my fellow-student, thinks me narrow. He could not pay me a greater compliment; Lord make me narrower still. There is not yet half enough of "this-one-thing-I-do-ishness" about me. I am on the scent after —; perhaps will have him in my meeting to-night.

I was ordered out of New South Wales last week to advance on Melbourne, where I am now storming the fort under Victor Immanuel. I don't believe in "Holding the fort"; we were at that game too long. It is now scaling the ramparts with the cry of "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The very name strikes terror into the foe. . . . It is grand to be roving about after the lost, just where the Lord tells you to go, looking to Him to supply your need. I would not exchange the toil of earth for the rest of Heaven. Ah Richard, I feel sometimes as if half of Heaven were poured into my soul, when communing alone with the Beloved. We should never rest in *prayer*, but press on to communion and fellowship, and this we enjoy when we trust in the blood that cleanseth from all sin. Mind, this text is not for sinners, but for saints walking in the light. I wish I were back among you for a wee bit, that we might have a talk about this "Baptism of Power." We never used to mention it! If the workers were

endued, how different would be the work in the Hall. I trust that none of you are satisfied with results. I never was, and am more dissatisfied now than ever, as I think of how all you fellows are labouring. It is not the quantity, but the quality of the work that needs to be increased.

I have not time to tell you any stories or give illustrations of how the Lord is blessing. Oh yes, take one. In Newcastle (a coal-field in New South Wales) we were holding a week's mission for non-church-goers in a hall, and had an open-air band and preaching. One night a swell, rigged like a parson, with white choker and bell-topper hat, came and stood beside me, and sang like a Trojan. I was so pleased, thinking that he was a brother. The crowd increased and they got the Gospel pure and simple. Then I sang them into the Hall, my friend keeping near me. Then I invited singers to come up and sit with me on the platform, and my friend came up with others. The Hall was filling fast with larrikins, so I sent all my brethren down among them, and went on with the service. Some of my friends went out and returned with short sticks, unknown to me, for they knew what was on, even a plot by the Roman Catholics to take the meeting out of my hands—the leader of the party being my parson colleague! But I never spoke to more orderly people; the Lord sent His Angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they didn't even growl. The news spread throughout the town, and hence my glorious congregation to see the fun. Must not the devil have been in a scot! for I tell you, Ritchie, they got the love of Jesus red-hot that night. In the beginning the laugh was against the "Mountebank," but at the close it was turned on my opponents. I do not forget you in prayer day by day. Oh carry more steam in pleading for me, with all the Australias on my back, for the Continent is my parish, and every soul my cure. Best of all God is with us. All a brother's affection for yourself from,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

NANKERINGA HOME STATION, S.A.

*October 11th, 1881.*

My very dear Richard,

I am now in the midst of another shearing campaign. I sent you a line from Daylesford, Victoria, three weeks ago, with some help for the Drill Hall, which I hope you got safely. When I got Jamestown provided for in February, I spent a week "tarrying" (Luke xxiv. 49). Oh, what a pity we have all so long overlooked that robe. Everything depends on the "robing with power" in work for Jesus. I often think that if

each of the D.H. workers had the Robe of Power—the special enduement that Jesus speaks of—they would hunt the devil out of Edinburgh in a month. I began work at Moonta mines among the Cornishmen, so I got properly broken in to "Glory," "Amen," and "Hallelujah." The Master was with us there, and a work began which is going on grandly still. I formed a "Band" under Captain T—— which now musters 80 strong! and I get despatches as "Commander-in-Chief" now and again, telling how things are coming on. Next I moved to New South Wales, the Colony north of Victoria, where I worked for three months, the Master causing us to triumph everywhere. Thanks be to His name, and His be the glory!

I don't *count* conversions. . . . So long as conversion work is going on I am satisfied. I let the Master do the counting, as He kens His own better than I, so I cannot tell how many souls Jesus won in New South Wales in those three months, but we'll know some day. I have seen as many as 25 stand for prayer, and 50 in the enquiry-room, anxious; once there were over 200 in the enquiry-meeting. Sometimes I don't use the enquiry-room at all—I make the big meeting the enquiry-meeting and do all the work myself from the platform, trusting to the Holy Ghost to apply the word. I can't always get an R. A. or a J. W. or a J. H. or a W. S. M. to man the enquiry-room, and I fear "daubing with untempered mortar." Amongst the places where I wrought are Newcastle and Temora—a new gold-rush with about 4,000 men. I tried the theatre, and began with street-fighting every night—grand meetings. The saints among the diggers used to muster for prayer shortly after 6 a.m. daily, and again at 6.30 p.m. In the beginning of June I came South to Melbourne, and began work in the largest Presbyterian church in the Colony, the Rev. D. S. McEachran's, the church of my student days. There was more power in the meetings than three months before, and as the work went on in Victoria the power increased,—that means that blessing increased—more souls saved—sleeping saints more thoroughly roused.

I finished work last month in Victoria with —— He is a man who has seen "days of the Right Hand." He was a mate of William Burns and was a man of William's stamp. I never saw a person so deeply moved as was the dear old man. He used to put me to shame the way he spoke. "Wherever you go tell them that you have waked up at least one old man." I am expecting that he will have the olden times back again. His town got turned upside down, and I think the right side is up now. My last two weeks in Victoria were by far the best in my life, and "still there's more to follow." We won't rest trying to bring Australia to the Master's feet till Jesus Himself

stops us. On September 20th I left Victoria overland for Jamestown to catch Major, and to start for the shearing sheds. The poor old thing knocked up at the end of my first day of forty miles! Nothing for it but to turn back and get his mate "Railway Harry"; he is not so good in the saddle, so I drove him in the buggy. He has been on the road over a fortnight now, and there are a lot of "points" about him, as we say; it's a very easy matter to count his bones! long journeys and little feed have not a fattening tendency.

By the way, I got a novel present from my praying band in Emerald Hill, Victoria,—a pair of silver stirrups and a riding whip. On the stirrups the inscription runs, "In loving remembrance of Emerald Hill Campaign. By prayer are we lifted upward." On the whip—"By prayer are we urged forward." They also expressed the hope that I would get a wife who would act as a spur to me. I have the whip with me now, and I fancy sometimes poor Harry prays, when I have to press him along, that I had left the "sanctified urger" where I left the stirrups.

We are having, on the whole, good meetings in the sheds; there is more power this year than last, and I expect a bigger harvest. Oh Richard, if I can only pick up *one* jewel for our Jesus' crown, all the hundreds of miles will have been well travelled, and I know that I have more than one already. Oh to know the value of *one* soul. Great God and Saviour, open our eyes, for we are asleep. If the world saw me spending as much time and strength over the salvation of one soul as I spent over that last railway, they would say I was mad. The Lord make me mad, right away! And you too, Richard! and keep us clean mad until we reach the country where there are no souls to save. This thought has brought me many a mile through the bush this trip. Last night I was hunting for one soul, and before I got back to the track it was getting dark. I did not know where I was, but was rolling on, singing "Glory to His name," as happy as a lark, because if I didn't know where I was, the Lord Jesus did, and He was with me, and that made it all right. He is Pilot. That was the bargain before we started. Just at dark we emerged from the bush on a track I knew. So my Pilot was right again. Sometimes I have meant to go to a certain place, and thought I was on the road, but He has brought me to another, because there were souls there to whom He wanted me to speak. It is grand to be able to sing, "All the way my Saviour leads me." On Sabbath night I reached a gold field with about seventy men encamped. I got the loan of a tin "shanty," and made it a chapel "*pro tem*," with seats, tables, stools, barrels, &c., to hold about forty. The

question was raised, "How will you gather them in after dark, MacNeil?" "Leave that to me, once I'm ready." I saw Harry all right, for he was tired and hungry, and then with my knapsack on, and holding one of my lamps in my hand lest I should tumble into a pit, I went into the midst of the camp and struck up "Ho, my comrades!" In the darkness the old hymn rolled magnificently over the diggings, and in a twinkling some "comrades,"—two men from my own Moonta band—rolled up! I then gave the intimations, telling the men to "gather at the kitchen." Saints and sinners soon mustered, and filled the shanty inside, and outside as well. We had a grand meeting. They did not know that I was coming, so it must have been like an apparition to hear a voice in the darkness, coming from behind a big flaming buggy lamp. I don't know if this is the orthodox way of gathering a congregation, but this is how we do it on the goldfields. All's fair in war. I spoke on the three "Ables."

*October 18th.* That Sabbath night I had to camp, as there was no accommodation on the diggings. I laid some bags of chaff on the ground for a bed, and taking off my boots and coat I turned in, covering myself with a rug. Slept like a top till daylight, but was awakened by the rain pattering on my face.

On the Monday night I got to a shed in dark and wet; asked for and obtained the use of the men's hut for service; had a good time pleading with the men to turn from sin to Christ. The squatter's wife was a strange being, and did not ask me to have anything to eat or to stop for the night, so after service, hungry and tired myself, I got a hold of poor Harry, hungry and tired too, and yoking up again, pushed off in the rain and darkness for the next shed, 21 miles off. If I could reach that, Harry and I would be right, for the overseer's wife was converted last year when we were round, and she would be only too glad to see us. In the darkness I could scarcely see the track. Often I thought we had lost it, but on, on we pressed; the roads were very heavy, so that progress was rather slow; sometimes we stopped for shelter under a tree, then on again, slipping and sliding, walking and trotting by turns, as the road would permit. Poor little Harry kept at it till 2 a.m., when he told me he had had enough of it (having had the harness on for thirteen hours), and I was not able for much myself, as now and again I would drop off to sleep and wake with a start as the buggy would plunge into a rut. So there was nothing for it but to camp. I pulled aside into the scrub, unyoked the horse, tied him to the wheel, and gave him what feed I had. It was too wet to light a camp fire, so I prepared to lie down in the buggy. Pulling out my New Testament, I read (in course) John



xiv. Rather suitable, I thought! Father's house over there; cold wet camp here, in the buggy and in the bush. But for Jesus' sake it was sweet, and I could sing "Glory to His name." Eternal thanks to Jesus for a religion that can make a man sing in circumstances like these. That's a religion worth having, is it not, Ritchie? I coiled down somehow in my wet coat, threw the rug over my head, and at 5 a.m. was harnessing up for a move on. My Father did not let a drop fall on me after I had bivouacked, though it rained heavily within two miles of where I was. When we got to the station it was all right. The Evangelist was received in the name of an Evangelist, and verily my bonnie bairn will in no wise lose her reward. I felt more for my poor little horse than for myself.

One day I had a long run of nearly fifty miles,—the last fifteen being the heaviest, as the road lay through sand hills—easy to ride but hard to drive. I met a bushman, and after speaking to him about his soul, and urging him to take time to secure his salvation, asked him how far it was to the station. "Fourteen miles," he said, "but don't try it with that little horse to-night; you'll have to camp." I thanked him, said I did not think so, and passed on. Night came and Harry was still pegging away; it was sometimes slow work, but on the good road he would make up for the bad pieces. Oh, that horrid sand! It was tearing the life out of my little horse, mile after mile dead dragging. I used to jump out behind and push as hard as I could, to help a little. Every now and then he would stop, turn round and look at me, as much as to ask, "Are you doing your share? Oh, must I go on again?" Off however he would go at a word, and at long last, after I had stood up in the buggy pretty often, looking anxiously for signs of the station, we sighted the lights. Then I cried: "This shed for Christ!"

While cook was getting supper, I mustered the men, and tried to supply their spiritual wants. As a rule I am well received, being pretty well known now among the sheds. "Oh, you're the chap as don't take no collections," they say. Once I came upon a squatter's wife who used to grudge a man his tea or his horse a feed when they were hungry. About me said this darling specimen of humanity: "Oh, what a blessing to have a clergyman call who does not want money!" Only this morning I rather astonished a squatter, who, holding the cheque in his hand, said: "I suppose you'll have no objection to taking two guineas?" Nay, verily; no man shall rob me of my boast—that without money and without price I have preached the Gospel on the stations, lest the squatters should say: "I have made Abraham rich." I expect to finish the sheds this week.

I am like Philip just now—"passing through" (Acts viii. 40). I preach the Gospel at all the sheds until I come to Spalding, where I begin a week's Evangelistic work on Sabbath. W—— is doing good work, a far more famous and popular man in South Australia than his old captain ever was. Are you praying for me every day? I never needed prayer more, for the work is getting so big, and I am only a child. Oh, to be "*nobody*." Ask the Lord to make me "*nobody*." With love to all who love the Master—old comrades in the fight,

I remain,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO REV. W. L. MORTON.

WILLIAM STREET,  
MELBOURNE,

July 15th, 1881.

My Dear L.,

I am to finish work at Ballarat on Friday night, August 19th. Can I get to you at Camperdown by Sabbath, the 21st? If I only had my old charger I could manage it. I will stay one week with you, but I must hurry away to the shearing sheds on the 29th. Try and get all the kirks invited; if there is any difficulty, it will be a pity. Have you got a hall in Camperdown? Hire it in my name, and this will make the work undenominational. You'll do the advertising A1. Get a week of united prayer beforehand, and there will be the "New fashion" in Camperdown. I am in Richmond just now; next week too; then Collingwood; then Kilmore; then Ballarat; then yourself. I trust that there will be a move all along the lines.

JOHANNES MACNEIL.

About this Camperdown Mission, Mr. Morton writes:—

His visit inaugurated times of blessing. Old Scotchmen who had never heard a man quite similar to him were moved to tears. For many days my Manse was a veritable "enquiry-room" for anxious souls, and much abiding fruit was gathered.

August found him back at his old home, holding services in the Ballarat Mission Hall, where he had first got a taste for aggressive work. The workers were delighted to see him again in the capacity of leader, and rallied round him to a man. Those were

days of revival, and souls were ready. There are some notices of these meetings in Mr. Martin Hosking's diary, and one runs thus:—"An excellent meeting; Mr. MacNeil took 'A brand plucked from the burning.' About forty were converted."

He left for Colac and Camperdown, but was back again on August 27th for a mission in St. John's Presbyterian Church. His fellow helpers of the Town Mission rallied again, and being full of enthusiasm were perhaps a little uproarious in their joy. One of them remembers how Mr. MacNeil used to take a band of workers through the streets, singing hymns and inviting to the meetings, during which time their occasional shouts of "Hallelujah," and "Praise the Lord" were not discouraged, but when the Presbyterian Church was neared, the command was issued and promptly obeyed: "Stop now lads; the Presbyterians don't understand this sort of thing!" His diary for September 5th, records, "Never had such a week in my life."

The following critique by the Hon. James Campbell, late Postmaster General of Victoria, possesses a double interest. Mr. MacNeil has often expressed his gratitude for some of the advice contained in it, and valued greatly the words of encouragement from this "granite" man. Both have now finished their course—one through weeks of terrible suffering, and one in an instant of time.

Rev. J. MacNeil has been labouring amongst us in Ballarat for the last three weeks, and has certainly created some stir in both religious and irreligious circles. Our people take a special interest in him for the simple reason that he is a Ballarat boy, and commenced his religious career in our Town Mission.

It is, of course, well known that Victorians are the most modest of Australians, and that Ballarat men are the most modest of Victorians, so that it can be easily understood how we regard our evangelist. To those who have not seen or heard him, my advice is: Hear him as quickly as you can, and as often as you can. In his own way he is somewhat of a phenomenon, namely, a Presbyterian revivalist, intensely

Scotch in his doctrines and sympathies, and intensely American in some of his methods. When he steps upon the platform or into the pulpit, you see before you a young man of good presence, and with a singularly pleasing expression. Some find fault with him for smiling too much, but I firmly believe that he could no more help smiling than a bird can refrain from singing in spring time. His heart is full of melody, and therefore his face is full of light and gladness. As he proceeds with his sermon you realise that a man of marked character is addressing you, in whom are many excellencies and some defects of manner. Among the latter is a too great familiarity with his audiences. Sometimes this familiarity causes him to clip his words and to rush out short sentences difficult to catch. Occasionally "you ain't" jars on the ear, and is very remarkable as uttered by a University man. When on a platform he moves about so often and so rapidly as to suggest restlessness, and he has an odd habit of now and then scratching his head, which gives a rather ludicrous effect to the period he has just ended. His methods are excellent, but against one of them I protest with all my might, and that is, singing the grand old Doxology "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," to a secular tune.

But, after all, these trifling errors of judgment are small matters when put alongside the many merits which Mr. MacNeil unquestionably possesses. Never have I heard a man who impressed me more with a sense of whole-hearted earnestness. There is such a perfect sincerity, such a ring of complete conviction in his words, his looks, his gestures, that it tells powerfully on the whole congregation. He has a message to deliver and he delivers it with a forcefulness, a clearness, and a directness that goes straight to the heart. He has immense energy and a temper that cannot be ruffled by any amount of interruption and noise—a most valuable quality in a speaker. His manner in description is effectively dramatic, with just the smallest tendency now and then to step beyond the line. His gestures are appropriate and telling, and sometimes graceful. His illustrations are very good, but it is his intense whole-souled earnestness which seems to put the very breath of life into views and doctrines which we have heard over and over again. He has no new creed, no subtle shades of meaning to give to old theology, no flavouring of heresy wherewith to startle us, no fresh discovery to wake us from our usual drowsiness, and yet he *does* startle us and wake us up, and it is all by virtue of a fervency and ardour of love and faith that seem to come down and burn into our inmost parts. Surely there is some marvellous innate force in the Faith that such men as Dr. Somerville, Mr. Moody, Mr. Inskip, and Mr. MacNeil preach

when they can move vast bodies of men and women to lead new lives and to become new creatures by something that these same men and women know perfectly well, and *have* known all their lives! It is no new faith that we hear, but the Old Faith preached by a man who believes intensely in its reality and importance. To him religion is an actual living thing, the great central fact; and the necessity of salvation the end and aim of life. As he speaks, men and women are aroused, hearts are troubled, consciences are awakened, and before the sermon is done all the small defects I have referred to are forgotten in the earnestness, the moving appeals, the telling directness of a man to whom His Master's service is ever a joy unspeakable, and the message he has to deliver a great and solemn responsibility.

The Presbyterian Church may well be thankful for possessing such a man in its ministry. I have heard some objections about "revivalism," "sensationalism," and so forth. Well, what of it? It is surely a small matter for a man to employ unusual methods so long as he brings about unusual and blessed results. It is a mere question of taste, and if, now and then, men brought up on the old lines are shocked at responsive cries from the audience, or if men like myself are shocked at tunes of the Christy Minstrels order, we ought to bear with a few excrescences for the sake of the solid body of good. The excrescences will be removed all in good time, but the good will last for ever. The commonest objection is that the work does not last. I deny it. The work *does* last, though not in the way men want. There is, doubtless, a cooling down from the perfervid heat of revival times; there are, alas! many cases of falling away; but whilst in a few cases men are worse than they were before, in most other cases they are better.

One of the greatest dangers to all the churches is that they may become frozen through too great respectability. One of the subtlest forms of religious laziness is that which refuses to do the slightest work out of customary lines under the plea of "all things being done decently and in order." An orderly conformity may in a few years become a lethargic monotony. So we may thank God when men like Mr. MacNeil are in our midst to stir us up, for his work stretches out unto all the churches. The Presbyterian Church has done wisely in welcoming and encouraging him, and I venture to prophesy that he will greatly quicken the spiritual life of that Church, especially amongst the young. A splendid work is being done—a work that will last and tell upon the churches and the Colony long after the timid fears of many worthy people, and the unworthy sneers of the irreligious have been utterly falsified by very blessed results.

From field to field my husband moved on, staying usually a week at each, blessing attending each mission, and always in varying quantity. He usually found true sympathy, but now and then was hampered by a spirit of petty jealousy which grudged to the evangelist larger congregations than the minister himself could gather. More often, however, he was distressed by a slipshod preparation, of which even earnest souls were sometimes guilty. This invariably meant a double expenditure of strength on his part, for if prayer had been "restrained" among the people, it meant that he must spend part of the night and sometimes the whole night upon his knees to supply their lack of service, when he sorely needed rest. It makes one's heart ache to think of the extra burdens thus laid upon him,—by brethren, too, who often thought themselves both earnest and sympathetic. Nothing would do as a substitute for prayer. As to rest, his motto was, "Rest when you are very tired, and only then; and then only a little."

The following train of extracts from letters written to H. S., an old friend of his boyish days, begun in Carlton about 1871 and continued at intervals till 1881, will show how persistently he could keep on the track of a single soul while at the same time seeking the salvation of thousands.

3A ELGIN STREET, CARLTON,

1872.

My dear H.,

I think when time is at one's command, correspondence is a thing which should be regularly engaged in. . . . Of course it is not very long since we met, and were running "about the braes," but it will soon be "Auld lang syne," for time is flying. A more important reason for corresponding is that I trust we are *one*, one in Christ, one with Christ, that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

*August 26th, 1872.*

We had a sermon last night on Revelations xx. "The books were opened." It was so solemn. We are ourselves every

minute writing the book which is to judge us at the last. Do not neglect your Bible any more, my dear friend, for how is the Holy Spirit to bless you unless he has something to bless *to* you? . . . If you write to me before I go home, answer this: Can you or can you not say, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"?

BRIDGE HOTEL, DANDENDONG,

(About) 1874.

I wonder how you are getting on, and if you are four weeks' nearer Home than when we last met in Ballarat. 'Tis a very important question, and I would so much like to get an answer in the affirmative. . . O dear friend, have you tasted the love of Jesus yet? How sweet it is. I wish I could make you feel it as I do now, and you would never want to be away from Jesus' side any more. "Jesus ready stands to save." Tell me, H., *Has He saved you?*

MELBOURNE ROAD, BALLARAT,

December 1st, 1874.

It is getting late; I can't rest without a line to you, for you are continually on my heart. God only knows how many times every day I plead your name before the Throne of Grace, entreating the Lord to save you from falling into hell. . . . What about the poor Christless soul? such I fear, my dear friend, is yours. I love your soul; therefore I speak plainly. . . Come now with me, my friend; let us take service together under the Blood-red Banner; let us sign our names together to this glorious declaration: "I believe that Christ Jesus, Glory's Eternal King, died for me that I should never die, and shed His blood to wash away all my sins, and that God forgives me now for His dear sake."

JOHN MACNEIL.

Oh for God's sake sign now, *here* . . . . .

[On March 19th, 1881, this was signed—nearly seven years afterwards. O the shame of it! resisting the Holy Spirit for seven weary years.—H.S.]

Please let know how you are getting on, as I can't rest, and never will, till you are safe.

MELBOURNE ROAD,

BALLARAT,

July 5th, 1876.

I could hardly manage to bid adieu to the land of my boyhood for a few years, without dropping a note to say "Good-bye, old chap" to one in whose company I have spent so many



COOLGARDIE, WEST AUSTRALIA, IN 1894.



happy days. Dear H., I have said good-bye, and may have seen you for the last time *this* side the river. I could weep tears of blood as the thought creeps over my mind that we may not meet beyond. Oh, my dear friend, if ever we are to clasp hands over on the golden shore, you must get upon the track in which by God's abounding grace I am running now. I am on the "up" track, and if you are on the "down" track I am sure we shall never meet. I have to thank you for your photo. Oh give me the unspeakable pleasure of writing underneath it, "Heir of Glory."

NEWCASTLE,

May 26th, 1881.

Oh how my heart did dance and sing for joy this morning! I was at breakfast, but when in reading my letters I came to yours, I had had enough. Alleluia! I love Jesus all the more now because He has touched your heart and I can call you *brother*. You are right, H., I never forgot to pray for you. A fellow said to me one day, "I suppose you'll soon give up H—S—." "Never, while he's out of hell," was my swift rejoinder. I must change my prayer now. No longer "Save H.S.," but, "Fill him full of the Holy Ghost." H., my lad, there's a fulness of blessing for you in Christ Jesus; put in for it. Don't be a half-and-half Christian; be out-and-out, fully consecrated to the blessed Christ.

"Don't forget Philip as he goes down towards Gaza, into the desert country, looking for Ethiopian eunuchs." So John wrote. Every letter was a call to prayer. Nothing strengthened his hands like the consciousness that a band of praying people followed him with their prayers from town to town. The weekly line in the *Southern Cross*, indicating his whereabouts, was eagerly seized on by many of the best people in Victoria, who at once began to pray specifically for that town at that time. September 3rd, 1882, found my husband at Bendigo; but as Rev. Joseph Cook of Boston was there at the same time, he gave up his meetings on the nights when the doctor was lecturing, and sat with intense delight under the sledge hammer blows and keen home thrusts of that mighty man. "God bless you,

MacNeil; you are engaged in the most glorious work a man can be engaged in!" said the old philosopher as he bade him good-bye.

From this time on, covering a space of eighteen months, I have a number of letters in my own possession; and though as a whole they have no general interest, many of them contain striking sentences or accounts of unusual doings which may be of more interest than a laboured account of meeting after meeting. I will omit dates and names of places and people so as to allow of greater freedom of expression, and if any man recognises himself here, let him hold his peace, for nobody else knows him, and I shall never tell. These extracts we may call

#### A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS.

Have such a nice camp here; so warm and sympathetic; just like marrow to my bones to hear Mr. — pleading. It is fine to be sent round to help these stranded ships into deep water again.

. . . . .

Some big folk are coming out to all the meetings to countenance me! for they say, "He's a plucky fellow, that Mac, and deserves recognition for coming to work in a church like this." Very patronising, is it not? but really it is true; it *is* something to be evangelising beside that expensive organ! I am keeping nice and quiet, for they say that "it is all Wesleyan, this kind of work." I am doing nothing but *preach and trust*. . . . No, no, I'm *not* being conformed to the world, but I *am* becoming all things to all men. To the rich I become as rich, and am so proper; but in the evenings at — I'm simple J. M. again. I glide from one state to the other quite easily.

. . . . .

This is a great place for ant-hills. I stop occasionally and beat the ground with my foot near one of them, and it is interesting to see how in a moment they begin pouring forth from underground, till in a little while the whole place is black. Just so, God has smitten this district with His foot, and lo, the sinners are turning out like ants to see what is the matter.

. . . . .

Poor — and his wife! They are getting the biggest skelping of their lives. Oh, the terrible rebuke God is giving them. Yes, they are going in heartily with me, for they know what a work of grace is. Yesterday morn he preached at —. They never had such a time for three years. He was weeping, and all the people were weeping—a real Bochim. Some folk were amazed to hear their minister. One man said, “Oh, how glad I will be to go back to my own minister’s preaching after that MacNeil.” But lo! his minister has caught fire, and he is now nearly as bad as MacNeil. Whatever will the poor fellow do?

Many heard the Gospel for the first time, and all this was done by the Captain without the help of Reuben, and without many of the governors of the people. The Presbyterian Minister said wonderingly, “Why the Bishop himself could not command an audience like that.” The Bishop has been on my tracks in — for the last three weeks, and has been hearing strange things about me.

Ah! you are a sage. You said, “I would rather have disunion than *seeming* union.” I thought that we had real union here, but it was only a sham. A seatholder came in, saying to the doorkeeper, “This is *our* Church.” “No, Madam,” said he, “it is God’s church.” “Who is in my seat? Tell her to come out.” The doorkeeper asked the lady to move, whereupon she replied, “If I do, I’ll leave the meeting.” Is it a wonder if the Holy Spirit was frightened away from a building like that?

I have seen one of my former bullock drivers. It made me feel as if the old days were back again to hear him calling me by my railway name. “Ah, I’ve never heard a word agin your character all these years,” he said. It would hardly do to come back preaching if he had!

It would do you good to see the change in —. The most active workers in arranging everything just now are my own bairns — “My own sons in the Gospel.” So sweet to look upon them bustling about, and theirs are the brightest faces in the meetings.

Pitch dark at night; I felt I had just to cling on. “I wrought for My Name’s sake” was of great comfort to me; so

I told Him, "If the Mission is not a success, *You* will lose more than I." Was out two hours in the morning, searching over the hills for jewels around the claim where the accident occurred. After evening service I was just settling down for a rest on the sofa before supper, when a messenger came, saying, "Woman dying; could I come and see her to-night, as she might not live till morning?" In two minutes I was booted and coated and away with a guide  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles up in the ranges; found her just on the brink, but resting, I think, on the Rock. She asked me to sing "My heavenly home is bright and fair." Then I gave her "Deliverance will come." When I called back this morning, the first thing she whispered was, "Deliv—er—ance—will—come." Poor soul, dying of cancer. Had another hunt for —, but he told me that he would *not* give up drink, so I had to leave him on the road to hell.

Ah, how you cut me, when you said, "Why shouldn't we have days like Finney had? The Captain is *Semper Idem*; it is I who am different. So much of self about me, and that is why I am off to the mountain-top to night, to seek to get it burnt out. Oh for the consuming fire to burn with a fierce devouring flame. I am so sorry that so few of the navvies have been coming in to the meetings; I am meditating an advance upon them by moonlight to-night, in the open air, after I finish with the church people in the Hall. Each soul is so precious, and they are many.

Crowded out again last night; great numbers rose for prayer; old men led the way; two young men were last—one of them a son of T——, the champion prize fighter, who is a publican here. T—— himself was in the meeting on Tuesday. Would it not be grand if Christ could catch him? Some muscular Christianity there!

Everybody is looking to me, and crying "Give, give, give." But who comes to *give* to me? A peculiar life is ours. We are being continually thrown amongst icebergs, and no sooner have we been the means of getting some of them melted and converted into boiling hot water, than in an hour or two we find a shudder running through our soul, because we have been planted in another ice field. Hardly anyone thinks it necessary to come round to help me in keeping up *my* temperature. Oh, how softly should we be treading! how can we take one *careless* step; the *dead* are beneath us; the *dying* around us, the living dead. Oh, great God, awake us from

our lethargy! open our eyes! Oh, to see the reality of these things. It will take you and me all our time to keep awake just now; even the five wise Virgins as well as the foolish are composing themselves to sleep. It will take "exceeding abundant" grace to enable us to keep our eyelids open.

The local doctor and chemist here is a grand case; one of the best I have ever had. He led a wild life, but is now like a child.

When speaking on "The man who has Christ, wanting *nothing*," and "the man who has *not* Christ, wanting *everything*," the truth came before me, oh so vividly, that all our property-men are saying, "We are well off." Why man, put their possessions up to auction on the judgment day, and you'll not get a bid! Well off! and yet lacking true riches. These fresh bits come to me with such power in the pulpit. I get them hot.

I asked Mr. ——— to help me with the crowd of anxious ones last night, and he said he *could not*; yet he is an earnest man! I then asked his wife, who said "I don't know what to say, but I'll try." So she did, and when coming home, she ask me to tell her how to set to work among the anxious. I promised to teach her to-day, and am going to have a class—the *minister and his wife in it*, to teach them both how to bring souls into the kingdom.

Fine meeting, but oh, I am so far back yet; so little of Christ's *yearning* over the lost and perishing. If we could only remember that each act of service may be our *last*—our very last—we would speak and act so differently. How uncertain it is, when we shall be ushered in to see the King in His beauty! What a glad surprise to be called away in an instant, without any warning. I have been thinking of that this afternoon—in a moment, to find yourself face to face with Himself!

I had a nice time *alone* this morning, in my den. You know my text is Isaiah xli. 10. It is my "Marshal Ney." Napoleon always called up Ney when he had hard fighting to do. I have lashed myself to it. On Monday night two sisters closed in with Christ, and told their widowed mother when they were going to bed. I knew nothing of it at the time. Tuesday night their only brother came up from Melbourne for a holiday

I called on them yesterday and he accepted Christ too. Poor old — was crying with the mother in the shop over the good work. So they are all in the Ark now—one family as happy as they can be. K— is a dear old soul—a real good genuine ring about his Irish heart. He was full up—choking—as he came to my room yesterday morning to tell me the good news. There are some excellent folk here. *All* the ministers are with me at every meeting—quite a little regiment behind me on the platform. I was intending going after sinners last night, but was shunted after saints. We want old Nehemiah here with his zeal—“plucking,” “smiting,” and “chasing.”

Royal time last night. People who say that we *may* get on well in *strange* places should have been here. I tried to speak on the “Uttermost Saviour.” Hundreds were present who never darken a church door. Was told not to have an after meeting, so sent them away hungry. . . . Travelled from —, yesterday, with friends from Ballarat. Martin Hosking, the missionary, was one of them. They were speaking of God’s justice and eternal punishment; it was awful. To-morrow night I am away to the top of the hill, with my Master, because I know I need it. Souls are perishing and God is sorrowing over them, and I must be in sympathy with Him. I want to be anointed for service afresh—a renewal of the baptism. I want to be made a flaming evangel in —, for His dear Name’s glory *only*. Local preacher intimated at — yesterday, “Rev. John MacNeil, B.A., Evangelist, will preach Tuesday afternoon under a Presbyterian Church! The brother took *Undera* for “*under a*.”

Working till 9.30 with penitents—no one helping; and to make things easier, I had a headache all day; so strange! So that singing, praying, directing the anxious, and steering the meeting was a pretty heavy strain on my poor brain. Headache and all, and strain and all—there were eighteen tickets gone for the day. I tell you, the Lord is not done with us yet. One old man came up to me at the close: “Please for a ticket, sir.” “For yourself?” “Yes.” “Are you saved?” “Oh, sir, He took me from a fearful pit”—and his eyes filled, and his voice trembled, and my eyes filled too. “When?” “The first Sabbath you came, sir.” I found out that he was a great drunkard, a thorn to his godly wife. An aged woman was among the seekers in the afternoon; her grandchild was by her side. “I think it is time;” she said, weeping, “I have given my heart to the Lord.”

Well, I *have* had funny work to do here! First piece was to get the people converted to MacNeil; they were choked with prejudice. I have good reason, now, to think that the crowds *are* converted to me, and I believe that a few have been converted to Christ. You know the first thing we have to do is to get the "spirit of hearing." — told me of one of his people who was urging another to come and hear MacNeil "But what can he tell me mair than Mr. — can tell me?" asked the other. "Ah mon, he can put *snuff* into his preaching!" said my friend. I asked an old Scotch woman at the meeting if she were trusting Christ. "Ay," she replied, "I likes Him better nor any sweetard!" That was good.

"I" was up at our Commission (Church Court) last week. Some men spoke out like bricks for me. Mr. — of — said, "I wish all the ministers of our Church were as sound in doctrine as J. M." Then Mr. — sprang up with, "Do you mean to insinuate?" "No, I do not mean to *insinuate*, but I mean to say," &c. They got quite lively over it. Fine—while they are wrangling, I am out filling my basket with fish.

Speaking to the children to-day, I asked them about the meetings. "What had I come to — for?" "You've come on business, sir," said one little fellow.

There was victory at —, though the devil did his level best to turn the fray. Who do you think was his agent? The minister! I could feel that things were not right. At last, after two or three days, he got brimful of envy, and wouldn't come to the meetings to which the people turned out so splendidly. He said he was too busy, and do you know what he was busy at—an old hen house! He had been praying at me one night before, but on Friday night he fairly exploded. I said something, and he burst in with "No." I turned and looked at him and went on. Again he burst out with "No," so sharp and tart that people could see he was angry. Speaking to one of the elders next day, the poor fellow broke down and burst out crying in the street, saying, "I never got such a blow before in the house of God; and to come from my own minister too!" Many souls have been saved this week, but this scene scared the people. By way of contrast, I began yesterday with —. I have good true sympathy from him and his young wife. He says, "Why John, you are to us a very angel from Heaven." No jealousy there! His wife was delighted when telling me that the churches were never so full before.

Mr. — gave me his own buggy, and the same team that took me from —. Our parson went with me as pilot, and at 2.30 we went round to visit a man who had sent me a letter, a cook at a camp out on the river. I recognised him as one to whom I spoke at the Parsonage, Jamestown. I went into his tent, sat on his bed, and when I put my arm on his shoulder he burst out weeping. He was in fearful distress, fearing that he had crossed the limit, and had sinned away the day of grace. I began with the old old story, and it was glorious to watch the change coming over his face. We prayed twice, and when I left him I asked, "On which side of your heart is Jesus now?" "Inside, sir," he said. "How do you keep Him there?" "By faith." I left him, saying, "Thank God."

On Sabbath night an old man introduced me to a young lady, Miss —, who was brought in in Ballarat two years ago in the Alfred Hall through the singing of the hymn, "Only trust Him." This is another of whom I knew nothing. Won't it be grand when we see them *all together!*

At 10.15 p.m. I was knocked up out of bed by a young man who said as he sat on the sofa, "I feel bad, sir; there's something wrong." Alleluia! he's a strapping soldier now.

You ask, "How is business?" Brisk, *very* brisk. I *never* saw it so brisk before. Gilead's Physician is getting His blessed hands full this week. He is wounding and healing everywhere.

Indeed, if I could I would gladly rest after —, for I need it. My voice as well as my frame is shaky to-day, but they are clearing the decks for action at —, and at —, during next week, and if I can lift my sword-arm at all, I'll be there, by the grace of God, to lead Immanuel's troops on to victory—His little band from Zebulon and Naphtali! He is very pitiful, and will give His servant strength for the burden, though it is heavy sometimes. Oh, what a joy to bear it for my sweet Lord Jesus, Who fell while carrying that weighty cross for me.

You can't think on or pray too much for poor —. The devil has been enthroned there for years, and weeping Christ has had to take the bleak hill-side for it. Oh, I am flat on my face that the devil may be sent to the hill-side to take his turn there for a season.



All ——'s family are saved, and the servant too ! Poor Mrs. —— choked as she said, "Goodbye, and thank you for all the good you have done in *this* family."

There was one little child who was at nearly all the meetings. She would say to her mother, when asked where she was going, "To hear Mr. Neil stamping his foot, and bringing in the sheaves !"

I am getting such awful lessons this week. Mr. and Mrs. —— were both workers with Moody, but here they have gone to sleep. Couldn't speak to people about their souls for fear of insulting them ! She is waking up splendidly, and has started to work again. I have talked to him as I seldom have talked to a Minister—such fiery words. He was trying yesterday to excuse himself : "You know, everyone can't talk to people about their souls ; it isn't their *forte*." The dear man has been afraid of giving offence, and therefore souls have been groping in the dark, and sweeping past him to hell.

You know —— lives here. They asked me out on Monday, so I went and stayed till Tuesday afternoon. The eldest son and daughter were both in the dark, saying, "Oh, that someone would lead me !" I took them by the hand, and away they stepped into the light straight off. I also had a word with the younger sons, and they too broke down. One said, "I am so glad you have spoken to me, for I do want to be saved." And yet Mr. —— tries to excuse himself for not speaking to them by saying, "Mrs. —— would be insulted." She is so nice ; asked me to have service for the servants, and said she would arrange for me to speak to her children, and yet this is the woman who would feel insulted if her Minister should dare to prove himself faithful ! . . . . It is a touching sight to see the old men, with hair as white as snow, seeking Christ on their knees among lads, young men, mothers, and maidens.

Since I wrote on Thursday, I have had the most terrible fight with the devil that I have ever had in the Colonies over that poor unfortunate I. P. I told you about our getting her into the house. I faced the man about the business too, and he professed to be willing that the poor thing should be saved from temporal and eternal ruin, but he was only a hollow hypocrite, . . . a rotten-hearted fiend. We arranged that she should go to Melbourne on Saturday—with me as far as ——, and then on by herself. He learnt this, and on Friday sent her a letter which we foolishly allowed her to receive. She wished then to see him to explain, &c. We

refused, but she wrote. On Friday night she got another letter, and when we all got home he turned up at the Manse and wanted to see her. Stupidly, we let him, instead of ordering him off the premises, and I declare if he didn't talk her over, and she came in and said she wanted to go back again. I went out to him and talked the skin off his face, but it did him no good. If you please, I was in bed when this began, but I was up and dressed in a twinkling.

While Mrs. — and I were talking to her, he was waiting outside and calling her. Near twelve o'clock Mr. C. fired up, and ordered him off. He retired, muttering vengeance. I told I — that he had gone. "Then," she said, "I'll stay, and be ready to go with you in the morning." "Very well," I said, and as I saw her bag packed, and standing at the door, I picked it up and took it to my room, for I feared she might escape through the window if she had all her things by her. In the morning, just as I was getting ready for breakfast, Mrs. — called me out and told me that I — was going back. Actually he had sent his boy down, and through the window she handed out to him two of her little bags, and was just going to follow when Mrs. — stopped her. I went and asked her what she was going to do. She said she was going back. I pleaded with her *hot*, but "No," she "*would*" go back. I then bade her farewell on the road to hell, took her things, bag and all, and threw them out of the door, and ordered her out. She went, but stood beside them for a little. "Pick up your things and go," I thundered, "I am not going to have Mrs. — made a fool of like this! She hesitated. "If you don't pick up that bag and be off, I'll get Mr. — to order you; be off now; I want to see you start again for destruction." Here she broke down, and said, "*Oh, Mr. MacNeil, I can't go.*" "But you *must* go; I am not going to be made a fool of like this." "Oh, but I won't make a fool of you again; I am so weak." I saw that she had relented; I picked up her things, brought them in, got breakfast, and we were off by the 8.12 train. I telegraphed to her sisters to meet her. Now what do you think of a battle like that? Won't it be grand if the poor outcast is saved! Mrs. — stood by me like a heroine; she has a great womanly heart. If it had not been for her we would not have gained the day.

After service, as I was putting on my coat in the vestry, two strapping young men came in to shake hands. They had altered, but I recognised them as the very first-fruits of last year's mission. One of them is preaching now I hear. Oh, it *is* so nice to see the bairns coming round like that.

It would do you good to hear the Welsh people sing. The organ is dead altogether, but the singing is grand. It makes me pace the platform like a war horse. I sang a new verse on Monday night to "Old times religion," viz.—

"It did for Paul and Silas,  
So it will do for John!"

You should have heard them roar; some cried for joy.

We had a great *amusement* at the children's service yesterday. I was preaching on "Sowing and Reaping," and I wanted to illustrate *Faith*, so I offered sixpence to anybody who would come for it. One little urchin chimed in with, "Ah, it's got a hole in it, sir!" He couldn't believe that I would give away a good one. No one claimed it for awhile, but at last how the bairns stared when they saw old Mr. I—— come. I asked them what did he reap for his faith in me? "Sixpence," they cried. "What did you reap from your unbelief?"

"Corruption" shouted a youngster. You know what followed!

The song of Victory rose from the battle field last night. It struck against the seven-barred gates of hell, bringing dismay and rage; and also against the gates of light, causing the harpers to strike the harps of Heaven. Rejoice and dance, for the Power has come, and even rocky—— has had to break up before it. Too many for me to count rose for prayer. They were rather slow in moving, but a dear little girl, 10 or 12, rose at last in a front seat, and led the way. God bless the leader! Then young men, women, maidens, and many children followed. One old man who had been standing at the back all the time walked out into the passage, and nodded at me to say, "I'm one." Had two workers from—— down last night. One came because he wanted a sermon, as he has to preach on Sabbath, and he thought the best method of getting one was to come down here, with a sheet of note paper!

I have been out on horseback two days now, and try to hunt up stragglers. It is a fine exercise. A young man came with me on Tuesday. I was riding his father's horse, and I spoke to him about his soul. I found out that he had decided on Sabbath morning, while I was speaking on Psalm xxiii. So you see, souls from the very first sermon! Isn't it gracious and glorious?

On Saturday morning the ministers came in to the Manse, had prayer with me, and walked down to the station to see me off. It was so nice and brotherly. This is Union work.

Last night I had three young women on their knees in one pew. Oh, didn't they weep! the seat was wet with their

tears—backsliders. I think the Lord will put spikes in their shoes this time.

. . . . .

I have been laid down all day yesterday with a very bad bilious attack. It has left me very weak. I didn't eat anything for 36 hours, and had constant pain and sickness. Altogether it has given the strong man a great shaking. It has done me good, and will do me good yet. It has made me more grateful for health and freedom from pain. You may guess how bad I was when I say that I was not able to pray. I was afraid I wouldn't manage my Bible Reading, so sent word to the ministers to take it for me, but at 3.45 the pain suddenly ceased, so I jumped out of bed and into my top coat, and put in an appearance ten minutes late, to everyone's surprise. True, I wasn't very bright; but I struggled through, got home, and rolled into bed again. Could only pray a little. Out again at 7.15; could just get down on my knees and tell Him that things were on the old score between us, begging Him not to let the work suffer, but to magnify His strength in my weakness. When I got down, the ministers were going on with the service. I craved the people's indulgence and threw me on His mercy, asking Him to help His sick child to speak a message that night that would be blessed to the conversion of many many precious souls. And such a night as we had! I was doubled up with pain sometimes, and sometimes quite free. When I stopped at 8.30, and asked who were willing to give their hearts to Jesus, up they got, from the grey-headed one to the child, all over the hall. I had not strength for an after-meeting, so asked the anxious to stay where they were, and we would have an enquiry-meeting. Down they went on their knees instantly, and I turned the ministers and other workers amongst them. I shall never forget yesterday—such a prayerless day—and yet seldom so many fish in the net at one sweep. Instead of saying to me yesterday, "Kneel down and pray," He said, "My son, lie there and suffer." All right Lord! Was it not kind of Him to stop the pain and let me out to the meetings?

. . . . .

Amongst other remedies for my sickness was this—a glass of hot grog! I *had* to take it, but as soon as my interior became aware of what was coming down, it rose in indignant rebellion, and ejected the whole concern in a very summary manner—emphatically declaring itself teetotal.

. . . . .

What do you think? a parson who was praying in each of

my meetings had a private theatrical performance in the parsonage last night! Achans, Achans everywhere.

"Are you coming to hear MacNeil?" a young man was asked. "Not I! why the man is as mad as a hatter." Alleluia. The place is in a *furor*—sinners, saints, and ministers up in arms against me; still the Lord is with me, and the work is going on.

An agent called on me to-day about insuring my life! I told him I would tell him in a fortnight. I have never thought seriously of the business. I then asked the man if he were insured in *my office*!

The Bible Readings are growing steadily; the people have to get educated to these things. Grand to see an old *Chinaman* walking in to the Bible Reading with his big Bible in his hand every day!

There was another little move last night; hall full, but I am terribly ashamed at so little being done. I feel like running away to Arabia for three years, and hiding my face in the desert. I *can't* work at this low pressure any longer, and have told the Master so. It is terrible that He can send so little blessing through me. I am writing to — to-day, to hang on his oars another week till I try to get a bit more ready. Oh shame, *shame* on John MacNeil.

"All Israel" is not with me yet. To-night they are going to have a *united prayer meeting* in one of the Churches. In the name of common sense, what are they praying for? Here goes on soul-saving work, and they won't come and help!

I wish that you would be faithful in this matter with me. This is the great fault many find with us Evangelists—so much of the "I." Do, *do* tell me when you see it. I am having most delightful hours in "Hebron" lately. Oh how I love to be roaming about its evergreen meadows, leaning on the Arm of my Beloved! Choice spot, where Heaven comes down to kiss the earth. Oh wealthy *Calebs* who possess the New Testament Hebron.

The work at — is done! that week of privilege has gone

on to meet me at the Judgment seat. There were three fish in the net on Friday night. For these souls I am so grateful. Pray for them that they may be kept by His mighty power.

I left at 8 on Saturday morn, driving Mr. — along the line with the "pay." Old work again. Nine miles up we met the engine, my old friend—and I drove her along to —; B — and McD. were both on her. I tell you that they had to hold their hats on sometimes. I pulled up at every gang of men for B. to pay them. Just nine years since I drove that engine last.

Oh the power that must be manifest next week at —. It will be Victory or Death. Oh for the overawing power. Souls, souls, souls! I'm dead on for souls.

When I got to — on Saturday night, I met L., who asked me, "What kind of night was last night?" I said, "Glorious." "Ah," said he, "there were three of us coming up from Melbourne in a railway carriage, and there was a Roman Catholic with us. I asked him if he had any objection to our praying. 'No, none.' So we got down and prayed for a long time, and we were asking, 'God bless John MacNeil.'"

I am going in for more of Christ this week; there are leads in that mine I have never yet struck. I am going to *prospect*, as I shall have a little more leisure.

The devil is awfully busy here; the meetings have been disturbed every day by drunken men; twice the police have had to drag people out into the street—a great commotion! One of them, Dr. —, is going to bring an action against me for £5,000, I think! Last night the break-down came. Several rose for prayer. Thank God for a little breach; may it be widened. There are many adversaries. The — minister who was with me last year, comes to the meetings, but preaches against me with tears (crocodile) on Sabbath. There is a party in — called the "MacNeilites," and an opposition party too; the *Non-Macs* are getting it hot. May the Lord give it to them hotter.

Had such a terrible fight during the elections on Monday. I took the platform at 9.20, after McK— was done, and then such yelling and howling! I could not hear my own voice for long. I sang and spoke, but no! they would not keep quiet. Then I just smiled at them, and when they saw that it was no

use, they cleared out and left the orderly people in the hall—very many R.C's. Kept them for 15 minutes on the other election. "Choose Christ or the devil." Some of the R.C's have been back every night since.

I take exercise religiously every day now on the beach before dinner. I get on the bathing boxes and walk up and down their verandahs, with the sea washing under me and roaring all round. Like a sea captain on his watch on the quarter-deck, I walk there praying. . . . Great God! would that I were living more intensely, bending every energy to gather glory in salvation work. Eternity will be on us before we are wide awake.

As I was riding in to Ballarat for exercise, the horse fell heavily on this side of the cemetery, and I was shot clean over *his* head and fell on *my* head. I rose at once, but there was an ugly scalp wound, from which the blood was pouring like water. My left hand also was wounded, but no bones were broken. Men came and bathed my head and bound it up, and I got on again and rode to Morton's. He came with me to Dr. Hudson, who extracted a piece of quartz from the cut; I must now remain here with hand and head in bandages. The doctor said this morning that I must keep quiet for fear of erysipelas. The pain has all gone. Never was nearer Home in my life. Mr. M. has gone out to take the meeting for me. They are both so kind to the wounded soldier. I tell Mrs. M. that she will run up a good many cups of cold water on this occasion. Oh, what is our life?—a vapour that is gone in an instant; no time for vanity in your life and mine. What a pity that it should be ever necessary to rest. Oh! I trust that this knock in the head may knock me together so that I may live while I live. How near and real this has brought death and eternity to me. My! won't I preach when He lets me back to the field again.

Here is a fine text; it suits splendidly: Deut. xxxii. 10—  
 "A soul's biography." (1) He "found me." (2) He "led me about" (round about, among quartz, stones, dust, and blood). (3) He "instructed me" while lying on my back with a bandaged head. He "taught" me patience, sweet patience, to lie still and know that I am not indispensable to the work. (4) He "*kept* me"—as the apple of His eye.

The bandages are off my hand; it is so far better that I can

carry it naked. Alleluia ! it will soon be ready for its old work of pulling souls out of the fire. It does amuse me to overhear M. at the door talking to people who enquire after me : " Work ! oh yes ; he was going down to his meeting to-night ; he'd preach if we'd let him if half his head was knocked off." The doctor was a little afraid lest I would persist in preaching, so I think he hinted to M. that the most effectual way to stop me would be to hide my clothes ! Mrs. M. has just brought me in a bowl of beef tea ; it seems as if I am always drinking something ; it beats me altogether if this is what they call " keeping him low ! " M. had a grand meeting last night again. Souls were saved, and he has started evangelising now ! He thinks this is one of the " Reasons *Why*"—to start *him* !



## CHAPTER VII

### *MARRIAGE. WESTERN AUSTRALIA*

I WAS only a girl, barely emancipated from the schoolroom, when I first met John MacNeil. He was conducting a mission at Golden Square, Bendigo, about four miles away, and on the Saturday we received a pressing invitation from the minister's wife to drive over for the services on the following day. She said that they were having glorious meetings, and that it would do us all good to be there. To me she sent a special message, for she knew that I had a class of boys at Sunday School, whom I loved with all my heart, although they came near to breaking it very often; and she knew that to drag me from them was a nearly impossible task. She strongly urged my coming for the boys' own sake, since (as she said) to hear Mr. MacNeil's address to children would be an education in itself. I yielded to her persuasions, left my class with a substitute, went to Golden Square, and found what had not entered into her thoughts or mine—a husband! Eighteen months later and we were married. I was fully aware that John MacNeil was an Evangelist, and that only; but once having faced and accepted a life-long partnership, no true woman can ever after complain of its trials. That the trials of an Evangelist's wife are very real, it would be idle to deny; but, given unbounded confidence on either side and mutual one-ness

of purpose, the life abounds in keener joy than falls to the lot of most. Much sympathy has been lavished upon me, because of the constant separation involved. It should rather have been extended to my husband, for to him separation meant leaving wife and children, as well as home. Our pleasure always lay in the fact that we were separated only by miles. My letters kept him in daily touch with me, while his daily bulletin, with its account of victory or its sharp cry for help, kept my interest fresh in the holy war. Thus, after months of absence, the thread could be picked up exactly where it had been dropped—if indeed it had been dropped at all.

On April 23rd, 1884, then, we were married, and two or three days afterwards we set sail for Western Australia. We have ever since considered that this was a mistake. Ten days in a coasting steamer do not constitute an ideal start in married life. Before leaving, John informed my parents that if a satisfactory report reached them of his care for his young wife on the steamer, he might be trusted for all the future, since he could never undergo a severer test. Western Australia was in rather a haze just then; little seemed to be known about it beyond Albany. The gold mines which have since made its name famous all over the world were still undiscovered; it was before "Coolgardie" and "Kalgoorlie," "Murchison" and "Cue." The colony belonged to the Crown, was sparsely populated, and differed in many respects from our Colonies in the East and South. "Other-siders" were looked upon in the Far West with considerable suspicion, and it took us a little time to accommodate ourselves to Western ways. Nevertheless, we found warm friends and received much kindness. John had been sent by the Presbytery to do evangelistic work in the Colony, and to give some relief to Rev. David Shearer, its only Presbyterian minister!

On the Sabbath before landing at Albany, my husband felt well enough to be at service. Bishop Parry was the preacher, and he acted as precentor to his lordship, who remarked that he wished he had the Evangelist's voice for singing.

#### DIARY.

*Albany, May 5th, 1884.*—Climbed Mount Clarence to-day, and prayed where I prayed five years ago.

In those days there was no railway from Albany, and as soon as we had landed in Fremantle and had settled in Perth, he became ill with one of those attacks which had lately given him occasional trouble. We tried fomentations, but it was a long time before the pain assuaged. This was the precursor of many more sicknesses of the same kind.

*May 12th.*—Running about; taking exercise and resting; trying to get up strength for the work ahead.

*May 13th.*—Afternoon to the Depot, an asylum for old men—convicts many of them, and had service.

*May 16th.*—Finished this morning making final arrangements for a fortnight of meetings. Saw a man driving five horses *tandem!* At 9 o'clock a cabman called and took the baby organ to its position in the Town Hall. "Not a very extensive affair, sir!" said the hall-keeper.

*May 19.*—Hall crowded. Numbers of young men standing at the back; well-behaved, too.

*May 24th.*—We had a nice row across the river this morning to the old mill. Were told that it was haunted. Went again to the Hospital. An old woman there says that she can't help calling H. "Miss," because she looks so young. "You won't be more than one-and-twenty?" she said, interrogatively. "Oh, you can never tell," H. replied; "some people look younger than they are!" What a fraud!

*May 25th.*—Presbyterian Church this morning, and Communion Service. Service in the Gaol at 3; more prisoners in than before. Several hands went up for prayer. At 8 o'clock we took our stand in the streets, and I commenced singing, to catch a lot of bushmen that had come to town. A good gathering in the Town Hall, although the night was dark and stormy.

*May 27th.*—Told to-day that the hall-keeper had summoned a young man for insulting me in the meeting on Sabbath night.

I had not taken any notice of what he had said, so was rather astonished. Asked H. to intercede for him, and have spoken to the Mayor, so we hope he'll get off—with a fright. He was in the meeting last night, very much broken down. Lord, save him!

May 29th.—The young fellow who got the summons was let off, and is very grateful.

May 30th.—Started at 9.30 this morning for an excursion on the Canning River. It was showery, but we enjoyed the trip. Landed 24 miles up; went to the manager's house, and found that at the saw mills, nine miles further in the hills, there are about 150 souls. Made partial arrangements for work there. Capital attendance in the Perth Hall last night; great power. There is a good foundation laid, we trust, for future evangelistic work in the city.

One of the "Press" reports may come in not inaptly here:—

Rev. John MacNeil conducted the service last Sunday evening in the Presbyterian Church, Perth. There was a large congregation. Mrs. MacNeil presided at the organ and led the singing. The rev. gentleman took for his subject Psalm xxiii. We were not at all prepared for the original and striking manner in which he treated it.

It is a proof of the inexhaustible riches of Holy Writ, when, after the lapse of so many hundreds of years, and the labours of numberless commentators, a new vein can be struck and gold still dug out. Mr. MacNeil first quoted Rev. C. H. Spurgeon's saying, that the 23rd Psalm came after the 22nd, "Down to the depths before we ascend to the heights"—"Light after darkness, joy after pain." Then, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd"—the individuality of religion—we must each appropriate. "The green pastures" were placed in vivid contrast with the place of "no pasture." "The valley of the shadow of death" was commented on as being widely different from "death's dark vale" in the metrical version—the shadow proving the existence of a light. "Goodness and mercy" were spoken of as the two under-shepherds whose office it is to hunt the sheep out, to rescue the fallen, and to cheer the faint. Then the choice for Eternity permitted us either "to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," or in outer darkness.

It is almost impossible to give a correct idea of Mr. MacNeil's happy manner—his vivid way of portraying the habits of sheep, of attracting the attention by homely illustration, and of raising solemn questions in the human breast. It was a sermon not easily forgotten; the softest tones of the preacher were

always audible, and when he tolled out the word "eternity" in his deep rich voice, the effect was striking. There is no doubt he exercises wondrous power over his congregation, and never suffers their interest to flag. Smiles were not infrequent as he mentioned sheep that could not enjoy the green pastures because of the "foot and mouth disease," and most of his thrusts went home. We believe this week is preparatory to his mission in Perth, which formally opens next Sunday by an undenominational meeting at the Town Hall after the evening services.

### REV. J. MACNEIL AT PERTH PRISON.

BY REV. G. HOWARD.

I have not given any detailed account of any of Rev. J. MacNeil's Evangelistic Meetings, but some are more interesting than others. The one held in Perth Prison on Sunday afternoon stands pre-eminently forward. I will try to describe it. The gloomy portals closed on the small party visiting the prison about 3 o'clock, and we were shown into the waiting room, where we heard the prisoners' heavy tread up the stairs. As we traversed the passage on our way to the Chapel, we were struck with an almost painful neatness and cleanliness. A spider weaving his web would have been a happy diversion; a few flies whisking above our heads would have suggested the idea of play; but as it was, the white-washed walls and the black-stained wood could only speak of innocence and guilt as far asunder as the east is from the west. The tiny cells faced us with open doors. We seemed to feel the fierce clutch of the law upon us, stopping our breath and clogging our steps. Hastening after our guide, we found more than 40 men awaiting.

We commenced by singing "There is a fountain filled with blood," from *Songs and Solos*. In this the men heartily joined, knowing the tune. Mr. MacNeil then prayed, and read from Rom. iii., pausing and expounding the passage as he went on. Recognising, but not laying bare the fact that his congregation comprised breakers of man's law, he showed them in forcible language that he claimed them as brothers because *he* had also broken God's law, and that "all had sinned and come short of the Glory of God." Joining himself and Mrs. MacNeil with them as fellow-sinners, he showed them that a Saviour was as necessary for him as for them. Mr. and Mrs. MacNeil then sang together "The Blood of the Lamb," and the rev. gentleman told them the story of the Prodigal Son. He suited his language to his hearers by making use of phrases that were current among them, and the result was strict attention. The scene

would have made a rare study for a phrenologist ; in spite of the dull uniformity of the prison dress, how unlike they were. But the interest culminated in Mrs. MacNeil's rendering of the mother's wail, "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" The song was peculiarly calculated to touch the class before her. Her voice rang through the building ; the words were almost painfully distinct :—

"Once he was pure as morning dew,  
As he knelt at his mother's knee ;  
No face was so bright, no heart more true,  
And none was so sweet as he."

All eyes were open, though some of the lowered faces showed signs of feeling they would fain repress. If there is a tender spot in a man's heart (and I believe in this life it is never completely hardened), the mention of his mother can move him. Then Mr. MacNeil told them that Father-God was as ready to welcome them as "mother," and five right hands went up in answer to his enquiry if he should pray especially for them. At the men's own request "Scatter seeds of kindness" was sung, and then they "Pulled for the Shore with a right good will."

After Perth we spent a few days visiting the Canning and the Jarrahdale Saw Mills. The way of travelling up, on rude wooden tramways, was, to me at any rate, a new experience, but to get up into these wilds is worth a little roughness. At Jarrahdale they had an iron way and a railway engine. It would be hard to find anything more delightful than on a bright morning to take one's seat on a bag of chaff laid on an open truck, and to travel in this first-class style to where the fellers are at work. The sunshine, the whispering of the leaves, the odour of the freshly-cut wood, and (if it be spring) the brilliant wild flowers on every side, fairly intoxicate one's senses. Then, leaving the line, and striking up into the heart of the timber, we hear the sharp ringing stroke of the axe, or the men's voices calling to their horses as they bring down the logs on their jinkers ! Presently there is a mighty crash, and another monarch lies low ! A reverend awe steals over the spirit as one stands in these

primeval forests. The exhilaration of these experiences thrills me as I write.

In a joint diary which we kept I find:—

*CANNING SAW MILLS, June 5th.*—Drove as far as "The Shunt"; waited for the trucks, and came up the hills by the train. The horses dragging the front truck kept jibbing, so, of course, John had to try his hand on them, and it was most edifying to me, seated at the back, to see him tearing up the hills, shouting at the horses, while the driver sat down and enjoyed himself. Still, I don't think we should have reached this if he had not interfered. Arrived about dinner time; and were shown to our lodgings. We can study astronomy without staying out of bed to do it. Fine hall here at the mill, and nearly every soul on the place turned into it to-night, stormy though it was—mothers with babies, and children. It was an interesting sight; we made it a service of song, H. doing the bulk of the work. Never been service here before. Lord save.

*June 7th.*—Finished my visiting before tea. Believe that the Spirit of God is working. Exercising to-day on an old gum tree, but have not got him down; will have to leave him three quarters felled.

*June 8th.*—Nine or ten young men stayed to the after-meeting to-night. So ended our little Mission with the Canning saw-millers.

*June 9th.*—Evangelising in earnest. Up before 7; awfully cold; rushed off to make porridge and toast for the last time; on the trucks by 8.15; at foot of hills before 10; picked up the coach at 11.45, and reached the Jarrahdale Crossing soon after 3. Mr. A. had the engine waiting; meeting at 7.30; room full.

*June 10th.*—Ride on the engine this morning to where the trees are being felled; truck ran off the line, but no damage done; looked over saw mills in afternoon; visiting before tea.

*June 11th.*—Found a man who talks French, and had a little chat with him. Good meeting to-night, close on a score anxious.

From Jarrahdale to Fremantle; then in a tiny coasting boat up to Geraldton (now the port of Murchison and Cue); from Geraldton through the Greenough Flats, the farming district of Western Australia, to Dongara. Back to Geraldton and Fremantle, and then left for York, Northam, and Newcastle.

YORK, *August 4th.*—The hall full to-night. It was the night or the Volunteer drill, but some of them crept into the meeting—only, however, to be ignominiously hauled out by an officer.

*August 5th.*—Fine meeting to-night, an unction resting on the people. Ten or twelve in the enquiry meeting.

NORTHAM, *August 15th.*—Bless the Lord for a revival.

NEWCASTLE, *August 16th.*—Beautiful drive from Northam here; lovely day; glad to get in safely, as our driver was one of the most reckless I ever trusted my life to. On the road to Newcastle passed the big rocks where a battle was fought between early settlers and blacks; 30 of the latter slain.

*August 18th.*—Received most heartily by the people.

*August 20th.*—Two women walked 13 miles to the meeting.

*August 22nd.*—The most hearty people in Evangelistic work in Western Australia are members of the Church of England. We left Newcastle on the 22nd, and drove to Chidlow's Well, where a large number of navvies were camped, working at the railway to York, and arranged to stay a night there, the engine shed being granted for the meeting. All the afternoon we went in and out among the tents, leaving tracts and inviting the men to the service. Just before the time, however, the rain began to fall in torrents, so that to get about the camp at all was an utter impossibility. We sat in our room in the "shanty," listening to the teeming rain and feeling rather dismal, when other sounds began to impress themselves on our notice. The bar of the hotel was full of navvies, drinking, swearing, and singing low songs. John went out and spoke to them, and said that if they would promise to behave like gentlemen, I would come and sing to them. They gave their word and moreover kept it. It was a strange place for a meeting. I had been on many queer platforms in Western Australia, but had never sung before from behind a public-house bar. The men welcomed me roughly but kindly, and began to listen with their quart-pots in their hands. These were gradually set down, and I saw more than one rough fist raised to dash away a tear. One man sobbed unrestrainedly. Then John spoke to them; then we taught them several choruses, and then went back to our room, praying that some of the good seed might have fallen into prepared ground. By this time the rain had cleared; there was no more coarse revelry in the bar; and far into the night we heard re-echoing from all sides of the camp the hymns that we had taught. It is remarkable that many of these men sing bad songs, not altogether from choice, but because they know no others. It used to be noticed that after my husband's services with the shearers, the character of the



"board" would be entirely changed for the rest of the season, *Songs and Solos* taking the place of the foolish, wicked pieces usually sung. This would sometimes be the result of a single service.

In Western Australia we met with a sequel to the dance story at Terowie, South Australia. A sort of advance guard of the Salvation Army, though calling themselves "Brigadiers," had come to Perth, and we attended one or two of their meetings. One of the women noticed John, and began to tell the story of his prayer in the ball-room. She herself had been present at the ball, and owed her conversion to that night's work. She said, if I remember rightly, that thirteen of the revellers were brought to Christ,—including the young lady who had offered to dance with him, and who turned out the brightest Christian of all!

From this on we journeyed homewards, through Guildford and Pinjarrah to Bunbury and Vasse, where we took steamer for Albany, and left almost immediately for Adelaide. After a flying visit to Gawler, Jamestown and Port Pirie, we landed in Melbourne on September 28th, after an absence of five months.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WAVERLEY

ALTHOUGH I have said little about my husband's health in the preceding chapters, it had gradually become so undermined that we felt it was useless for him to try to continue his work as an Evangelist, and so we decided to settle, for a time at least, in a fixed charge, in the hope that he might, through change of work, recover lost ground. He had become thin and emaciated, and although the spirit burned as brightly as ever, the body could not answer its demands. Severe and increasingly frequent attacks of pain used to seize him, and leave him weak for days afterwards. In the hope, then, that his old vigour might soon return, and not because of any change in his "commission," he decided to try to establish a new Presbyterian charge at Waverley, a suburb of Sydney. Here for two months, commencing January, 1885, John held services in a Hall, to see what were the prospects of Presbyterianism there.

TO REV. W. L. MORTON.

SANDHURST.

*Saturday Night.*

My dear old Fellow,

I am truly sorry that we will not have the pleasure and privilege of staying awhile with you ere leaving the Colony. . . . We sail on Wednesday by the "Katoomba" for Sydney. When you want change and rest you know where you'll be welcome—no one more so—and of course I mean Mrs. Morton

too. Give our united love to dear Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, whom we love in the faith. How goes the day at Ebenezer? Are the people being saved? and sanctified? "*Nulla dies sine anima.*" I am feeling pretty well just now; had a slight return of my old trouble this week, and fear it was the result of an over-strain in Prahran. The rest will restore me. I am not going to run another mission till I am *old* John again! I have refused about fifteen invitations in Victoria.

JOHN MACNEIL.

#### DIARY.

*Sabbath, Jan. 25th.*—Without any anxiety, went to the Hall this morning, and found just a few had gathered. More came in, till we had about one hundred present—not bad with only one day's notice. Told the people to go out into the quarry and work for a week, to see what they can do, and if it looks well, then I'll start and help them.

*Feb. 1.*—Began visiting, and was well received everywhere.

On April 10th, after a few days in Victoria, we reached Waverley again, this time to remain, as it had been decided that the prospects were encouraging. Already a nice congregation had begun to gather regularly, a piece of land had been bought in a splendid position, and there seemed to be a bright outlook for the Church. Our first domestic experience was rather sad. We took a house called "Sunny Corner" at some distance from our people, and having placed a number of boxes in it, containing wedding presents, etc., we decided that it would be unsafe to go to lodgings and leave them there unguarded. We therefore bought a few necessary things, and persuaded ourselves that to "picnic" in the house would be rather pleasant than otherwise until we got it furnished. Never was there a gloomier picnic. That very night my husband spent in agony. I had no help in the house, no friend near, scarcely any appliances for sickness, the rooms were uncarpeted and unfurnished, the stove would not "draw," and nothing that I could think of would alleviate the pain. To crown all, we had not been alive to the fact that mosquito nets were not a luxury

but a necessity in Sydney, and what we suffered that night from those swarms of hungry insects beggars description. Putting himself under the care of a skilful physician, John now applied himself to pills and potions with characteristic energy, and it was not his fault that they failed to cure. He followed out every direction to the letter, and at the same time prayed hard for blessing on the means.

On Tuesday, May 26th, he was inducted to the charge of Waverley.

#### DIARY.

"Had to go to Sydney to look after certificate; would rather have stayed at prayer. Out just in time for tea, and then had to hurry off to the meeting. Good muster of people. Dr. Gilchrist delivered an excellent sermon on "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." I answered the solemn questions as best I could. Got a welcome at the close. Oh, Lord Jesus, give me grace to carry the burden placed on me this night. Who am I? Who is sufficient for these things? May I hear Thee say. "*My* grace is sufficient for thee."

*Sabbath, June 7th.*—My first full day as steady pastor. Preached a rousing sermon to saints in the morning and to sinners at night. I know God blessed His Word.

Once fairly settled, a straightforward, street by street, house to house visitation was begun, to find out whether the people were attending church or not. It soon began to be noised abroad that something unusual was going on, and numbers of people who, as they said, "did not trouble church, nor did church trouble them," found that they were wrong about the latter half of the sentence. A short visit from this new minister, a few minutes of pointed personal conversation in which they found that they could not escape by pleading that they were not Presbyterians, but were brought face to face with their own individual condition—and he passed on to the next house, leaving various emotions down the whole length of the street. Many a feeble saint was discovered in this way, and the home would

seem brighter as he passed along. Many a poor wanderer, too, would be lovingly reminded of the Father's House; burdened mothers who were "too tired" to go to church on Sundays were told that the week would run the more smoothly if they and "the bairns" came up to worship together; fathers, who calmly shirked all responsibility in the matter, were told plainly what the minister, at any rate, thought of them; while the children—oh, the children! were always John's MacNeil's warm friends and staunch allies. The other churches now found themselves benefited, for all were urged to attend their own church, and that regularly. Even among Roman Catholics he won his way. "Don't you believe in the Blessed Mother?" he would say to one who seemed inclined to shut the door in his face. "Indeed I do." "So do I, and I should not wonder if I am a better Catholic than you are, for I have taken her advice." "Indeed! what might that be?" "She said once, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.' Now I have done what He told me to do, *Have you?*" Having thus made an opening, he would preach that gospel without which neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant can be saved. His figure soon became familiar everywhere. He went about either on foot or on a tricycle which he bought both to ease himself and to cover the ground more rapidly.

## DIARY.

*Sabbath, June 14th.*—Preached to a good congregation on "There went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched." Oh that God would touch the hearts of a band in Waverley. Heard Rev. H. A. Langley twice, and H. B. Macartney once, in the Church of England Eight-day Mission. Macartney said: "I should take the Lord for my healer!" That should not be a hard thing for me to do; I must get closer to the Lord. Oh for a shaking among the people.

A pioneer in Church work possesses a great

advantage in this respect, that only the people who like him, and are attracted by his ministry, gather round him. Knowing the Church from its infancy, every onward step is a matter of congratulation, and the tie between minister and people is unusually tender and strong. It was so at Waverley. Young converts, who under their Minister's precept and practice soon became earnest workers, loved their spiritual father. He was always their leader, and they followed him with a touching loyalty. He was their *beau idéal* of a Christian, and to be like him was their one ambition. Gradually a band of young men and women gathered round him on whom he he could rely. "A Church is *not* a field to work in, *but* a force to work with," was one of his favourite mottoes—rather startling to those valetudinarian adherents who expect much attention and careful handling. If there were any such in Waverley, their ideas must have been rudely shattered. To the sick he was kindness itself; they never called for him in vain. Although, moreover, he was most willing to help along the "young and tender," and always ready with a stimulus to shrinking souls, yet he lost all patience with them if they remained at that stage—requiring incessant help and giving none. His ultimatum was: "I will bestow any amount of pains on you, but you *must* improve." At regular intervals he would spend an hour over his roll of Church Membership—taking stock of his communicants, and after such times warm words might be expected next Sabbath morning. He had a larger proportion of earnest workers among his communicants than many, perhaps most Ministers, but that did not satisfy him. He conceived that every Christian ought to be doing something for the Master Who had done so much for him. A stranger, hearing one morning lazy members denounced as "spiritual loafers," looked round on

the well-dressed congregation in dismay, expecting to see them rise and leave in a body ; but they knew their minister better than he did. "I do not know how you can stand being talked to like that," said another stranger to one of the most helpful of the members. "We stand it," he said, "simply because our minister practises all, and more than all he preaches, and because we feel that we deserve it."

If my readers were to go to-day and speak to some of those dear people, they would find their minister's memory cherished most dearly by some of those who smarted most severely under him. But he was not always severe. To the timid, stumbling, but honest endeavourer, how kind he was! See his arm there thrown about someone, sending a thrill of electrical sympathy through him, and making him strong just where formerly he had been weak! To the babes in Christ who were honestly trying to feel their feet, he never gave a withdrawing shoulder. He taught his young converts how to work, taking them with him into the open-air and encouraging them to speak, until their voices strengthened like his own, and their early feeble efforts grew into powerful addresses. Once they were fully awake to the road by which he was leading them, it became a point of honour to "stand by" and to further his efforts. The Missions carried on in other towns were in their eyes "Our Missions." But I am anticipating. As yet the only two Missions attempted had been dismal failures, inasmuch as the Evangelist had quite broken down in both, and has caused dire alarm in the houses where he stayed by reason of the pains which he was called to pass through. Sorrowfully he was driven to the conclusion that he must not seek to lift a finger outside Waverley,—and to a man of his energy that seemed a small field indeed. The cause was now prospering, and soon tenders were called in for the erection of a brick building to be

an *interim* church, and subsequently to serve as a school. On November 7th the Foundation Stone was laid by Mrs. W. Graham, and nearly £300 was placed upon it. "We give Thee all the praise;" he said, "Now, Lord, send us many *living* stones."

## DIARY.

*January* 1st, 1886.—Set apart as a day of prayer. "Watch-night" in the hall; we brought in the New Year on our knees pleading for power.

*January* 3rd.—Rode in to St. Stephen's and preached on the "Bundle." Dr. Steel took the first service in the hall, and it was full. Nice meeting with the children in the afternoon; full again at night; only drops of blessing visible; one good case at least; Lord, make that hall famous as the birthplace of souls.

*January* 12th.—Ordination of elders.

*Wednesday January* 27th, 1886.—*Jehovah Rophi*. Noticed at breakfast an advertisement calling a meeting to consider Divine Healing at 11 a.m. in the new Oddfellows' Hall, Sydney. I resolved to go; went; heard Mr. Barker state the case on Jas. v. 14; called on him to anoint me, and the Lord healed me; I there and then believed. I went to the Y.M.C.A. rooms and took for dinner what was prepared for others, and felt no inconvenience. I took Him for my Healer and for my Strength. Welcomed Mr. George Müller that afternoon, and was appointed secretary to the Committee, so that I began to do extra work three hours after I was healed, and I intend to keep on till my time of service is up. Alleluia.

TO REV. R. MITCHELL.

SUNNY CORNER,  
FERN STREET,

*February* 23rd, 1886.

My dear Brother,

Does it not make a difference to get into your own workshop! I know about it. I had some three months in a hall, and now for two months we have been in our own school. At the end of January I broke ground in Waverley, and by the end of December we were worshipping in our own place. The best workers are now my own bairns—born since I came here. Some of them are "clippers," AI at Lloyds!

You know how my wanderings were brought to a termination a year ago. Indeed, I was nearly at a full stop. Aggravated dyspepsia, the coating of my stomach destroyed, the doctor



fearful of ulcers or even of cancer—not knowing very well what it was. Well, for months I dragged out a weary existence—not on the shelf altogether, thank God, for broken down as I was He used me in establishing what promises to be one of the best Sydney charges in a healthy popular suburb. Waverley is on the sea coast, about four miles south of the G.P.O. Our house overlooks the ocean. Severe gastric pains used to visit me periodically, completely prostrating me, and all the time I had to be an eclectic in my diet—dare not touch this or look at that. We were nearly at our wit's end. *But*, now for four weeks I have enjoyed perfect health. I feel stronger to-day than I have done for two years, and am better than I ever remember being in my life. The doctor gave me no hopes of being cured, and here I am *well*, able to work like a Trojan. I have been running George Müller's work since he came to Sydney. How is this? I have taken no medicine for four weeks—not even a cup of hot water! I have eaten whatever was on the table,—corned beef, cucumbers even. How is it? you ask. *James v. 14 and 15* is the answer. I took the Lord Jesus Christ as my Doctor. I followed out literally His prescription, and lo! I am a wonder unto many. A miracle has been wrought in poor, broken down John MacNeil. I tried a mission in September, but broke down in the middle. I tried a week at the opening of my school, and broke down then also; but to-morrow, I would try a week or a month and would go through it like a lark! The very day I was cured (January 27th) I began special extra work with Mr. Müller. I have been carrying full sail ever since, and am getting stronger week by week.

Do not confound *James v. 14* with Mr. — and Mr. — *et hoc genus*. It is altogether different. This flows from no virtue in the elder who administers the ordinance, but simply from childlike obedience to, and trust in *The Naked Word*. I was shocked when I turned up my Church history, and found that this prescription was followed out by the Christians during the *first five centuries*; then it dropped with many another good thing. . . . Again let us remember that God does not want the aid of disease in bringing His children home to Himself. When our work is finished we should run down like a clock, and die like Moses and Aaron. If you want more light I will be glad to lend you my Candle. . . . It was my sickness that shelved my Evangelistic work, and now that that sickness has gone, I am ready, when the cloud moves, to strike tent and follow again. . . . Glad to see you are going in for souls. "*You'll aye get what you gang in for,*" as Duncan Matheson says.

JOHN MACNEIL.

P.S.—I omitted one thing: I have a prayer meeting on Sabbath evening, half an hour before service. It is the *heating* time; and at 10.0 a.m. there is a Young Men's Fellowship Meeting. Here my boys get drilled; they are trained in the use of the sword and of the battle cry. There they begin to pray, and now some of them can put the older men to shame. Let us train them *for active service* as soon as they are enlisted. Mrs. MacNeil has a ladies' meeting on Tuesday afternoons, where they pray for the minister, for the children, and for families; they also do some Bible searching. I am thinking of having an "evening at home" in the vestry, where anybody and everybody can see me about anything and everything—specially about their souls. On Wednesdays we have evening service. It is now about half the size of our Sabbath service, and I expect soon to have it just as big. I give out the subject for next week, so that the people come prepared as well as the minister. Last Wednesday's subject was "The verse in St. Paul's Epistles containing—Christ's sweetest name, highest title, greatest work, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming glory." Several found it and gave it me, and then I preached for a little on it. I gave out for to-morrow—"Testimonials from the Master to His servants," such as Job i. 8, &c. In this way the meetings are very interesting. We have an enquiry-meeting every Sabbath night for prayer and conversation with the anxious. Teachers prayer meeting also after school.

To thoroughly appreciate the blessing that had come to my husband in the shape of restored health, one would need to have lived with him for the past two years. When he felt himself comparatively well, he was out among his people; when he was suffering he was naturally at home. Life for the while past had become a martyrdom; he knew only a few days in each month in which he felt "himself," and these days of freedom from sickness were the sure precursors of another severe attack of pain. Food had become poison to him; one article of diet after another had been rejected, until he could touch little beyond toast and water. It was sad to see him come in from a morning's work, very hungry, and yet afraid to satisfy his appetite. In spite of the extreme care which he always

exercised, he could never escape from periodical visitations—any slight deviation from the dietary scale, moreover, entailing extra suffering. I have seen him, not once or twice, but many a time, give out a hymn, leave the pulpit overcome by a terrible sickness, and then return with a face ashy pale, and with trembling limbs. It was a sad day when he returned from the doctor, saying, "He says he can't cure me, but he will do all he can to relieve me of distress."

A friend, as you see in his diary, had some time before said to him, "MacNeil, you have no business to be laid on the shelf like this." This was rather a staggering blow. "Why man," he said, "I have been praying with all my might that I might be resigned to God's will, and now you tell me that it is *not* God's will at all." The thought simmered in his mind for a while, but he took no action till the morning when his eye caught the advertisement of Mr. Barker, a Church of England Minister and a relative of the Primate. He threw down the paper, saying: "I'm going into that meeting to hear if there's anything in it." He did not return till nearly evening, when I met him at the door and said, "Well, what about the meeting? Are you going to be cured?" "I *am* cured," was his reply.

Do not blame me, dear reader, if I was somewhat sceptical. I sat down and laughed heartily, for the idea of a man, who had had such incessant attention as he had required during the nearly two years of our married life, being perfectly restored to health in an instant of time seemed inexpressibly funny. I wanted to know all about it, so he told me—much as he has told Mr. Mitchell in his letter—and then he said that he had been to the Y.M.C.A., and had what he called a "good square meal." He described it to me—roast beef,

roast potatoes, *cabbage*, rice pudding, and tea! I was aghast, and remarked *sotto voce*, "We shall have a time of it." He went on to say that I was not to study him any more in the food that I placed before him—I was to provide what I felt inclined, and he would ask God's blessing on it, and eat it. (He used afterwards to say that "asking a blessing" had become a new act of worship to him.) I took him at his word, and we began to have pleasant meals in "Sunny Corner" which *now* fully deserved its name. As I saw his faith mine began to strengthen, but it shook again when a fortnight later (his usual time for trouble) all the old premonitory symptoms began to reappear. *Not so his faith*; he realised that it was a *test*, and entering his study and locking the door behind him he threw himself on his face before the Lord, declaring that this was a case which did not touch John MacNeil's honour, but the very honour of the Lord Himself. He had made no secret of what he had done, thereby agitating some timid friends who said, "Oh do wait a little; you might be sick again, and then how foolish you would look." So he said, "Everybody knows, Lord, what I have done; now look to Thy great Name." The victory was won, the foe was routed, and hostilities were *never* renewed. Now we were happy indeed; life became a delight; sorrow and anxiety were things of the past.

But with renewed health, the necessity for retiring from Evangelistic work was past, and the old love began to pull at his heart strings. He was doing what most people considered a splendid work; his congregation was devoted to him; there was rarely a week without conversions; and the "Charing Cross Church" was the centre of an aggressive movement that was making itself widely felt. Each Sabbath night saw the Hall crowded. It was no

unusual spectacle to behold a distracted door-keeper flying bare-headed down the street, saying breathlessly, "We have used up every seat about the Church, and I'm making a raid on the neighbours for chairs." But it was not enough. "The maximum, the maximum!" was his constant cry. "There are plenty of men to carry this on, but there's nobody doing *my* work. I can win more souls in a week's Evangelistic services than I am winning here in six months." The congregation at once rose up in arms at the idea of losing him. By a wonderfully liberal arrangement they did succeed in keeping him for awhile longer, and remonstrated with him as follows:—

TO THE REV. JOHN MACNEIL, B.A.

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned, members and adherents of your congregation, have been greatly affected by the sudden and startling intelligence that you have decided to give up your Ministry among us. It has come upon us like a thunderclap, and we can hardly yet realise the fact, or bring ourselves to do or say anything at all, except to cry out with one voice, "This must not be; we cannot let you go." We feel that during the year that God has given you to us, you have, under His Divine blessing, and by your untiring labours, your indefatigable efforts, and your soul-stirring sermons, done wonders for the Presbyterian cause in Waverley. Under your ministry more than eighty members have been placed upon our Communion Roll; a Church has been built, and money has come in beyond our most sanguine expectations. We think, also, you hardly realise what an effect your personal influence has over many in Waverley; what fruit it has already borne; and what it may still be expected to bear. This influence, we would urge, is too valuable to be lost at present. We feel that you are the keystone to our Church, and that without our keystone the structure will fall to pieces. We are at a critical stage of our existence, and to lose you now would be our death-blow. The Church is not yet consolidated, and until it is, we would urge that we have a strong claim upon you. We would point out also that there is still a wide field in Waverley for both pastoral and evangelical work, and that another year spent by you among us would be very fruitful. We earnestly pray you

to reconsider your determination, and, if possible, to remain a while longer with the people who have learned to love you, and to look up to you as their spiritual pastor and friend. We rejoice in your wonderful restoration to health, and appreciate most fully the self-denying spirit in which you proclaim yourself ready to obey the Master's call, and to consecrate that recovered health to Him by undertaking work for which you are so eminently qualified, and which is sure to prove such a blessing to so many. We would not seek in any selfish spirit to dissuade you from such work, but desire to strengthen your hands in making such a sacrifice of home ties, which it will be so hard for you to break.

We would however say, "Stay another year, and perfect and consolidate the work you have carried on so successfully," and may God Himself guide you and us in this matter, and order all for the best. We most earnestly beg of you to give this memorial your most careful consideration, and subscribe ourselves :—

(Here follow the signatures.)

A visitor to the Waverley Church, struck by the work being carried on there, sent the following account to the *Australian Christian World*. It happened to be an anniversary day, but beyond the fact that the morning preacher was Rev. Dr. Steel, and that there was a special address to children in the afternoon, it much resembled any other Sabbath.

#### A CHURCH IN EARNEST.

It was my privilege last Sunday to worship at the Presbyterian Church, Waverley, which, as many readers of the *Australian Christian World* will know, is under the pastoral care of Rev. John MacNeil. I was impressed with the fact that minister and people were evidently truly consecrated to God, and in earnest for the salvation of souls. The services of the day commence with a prayer meeting at 7 a.m., at which there are usually from 20 to 25 present. This very laudable commencement of Sunday's services was more common thirty years ago in the old country than it is in the Colonies at the present day. I was assured that the tone of the early prayer meeting was a sure forecast of the blessing of the day. The pastor, in speaking to me of this meeting, said: "The Christians who come expect to get what they ask for, and they *do* get it." At 9.45, I attended the Young Men's

Fellowship meeting in one of the vestries, another room being occupied by the Young Women for a similar purpose. The members of these Fellowships preside in rotation, and introduce, by a written paper or a brief address, the subject for the morning. Last Sunday's subject was "The Humiliation of the Lord Jesus," and the deep spirituality manifested by these young men was truly refreshing and stimulating. Rev. Dr. Steel occupied the pulpit at 11.0, this being the Second Anniversary. The special service for children in the afternoon was characterised by the greatest attention on the part of nearly the whole of the scholars. The impression left on my mind was that many of the boys and girls attending that school would live to call the Redeemer "Blessed." At 6.30, the usual congregational prayer meeting was held, the large vestry being quite full, and the same fervour and faith seemed to be manifested. Although the evening was wet, a band of workers scoured the streets, and the Church was well filled. The pastor prefaced his sermon by calling for a doxology for the souls won to Christ during the two years of his ministry, and urged the Church members to join in prayerful effort to double this number during the coming year. The heart-stirring address which followed from the words in John xiv., "My Father's House," kept everybody awake. At the after-meeting half the congregation remained, and a number of anxious enquirers knelt in their pews to indicate their desire to become disciples of Christ. Although this communion has only existed two years, I found a large band of zealous workers, a mission hall in a neighbouring district (nearly completed) for outside missionary work, and I ascertained that a number of promising young men are being trained by their minister for this, and for open-air work. These Christians manifested in their countenances the joy that filled their hearts, and I could not help praying that all our Churches might be characterised by similar self-denying and whole-hearted consecration.

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

SUNNY CORNER,  
RANDWICK,  
N.S.W.,

November 29th, 1886.

My dear old Comrade,

It was a real glad surprise to get your budget on *Christmas morning*. God bless you for your thoughtfulness. Your letters are always more than letters to me, and I have missed them for so long a time. You seem to be pretty well up in news about me somehow or other. Let me give you a

bit more. The beginning of 1885 found me so very, very poorly that I had to anchor, and the Pilot steered me round to Waverley, one of the suburbs of Sydney, on the sea coast (as I write, I hear through my open study window the breakers roaring on the beach below,) and there He cried, "Let go."

I conducted the first Presbyterian service in the place in January, 1885, and by the first Sabbath in 1886 we were worshipping in our own school. It would have done you good to have seen the congregations yesterday and the boys and girls at work. You should see the crowd of children that come up with their parents at 11.0 a.m. At 2.30 the teachers meet for prayer; at 2.45, School begins; at 4.0, prayer meeting for teachers and senior scholars; at 6.30, prayer meeting; at 7.0, service, always followed by an enquiry-meeting, finishing about 9.0 p.m. The last three Sabbaths of the year have been the best of the two years. I spoke to 15 souls anxious about their eternal well-being. How many prayer meetings my people have in one-another's houses through the week I cannot say. I heard of one man yesterday, who has to put down a new carpet as the old one is worn out by praying people! Our Wednesday evening is well attended; I make our week-night service a kind of Bible reading. For many a week we were upon "The Holy Spirit" — Personality of — Emblems of — Work of — Sins against. The people give me the texts, and I have just to expound and apply them. We have an open-air meeting once a week for which my Young Men's Association is responsible, and it is doing splendidly. I have a band of workers, better than whom I have not seen north or south of the line. I came here as I said, to *rest*, hoping that change of employment would set me up again, but in this I was grievously disappointed. I was getting worse and worse, and was looking as old and decrepid as a man of 50. . . . (Here follows the story of his recovery.) Ever since I've been carrying 120lb. to the square inch, and I am as well and strong and healthy a man as is in Australia to-day.

After this I sent in my resignation, as I felt (and so did my wife) that I must get back again to my loved employ of rambling after rambling sinners; oh the tempest this raised about my ears in Waverley! the wail was simply distressing. I was going to leave in June, having been twelve months inducted, but they besought me stay another year. I asked the Lord, telling Him that I was ready to go through the storm under close-reefed topsails if only He gave the word. I promised to stay nine months longer on condition that I got away when I liked for Evangelistic work. "Yes, yes!" they all cried, and gave me £100 a year extra in addition! So I have been away about



twelve days a month on an average ever since, evangelising, and the cause here has prospered well. My people evince such interest in these excursions, call them "*Our Missions*," pray so earnestly for them, and then expect a report on my return.

At the beginning of this year we formed a Ministers' Union in Sydney for all denominations; we meet monthly and it is doing good work. We are engaged just now fighting against the secularisation of the Lord's day; we are fast drifting, alas! towards the Continental Sabbath. Last month we had a Convention for three days, which drew Christians of different branches together, and did good. It is to be annual, and in between we are having monthly meetings for conference and prayer. I suppose you have had enough about me now.

We have two little girlies, the eldest, "*Elsie Evangeline*," 17 months old, trots about and talks a little, but does not come near that boy of yours. Twenty-third Psalm at 15 months! Why that beats John Bunyan! All Elsie can say yet is, "*Alleluia, Amen*," but that means a great deal. The other is a wee lamb, just over a fortnight old. What name is down for her in the Book of Life we have not yet found out.

Yes, *of course*—do you think I would be all this time without "*Whyte on the Catechism?*" Wouldn't I like to be there to hear him on "*Grace abounding*." Give John McNeill my love when you see him; tell him that *Dynamite* (Acts i. 8) is a capital thing for quarry men working among nether-millstone rocks. . . . I dont agree with your theology about your little son—"if he gets grace." I believe both my children *have* grace already, and I am only waiting for it to manifest itself. No, no! I will not doubt His word. When He gave them to us, the first thing we did was to "*return*" them (1 Samuel i. 28. margin); I would not mock Him by doubting whether He took my darlings or not. Much love to the whole of the Alexander family.

JOHN MACNEIL.

Many who heard the story of John MacNeil's recovery were often puzzled to know how a man was to die, who was not sick. This question was put to him over and over again. It gave him a good deal of amusement, seeing how anxious they were not to live too long, but his usual answer was something to the same affect as the following account of a meeting sent by a friend to the *Southern Cross*, after my husband had been taken away.

## A REMEMBRANCE OF JOHN MACNEIL.

Having been "ever a lover" of John MacNeil since I first knew him sixteen years ago, I think it might interest the many others in whose hearts he had such a warm place to have light thrown upon his sudden transition into glory. Many wonder why this sudden death should occur to one so beloved of the Lord. I will relate what I heard in the autumn of 1892, while he was holding a mission in a place within fifty miles of Melbourne. One evening after his Evangelistic services were over, a few friends met with him to seek for more light on the subject of Divine healing. One of the questions put to our dear brother now in glory was: "But if the Lord always heals, there could be no death; how then will it be when it is time for us to die?" I shall never forget the look that came into John MacNeil's face, radiant with smiles, nor the hearty tones that rang out through the room—"Why! man! must the Lord lay you on a bed of sickness and pain when He wants to take you home? Has He no other way but by breaking you up bit by bit? Look," he continued, "if I had finished with this watch of mine and needed it no more, would I take a hammer and smash it to pieces bit by bit by a long and tedious process? Would I not just some night cease to *wind it up*, and the next morning it would have stopped? Just so, I believe that when the Lord has done with me, He will not 'wind me up,' and I shall be gone." Then he added, "Now, mark my words: I am not going to lie on a bed of sickness; and when some day you read in the *Argus* or *Age* that John MacNeil, the well-known Evangelist, is dead, you just inquire of my friends and see if it is not as I say. No lingering sickness for John MacNeil, but when the Lord did not need him any longer, He did not 'wind him up.'" As soon as the news of Mr. MacNeil's sudden death came into our midst, many of us said at once, "It is even as he said! his work was done, so the Lord did not wind him up."

4th September, 1896.

When the news reached him that his old friend, Mr. W. Howat, had lost his father, he wrote to him as follows:—

WAVERLEY,

February 6th, 1885.

My dear William,

I have no doubt but that you have all found out more preciousness in Jesus. We cannot *imagine* how much He *care* be to us till we are placed in the circumstances that try us. I

know not what to say about your loss, your heavy, heavy loss, for few were blessed with such a father. I loved him since I knew him, and couldn't help it. I saw him in the Presbytery on my return from Western Australia for the last time; next time I shall see him in glory. Yes, you have sustained a loss—shall I call it irreparable? Cannot Jesus fill the gap? You know. But oh, *his* gain! "With Christ, which is *very far* better." Rest assured that you have my heartiest sympathy, and an interest in our prayers.

JOHN MACNEIL.

In August, 1886, John left for a fortnight's mission in Ballarat, and when he reached the Spencer Street Station, a number of friends were waiting to see him. Several of us were standing together on the platform, keeping a kind of watch over a Gladstone bag which we had had in the carriage, while he went to look after the rest of the luggage. From under our very eyes some Melbourne sharper carried off that bag, and when he returned it was gone! It contained about 80 sermons—"all my Waverley work," he moans in his diary; and away he went to his mission without a note. To a man who never attempted to preach without having his MS. before him (however little he might use it), this was a trial hard to bear, but it was the beginning of new life to him. *He never again wrote out a sermon.* A page or two of headings is all that he allowed himself since, so that it was really (as he has said many a time afterwards) "the best thing that ever happened to me." There was small comfort in the thought of the chagrin of the thief, when he found what a prize he had taken, for the bag contained little else. There was not even the hope that he might read them and be converted thereby, for the writing was half in shorthand—hardly intelligible to the average reader! In spite of this loss (perhaps because of it, since it meant that the preacher was thrown entirely upon God), the Mission was a great success.

## DIARY.

*September 12th.*—Young Duncan Matheson came to tea with us, and spent the night. God bless the dear old Duncan's first-born son.

*October 19th.*—My birthday! For 32 years hast Thou borne with me now. Oh, the long suffering of my God! What great things hast Thou done for me this past year! Twelve months ago I penned the prayer: "Lord grant that the next year I may be restored to health," and that prayer has been graciously answered in Thine own way. Glory be to Thy name for ever and ever. It has been a year crowned with blessing for H. and E. and for Thy unworthy child. Lord, do in mercy grant that this year may be *the most fruitful of my life*. This "one thing" I do desire to-day, that the Lord in His infinite mercy may make my 33rd year the most fruitful of my life. Our fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters have been all spared to us, and for this I would thank Thee. Oh that they may be all within the fold!

*Friday.*—Home from Gulgong. Elsie was in bed, and when she saw me she cried: "Oh dadda!" and put up her hands to come to me. This is the first time she recognized me at once. Preparatory service to-night—fourteen new communicants received—A. among the number. Thank God.

*November 7th, 1886.*—Communion Sabbath; preached on "Stewardship." Seventeen new communicants; Lord keep them faithful.

Communion seasons at Waverley were times to think about. There were always a number to be received "on profession of faith," and their reception at the preparatory service on the previous Friday was made unusually interesting. They were given the front seat, and the line often stretched right across the church. Taking each one by the hand, the minister would, in the name of the Session, welcome them into the fellowship of the Church, and would then give to each a text, carefully selected by himself, to mark the important step. These texts were highly valued, and no doubt could be found noted in many a Bible to-day. This hearty reception made the young converts feel that joining the Church was a pleasant thing, and brought them at once into a warm atmosphere, and among people

who were really glad to see them. John kept up the old Scotch custom of "fencing the tables." It is very rarely done now, I fancy, but it adds greatly to the solemnity of the occasion. Many may complain of its austerity; but once, in humble dependence upon the Saviour, the communicants had passed the "fence," nothing hard was found beyond it. The finest of the wheat and the most refined wine were dealt out liberally to those who approached, and men and women left the table of the Lord feeling that they had been sitting there with the Lord Himself at the head. Children, too, were encouraged to draw near. It was, indeed, looked upon as an innovation when a child of twelve was admitted; but "why," he asked, "should a child who gives good evidence of change of heart be shut out?" Then he would say, with a shake of the head and a kindly smile, to those who spoke to him about it: "I wish I was as sure of some of you as I am of that girl!"

In 1886 a fearful outrage took place at Mount Rennie, which convulsed the whole of New South Wales. Excitement ran high, and popular feeling was strongly in favour of hanging the accused young men almost without a trial. Eight of the unhappy number were condemned to death, two of whom were Presbyterians, and John visited them frequently in their own cells. They were present besides, when he was preaching to other prisoners. They were only aged 19 and 22, and his heart was wrung at the thought of their being under sentence of death so early in life. "My dear boys, however do you come to be in here?" he said, when he saw them first, horrified at their youth. "Oh, Mr. MacNeil," they said solemnly, "it was bad company that did it."

They had formerly belonged to one of the Sydney Presbyterian Churches, but as soon as they began to feel themselves men (which was long before

others had begun to regard them as such), they had cut all connection with Church and Sunday School, had gradually drifted from bad to worse, and had at last become attached to one of the worst "pushes" in Sydney. The other condemned men declared that these two boys were innocent, but a chain of circumstantial evidence had wound itself around them till they had no chance of escape. One of them was reprieved on the night before the execution, and that night John spent in Darlinghurst, staying as late as he could with Reade, and spending the rest of the hours in a cell alone. That night Reade gave him a message for the young men of Australia, which he promised to deliver. This promise he kept, although there were occasional sneers at the gruesomeness of the theme, and he had a little gratuitous advice to "drop it." The lecture itself was only an impressive sermon on "Bad Company," the illustrations being drawn from Reade's career.

The posters announcing it were certainly a little sensational, but they drew exactly the right class. It would be no exaggeration to say that more larrikins have heard the gospel through this lecture than through any other address ever given in Australia. Seat after seat at the back of the halls was filled with young men who would never dream of going to hear an ordinary sermon, and they never failed to behave in an exemplary manner. There was plenty of laughing to begin with, for Mr. MacNeil believed that plenty of truth found its way through an open mouth. When a truth gave unmistakable evidence of having hit its mark, he would nod and say, "That was a bull's eye! did you hear it ring?" It was of no use talking to those boys in classical English. But the laughter gradually died away, until the stillness was almost oppressive while they listened to the fate of a young man who perished solely on account of the company he

kept. "The companion of fools shall be destroyed."

He stayed with Reade until the last—it was an awful time—six young men launched into eternity at the same moment. Reade kept repeating to himself two texts which had been given him—"The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth me from all sin," and "Underneath are the everlasting arms." The minister, who knew the mothers of the boys, and who knew them also when they were younger, was also present, sobbing like a child. It was with a white face and a mute appeal to "ask no questions" that John came home from Darlinghurst that morning—sick at heart because of the ravages which sin had wrought.

#### DIARY.

Jan. 1st, 1887.—New Year's Day, 10 p.m.—What has God done for *us*, for *me*, since last New Year? Since then we have another little jewel in our home, thank the Lord! Since then He has made me well and strong again, and sent me out to my old work. Now, what about the New Year? I should like it to be the richest, the *holiest* of my life. I am not as much in communion as I must be. Lord, tell me what would help me! I hereby solemnly resolve that I will try this plan *for one week*, in reliance on His gracious Spirit. The clock striking the *even hours*, when I am awake, will be regarded by me as a *Royal Messenger*, summoning me into His more immediate presence. I used to rise at midnight to call upon His name, but this gracious and most helpful habit has been almost entirely dropped of late. It is hereby resolved that this means of grace be picked up again. My path this year is undefined; all I know is that I am under sealed orders to leave Waverley in April, and to follow Christ in His wanderings after wandering souls, and this means that I leave my wife and children and home. So help me, God. "Here am I, my Master." Alleluia for my Master! I'm ready, Lord, when You are. I have received as my motto for 1887 Paul's triumphant words, "I can do *all things* through Christ Which strengtheneth me."

May I be dwelling more on my Lord's return this year than ever before. May I be a herald of the coming King.

Up to January, 1887, my husband was carrying on single-handed the pastoral oversight of Waverley,

and extending the work to a thickly-populated part of a district called Mill Hill, where a Sunday School was begun, and open-air meetings held, and where it was wished that a Mission Hall should be built. He also was away evangelising in other places for ten or twelve days in every month. The Church was prospering, but he was far from satisfied with his Evangelistic work; he could not give up holding Missions, and consequently felt that he was not doing what he considered justice to his people. He told them again that he should have to leave them, so they made a further effort to retain him by offering to provide an assistant, and to leave him free for six months in the year for Evangelistic effort. It would have been hard to refuse so generous an offer as this, so he agreed to try how it would answer, and remained with his people for eighteen months longer, giving them half the year and devoting the other half to congregations who called for his help. It was desperately hard work, and though many hailed it as an ideal way of keeping pastoral and Evangelistic work in close connection, very few men have sufficient physical strength to stand the wear and tear of it.

The following letter is from a minister, who says that he benefited by the action of the congregation :—

THE MANSE, COLERAINE,

*May 23rd, 1887.*

TO MR. F. KEMP.

Dear Sir,

As I want to convey to Waverley Presbyterian Church session, and congregation, some thoughts and feelings that are in my mind at present, I take the liberty of addressing this letter to you. In common with two other congregations in this neighbourhood, we, in Coleraine, have recently had an Evangelistic visit from your esteemed minister. Whilst reading and hearing a good deal about Mr. MacNeil, I never had the pleasure of meeting him before. About three years ago I was anxious that



he should pay us a visit, but the way was not then open. When he settled down in Sydney, I gave up all hopes of his coming to Coleraine on Evangelistic work. Imagine my surprise, then, when I read in the *Presbyterian*, that his congregation had made an arrangement whereby he would be able to give six months out of twelve to Evangelistic work. After reading the paragraph, I said to myself: "Mr. MacNeil must be no ordinary man, and his congregation must be no ordinary congregation. How very few congregations would practice such self-denial." But, since meeting Mr. MacNeil, and attending a few of his services, I can, in some measure, understand the action. Nothing, I think, short of that wisdom that cometh from above, could have guided them in doing as they have done.

Mr. MacNeil has rare gifts for Evangelistic work; and it would be a misfortune were they confined exclusively to one charge, however large and important. I can conceive no better arrangement, under the circumstances, than the one that has been made by him and his people. Six months steady, quiet work at Waverley, will be good for himself and them; and the other six will be very helpful in extending Christ's kingdom in the regions beyond.

In forming these opinions I am largely influenced by what I have seen and experienced in connection with his recent visit to Coleraine. In every way it has been for good—awakening, stimulating, encouraging. The cause of pure and undefiled religion has received a decided impulse. Many will never forget his clear expositions of Divine truth, and his urgent appeals to the unsaved to close immediately with the offer of eternal life. Let such visits be repeated in other places, and, with the Divine blessing, not a few must be gathered into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Such results must be gratifying to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, but especially to the Presbyterian Church of Waverley. And why? Just because they are fellow-helpers of good work. By their self-denial, they render it possible for Mr. MacNeil to undertake the work; and by their sympathy and prayers, they sustain his hands, and encourage him, when engaged in the work. Since "it is more blessed to give than to receive," your congregation must be a highly favoured one.

When thinking over what you have done, I recall the action of the Church at Antioch, when they, in obedience to the Divine call, separated Paul and Barnabas to Evangelistic work and sent them away. You are doing something of the same, are you not? Having a minister specially fitted for such work, you send him away six months out of the twelve to engage in

it; bidding him God speed when leaving, and following him with your prayers wherever he goes. You are setting other congregations an excellent example; and what a blessed thing it would be if some of them would only follow it. Then those who are still "without" would have good reason for saying,— "See how these Christians love one another."

I have written more than I intended, and have introduced topics which I did not intend to introduce. What I want specially to say is, that I greatly admire the fine Christian spirit manifested in the arrangements entered into with your minister. It is really cheering and refreshing, when even one congregation is found looking not on their own things only, but also on the things of others. That is surely the very Spirit of our Master Himself, for "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty, might be rich."

Accept my unfeigned thanks for sending Mr. MacNeil to visit us in Coleraine; and in return may our God supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Yours, &c.,

W. J. GILLESPIE.

In the beginning of 1888 the Colony of New South Wales celebrated its Centenary. A Centennial Celebration Committee was formed, of which Bishop Barry was president and my husband secretary. Several large meetings were arranged for—one especially on Sunday afternoon, January 29th, in the Exhibition Building, at which the Governor was present, and at which a leading Minister of each denomination addressed a crowded audience.

A monster gathering of S. S. children was held at Moore Park on the following Saturday. "Slaving all the week" his journal says. "At the S. S. Demonstration the Lord gave us a beautiful day, and about 7,000 children mustered." Superintendents who have the oversight of, say, 500 children at an ordinary Sunday School picnic will understand the amount of anxiety entailed by a demonstration of this kind. John was conspicuous on a pony which flew about the grounds at a most unorthodox rate, "putting" (according to the *Daily Telegraph*) "the best army adjutant to

shame by his resources and the speed of his movements."

In April, 1889, the health of our assistant broke completely down, so that he had to resign his appointment, and John was left single-handed again. Calls for Evangelistic work had been coming in so fast that the half-year was not nearly sufficient to undertake them, and many circumstances pointed to the fact that the time had now come "to launch out into the deep." Every means had been tried to compass both callings, but he felt that one of them was enough for any man to do justice to, and in July the sorrowful wrench of parting came.

#### DIARY.

*Sunday, July 8th, 1888.*—Thirty-five out at 7 a.m.; about one hundred and forty Communicants at 11; Church full. "The love of Christ constraineth us." At 6.30, splendid muster of open-air workers; 7, Hall crowded—St. Paul's "three years" at Ephesus; 10.0 p.m. before we finished; sixteen anxious—the most glorious meeting I ever had in Sydney.

*Tuesday.*—Presbytery meeting. R. and McP. spoke, saying that they have seen more of the power of the Holy Ghost in the last three years than in all their lives before. Thank God. After some debate I was released. Glory to God—an Evangelist again.

*Saturday.*—Sale day; no home to-night but in Heaven.

*Sabbath.*—Prayer-room full at 7 a.m.; rode to Pyrmont for 11; muster of my own S. S. at 3—God bless my boys and girls; spoke to them about the "token"; oh may they all have one. 7.0 p.m., Hall packed, porch, vestry, and all. "Farewell." Four decisions and others anxious; broke down in closing the after-meeting. Oh Lord answer prayer, and accept our heart-felt praises for the work.

#### FROM THE "PRESBYTERIAN."

##### WAVERLEY.

On Wednesday evening a meeting was held to say farewell to the late pastor of the church, Rev. J. MacNeil, B.A. There was a large gathering of the residents, who united heartily with the congregation in bidding adieu to one who has made himself well-known and respected, not only in the *locale* of his charge,

but all over the Colony. The rev. pastor was the first minister of Waverley, and with a handful faced the labour of setting up a Presbyterian Church in a district which by our Church had been overlooked, and in fact neglected; so much so, that all the other denominations had flourishing charges here before our Church made the slightest movement. So it can be easily guessed how much laborious uphill work had to be done. But thanks to Mr. MacNeil and the loyal little band, the mountain has become a plain, and many valleys of difficulty have been filled up, and we have now amongst us a branch of the Church of our fathers.

The meeting mingled joy and sorrow; joy, that their late pastor was called to enter upon a wider sphere of Evangelical labour, and sorrow that his valuable ministry among them was to come to an end. Mr. Alderman Macpherson occupied the chair, having on his right Rev. J. MacNeil, and on his left Rev. J. M. Ross. Apologies were read from Dr. Steel and Rev. J. Auld. After singing, the Chairman delivered an excellent address, full of practical remarks, and showing a fund of information, combined with a liberal spirit that greatly pleased the meeting. Mr. J. D. Rutherford made a short speech that was heartily applauded, and wound up by presenting Rev. J. MacNeil with a handsomely-bound address in book form, expressive of their sorrow at his removal, and testifying to the good work he had done at Waverley, and of his leaving a well-organised congregation in a most satisfactory state, numerically, financially, and spiritually. Mr. Rutherford also handed Mr. MacNeil a purse containing a cheque for one hundred guineas from the congregation. Mr. Wm. Graham then asked Mrs. MacNeil to accept a present from the ladies of the congregation, consisting of a very handsome timepiece, and a large case of ivory-handled knives and forks, accompanied by a small cruet-stand. Mr. P. D. McCormick (superintendent), on behalf of the Sabbath-school, handed Mr. MacNeil a travelling case of fine leather, and a Bible and hymn-book of very superior binding, and made a few appropriate remarks. After receiving all the gifts, Mr. MacNeil rose to reply, but could not proceed very fast, as he said, "he was fairly on his beam ends," and completely taken aback at the outcome of such great kindness, which he never dreamt of. He heartily thanked the meeting for their munificent gifts, both to himself and wife. Mr. MacNeil pulled from his pocket a handsome gold lever watch the gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Nicholson. It was plainly evident that Mr. MacNeil was overcome, and could not get into the vein of making a speech, but the remarks he made were characteristic, and received by the meeting with great

favour. The whole time of the meeting was so well taken up between the speeches, singing and conversation, that it was 10.30 before the doxology was sung, when all retired, being highly pleased with all the arrangements of a really grand, enthusiastic meeting. It should be noted also that Mr. Alderman T. Jessop (Wesleyan), at the invitation of the Chairman, made a few pointed remarks, and bore testimony to the good done by Mr. MacNeil in Waverley even among the people of his Church.

My husband's astonishment at the gifts which were being lavished upon him was very comical, and as one after another got up to present something new, he was quite overcome. He ought, of course, to have cried, but beginning to laugh instead, the people joined in, and so this most trying experience was gone through with great hilarity. In the quiet of his study at night, he writes:—

I tried to reply, but couldn't. Oh, I am oppressed with shame and confusion. I am all unworthy of things like this. I know my own failings so well. God bless my people and forgive me. And so I have seen the dear old Hall lit up for the last time.

It was with very sore hearts that we turned away from Waverley. No other place could ever be quite the same to us. Trials, indeed, had come to us—what Minister's life is all sunshine?—but the joy had far outbalanced the sorrow. We gave the dear name to one of our children, and it also designates our present home. The little School Hall, however plain and insignificant in its appearance, had been the centre of far-reaching influence; friends were there who had been true in bright days and dark days, and the breaking of the bonds that bound us caused deep heartachings. But the orders were, "Come out," and they were too plain to be disobeyed. So we came out; out to wider service, to deeper experience, and to more blessed results.

## CHAPTER IX

### ABBOTSFORD

**E**VANGELISTIC work was begun at once in the north of New South Wales; then passing through Victoria to South Australia, John paid a visit to his old parish, Jamestown and Spalding, went as far north as Port Augusta, and away up to Broken Hill, then in the height of its prosperity. From one of his South Australian letters I take the following incident:—

On Sabbath night one of the seekers was G. M., son of a minister, and after a short struggle he yielded. The workers went and told Mr. M. "Thank God," he cried, the tears running down his face. I was just going to pronounce the benediction, when the old man interrupted me: "I would like to say something; you all know my son George; well, I have prayed for that lad a thousand times, and to-night my prayer is answered; he is saved. Have I not got reason to be glad?" Here the old man broke down; the people stood and looked at him; some wept; some murmured praise and approval; they will never forget that scene.

Much might be written of these Missions, but space fails. At the end of 1888 he draws these lessons from his own experience:—

- I. Only visit fields to which *God* calls.
- II. When you enter a field, say, "*Thy* will, not mine, be done." Souls will be saved, many or few, as seems best to Him. The meetings will be large or small as seems best to Him. Leave the field, thanking Him, in that His will has been done, and His is best.

III. Begin the mission with some specially advertised subject, to get the ear of the people at the start.

IV. Begin the meetings at advertised time, and never work up to that hour by a preparatory prayer meeting in the room in which the people are gathering. Have preparatory prayer meeting by all means, if possible, but it *must* be in another room.

*New Year's Day, 1889.*—By what a strange path have we been led during 1888! Now we are freer than ever to do His blessed will and work. I dare not even *think* of sacrifice. Let this be the grandest year of my life. I will soon be ten years an ordained minister. Let the second decade of my service open right gloriously. I am ready to come and go at a word anywhere. My business on earth is—"One thing." Oh joy! if our Bridegroom should come this year.

TO MR. R. ALEXANDER.

SANDHURST,

VICTORIA,

Jan. 15th, 1889.

My dear old Richard,

Who's the sinner, you or I? *If* it is I, though I don't think so, please pardon. I thank you very heartily for the *Christian* of Oct. 19th, my birthday. It has John McNeill in it. I get the *Christian* myself, but, strange to say, that copy never reached me, so that yours came in splendidly. Bless you and bless that mighty man of valour, whom the Lord has hurled on Edinburgh. I have joined John's name with Richard's now, and am praying for both daily.

In July last the Presbytery "loosed me and let me go," and I am now for six months back at my old work again, the tracks of the fire behind me in every place, glory to His name—in some places, of course, broader and deeper than in others. I picked up in my ambulance waggon last year over five hundred and fifty "wounded" of the King's enemies. If I walk up to my New Year motto, my mighty Master could add an *O* to that number for 1889. . . . I feel intoxicated with this thought—"Nothing to do but to do God's will in pulling men out of the fire." I wouldn't change the sword for the harp yet, for my work is not done. Bless me, it seems as if it has hardly begun! Still, by the time you get this, it will be ten years since I said good-bye to you dear fellows in Edinburgh. I

was reading in the Acts to-day of how the brethren encouraged the fervent Apollos. How nice! I kind of envy him! Some dear brethren here have a way of their own of encouraging any one with a little Holy Ghost fire about him, by wet-blanketing!

The following note shows the effect on his fellow-workers of his short but always inspiring letters:—

*Jan. 3rd, 1889.*

My dear Fellow-labourer,

Your short battle-note came like an inspiration to me. I was more pleased to receive it than I can utter. I have read it over and over again, and I feel stronger because of it. I believe God is answering your prayers and giving me more of the Holy Ghost. . . . I trust you will continue in prayer on my behalf, and my poor supplication shall not be wanting that God will do mighty things in the name of "His Holy Child," through your ministry. I have come across the fruits of your labours in divers places, and almost without exception they stand out sharply defined, even among their fellow Christians. They are not (so far as I have seen them) conformed to the world, and some of them are powerful, and fruitful in the faith. With warmest thanks for your apostolic note, and with hearty Christian love, I am,

Yours in the Gospel.

After twelve months of continuous Evangelistic work, John was asked by the Presbytery of Melbourne North to take charge for a while of the old Simpson's Road Presbyterian Church, which was almost defunct, and which was to have just this one chance for its life. He went down to reconnoitre, and found that it was situated in the middle of the old Collingwood Flat, now named Abbotsford; that the population was thick, and that it simply meant confining his work to one district for awhile, with the additional hope of building up the Church. It was a roomy stone structure, and, as he described it, "an excellent workshop." He preached on the first Sunday without being announced. Only a handful were in the big building, and it looked forbidding enough. He got, however, these people about him and told them that if they would help, the Church would be thronged on the next Sabbath



night. They were very dubious, but worked well, and were rewarded by seeing the prophecy fulfilled. Before 7.0 the place was packed—aisles, stairs, vestry—some, moreover, standing on the footpath. A week of special services followed, and the Church having been thoroughly warmed by the crowd, was never allowed to get cold again. It was impossible here for the minister to visit every house personally, so a number of boys were sent out with a tract, "A knock at every door," and through the great kindness of Mrs. R. G. Wilson, who paid her salary for a year, a Bible Woman was engaged to help in the visiting. We set up house again in Hoddle Street, East Melbourne, and although it was only intended to remain one year, it proved to be two before the Church was considered strong enough to be left. The work here differed greatly from that in Waverley. We were in constant contact with the rough, the low, and the degraded, but John soon roused in his members a spirit of love and pity on their behalf. He would put himself to any inconvenience to help them. He would bring to his own home such as were anxious to give up drink, would watch over them with the utmost care, and see that proper food was supplied to try and meet the terrible craving. It gave me something of a shock, one winter's evening, when on opening the door I saw a draggled, battered, mud-splashed young man, whom he was propping up, and who fell headlong on the hall floor as soon as he was let go. "Some mother's boy!" he said, whom he had picked up dead-drunk on the footpath, and in the bitter cold. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he was put in charge of one of our workers and sent home. He took endless trouble; in some cases he was successful, in some not; the issues were not with him.

He records, in August, the first of the weekly

“all-nights of prayer” which he attended. A little company of ministers, feeling sorely that in their own lives they had not experienced that richness of blessing which the Bible had led them to expect, and that, therefore, their ministry was not so fruitful as it might be, agreed to spend one night a week on their knees pleading for themselves, their congregations, and the Colony. The next thing was a “Day of Prayer” in Melbourne, and in as many other places as could be induced to join.

#### DIARY.

*October 3rd, 1889*, is over and gone—a day the like of which Melbourne has never seen. The results will be felt through Eternity. We sent a circular to every Minister in the Colony, asking them to fall in with us. At 10 a.m. we met in the Temperance Hall, an “upper room,” and went on till 5, the attendance growing all day, till there must have been 700 present ere the afternoon closed. I was called out to see Mrs. H., dying of cancer, opposite my Church. I left her at 4.50. I had spoken to her about sin and the Saviour; got her to cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and prayed with her. Got back to the Hall just as the people had left, but gathered about thirty together who had stayed, and set them praying for this dying soul. About 6 o’clock I stopped them, and began, “Alleluia, ’tis done; she is saved by the blood of the Crucified One.” The interval meeting was growing all the time, and great blessing was coming. The finish was glorious. Next morning I ran down to see Mrs. H. She had died at 6.40 last night. “Children,” she had said, “I have left it late, very late, but I am going Home now; meet me there.” She clung to the Publican’s prayer till the last.

*October 6th, 1889*.—My first Communion at Abbotsford. Ninety-one sat down at the table, thirty-three of them added to the roll, nineteen on profession of faith. Last Tuesday our representative elder reported at the Presbytery that I was building up the new congregation at the expense of the old one. Worse things, perhaps, might happen than this. Lord help me to copy Saul, “He was as though he heard them not.”

Having parted with his tricycle, finding it too cumbersome, John purchased a bicycle—not a very startling statement now-a-days, but *then* it was a

most extraordinary thing for a Minister to do. He was probably the clerical pioneer in this as in many other things. It was considered that John MacNeil might do it, since he was not bound by ordinary rules, but for any other Minister it was not "quite the thing." Now that we see our most dignified clergymen, even our Bishops, astride the wheel, we see how quickly popular opinion can change. The bicycle, he said, was equal to "half a Minister," and certainly made a great difference in the work he could accomplish.

## DIARY.

*November 19th, 1889.* — The Assembly appointed me unanimously as their first Evangelist, to begin work when I am finished at Abbotsford. Lord make this the best thing for our Church she ever did.

He had heard in some way that an immense crowd of people was gathering at Studley Park every Sunday afternoon. Running down on his bicycle to see if it were true, he found that thousands of people were regularly there, and that there was no one to give them the Gospel. This would not do, so arrangements were made to begin a regular Sabbath afternoon service. The first was a failure, owing to taking up a wrong position, but soon he records an attendance of 2,000. He had before this appealed to his friends for funds to purchase brass instruments for open-air work. They were soon forthcoming, and then musical volunteers were called for. He himself used to play a little on a silver cornet, and he was thus able to show his men that he did not mind doing himself what he asked them to do. This brass band greatly increased the efficiency of the open-air work—indeed much of it would otherwise have been impossible, and it soon became a recognised thing. The crowd was most respectful and attentive, and an amusing account of

a tussle with some Freethinkers, published in the *Southern Cross*, shows the temper of the audience.

### HOW THE BLASPHEMERS WERE SILENCED.

#### LIVELY SCENES IN STUDLEY PARK.

The Abbotsford Presbyterian congregation has for the last seven months sent a strong band of workers, consisting of speakers, singers, and a brass band of twelve performers (the latter to do in the open-air what the organ does inside the church) to conduct services every Sunday afternoon at 3.0 in Studley Park. The attendances have varied with the weather, from 500 to 2,000 sometimes standing around, or reclining on the grass, listening to the Word. Tidings of what the Gospel was doing in the Park reached the "Hall of Science." A band of workers was sent down about eight weeks ago to "upset MacNeil and his meeting." They started their first meeting close beside ours, but at the word the Abbotsford band soon proved too much for the men of science, and they had to beat a hasty retreat to a respectful distance. Some of them came back to us, asking to be allowed to put some questions, for ten minutes to reply, etc., etc., but we went on singing and preaching, taking no notice of their presence whatever, much to their chagrin. After our service closed, their "Mercurius" mounted the bridge on which we had been standing, and commenced about "the gospel of enlightenment which is to take the place of the exploded stories to which you have been listening this afternoon," etc., etc. Before they had finished the crowd arose and swept them off the ground!

Next Sunday they were back again with piles of *Liberators* for free distribution. Again they began their meeting in the midst of ours, but the instruments drowning their voices compelled them to retreat, taking a very large number with them. Presently strange noises are heard proceeding from their crowd; it begins to sway, and soon there is something like a hunt—the young men of Melbourne pursuing their would-be instructors, who can find no rest anywhere for the soles of their feet. We heard afterwards that the young men wanted to know where Adam came from, but such a question was too deep for the "Hall of Science" and the young fellows would not hear another word from them till they answered this question.

Next Sunday they were back again as busy as ever, but the crowd was double what it was the previous Sunday. Soon ominous sounds were heard again like the mutterings of distant thunder; presently the storm breaks, the "lights" of Melbourne

are off, and the young men after them in full cry. They caused their quarry to double so often that at last they got them very close to where our meeting was going on. We saw that the pursued were being very roughly handled, and so we called to one of them who was receiving very special attention, "Brother, come up here and we'll protect you! Come and stand behind us, and the young men will not harm you"; but this he was very loth to do. Eventually he was compelled to come and stand among our workers, but they still pressed upon him, wishing to run him into the Yarra which was flowing at our back, when some of our workers rescued him by seizing him by the collar of the coat and by the arms, lifting him thus bodily out of the crowd and over the bannisters of the bridge on which we were standing. He meekly kept his place on the bridge behind us, sitting on a rail till the close of our service unmolested, though the young men were waiting below and watching him as an opossum might be watched that had sought refuge up a tree. The crowd around by this time was immense, numbering between four and five thousand souls, listening intently to all we had to say.

Next Lord's day we received notice that the men of "science" had appealed for police protection from the "ruffianism of MacNeil's crowd." No doubt it was annoying and humbling that the workers from a "Christian" Church could say to that same crowd what they liked, and be listened to most attentively for an hour and a half, or even longer, while they, the apostolic band from the "Hall of Science," could not get a decent hearing for more than ten minutes. But the young men in Studley Park know instinctively who are their friends. They know that Jesus of Nazareth is still the working man's best Friend, and they will not stand meekly by and hear Him and His work reviled. They said to these heralds of the new gospel, "Do you see those men (pointing to the Abbotsford workers)? We will listen to those men as long as they like to talk, for they are doing good, but *you!* We would rather turn Chinamen and learn their religion than believe the insufferable rot you talk. Now, look here! tell Symes to come down here, and as surely as he does we'll duck him in the Yarra." But the gauntlet was never taken up by this last and greatest of the apostles.

Surely enough, on this afternoon, the first sight we got on nearing Studley Park was the helmets of the police told off to protect the blasphemers, but, fortunately, the officers were men of grit and gumption, as the event proved. For half an hour the crowd kept gathering, but no signs of the Liberators. During this time we had police and all in our congregation. At last they arrived, and went straight to their own place; a

crowd gathered around, and the police followed. In a little while the old premonitions were heard, then the swaying and rocking, then the hunt. Shortly a truce was called, and then was to be seen the strange sight of the "Hall of Science" contingent, flanked by the police, marching crestfallen off the ground! This, certainly, was not according to plan at all, and was inexplicable, till, after finishing our meeting in peace and quietness, we went over to the police, who had rejoined our congregation, and asked for an explanation. The senior constable informed us that when the police joined the crowd they found the "Hall of Science" men talking about the angel that appeared to Manoaah's wife, and they asked, "Did you ever see an angel? Do you know what an angel is? We'll tell you: it's a cross between a man and a bird." Then, said the officer, the young fellows would hear no more, and the jostling began. I went up to the freethinkers, and said, when I heard the stuff they were talking, "If you value your own lives and the peace of the community, you had better make yourselves scarce out of this;" and we escorted them out of the reach of the young fellows—and so the police left them to find their own ways home, sadder if not wiser, because thoroughly beaten men. Thus the upsetters themselves were properly upset.

This work in the open air will necessarily cease as the winter approaches, but it is our intention to continue the Sunday afternoon services in one of the Halls in this district, and thus try and retain the affection and sympathy which we have gained from these young fellows, in the hope that many of these brave hearts may be won for that Saviour Whose cause they showed themselves so ready outwardly to espouse.

Whilst the Abbotsford work was thus going on, John was conducting missions in many other places—short missions, mostly from Monday to Friday, returning to Abbotsford for each Sabbath.

#### DIARY.

*New Year, 1890.*—After our watch-night service, rode up to Albert Street for our weekly midnight prayer. It was a powerful meeting, and thus the opening hours of this year were spent pleading for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

I spent the day quietly till evening, when I had a wedding at Carlton, and then went to see —; found him coming out of the public house, took him home, made him wash and dress, then took him to the barber's and got him shaved, then handed him over to —. He is one of the lost ones who is yet to be found a jewel for His crown. . . . The Spirit of Prayer and

expectancy for a "Big Revival" marks 1889 as a red-letter year. Since August 14th we have had a weekly all-night of prayer for the blessing, and we intend to continue till it comes.

*"Not a week in 1890 without souls."*

May we live under an abiding baptism.

MOTTO FOR 1890 :

"Ye shall see greater things than these."

I wish to put on record my gratefulness to Thee, my blessed Lord, for the fact, that during the past year I have not lost one day through sickness.

*May 5th, 1890.*—Five years ago, this month, I was inducted at Waverley. I have been two years without a charge. Tonight again the harness is buckled on. Mr. Yule gave a good word to the new "Evangelist pastor," as he called me. Had a prayer meeting at the close, the vestry packed; pleaded for Rev. J. F. Ewing, who is lying on the border-land. . . . Had a good day yesterday, and several burdens were lifted.

*May 24th.*—Dear Ewing was called home on May 7th. The last thing he did was to order me off for rest. Now he has reached "the rest that remaineth." Lord make us faithful.

In August, 1890, the great "strike" took place, which threatened serious consequences to Melbourne. The gas stokers "came out," and Melbourne was, for a little, lit with candles! This did not last long, for volunteers from every grade of society, exasperated at the action of the men, flocked to the works. The strikers gathered in great numbers on the wharves, loud mutterings were heard, and it was feared that bloodshed was inevitable. Well, on the afternoon of August 24th the Abbotsford band left Studley Park and wended their way to the wharves. Their experience there was unusual. It was thought that the men mistook them for a brass band which they believed was coming to drown the voice of their principal speaker. As soon, therefore, as the first note was heard, the crowd made a rush and swept players, instruments, and music off the ground, leaving John and one other worker alone in their midst. Not understanding this treatment, they tried to explain, but the temper of

the mob was up, and every mention of the name of Christ was met with a literal gnashing of teeth.

The viaduct from Spencer Street to Flinders Street was then being constructed: at the unfinished end long lengths of hoop iron were hanging out, by means of which John climbed up to the top, and remained for a while on this vantage ground quite by himself. Soon, however, the men followed him, tore off his hat, threw it down to the mob, and tried to jostle him over. For an hour he stood there bareheaded, awaiting developments; then he climbed down and began to speak below. Those above now threw down stones and lime, while Colonel Wardrop and the police tried to get him a hearing. At last he retreated to a little distance, and finding another speaker, they two so on had a large and attentive congregation. Nothing was lost but the hat! When he arrived home he was as disreputable-looking a minister as one could see—covered with lime and sand, clothes torn, hands cut with the hoop iron, but otherwise uninjured. Five minutes after, two of the workers arrived, with pale, scared faces, to know if he was home. "We thought," they said, "that he would have been killed." The next Sunday he and another (who still carries on the work in Studley Park) went to the monster meeting in Flinders Park, where the labour question was being discussed, and had a splendid meeting. The whole trouble had arisen through taking wrong advice as to their position.

#### DIARY.

*On September 30th* we met for prayer in Dr. Bevan's church. Got telegrams from New Zealand, Queensland, and South Australia. Sent telegrams of greeting back, and also to Tasmania and to West Australia.

£; Nothing out of the ordinary going on at William Street. O, Lord, how long? Spent the night of Wednesday, the 24th, in prayer in the church. Lord, does it make no difference that we



pray? . . . I am finding more in, “I will manifest Myself to him.”

*On September 28th*, as I was going to church in the evening, a spring-cart ran into my bicycle and threw me in front of a running tram, but God preserved me. I rose not much the worse, and rode away to the service.

*October 19th*.—Now I have started another year’s march; 36 have passed. Lord, make this the most blessed year of my experience.

*December 19th*.—Signed contract for our new house at Sandringham, to be completed on April 20th.

*Record for 1890*.—Spoken to in enquiry-rooms, total 214. This fills me with shame and concern; it is the poorest result since I became an Evangelist, with the exception of 1885, the year in which I broke down, when I only recorded 161 enquirers. It is high time to awake out of sleep. Soon the “recall” will be sounded. Oh, shall my corner of the field not be reaped ere that hour comes?

*January 1st, 1891*.—A happy new year to You, my Lord Jesus Christ! With all my heart I say it. May I be used in bringing some of the joy to the Sacred Heart. Let the Great Revival break this year. For all temporal mercies God be praised. My wife and children are well, and I have been kept in perfect health. Glory. On *January 4th* went away to Port Campbell. God’s people got a blessing, but I saw no breakdown. Visited the scene of the wreck of the “Loch Ard,” and covered the rude tombstones with texts. God grant that they may be as life-belts to some drowning souls.

*Monday, 16th, to Friday, 20th*.—Working in Broadford with my old friend of Mansfield; the place went on fire; I can’t tell how many were savingly influenced.

*Sabbath, January 22nd*.—Had special enquirers’ meeting. Dr. MacColl answered my questions. God helped him and used him greatly. Many were led into the light.

On March 16th, the little band who had been meeting regularly to pray for a mighty outpouring of God’s Spirit, went into “Retreat,”—*i.e.*, for four days they left their churches and their homes, and went away to a quiet spot, in order to be free from all distraction, and set their faces steadily to seek their hearts’ desire. Mrs. Rutherford, of Como, near Geelong, hospitably entertained them all. This was to be no holiday, but a serious piece of business.

A deserted cottage was found in the middle of a paddock, and the next thing to be seen was my husband with a bundle of hay, which he spread on the floor. There they spent their time in fellowship and hard praying. Those days are almost too sacred to be spoken about, but it will not be considered a breach of faith to tell of one thing that occurred. After a day of wonderful nearness to God, one of the friends suggested that, as John MacNeil was soon to go out again as an Evangelist, they should lay hands on him, and thus give him a special ordination to his work. It was done, and he dated a new era in his ministry from that hour. "The Sabbath following was 'astonishment day,' in Abbotsford and elsewhere."

In April the time came to leave Abbotsford; the church was re-established and ready for another minister; and there was much outside work waiting to be done. A call had come from Dunedin, New Zealand, for eight weeks' work in the city and suburbs. On April 20th, we left Abbotsford and came into the new house at Sandringham—Mr. MacNeil, though relieved of his charge, remaining at his old post till May 10th.

On *May 3rd* I broke bread for the last time with my dear people, and wept bitterly too at the evening service.

*May 10th.*—H. and I drove in to Abbotsford; splendid congregation at 11; another crowd at 3; spoke to the children on "What shall I do with Jesus?" full at 7, and a glorious service. G. P. decided; J. M. under deep conviction. Closed my ministry amid scenes of saving grace.—Alleluia.



"WAVERLEY," SANDRINGHAM (SIDE VIEW).

## CHAPTER X

### DUNEDIN. FIRST GEELONG CONVENTION

I N May, 1891, began nearly six years of uninterrupted Evangelistic work—certainly the best years of my husband's life. He had always watched himself with considerable jealousy lest the fire within him should burn less brightly as he grew older. It distressed him to see many men, who in their youth had been ardent spirits, gradually cool off into a prudent moderatism. "Shall I ever get like that?" he would ask. "Is it *necessary* for a man's ardour to decrease as his years increase?" and then answering his own question, would reply emphatically—"No! by *God's grace*, I will not alter if I live to be eighty; people will be as glad to come and hear me when I preach leaning on a staff, as they are now." It was a great comfort to him to run over the long list of honourable names of white-haired old men who are serving God as enthusiastically now as when their blood ran faster in their veins. It was one great charm in John MacNeil that he never *did* alter. He was the same at 40 as at 20. In him "zeal" never "curdled into ambition," nor did his enthusiasm ever abate. He was the same eager, hopeful, courageous soul from beginning to end. His cheerfulness struck everybody. He always came to his work with a spring. The pulse of a prayer meeting quickened, and stiffness flew out of the window as he came in at the door. His

quaint, original way of putting the truth brought smiles and tears together. He seemed almost to be two men—the one softening, mellowing, and brightening all whom he touched; the other fierce, fearless, reckless of the world's good will, as he pounced upon evil doing anywhere, in any rank of life, denouncing it like any old Hebrew prophet. The man who, with voice raised to its loudest pitch, with tossed hair and flashing eye, and arm revolving like a flail, strode up and down the platform, holding up to contempt and indignation some modern Babylonianism, would hardly be recognised next day as he sat beside the bed of some dying man, singing as softly as the breeze that only just moves the forest leaf, yet with such a fulness of tone and depth of feeling that weak ones would look wonderingly up into his face and place their hands in his, as though by contact to appropriate some of his strength. "He is going *down* all the time," said a minister, as they both stood beside a sinking Christian. "Nonsense," said the Evangelist, smiling, and putting his arm round the invalid, "he is all the time going *up*."

Old people loved him. His visits brought brightness into many of their weary days. "Is that Mr. MacNeil?" enquires an old lady as she hears a step at the door. "No, no, Grannie; it's only John!" was the kindly reply. Then he would sit down and sing to her about the "Deliverance" that was coming, and, asking for the old Bible, would read about the time when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." To those who, being aged, felt themselves useless, his message about the difference between "works" and "fruit," used to be very helpful. "Ah, Grannie, you are too old to do much work, but you can still bear fruit." Only a few words of prayer, and he would be away—hardly ten minutes in the house—but from many a lonely room went up daily prayer on

his account from hearts that found, at any rate, *this* way of fruit bearing. He was never too busy, never too pre-occupied, to carry a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul, even though that soul did happen to be old.

His way of denouncing wrong wherever he saw it, never mind who the wrong doer was, often, as might be expected, brought down upon him a storm of denunciation, remonstrance, or ridicule.

"Dear me," he was sometimes asked, "how is it that you cannot live quietly like other men? Why must *you* always be the one to raise the hornet's nest?" With a shake of the head, half grave, half comical, he often replied, "Ah, I'm a man of war from my youth up!"

Away in some agricultural town he once heard that one of the large butter factories was being kept open and that work was being carried on as usual on Sunday. This aroused him, and he waited for his best chance of saying publicly what he had to say about it. At his last meeting the church was packed, every inch of available room being taken up, and on the very front seat were several directors of this identical factory, all unconscious of what awaited them. There was a pretty general hitting out at first, and none enjoyed the hits more than the directors—they laughed again and again. Presently he spied them, and addressing himself to them with a twinkle in his eye, he advised them to "laugh away and enjoy yourselves while you can! I'll be round your way presently." He was soon "round their way," and for five minutes he turned his broadside on them with startling effect. It was next to impossible to get out of the crowded church. The discomfiture of the others had given them so much amusement that for very shame they had to face it out when it came to their turn, but they must have had a terrible time as the Evangelist held them up

on the point of his spear. He spoiled the symmetry of many a good sermon because he felt that some particular truth needed special application at that particular time. "How did you like him?" a hearer was once asked. "Like him?" he said excitedly, "I don't like him at all; I've been used to firstly, secondly, thirdly, and then the application in a sermon; but that man! he's application from beginning to end." John was, in some respects, a most "uncomfortable" man. Conscience and he had a remarkable way of agreeing with each other, and this was not true of him only in public. He had a simple, direct way of finding out the spiritual whereabouts of his friends, which made any of them, whose first love had in any degree evaporated, not at all anxious to meet him. "Ah," he would say sometimes with a sigh, "I'm afraid — is not the man he used to be. He used not to shun me like that." "You are an awkward man to have about, John," was once said to him, "when one wants to do a little backsliding." His own life was such an onward *march* that it was a continual reproach to Christian lives that loitered at all along the way.

It was suggested in one Assembly that Mr. MacNeil must be getting "mentally lazy." (It should perhaps be explained that the man who said this knew very little about him.) That he *was* becoming so was argued from the fact that in his missions he used the same sermons over and over again. It is true that he did so, but at the same time the inference was wrong. He was perpetually preparing fresh matter, which, however, was seldom used in his mission meetings. When he was asked, as he often was, why he kept so persistently to the old addresses, and why he did not use the new ones, which were equally as good and presumably fresher, he would reply, "To tell you the truth, I am afraid of discarding nets which have served me so well at

catching the fish." At the same time he worked as hard in his study as though he were obliged to prepare two sermons a week. He would have scorned himself had he allowed his Evangelistic work to serve as an excuse for "mental laziness." It was the same with study of all descriptions. He said so little about his reading that many people thought he read nothing but his Bible. No book, indeed, was ever allowed to take precedence of it; the freshest hours of the day were spent among its pages; it was the first thing in his hands in the morning, and the last laid down at night.

But it was not his *only* book. Next to his Bible came "Rutherford's Letters." They were his constant companions. He loved the Puritans, too; and was, moreover, a Mystic. He revelled in their devotions and meditations, while at the same time he was a shrewd man of the world, and brought his mysticism to bear on everyday objects. The best poets were his admiration. Their noblest sentiments were seized on, and not only committed to memory, but made a standard and a stimulus to himself. The heroic strain in James Russell Lowell fired the same strain in his own soul. He would spring to his feet and pace up and down the room, saying, "Listen to this! isn't it glorious? what would not I give to be able to put things like that!" In the ordinary sense of the term he was *not* a wide reader, but whether he was a loser or a gainer by this does not yet appear. I have found among his papers dozens of addresses by Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, for whom he retained all his old loyalty. "That great preacher of repentance," as he calls him, exercised an undoubted sway over his mind, and the *British Weekly*, which brought these addresses to him, received a double welcome on his account.

The usual bundle of magazines, that delight and plague of every minister, was carefully gone through;



and being read, the old copies were packed away to be carried off on his long journeys, one being dropped at every lonely gatehouse on the line, or at other places where reading matter is almost as precious and as scarce as gold. It is when making little sacrifices of one's comfort in this way that the Spirit of Christ seems to shine out most conspicuously. "I want to be a 'one-thing-I-do' man," he said years ago, and the one object which he set before himself all his life through was "To glorify God in the salvation of souls." That "good is the enemy of best" was a sentiment which he seems to have altogether comprehended, and in striving after the "best" thing he had to brush aside many a thing that was "good," and which he himself recognised to be such. After this "one thing," he was striving as strenuously and as sternly when he finished his course as when he began it in all his young enthusiasm.

"As soon as we hear on infallible authority that hell's gates are shut, and that no more are passing in, let you and me have a rest, and not till then." So he wrote to a friend. He was waiting *till then* to enjoy many of the good gifts of God, and to read many a book which under other circumstances he knew would be well worth reading.

It was in the South or Middle Island of New Zealand, that he began his Evangelistic work for the third time.

#### DIARY.

"On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 12th, 1891, I kissed good-bye to my three precious bairns in our new pretty home at Sandringham, on the shores of Port Philip Bay, and set out on my *Third Evangelistic Campaign*, my wife accompanying me to the ship. My first campaign extended from February, 1881, till March, 1885; my second, from July, 1888, till May, 1889; my third begins to-day. The Captain only knows when, and where, and how it will end. On reaching the good

ship "Wairarapa," I found father and mother there, and a great company from dear old Abbotsford. After saying good-bye, I took up my position on the top deck, and the band began to sing hymns, and kept at it all the time we were within hearing. As the ship sped down the stream, I heard floating over the water: "Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, beautiful river." There were about 60 present, in solid phalanx, and they kept waving good-bye, till lost to sight.

The Dunedin Mission was the first that he had undertaken of so great a length, in and around one city. The plan was to take four weeks in the suburbs first; then three weeks more in the city churches; and then a last week in the Garrison Hall as a climax. In announcing the forthcoming mission to his people, Rev. James Gibb, of the First Church, said: "For the last two years Mr. MacNeil has been engaged in building up a congregation which had suffered shipwreck. This task he has successfully accomplished, and my letter, asking him to come over here for awhile, reached him just when he had made up his mind to hand over the Abbotsford charge to the Presbytery, and to put his services again at the disposal of the Evangelistic Committee of his Church. 'The Man of Macedonia business over again!' he said, when he got my note, and he at once determined to come to Dunedin. Mr. MacNeil will preach to you the doctrine of the Cross of Christ, and he will insist, I am glad to say, not less earnestly upon the need of personal holiness. He has methods of working, and ways of stating the Truth, which are the reverse of conventional, and perhaps, so much the better for us all. He will get his own way, unhindered by any notions of ours, as to pulpit proprieties, and the like."

#### MR. MACNEIL'S LETTERS FROM DUNEDIN.

FIRST CHURCH MANSE,  
DUNEDIN,

*May 19th, 1891.*

I am now camped on the field of battle—such a field as I

have never fought on in all my life before. For eight weeks, if the Lord tarries, I am to be here. Surely there will be something extraordinary as the result of this extra-long campaign. We landed at Hobart early on Thursday. Going ashore I posted your letter, strolled away up towards Mount Wellington, and found myself on the top of a hill called after Lord Nelson, talking to some quarrymen about eternal things. Stayed till nearly dinner time, and then struck down for the boat, but had to hunt up a draper by the way, to buy some buttons and pins! We got off again about 4.0, and steamed down to the ocean. It was simply charming. The tints between us and Mount Wellington would have delighted your soul. Friday, fair wind, and all sail set. Captain McIntosh\* was very kind to me, and told me to "make myself at home" in his cabin, the best place in the ship. On Sabbath morning we were near land, and I could see the snow-capped hills in the distance. At 11.0 the Church bell rang, and nearly everybody in the saloon heard me. Mr. Whitehead played and sang. I spoke shortly on "Ye must be born again." In the afternoon we went aft, and Mr. P. (if he calls on you before I return, make him welcome right royally; he is one of the King's Own, and as oft refreshed my spirit) Mr. W. and myself had each a word. We got to the Bluff that evening about dark and the P. M. Minister asked me to preach. Got into the Church just in time—fine, big congregation, and power too.

When I came on deck this morning we were creeping into Port Chalmers. It rained slightly as we sailed up the Estuary, and shortly after 1.0 we sighted the city. I raised my hat, and said from my heart, "Dunedin for Christ." As I got nearer I saw a knot of ministers waiting; I waved, they answered, and soon jumping ashore was introduced to all. One of them said, "Don't you mind Johnnie Dunn?" He, you must know, was one of my Edinburgh Professors, and lo! here was one of my old New College mates. They are most warm hearted here—the antipodes of their climate.

*Wednesday.*—We have made a start. It was pouring wet, but about 250 came out to the prayer meeting. I began to-night at South Dunedin, in a small church holding 350 or more, and we have seen the first fruits. My old Professor has sent me a letter to-day, asking me to come to Oamaru.

CAVERSHAM,

NEW ZEALAND,

*May 27th, 1891.*

This letter goes by Captain Logan of the *Manipouri*. If you

\*Who perished when his boat was lost soon afterwards.

have anything to send down he will gladly take it. I move on to-morrow to Anderson's Bay. On Saturday, my first rest day, I go up to Mossgiel, eight miles away, the country town where they make the Scotch plaids. I will have been at it a week to-night, and in that time will have finished two missions, so you see they are not giving me much time to do the reaping. They are “looking at me!” some of these people. I told them that I was a “Primitive Presbyterian,” and so their curiosity is satisfied. “How are you?” I asked a Scotchman, not long out from Dr. Andrew Bonar's Church. “Oh graun! I've got an awfu' blissin'”—and he looked like it. I have had some good times myself, too, in my lonely room. I was singing the other night, as I came in from the meeting:—

“I saw Salvation's herald go,  
Through Austral's wilds, New Zealand's snow,  
To free from Satan's thrall;  
No friend or comfort counts he dear,  
No foe or peril does he fear,  
He feels that 'CHRIST is all.'”

As I sang, down came the glory. Oh! I would fare badly away from my own home, if I did not get sweet glimpses of His face now and again from that country where

“Rivers of milk and honey rise,  
And all the fruits of Paradise  
In endless plenty grow.”

This is compensation! Last week, for a day or two, Dunedin was surrounded with snow. You would enjoy these bracing winds.

ANDERSON'S BAY,

June 2nd, 1891.

You will have heard from the P.S. what a glorious finish we had at Caversham. Friday night was the best night I have seen yet—nearly a dozen good cases. Saturday was play day, so I borrowed Mr. C.'s horse “Pet,” and rode out to Mossgiel, and purchased a MacNeil rug. The pattern of the tartan is of course the prettiest o' them a'—the veritable MacNeil of Bara and of Gigha, those glorious old ancestors of mine, whose coat of arms bears the motto, *Vincere vel Mori*. It suits me grandly. The factory is in the centre of the great Taiéri Plain, which is bounded by the sea on one side, and by mountains on the other. I crossed one of these ranges, and I shall not forget in a hurry the sight I saw as I reached the summit and looked down on the plain below, and then away to the hills with their lights and shadows in the distance.

Mr. McK. introduced me to the manager of the factory, who took me all through it—the scouring room, the dyeing room,

a room where two "devils" were at work, the carding, and the spinning. I saw 900 old women at work spinning in one row, and there were about a dozen rows, so you will be able to calculate how many grannies I saw at work in one room! Bless me it *was* interesting.

I had good times on Sabbath, especially with the children. We arranged to-day for the last month's work in the city, taking the fourth week in the City Hall. This afternoon I took the mare, and rode along the Peninsula to Port Chalmers. Such pretty scenery! There is just a narrow arm of the sea running up eight miles from Port Chalmers to Dunedin, and on either side are high hills dotted with farms from the summit to the water's edge. I rode along the eastern ridge, and as I climbed I saw the ocean, then Port Chalmers, then all the way up the Estuary to Dunedin, then the train steaming along the foot of the opposite hills, then snow-clad mountains rising heavenward in the distance. I would give anything to have had you here to see these lovely pictures; your soul would glory in them.

Do you know what has been laid on my heart—to *write a book!* and I have actually started, It may be years before it is ready, but I believe it will come through all right some day. What is it? A handbook of Bible Readings. I have such a lot in my Bible that might do good to others if I passed it on.

I told Max, the eldest boy here, about five years old, that I was a *wild* man from Australia! He looked at me, and said, "Is your little girls wild? Is Mrs. Macneil wild too?"

*Friday.*—It is a glorious, bright, sunny morning, but freezing; and if you could peep in at the door you would see "the MacNeil" sitting with his plaid round his shoulders, and the "possum" over his legs and feet, trying to keep warm *successfully!* We had a grand start here at Mornington on Wednesday; twelve ministers present, and such a blessed meeting. I tried to sing "Deliverance," and the oldest Minister in Otago said to me after, "I did enjoy it; I would give you £100 if you could teach me to sing like that!"

THE KAIKORAI,

*Thursday afternoon.*

The Mission is gathering force, thank God! Sabbath was a grand day; Church packed in the afternoon, full up at night, and full of power and glory too. One young fellow was so angry with me the first two nights that he was going to "punch my head." On Sunday night he went out with the crowd, but creeping back in the after-meeting, he edged over

to Mr. P., and said, “Oh, sir, speak to me ; I am so miserable !” He went home rejoicing, and would now do anything for me. Another, a girl, threatened bodily damage because I dared to speak of hell in her hearing ! so don't be alarmed if you find a battered husband turning up some day. Monday was bitterly cold, high wind, snow, and hail. What a colour the people's noses looked ! Tuesday was a rest day, but I said I would work, and I am glad I did, for many a soul was snatched from the devil that night. Came over here to “Batchelors' Hall” last night. I feel at home, but don't like places where there is no wife. I am pegging away at — to get a “Mrs.,” and I hope I am making an impression. I have nearly three days with him still, and I may get him quite cheery over the prospect ere I move on. Last night we had the best first meeting I have had for a long time—lovely tone and good solid work done. Several who were saved went home and confessed Christ at once. The interest is rising, and the outlook, as well as uplook, is splendid for the next month.

You never saw such tram-lines as they have here. A Melbourne engineer built the first. Up from Dunedin they rise one in six ! and then there is the “Extension,” passing Mrs. P.'s door, one in three-and-a-half. I came down it once. You have to hold on by your eyebrows for fear of tipping over ! it is like sliding down the roof of a house. There was a runaway *once*, and that “once” was quite enough. Tell dear Elsie that I will be starting for home (D.V.) this day five weeks, and expect to be with you on June 23rd, so I will be in time for her party. Then, please God, I will have a week at home. Can't stay any more, because I am later here than the Committee asked me to be. My heart is clinging to you all ; 1,200 miles of sea can't make the grip loosen.

N.E. VALLEY,

*June 17th, 1891.*

The Lord's work here is like a snowball, bigger the farther it rolls. We had a splendid finish at Kaikorai, and here they have been getting saved in batches. We have started in the wholesale line. Hallelujah ! Attendances splendid ; Church full last night ; it was just a spinning meeting. Now then, pray for 350 *at least* for the next four weeks, and as many more as He likes to give. I must stop ; I want to have an hour's praying.

*Thursday.*

Our 7 a.m. prayer meetings have been queer ! I sometimes tried for a hymn, but couldn't get it in edgeways. Tried to say something, but they would not give me time—

praying on as fast as sharpshooters. Room packed—standing out in the passage. Ah! it is grand to get a Presbyterian on fire; he *can* burn. I just stand and look at them, and laugh at what God is doing. I discovered ten days ago that I was preaching with my coat parting from one of its sleeves, so I set to work to darn it. I am afraid you would blow me up if you saw the way I did it; but, at any rate, if it is not neat, it is *strong*.

### DIARY.

*Saturday, June 20th, 1891.*—Nine a.m. found me in the Chemistry Class-room of the Dunedin University, for an hour's talk with the students. About 50 rolled up, including women, and I think we had a good and profitable time. Went out to Ocean Beach for dinner, with the Borrie family. Now, Lord, shake Dunedin! put Thy stamp upon the city for Christ's sake!

*Saturday, June 27th.*—Last Sabbath, preached on "The Apple Tree" in North Dunedin at the Communion service; not much blessing in my own soul. A very nice time with St. Andrew's Sunday School children at 2.30; several of them professed to decide for Christ in the prayer meeting; church crammed to the door at night. Solemn time on the "Burning Barley Fields."

*Tuesday.*—Attendance better still; spoke on "The Blood"; took notes to the pulpit, and oh, such bondage! the people felt it. Some rose and left the church! I never remember being more disgusted with myself. I had had more prayer than usual, had stayed up till after 1 a.m., and prayed much during the day, and yet I neutralised it all by leaning on a broken reed. Forgive, forgive! And yet souls were saved.

*Wednesday.*—Spoke on "Christ's tears," and left my notes at home. There was a blessed, powerful meeting. Lord help me to remember the lesson till my dying day.

*Thursday.*—Shifted to Dr. Stewart's; crowded meeting at night.

*Friday.*—Started Bible Readings in Y.W.C.A; hall crowded. Mark Guy Pearse's lecture at night, and Madame Patey singing were counter attractions, but we had a wonderful meeting, and several seekers at the close.

*Saturday.*—Went to the Flagstaff with some students to-day. Grand walk; four hours at it through the scrub. Heard M. G. Pearse to-night on Psalm *xviii*; some very good points indeed; God bless his visit to many souls in Dunedin.

*Saturday, July 4th, 1891.*—New Knox Church quite full last Sabbath. Glorious sight when the great congregation rose to praise! Spoke on "The Temple."

*Thursday.*—Moved back to Mr. Gibbs's again to-day, and at 10 a.m. was in the hall of the First Church to begin the All-day of Prayer. The meeting grew on till 3.0, when we could not get the people in. I was very weary, having been in charge for seven hours at a stretch. Resumed at 7.30. Pleading hard for the work.

*Friday.*—Good Bible Reading, and hundreds turned away from my lecture at the City Hall, Some good cases in the after meeting. Lord, keep the Mission humming. To-day, drove down the Peninsula to Portobello, and feel splendid to-night, thank God. *Now Lord, we leave it to Yourself this week.*

*Saturday 11th.*—Preached to the Highlanders in Chalmers Church on Psalm xxiii.; church full; I enjoyed the service much. At 6.30 the First Church was crammed to the doors; spoke on "Talents." The congregation was most attentive, but I did not get *range* for a good time; then at 7.50 ran round to the City Hall; it was quite full too; spoke on "Eternal Hope." Some decided at the close.

*Monday.*—Hall quite full of men at 7.30. Gave my first address on the "Social Evil." With few exceptions, the vast audience sprang to their feet when I cried: "Who will, by God's help, keep his record clean henceforth?"

*Thursday.*—Best-toned meeting of all.

*Friday.*—About 600 people out at the Bible Reading. Praise! Hall full at night, and splendid work done. Thank God.

*Saturday.*—Drove round Mount Cargill; prepared for re-delivery of lecture to-night, men only. Lord give wonderful blessing. . . . The City Hall was filled to the doors. God was working and blessing souls.

*Sabbath.*—Preached at the First Church at 11 a.m. on "Battlements"; full; many blessed. Church filled at 6.30, aisles, pulpit and all; subject, "Cannot enter." Went round to the City Hall at 8; crammed; man arrested by God that night, and prevented from murdering his wife.

*Wednesday.*—City Hall full at 3 p.m.; Bible Reading on "The Lord's Second Coming"; the crowd gathered long before 7.30, and it was near 11 p.m. before we were finished. How wonderfully fresh I am.

*Thursday.*—Left at 8 a.m. for Invercargill; a nice company here at the station to see me off; they sang the Doxology. God bless them very, very abundantly, for Christ's sake.

*Sabbath.*—On board the *Tarawera*. Got up after breakfast to try to prepare for service, but was too ill. Lay down till evening, when I roused myself and went forward to invite the people to church. At 7.30 had music saloon filled. God kept me up, so that I struggled through the service; hard work.



*Thursday.*—Made fast to the Melbourne Wharf at 6 a.m. in the moonlight. Saw dear brother W. waiting for me; bless him. Home before 8 o'clock. Elsie ran down the road to meet me first, followed by Ella. Her first greeting was: "Tie it, father"—her shoe had come off!

*Sabbath.*—Spent the evening at home with the children; started reading the Pilgrim's Progress with them—most deeply interested.

What were the lasting results of this mission? In the case of Dunedin, peculiar circumstances led to a searching investigation as to what remained after the lapse of a year. We had to thank God for what we heard. One church reported twenty-five having joined, while fifteen or sixteen more were being instructed "more perfectly" in the things of God. "No results from John MacNeil's meetings!" said one astonished young man. "Why, without thinking for a moment, I can name a dozen in my own circle converted then. There were scores of people in Dunedin converted at that time."

The next outstanding event in my husband's experience was the First Geelong Convention. The ministers who formed what had come to be known as "The Band" had increased in number, until it comprised thirty or forty members from all denominations. The subject of the Higher Life had begun to excite interest. The ministers themselves had been finding out "deeper depths" and "higher heights," and it was now felt that a Convention, on the lines of the famous Convention at Keswick, would give the much-needed opportunity of setting forth the doctrine of Sanctification by Faith. Rev. George Grubb was then in Australia, and it was resolved to ask him to act as chairman. It was something of a venture, and was eyed with much suspicion by many estimable people who could not understand—first, why there should be a Convention

at all; secondly, why it should be held at Geelong; and thirdly, why the speakers should be confined to a limited circle.

To the promoters of the Convention there seemed to be excellent reasons for all three arrangements. My husband's position as secretary entailed much anxious work. It was a bold, and yet had to be a cautious step. The standard had to be set up, and yet it had to be done with due consideration for the feelings of those who were not altogether in sympathy.

The report of the Missionary Meeting at the close of that Convention travelled through the length and breadth of Christendom, with exaggerations varying as it flew. Its excitement and its eccentricities were duly commented on and severely rebuked. This one effect it produced at all events—that "Geelong" became famous at its birth. Those who really were present at that occasion will never forget it. It was a wonderful meeting in its stillness, its absolute freedom from physical excitement, and in the unmistakable presence and power of the Holy Spirit. A decided movement towards Foreign Missions may be traced to that year. Dr. and Mrs. Warren were then led to the opening of their "Missionary Home" for women, which acts as a splendid sieve for candidates, and a training ground for those who can pass its tests. It was decided that as a general rule the Convention should not itself undertake the responsibility of sending out missionaries, but should pass on its volunteers to various existing societies. One lady candidate, however, was sent to South Africa under the direct auspices of the Convention, and is doing good service under the Cape General Mission. Their message about her is to the effect that they would like "more workers of the same sort." There were not wanting people who declared that the success of this gathering was owing to Mr

Grubb's presence, and that the second year's attempt would end in failure. Six years, however, have come and gone, and it is now recognised that as long as the Geelong Convention is kept on its primitive lines, its success or otherwise will not lie altogether in the person of the chairman.

#### DIARY.

*Geelong, Tuesday, September 15th, 1891*—At 10.30 (the first meeting) the body of the Hall was half-filled. After a Bible Reading by Mr. Grubb, Mr. Chapman stated how we had been led up to holding this Convention; the men of the Band had been forced to the conviction that Apostolic Christianity was *not* ours.

*Wednesday*.—Great crowd out at the 7 a.m. prayer meeting, and over £35 subscribed for a poor woman whose husband is in gaol. The meetings grew in interest and in numbers through the day.

*Thursday*.—"David," the Tamil, has been teaching in the power of the Spirit.

*Friday*.—At 10.30, a Missionary Meeting was held, at which Miss Fuller broke us all down with her testimony as to having received "the blessing." David then gave "a message," pointing out the difference between a messenger being "called," and being "sent." Then Father Watsford prayed, and we all broke down under the power of God. Many publicly gave themselves to the work of the Lord in the Foreign Field; then gifts began to come in very unostentatiously, until nearly £1000 (or its equivalent) was given or promised—money, houses, lands, watches, chains, bracelets, brooches, trinkets, and—sons and daughters! Now what shall we render to Thee for Thy great goodness to us during the Convention—born in the "Glory House" at Como?

The Geelong Convention has become the mother of numberless small Conventions in country towns, and thus the doctrines of the Higher Life have been widely disseminated. These assemblages, accompanied by the personal testimony of those who have entered upon "second blessing," have brought light to many to whom Geelong is only a name.

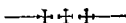
## CHAPTER XI

### "THE KING'S OWN." A SON OF CONSOLATION. TASMANIA

AS the converts under my husband's ministry increased in number, he began to be a good deal exercised about the quality of their religion. It did not at all satisfy him that they should simply profess saving faith in Christ and rest there; he was anxious that they should at once step up upon a higher platform, where those worldly considerations, which so often clog the steps of the young, would exercise a minimum of influence. Knowing the helpfulness of a strong line of demarcation, he drew up a set of resolutions for Christian behaviour and avoidance, and placing under them the text "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me," he gave the name of "King's Own" to all who enrolled themselves under this banner. Not that those who joined were peculiarly dear to "the King," but because there is so much in a name, and because he felt that *noblesse oblige* must become a principle with all who accepted such a name as this. A fac-simile of the certificate is here shown as it now appears. It was originally intended only for his own converts, but has since been broadened so as to include any who wish to join. A badge was prepared to be worn by members—not compulsory—but useful for the purpose of recognition and Christian conversation generally.

# "The King's Own."

Founded by REV. JOHN MACNEIL, B.A.



This is to Certify

That.....

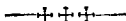
of.....

is No.....in the Roll-Call of "The King's Own."

Enrolled.....

HANNAH MACNEIL,

General Secretary.



## Our Principles.

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be our all-sufficient Saviour and absolute Lord and Master, the Bible to be the one Divinely-inspired and authoritative standard of faith and conduct, and that it is our birthright as Children of God to be "filled with the Spirit."

### In Reliance upon Divine grace

*We Resolve* to claim this blessed infilling, and then to retain it by obedience and daily fellowship with "The King," through the written word and prayer.

*We Resolve* to "come out from among them and be separate" from the ungodly, to abstain from everything that is carnal, that is of the world, the flesh, or the devil, such as smoking, drinking, dancing, theatre-going, racing, betting, and gambling in all its forms.

*We Resolve* to make in all things "The King's" will the rule of our life, and in matters of perplexity always to ask "What would Jesus do?"

*We Resolve* to give regularly, and, where practicable, systematically, a due proportion of our income, whether it be great or small, to "The King," Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

*We Resolve* to acquit ourselves before our fellows as becometh "The King's Own," to be out and out for "The King," and to be engaged in *active service* for Him, while "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

*We Resolve* to pray daily for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in connection with every effort—especially Evangelistic effort—for the extension of the Kingdom.

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me."

Explain our Principles to others.

Endeavour to Extend our Membership.

Some hundreds of names now appear upon this roll. The "King's Own" are all bound by "resolution" to be engaged in "active service." This secures not only that each member is a daily Bible-reader, prayerful, unworldly, obedient, systematically liberal, but is also engaged in the special "active service" of "looking for" Christ's return, and of praying daily for the extension of His Kingdom. It is amusing to note how the membership might have been doubled, or even trebled, could the clause about the "smoking" have been excluded. "I would so much like to join the King's Own," says one dear Swedish brother, "but I cannot give up *de smokin*." Well, we do not say that a smoker cannot rise to the highest heights of Christian privilege; we simply say that he cannot be a member of "the King's Own." There are, alas, many other things just as worldly as those here indicated as "carnal," so it must be borne in mind that we only say "such as"—not for a moment implying that the list is in any sense complete.

#### DIARY.

*October 19th, 1891.*—Spent my 38th birthday at Richmond, leading Christians into the Higher Life, and sinners into the Kingdom. My four precious children came to me in the morning with "The Story of Uganda," a book in which all their names were written. Stewart was sitting on it, Mother holding him and Elsie, Ella and Cora holding fast to the book under him—it was a lovely picture.

A new experience came to John this year. His youngest sister, a bright girl and a beautiful singer, had been stricken with mortal illness. His letters to her in her suffering were some of the brightest spots in her life, eagerly seized on, read and re-read, and kept close at hand, where they could be felt even when not seen. He was able to get away from his work in October, and ran over to South Australia to see her.

## DIARY.

H. and I started for Adelaide to see Lizzie. Dear old girl, what a state I found her in! a galloping consumption eating her dear life away. I stayed with her till Monday morning, comforting her all I knew, and as she was able to bear it. Said good-bye as she lay in her bed. She was thinking, "I'll never see John again;" and I was thinking, "I'll never see Lizz again." I left her, kind Shepherd, in Thy tender keeping.

## TO HIS SISTER.

WOORIWRITE STATION,

NEAR CAMPERDOWN,

*Tuesday Afternoon.*

My darling sister Lizz,

I do trust you will be well enough to read this. I got a line from T. at Gawler to-day, telling of the bad turn you had before she left. Oh, I do hope it has been the last. I pray that Jesus may open my darling's eyes, and show her the glory that is drawing nigh, and then she will be able to say with St. Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." If you could only hear Him saying to you, "All this is working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," it would help you such a lot. I do so long to be with you, darling, and if I were my own Master I *would* be with you, but my Committee have all my work cut out, and I am expected to be here on such a day, and there on such another day; but my heart is with you, and my heart will be with you when you are in the glory with the dear Lord Jesus and with Dorothy.\* I send my warmest love by you to the Lord Jesus, the Man that died for you and me; tell Him that I am trying all I can to bring people to His blessed feet. We'll not be long in coming after you, for we are all wearing that way. Won't it be grand when we are altogether in the "Muckle Hoose" (as a Scotchman called it), with *everything* just as we would have it — no pain in head or heart. It won't be long till it all comes true. "For the joy that was set before Him, despising *the cross*." Let us copy Him, my darling.

Your own loving brother,

JOHN.

## DIARY.

On December 27th, my sister Lizzie entered into rest; she no longer needs to say, "*I wish I could sing.*"

\* Her little child,

TO MRS. MARTIN.

LAUNCESTON,

*Wednesday Night,*

*December 28th, 1891.*

My darling sister Tina,

I was at prayer in my room this morning, when a knock came to my door, and a telegram was handed in. I knew what it was. Yes, it was from H., saying, “Lizzie went home yesterday. Funeral to-morrow,” and so I can’t be present. I looked longingly at the steamer down at the wharf, but she couldn’t take me there soon enough, so the next time I see the dear face will be in glory. I long to know whether you were with her at “the release,” as she called it. I am hungry for all the news. I shall never forget the darling saying to me with big tears in her eyes on the Sunday I was with her, “I am afraid to die, John; I am afraid of the pain.” It ploughed up my heart, and I have been praying hard that at the last He would just hush her off to sleep. However, it is all behind her now; she is to be envied, and we are to be pitied. She has seen Him and heard Him Whom I am trying to serve every day and night. Often she sang with me in the meetings in years gone by,

“At the name of Jesus bowing,  
Falling prostrate at His feet.”

We were singing that at our Bible reading to-day, and my heart looked up, and saw her *doing* it. Ah Lizzie! my sister! you could preach better than your poor stammering brother now. I hear her calling to me in the loneliness of this borrowed room—“Preach away, John; it’s all true that you say, but you don’t tell out half the story;” and I am answering back, “I’ll do the best I can, as long as I can.” She is the first to fall out of our earthly circle of seven! no more praying for Lizzie; no, I am praising for her now. Who’ll be the next to fall out? Which of us six?\* I must pray all the harder for the other five. . . Don’t forget, Tina; tell me *all* you know; you won’t weary me by telling me everything about my loving, unselfish sister’s closing hours, no matter how long your letter may be.

Your loving brother,

JOHN.

I have three other letters of sympathy, two written to his friend, Mr. David Beath, whose second

\* He was the next.



daughter died in England most unexpectedly while he himself was in Victoria; and the other to his Band-mate, Rev. M. G. Hart, on the death of his little child.

TO MR. DAVID BEATH.

MANSE, TERANG,

April 29th, 1892.

My Precious Brother,

Your telegram was put into my hand just as I was entering the pulpit last night. If it could give me such a shock, oh, what must the cable have given you! I almost wish I had been at home this week instead of last. I would like to have been near you, for I could make you *feel* how much I loved you and sympathised with you in this supreme sorrow. Let us give thanks even in this, and so glorify our Elder Brother. If dear old Constance is no longer with us, she is with *Him*, which is "very far" better. He wanted the young mother by His own loving side. She has outrun her dear father and mother; she has "gazed upon her Master; His Name is on her brow." Man dear, think of it till your heart swells! If her first Bridegroom wanted her, and sent for her, hadn't He a right to her, a prior claim to all others? *Her* joy is full, and so is *His*; she is looking into His dear face now; she is listening to His dear voice. School your aching heart to dwell on that side of the case. Now is the time for you to play the man of faith. See that you win His "well done." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Now we can *say* in faith, "It is well," but then we shall *see* that it was even so. Let us give thanks that her own dear mother was at her side before she went Home. Perhaps she'll be back for you all with Himself sooner than we think. I am just asking Him to astonish you all—you here and the loved ones yonder, by the amazing grace which He makes "run over on all sides" to you. I am just off to try and catch some children's hearts and lives for our Beloved. I am deeply indebted to you for letting me help you to bear the burden *so soon* after you felt its weight.

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO THE SAME.

TERANG,

May 4th, 1892.

My Beloved Friend,

Just a line that you may make sure you are not being forgotten by one who has good reason to remember you.

" Show me Thy face ;  
The heaviest Cross  
Will then seem light to bear ;  
There will be gain in *every* loss,  
And peace with every care."

I think that will be a message for you. Every line is weighted. You and I must go on to say :

" Shine clear, though pale,  
Behind the veil,  
Until, the veil removed,  
In perfect glory I behold  
The face that I have loved."

Constance has got behind that veil ! Oh, glory ! Think of her gazing on His face *within* the veil.

Ah, beloved ! it is some near and dear one going upstairs that brings the upstairs down very near us ; or perhaps it is the other way about—it lifts us up to the stair-head, and keeps us there just outside the gate, hungry for our turn to go in and see. If I knew the address of my dear "Ivy Grange mother" I would write her a line, but you can tell her that her big boy of 1881 and 1882 has a warm place for her and her's just now in his sympathies and prayers. Oh, for superabounding consolations. Constance has been a week within the veil to-day. Oh, to be with Connie !

" There the red rose of Sharon  
Unfolds its heartsome bloom,  
And fills the air of Heaven  
With ravishing perfume."

Cheer, my fellow pilgrim ! We're nearing Home. He is seeing of His soul-travail. Yours true till the Glory,

JOHN MACNEIL.

TO REV. M. G. HART.

BORDER TOWN,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

*December 6th, 1888.*

My Beloved Brother,

From my wife this morning I got the sad news that a great blank had been made in your little circle. There was *one* flower in the garden, and only one ; and it the gardener had been tending with the tenderest care. One morning on his rounds he missed it ; it was gone ! "Who plucked that flower?" he asked in his grief. "*The Master,*" was the answer, and the gardener held his peace.

I can't send you a letter just now ; yours is a sorrow with which I cannot intermeddle ; but, brother Matthew, I am just sending a line to say that you have my deepest sympathy. I have just been talking to Father about you and the dear wife. He knows how to bind and heal. May you both have more of the *Creator*, now you have less of the creature. He *can* fill the gap, and only He.

Your sympathising brother,

JOHN MACNEIL.

John was in Launceston, Tasmania, when the news of his sister's death reached him. His diary has a few entries of the work done in that place, of which he records that it was "hard, hard fighting ; no breaking up or down yet ; but Christ lives."

#### DIARY.

*Hobart, January 28th, 1893.*—A blessed week at Chalmers Church. No liberty last Lord's Day, but the people were filled. How mysteriously He moves ! but all is well. The blessed work went on every night—catching fish, thank God. It has started, too, in St. John's.

*February 4th.*—Glory to His name ! He hath done it ! The best week of my life, I believe. The gaol on Friday afternoon—I don't think I will ever forget that meeting.

*February 11th.*—Had a nice steady finish up at Hobart last Sabbath ; left by the morning train for Perth ; reached "Scone," that lovely spot of Mr. W. Gibson's ; enjoyed two days' rest there. Home by noon on Thursday, and started in Port Melbourne that same night.



"WAVERLEY," SANDRINGHAM (FRONT VIEW).

## CHAPTER XII

SOUTH AUSTRALIA. NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND.  
REV. J. McNEILL'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA, 1894

ALTHOUGH no particular mention has been made of my husband's work in Victoria, it should be remembered that through all these years he was acting as Evangelist for the Presbyterian Church. About nine months each year were spent in Evangelising, chiefly in this colony; but in response to numerous calls from elsewhere, his usual plan was to obtain three months' leave of absence from his committee, and to devote them to the "regions beyond." This year a call came from Wellington, New Zealand; and March 3rd, 1894, found us in that city. But first, however, a few extracts from his Victorian diary may prove interesting:—

### DIARY.

*March 11th, 1893.*—At Essendon the glory came down. Wesleyan, Church of England, and Primitive Methodist all united with us in preparing for the Mission. The result is that it is my Model Mission in Victoria. Dear A. S. stood by nobly. God bless the Church of England Ministers.

*On March 2nd,* I said good-bye, and left for —, where I found things in a terrible state of unpreparedness; but the Lord has proved Himself faithful.

*Saturday, May 20th, 1893.*—After finishing Erskine, I took a week's rest, during which I conducted a Bible Reading at Hon. James Campbell's, and gave an address at Mr. Hardie's temperance meeting. Put in the second week of my rest at

Burnley, where the Right Hand was restrained. Why, Lord? After that, Brighton, where the Right Hand was made bare. On, on, with the big Revival! sure, it can't be far away. Now, Lord, hasten it, we pray.

*June 3rd, 1893.*—Attendances at Clifton Hill good to the close. The champion footballer professed conversion. Lord keep him.

*June 24th.*—In Maldon the meetings were largely attended, all Churches uniting, but oh! how hard the sinners were. At ———, I found them preparing for a ball and concert to raise funds for the Church! This I denounced in the name of the Lord. The place is rotten with worldliness. Lord, strengthen the hands of Thy servants there.

Things are moving in Talbot; it was midnight ere I got home last night, after talking with young men.

*August 5th.*—Lord Jesus, do make my *experience* to keep abreast of my *knowledge*. Box Hill mission was such a happy time; we were all mixed up and couldn't tell who was who. Lord, keep the revival going.

*September 2nd.*—Four weeks since my last entry. Christ is getting richer. The Holy Spirit, the Fisher, is using me as a rod in His Hand to land many a fish, but more, many more! A visit this week to dear James Campbell. He is dying.

*October 7th.*—How the months roll by! but, glory to God, as they roll, they are rolling sinners into the Fountain, and we are constantly being brought

“Into the deepest of joys ever had,

Into the gladness of making God glad.”

Geelong has come again, and gone; blessed week! Ararat finished gloriously on October 5th. Many Christians were shaken and lifted, and sinners saved.

*October 21st.*—So (on October 19th) I passed the 39th milestone on my way home. Glory to God. Yet when I look back, oh, the shame and sorrow for all the wasted hours! The two last years have been, by His grace, the best of my life. Lord, overcome continuously in me. Oh, come and shake Horsham where I began on October 19th. Shake it terribly. Lord; let us see the “new fashion.”

On *December 14th* rode to Jinjellie, on the New South Wales side of the Murray; had a nice meeting at 3.0; back at 8.0 to Mulwala (on the Victoria side), where was the most wonderful meeting of the mission. Then started for Tallangatta, fifty miles away, travelling along the Murray banks from 11.30 p.m. till 7.30 a.m. At 2.30 the moon set, and the road being a little rough, the horse almost fell with me once. I had the stars till 3.30, when day began to break, and the birds began to

wake and praise. I was kept wonderfully fresh, and had the comfort of travelling in the cool, and without the plague of flies. Was in the train at 9.30 a.m., and by 12.0 p.m. was home. Thank God, I found that I was as strong as ever I was, just as able to do extra work as I used to be on the railways.

*January 1st, 1894.*—I have just made up my returns for 1893, and find that 2,652 were spoken to during the year, and professed to accept Christ. The work and its results have brought joy to the Sacred Heart ; but, Beloved ! I want my *walk* to bring Thee joy as well as my work.

*Saturday, January 20th.*—This has been a week of stirring and shaking among the bones. Splendid gatherings at Chiltern, and three nights at the Great Northern, where Mr. Caldwell is thinking of breaking ground. The attendances have been grand, and every night souls have been saved.

The above few extracts have been taken almost at random, for in the six years of his connection with the Victorian Church he covered an immense amount of ground, visiting places both large and small.

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On arrival at Wellington, New Zealand, in the beginning of March, 1894, a rather unusual state of things presented itself. Mr. MacNeil had accepted the invitation of the Presbyterians there to visit their city ; but on landing, he found that all the ministers but one, had withdrawn from their position, for reasons not given ; and that not only would they have nothing to do with the mission, but closed their pulpits against him. Thus they discredited both him and his work as much as lay in their power. Considering that he was visiting Wellington, not so much in his private capacity as an Evangelist, but rather as the accredited agent of the Victorian Church, this discourtesy was the more surprising. It fell therefore to my husband's lot to enquire into the matter, and he discovered that this action had been taken on receipt of a letter from a town which he had visited a year before. This letter declared that the result of the mission was worse than nil.

Now as the letter came from a man who at the time had sent John away with the warmest expressions of gratitude to God for his visit, he was the more surprised and pained. "If this is true," he said, "it is time I stopped my work. I looked upon that mission as one of my best, and now to hear that there are no results is dreadful."

By means of correspondence, and through friends who took the trouble to investigate the true state of the case, he was thankful to find that the statements of the letter were far from being fact, and that there were to that day many in that town who found Christ during the mission, and that some of the converts had left the place for wider spheres of usefulness. It was an immense relief to be reassured on this point, for it was nothing to him that crowds should attend, or that there should be seeming success at the time, if the effects were not permanent. The character of the Wellington mission was thus entirely changed. "I came here," he says, "to conduct a Presbyterian mission, and lo! it has broadened out into a mission for the whole city." Many friends gathered round, a strong committee had been already formed, a large skating rink was taken and seated, and the mission began with an immense meeting of two thousand people in the Salvation Army Barracks. Yet strange to say, it was what might be called "heavy" work. The meetings were good, but they lacked their usual swing. There were results, but they were not up to the usual standard.

#### DIARY.

*Wellington, March 10th, 1894.*—Had over 3000 souls at the Young People's Service in the Opera House last Sabbath, and about 2000 came at night. Owing to the huge open space at the back, I nearly killed myself in the effort to speak so as to be heard. I was in chains when speaking on the "Wages of Sin," but God can and will glorify His Name.



*Tuesday.*—Started in the Skating Rink with a fair muster for the Bible Reading ; middling at night. The attendances have not increased ; there have only been droppings instead of the big deluge. Called a special muster of 60 praying ones last night at 10 ; we confessed our own sin, and the sin of the church, and pleaded for the perishing. Alleluia, the tide is rising. Lord, go before at Napier and Auckland, for Christ's sake, and for souls' sake.

*Auckland, March 31st.*—The mission dragged its length along in Wellington, waning rather than waxing. Oh, how different this from the story I expected to record. Many have received the biggest blessing of their lives, and many have been converted, but there was not half the blessing we were looking for. Only three ministers in the city stood by. I have been battling against the most adverse circumstances, and God's hand has been restrained. These lies were not swept away as they might have been. Oh ! if He had only arisen, and pleaded His own cause in power, that would have vindicated His servant as nothing else could do. How long, Oh Lord, how long ?

On Sabbath, March 18th, we closed with a lecture on "Gambling," in the afternoon, which was very well attended, and we had a very large meeting at night. Had a very loving send-off from the Presbyterian brethren on Monday morning, at 6.30. After three days at Napier, where the meetings, though small, were good, we crossed to New Plymouth, and took ship for Onehunga.

#### DIARY.

Left on Friday morning for New Plymouth ; reached at 9.40 p.m., expecting to get away by the *Gairloch* that night, but she was delayed. On Saturday, saw the graves of the soldiers who fell in 1864, in the Maori war ; then went up to the Old Men's Home and had a little service with them ; then up to the Hospital, and spoke to the convalescents. After dinner, ere leaving for the ship, spoke to a consumptive who is out from England for his health ; he definitely accepted Christ. Lord, is this the reason why we were delayed ? We sat in the *Gairloch* watching Mount Egmont, with its crater full of snow, a lovely sight ; the sun setting behind the noble elevation, so stately in its loneliness—around its waist a band of cloud, so that the top seemed like a beautiful island, rising from a sea of mist. Got to Onehunga by 7 a.m. on Sabbath, when Mr. Brackenrigg, General Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., met us, and drove us to Carlton House. Preached with some help for Mr. Blaikie at 11, and in the afternoon in the City Hall to a small gathering ; not much bigger at night, but I was chained again ; still, hearts

were touched and souls were saved, thank God. I have had liberty all the week in the Y.M.C.A. The Hall seats 500; we have not filled it all the week, but we will not despise the day of small things. The Auckland people are suspicious of Evangelists; they have seen some strange specimens.

*April 7th, 1894*—Finished last night with dear Mr. MacNicol, who has shown a sweet spirit. I only wish there had been greater results. The work done has been chiefly among the young. Now, my Master, why has the work not taken hold on the grown up-people? Oh search me and tell me if the cause is in *me*? Are my motives clear? Don't let me forget that my chief aim must be to *glorify God*, not to *save souls*. I bless God for the luxury of preaching Christ with liberty this whole week. I am conscious that I have been preaching with power, and all that I am responsible for is the possession of it.

*April 14th*.—Began my last week's work in Auckland by a 7 a.m. prayer meeting in the Tabernacle; about 50 present. No shouts, but groans, for God searched and emptied us. At 11 essayed to speak on the "Battlements for the roof," but oh, what a failure! as far as my feelings were concerned. No liberty; in chains nearly all the time; so I fear that the Lord's message was spoilt in the delivery. I got an emptying with a vengeance; felt as if I could never hold up my head again. Never felt so deserted of God so often in all my ministry of 15 years as I have been during the past six weeks. Teach me the lesson. God helping me, I will bless and praise Him for help and liberty every time I get it, most *especially* on returning to my room from every service. I have been taking it, I fear, too much as a matter of course; but I see now that it is *all of grace*. The attendances have been excellent all through. Such a blessed work done among lads and young men. Quite phenomenal. Praise! How lovely when Christ takes His whip and makes a meeting "hum." It is holy revelry working then. Received illuminated address from the elders and deacons at Wellington. Bless them, Lord Jesus, every one of them.

My husband had many new experiences on this tour, and the one he alluded to most frequently was "being in chains." All the joy of preaching was taken away—that is, the joy which the true minister feels in the actual act of preaching. When he began to speak it seemed as though he were bound hand and foot—no spontaneity, no rush of words or ideas, no electrical flow of sympathy between pulpit and

pew. There was nothing, however, noticeable to the audience. They were often blest while he himself was writhing. The early Methodist preachers knew the difference between "liberty" and "bondage." To preach with liberty was to them a glorious privilege, while the opposite left the body exhausted and the soul sad at its awful hardness. God has His own way of leading His servants. It seemed strange that after John's fifteen years of preaching this should overtake him. An occasional service would not have called for any notice, but here, for a week at a time, he would not know what it was to preach with comfort. He felt "God-deserted," as he expressed it. Many a talk we had over the "why" of this experience, but could only accept it as one of God's mysterious dealings, behind which there was some lesson to be learned of dependence, of trust, and of submission. As far as I know, the experience never returned; the lesson evidently had been burnt in.

God took many ways of mellowing him. "I wonder will the grace of God ever succeed in making you and me meek, John," a dear friend used to say to him. Usually by trials from without, but occasionally by trials from within, he was constantly being tested, until his character began to assume a beautiful roundness, his natural impatience was subdued, and he was taught to stay himself upon God in every emergency. It was very noticeable to all who loved him, how God was gradually bringing him to perfection. He learned to wait for things which, in his natural impetuosity, he would have moved heaven and earth to settle for himself. Although the Lord may use a man's natural characteristics for His own glory, never turning a cautious Thomas into a headlong Peter, yet he removes the dross from both caution and rashness, until the one by grace is ready to go forward in spite of his natural sluggishness, while the other, by grace also, reins himself in at the

dictates of love to God and man. So my husband was being disciplined; becoming not less fervent, but more patient; not less "headlong," but more considerate of others whose pace was not so fast. In the earlier part of his ministry he was somewhat given to riding roughshod over those who, though not startled at the doctrine of the young Evangelist, were left quite out of breath by his speed. They shared the feelings of the old lady who could not reconcile goodness with hard riding. It was not intentional on his part if sometimes he was far away before the injured friend had time enough to protest, and so he never knew that any damage had been done.

He felt much more longing latterly for fraternal sympathy than he used to do, and though he was not dependent on it, and could do his work in spite of the lack of it, the brotherly handgrip which he might have expected, and sometimes did not get, would have made his way all the brighter from a human point of view. The worker is gone; to him, with the smile of his Master, it matters not now who smiles or who frowns, but there are some who for ever have missed the opportunity of saying, "God bless you, and God speed you, brother!" to one who, if he was not about his Master's business when here on earth, was certainly about nothing else. "May God forgive those," once prayed a saint, now himself with his Lord, "who made John's work hard for him."

In spite of many and most faithful friends, he was a lonely man, for the simple reason that he was always pressing to the front. He makes one think of one of his own stories of a colour-sergeant, who in his eagerness to run forward, had got some way up hill ahead of his regiment. The officer in command, seeing that he was in danger, called out, "Bring down the colours to the men." Instantly the

undaunted soldier rang back the words, "Bring the men up to the colours."

The following may give some idea of his work in Auckland from an opposite point of view :—

### THE REV. JOHN MACNEIL'S MISSION.

BY PASTOR JAMES BLAIKIE.

Mr. MacNeil is a man of the "John the Baptist" order, with a grand scorn for Pharisees, and a big axe for stout, stubborn sinners. He has the courage of Stephen, with the ardour of the apostle Peter—a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. He is a well tried man, and so has an established reputation as a worker and soul-winner in the Kingdom of Christ. Like David, he has proved his weapons well, and he is not afraid of Philistines. His coming to Auckland, therefore, was no venture, but an anticipated victory. He did not at first excite any great interest, but before the Mission was over, the Auckland Christians knew what kind of a man they had got, and so clung to him with the ardour of affection. His mission here lasted three weeks—the first being spent with the Y.M.C.A. ; the second at St. James's ; and the last at the Tabernacle. From first to last the power of the Lord was with him, and all bore witness that the sword he wielded was the sword of the Spirit. Nor did he wield the sword in vain, for with heavy, yet Spirit-directed blows, he smote saint and sinner alike. The afternoon Bible-readings, especially the last week at the Y.M.C.A., will be remembered for long days to come as masterly appeals and expositions. The search light from the Throne flashed on our hearts, while the fountain of living waters splashed at our feet. Oh, it was grand to see our need and Christ's fulness at one glance. I felt I wanted to clap my hands to relieve my soul of a pent-up pleasure. "The Fulness of the Spirit, the birthright of every believer," is a goal to which many are advancing since they heard the trumpet calls of John MacNeil. No one can drive a nail better than he can, and this nail is surely fastened in many a heart. Every meeting bore fruit more or less. I have heard that fifty sought the Lord at the Y.M.C.A., and at St. James's some fifty more names were recorded, while at the Tabernacle there were one hundred and seventy for the week. Hallelujah ! The writer felt it to be one of the happy weeks in his life. The converts were chiefly boys and young men. This was a notable feature of Mr. MacNeil's mission. Night after night these lads were found coming into the enquiry-room ; and, blessed be God ! the

ranks of workers were recruited from the young converts themselves, who soon sought to fetch in other lads to the Saviour. A large proportion of these lads are from our Sunday School, and so the teacher's heart leaps for joy—sower and reaper rejoicing together. Ay, I saw dear fathers and mothers weep tears of joy. For an audience, the Monday evening when the subject was "A voice from the condemned cell," was memorable. The Tabernacle was full, and there must have been quite one thousand men present. The message of the preacher was delivered with great effect, and left a lasting impression. His earnestness, telling illustrations, steam-hammer logic, and lion-like boldness, carries heart and judgment by storm. The converts made under his ministry ought to stand, if properly tended, for he fastens the Truth with all the power of his own personality. Mr. MacNeil is endowed by nature with a splendid vehemence, and a robust constitution. This he uses with tremendous force at every effort. He preaches a full salvation, and seeks to lift his hearers to the high-level life.

In addition to the meetings held every night and three afternoons a week, Mr. MacNeil addressed the inmates of the Costley Home, gave an address to business men, and spoke at the Ministers' Meeting. The good old Gospel has again triumphed, and the power of prayer has prevailed. Victory has been won in spite of all obstacles, and they were not few nor trivial. Mr. MacNeil is not a man to be daunted by difficulties. It was a fine testimony to the success of the Mission to see so many converts and other Christians assemble to say farewell, as the steamer left, to the man who for three weeks had preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Good-bye, brother, and God bless you! Be sure you come again. Thank you, Victoria, for sending us such a man.

#### DIARY.

*Saturday, April 28th, 1894.*—My place of review, my Pisgah-top to-day, is at Mr. A. McNeill's, Warrnambool, where I resumed my work on the 25th at the Convention. What backloads of mercies since I reviewed last! A favourable start from Auckland in the "*Mararoa*," good company on the boat, and lovely weather; landed in safety on the Saturday morning at Sydney; took morning and evening sermons at Mill Hill—two blessed services. Left by 9.30 train for Bowral; stayed till 8.0 p.m. Melbourne at noon, where we found father and mother and four bairns to welcome us. Bless the Lord, how well they all looked. Drove home, and met M. coming down

the hill with darling little Neil; ran and took him. What a lovely boy the Lord has made of him. Our hearts were running over. Left next morning for Warrnambool, and took part in the afternoon and evening meetings. Spoke on the "Crisis of a clean heart." I am thinking a good deal about the diggers in the West Australian goldfields. Are any of Christ's witnesses following them? Here am I, send me.

*May 24th.*—I got home for an hour or two and found all well. Took the children to the Zoo till 3 o; had such a happy time with them; home to tea; packed for Adelaide; left at 9.0 p.m. for Lilydale. Had grand day on the Sabbath; took excursion train to Adelaide on Monday. Tuesday night heard Gipsy Smith preach and saw God at work. On Wednesday had small workers' meeting in Y. M. C. A.; crowded Hall on Thursday. The mission did not take hold.

On *Wednesday, June 6th.*—Started at Goodwood with a crush; a great work of grace on Friday. Lord, give us a second Pentecost! Went to-day to Gawler, and drove out to Kapunda with Dr. and Mrs. Torr, seeing T. P. at Rowland's Flat. Lord, bring that dear fellow into the light. Had short lesson with the College boys to-night, and a talk with two unconverted at the close.

*Saturday, June 9th, 1894.*—I am staying here (Way College, Adelaide) with my old Moonta friend, W. G. Torr, now Doctor and Principal,—a delightful fellow. The mission in Warrnambool finished beautifully. Dear Dixon as warm and sympathetic as possible. After Commission, went to Essendon for three nights. On May 10th, began at Parkville. Finished here my M.S. on "The Spirit-filled Life."

*June 16th.*—Started Strathalbyn united mission on Tuesday night; there seemed to be good feeling, but I did not catch anyone at the close. Wednesday night, very good meeting and nine enquirers. Thursday night I was entirely out-generalled in the after-meeting; the fish got away through my blundering. Lord, tell me if I can handle my nets better.

I have been waiting on God to-day for blessing in the coming Convention. What shall my note be next Sabbath? I am able to *think* of great blessing, but my Lord is able to do exceeding abundantly above what I think. Two-and-a-half hours spent this morning over prayer and the word, and my good Lord was here and blessed my soul.

*Saturday, June 23rd.*—Finished the week's Convention at 2 a.m. this morning by a most blessed four hours prayer meeting; the glory of God was more real to me, I think, than it has been for years. May it be educational for them all. God has blessed my own soul richly this week. "Beautiful Jesus,"

one young man called Him last night. Wonderful Saviour. Greatly helped by address from Gipsy Smith on, "Why could not we cast him out?"

*Gawler, July 7th.*—Have been home for a week, and busy revising proofs of "The Spirit-filled Life." Heard Thomas Cook, on Sabbath, on the "Barren fig-tree." Thursday, began here, and found the bills were not printed, so that I had a very poor start. Sabbath was a blessed day. Staying with my dear sisters.

*Saturday, 24th.*—Sabbath at Norwood was a broken day; fine congregation of men at 3.0, but there were only three professed decision for Christ. *Monday*; wretched attendance, and I was turned on to the Saints on soul winning, and lo! 15 went into the enquiry-room. *Tuesday*; crowded out, for the Salvation Army were with us. *Wednesday*; full to the doors without them. There have been good cases of conversion, but oh, more, more! Had a fresh anointing at prayer with J. N. in his study this morning. Lord, let the influence go with him and with me for many a day to come.

*August 4th.*—The call to Coolgardie has blossomed out into a commission for 12 months Evangelising in the West Australia gold-fields. It is settled that I leave by first boat in September. Great excitement in Melbourne, just now, over John McNeill's visit. May thousands be won for God. My book reached me to-day; it will be out next week. I have prayed over every page of it this evening, and believe God will bless it.

*August 31st.*—At Woodlands every unconverted soul that stayed to the after-meeting professed conversion ere the meeting closed. At Lyndoch Valley it was pouring wet, and pitch dark. A small meeting, but nearly every one was converted; one young man told me that he made up his mind to be saved as soon as he heard I was coming. Praise!

In the winter of 1894, Rev. John McNeill, the Scottish Evangelist, paid his long expected visit to the Australian Colonies. His four weeks of meetings in Melbourne will be long remembered as the largest gatherings at religious services that have ever been seen in this capital. My husband was away at some appointed work during the whole month, and so, to their mutual disappointment, it seemed that the two namesakes were not likely to meet. Three extra services, however, having been arranged for in the Exhibition Building, the dates



corresponded with a few days of rest which "our John" was to take, in order to prepare himself for his work in Coolgardie. On the first night of these meetings, we slipped in at the back of the platform, but someone, spying us, told Mr. McNeill that John was present, and he at once sent an urgent request that he would come forward. He stepped to the front, and there on the platform, before the immense audience of five thousand people, stood McNeill and MacNeil. It was felt to be an interesting moment; they bore the same name, were of the same calling, and without much physical resemblance, were both in the full prime and vigour of manhood. To the one had come the wider fame, while the other had made his name a synonym for all that was manly and spiritual throughout Australia. There was a strong disposition among the people to cheer, but as a hymn was being sung, they had to restrain their excitement until it was finished, and then they were effectually quieted by the announcement that "John MacNeil will pray." And when John MacNeil prayed, "Oh Lord bless John McNeill," a deep thrill ran through the hearers, many of whom had had on that night one great wish fulfilled—to see the two McNeils on one platform. In 1888, Dr. Moxey wrote the following letter, comparing the Scottish and Australian Evangelists:—

#### THE AUSTRALIAN JOHN MACNEIL.

To the Editor of *The British Weekly*.

Dear Sir,—In a recent number of *The British Weekly* I observe a short paragraph commencing "An Evangelist entitled the Rev. John MacNeil has been making a great impression in Adelaide and other parts of Australia." It may interest you to know that this gentleman gave up fine business prospects to preach the Gospel. That he might be fully equipped for the ministry, he came to Edinburgh, and studied in the University and New College. In the latter he was one of the best-known and best-beloved students, and when he left, at the

close of the session of 1879, having completed his curriculum for the ministry of the Free Church, he was accompanied to the railway station by a large number of his fellow-students, who sang a hymn on the platform. His last words were "Australia for Christ!" He had a natural gift of speech, and distinguished himself greatly in the class of elocution, taking the highest prize. He was by no means undistinguished in other classes, and would doubtless have made a greater mark than he did, had he not been consumed with an over-mastering hunger for souls. Every spare moment found him in mission-halls or on the street; but the saving from destruction of young University students was his special work. He would find out the names of some who were going astray, and, posting himself near some haunt of vice, he would patiently wait, often till midnight, and suddenly confronting and naming the trembling wretch, he would scare him from the spot, and sometimes win him to other scenes and other ways.

Mr. MacNeil, as you remark, differs from *our* Mr. McNeill in having only one "l" in his name. In other respects they are much alike. Neither has been spoiled by University or College. Each remains a child of Nature—*educated* Nature, if I may be allowed the paradox. Both have exceptional gifts of physique, voice, and manner. I do not know which is the more pathetic or the more humorous of the two. The Australian's witty sayings are quoted to this day, and should our Scottish preacher migrate to London, I know of only one man who could *just* take his vacant place in Scotland, and that is his namesake. I may just add that he is not now for the first time "making a great impression" in Australia. He has been doing so for the last nine years. Those of your readers who are praying for our own John McNeill might remember his brother at the Antipodes.—I am, &c.,

D. A. MOXEY.

Edinburgh, *December 3rd*, 1888.

Their personal intercourse was necessarily very short. This is the only entry in his diary:—

"On August 29th, I got home for a rest, and heard John McN. the same night at the Exhibition. He was glad to see me, and I to see him. I heard him again on the 30th and 31st; and on the 31st, also, I rode with him to Sandringham."

As the party were getting ready to leave our house, after the expedition to Sandringham, my husband suddenly waved his hat in the air and rode off down the hill in truly Australian fashion; the other

horses pricked up their ears and followed—Mr. McNeill bringing up the rear at a more dignified pace.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WEST AUSTRALIAN GOLDFIELDS

\* \* Owing to the fact that my husband visited Coolgardie at an interesting time in its history, much more space has been devoted to the Letters describing his work there than has been given to the record of any other three months of labour. My mass of material has been cut down in order to allow more room for what now follows.

PERTH,

*September 12th, 1894.*

WHEN I reached this, I found a large company waiting to welcome me at the railway station. They had laid plans to keep me over Sabbath, but I did not see it at first. After consultation, however, and prayer at the manse, I felt that it was right to stay, and thus get in touch with the Presbyterians of Perth and Fremantle, so that they might be more interested in our work on the gold-fields. I went down to the post office and telegraphed to Coolgardie that I would not leave till Monday. We arranged to hold Evangelistic services in Perth on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evening, with preaching at Fremantle on Sabbath morning and in Perth on Sabbath night. People are pouring into this Colony at the rate of about 1000 a week. Oh to catch them for Christ! I have just heard that my Abbotsford bicycle is of no use for the Coolgardie sands, because it has only rubber tyres, so that I may have to purchase a new

machine here, after all the trouble of bringing the old one from Melbourne.

PERTH,

*September 14th, 1894.*

The Meetings here have not been large, but they have been good; there have been decisions for Christ each evening, and some have listened who do not often hear the gospel.

I have been out to-night practising on my bicycle for my long journey, as I am thinking of riding from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, doing mission work by the way. I have been riding with the brake hard on, trying to get up some driving muscle. You would never know me in my brand new suit of "kahkee"; I was advised to get this, as the very thing for the hot and dusty roads. Helmet, billy, water-bag, and all other requisites will have to be purchased to-morrow. Was asked to go and see a young man dying of consumption, and found his heart in a worse condition than his lungs. After some talk over the matter, he accepted Jesus so beautifully as his Almighty Saviour that I have no fear about him now on the score of heart disease. I am sending under separate cover a plan of my parish, so that you may be able to follow me in my peregrinations from place to place. I pray that the Master will plan for me.

"THE FORTY MILE,"

COOLGARDIE ROAD,

*September 18th, 1894.*

I am writing in our "special," outside the door of the shanty where they are preparing tea.

Yesterday I bought a pneumatic "Raleigh" for £27, and at 3 p.m. bicycles, bags, and baggage were safe aboard the train for "Southern Cross." The Premier has kindly franked me over the Government

Railways. On the train with me was Mr. W——, who was going right through to Coolgardie by special coach, and my brother asked him to give me a seat, if possible, as that would be a quicker and easier route of transit than riding my "viewless courser of the air." Mr. W—— said he would try, and has been kindness itself. At 7.0 this morning we reached Southern Cross, the present terminus of the railway—famous in Australian history as the place where the demon Deeming was run to earth. It is a place of busy stir to-day, as it is the headquarters of the hundreds of teamsters, who do the carrying trade to Coolgardie, 120 miles further on, East by North. Its days of bustle are ending, however, for soon the railway will be extended to Coolgardie, and the teamsters will then move on. It is situate on the banks of one of those salt lakes which abound in Western Australia, and from which, by means of condensers, the supply of fresh water for the gold fields is chiefly obtained. I had an idea that this condensed water would be rather insipid, but I am most agreeably surprised to find that I was wrong. It is not at all like the condensed water you get on board ship. It is quite enjoyable, and, like Cadbury's cocoa, "absolutely pure." Condensed "steam" would be a more correct name for it. The "muckle pot" is generally an iron 400 gallon tank, in which the water is kept for ever boiling, "all day on Sunday, and six days a week." The steam escapes from this boiler through long lengths of galvanized piping, cooling in its passage, till at last it trickles out, beautifully clear and sparkling.

By 9 a.m. I had my "impedimenta"—bicycles, boxes, etc., in the hands of an agent, to be forwarded after me by the first available team, and found myself aboard the "special." I learn that the would-be-pro prospector has a choice of methods of "negotiating" the 120 miles that still separate him

from the alluring goldfields of the west. He may (1) take a seat with Cobb & Co., for a consideration of £5; or (2), he may engage with a teamster to carry his swag for £1, and trudge along-side the loaded wagon himself, camping by day or by night; or (3), he may walk "with bluey up" (*i.e.*, carry his own swag) all the way, as many have done, because of lack of funds; or (4), he may ride a bicycle, as I intended doing; or (5), lastly, he may get through on a "special," as I did. It is not likely that he will hire a "special" for himself. If he does, after our experience, he must be burdened "wi mair siller than sense."

Our "special" consists of four splendid horses, and a trap that baffles description; it is a light, double-seated wagon, with no springs under the body; but there are two springs under each seat, strong enough to bear a small bullock without yielding perceptibly. Fancy, then, if you can, the jolting, as we bowl along over roots and ruts! We hope to reach Coolgardie whole! At Reen's Soak, 18 miles this side of Southern Cross, where we stopped for dinner, I did my first piece of Missionary work. The Government is building a big dam there, and I went through all the tents while our horses were feeding, placing a Testament and a tract in each, so that when the men came in this evening, they found these messengers waiting for them.

BOORABBIN HOTEL,

*September 18th, 1894.*

Since writing the foregoing, we have reached the half-way house. I am writing in the bar,—rum drinking and cursing going on beside me. At 7.15 p.m. we started from the "Forty Mile" in the dark, and struck into the big sand plain, eighteen miles across. This is the teamsters' terror. It took us three hours to push through it to the hotel,

where we are now camped. We hoped to find a fresh set of horses waiting us here, but the manager failed, and there is nothing for it but to take the same four horses on another stage. They have already done about sixty miles. I have made the acquaintance to-day with the W. A. "Soaks." It was truly a chaotic word to me till I saw one. All over these goldfields there are raised platforms of rock, varying in extent from ten to scores of acres. Anyone can perceive what a splendid catchment area this is when rain falls. The water pours down the rocks and soaks into the surrounding sand. To get at it, then, a hole must be dug, shallow or deep, according to the dryness or wetness of the season. In a very dry year the water gives out altogether. It is then that the freight goes up, for the teamsters are obliged to carry as much water as will take them over the dry stages. It has been as high as £40 per ton for the 120 miles between Southern Cross and Coolgardie. Latterly it has been ranging from £16 to £18.

I have just been talking to an old friend whom I have not seen for fourteen years, who is on his way down, and he has given me my first personal realisation of what Coolgardie, the "El Dorado," has been to some men. He has been up there for three weeks, he tell me, and has made £14,000 in that short time. He was well-to-do before he came to the West at all. A more telling illustration I have never met of how true to life are Burns' words—

" Nae pleasures nor treasures  
Could make us happy lang,  
The heart aye's the pairt aye  
That makes us right or wrang."

This man has abundance of "treasures" and all the "pleasures" that the treasures can purchase, but he confessed to me, as we walked arm in arm in



the moonlight, hissing his statement through his clenched teeth, "When I arose this morning, MacNeil, I was as miserable as a man could be." Why? Because, as he was told, his heart was not right with God. . . It is now 1 a.m., Wednesday morning; our horses are being yoked, so I must away.

#### COOLGARDIE AT LAST.

COOLGARDIE, *Sept. 20th, 1894.*—Now to resume my story from the bar of the public-house at Boorabbin. At 1 o'clock in the morning our weary team of four bays was hitched up for the fourth time, and we were off again in the dark through the sandy bush. By 4 a.m. we reached Gilmour's, where, much to our delight, we found fresh horses. Those four brave beasts had been going since 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning over a sandy track—covering about 80 miles. They laid down as soon as they were placed inside the yard, and my heart ached for them.

Our new team was only a unicorn. The leader, however, was one of the best horses on the road, but after running for about eight miles it became evident, as day was breaking, that something was wrong with him. We stopped, and sure enough the game little fellow was nearly dropping, and trembling all over. We took him out, unharnessed him, left him in charge of our driver, and Mr. W—— himself drove on with the two wheelers. About five miles from our destination one of them showed signs of knocking up, and before long he was completely done. Visions of a tramp began to arise, but, fortunately for us, the remaining one proved to be as good a horse as was ever collared.

By 10 o'clock we sighted Coolgardie, soon pulled up at a new weather-board cottage by the roadside, and I took a by-no-means tearful farewell of that bone-shaker. We had done the through journey of

125 miles in 25 hours. This, I believe, was the "record" trip. I was soon established in the smartest house in Coolgardie; it cost £800, and would have been built in Victoria for about £200.

I was too tired to go out and survey the town yesterday, but went out to see it by starlight. Thought there might be some meeting or other on, so asked a man whom I met if he knew of any. "Salvation Army, sir, is the only one I know." Having volunteered to pilot me through the dark streets and by-ways to the "barracks," I opened up on him about his own soul's interests, and found that he was a sceptical Presbyterian. By the time we had reached the place we were so deeply engrossed in conversation and argument that we stood outside until the meeting broke up, and then we separated. I pray God that the first man I tackled on Coolgardie may yet be a jewel in Immanuel's crown. I went in and introduced myself to the Captain and Lieutenant, and we had prayer together. The Barracks is a typical bush erection—walls of perpendicular saplings, seats of split logs, and Mother Earth for a floor, but it is covered with a watertight iron roof. After breakfast this morning I went out to look for the Wesleyan Church. Found it to be but a shell with Hessian walls. The roof and floor are all right, and there are good strong forms. I arranged with the minister to preach at 11 and 7 on Sabbath, and to take his open-air meeting in Bayley-street at 3.15 p.m.; then to go on with special services each evening during the week. The Geelong Convention is now in Session. I sent the brethren a telegram yesterday morning, just to let them see that though in far-off Coolgardie I had not forgotten them. We have arranged also to have little meetings for prayer to-night and to-morrow.

I have met a good many people already who knew me on the other side. One man said when shaking

hands to-day, "I met you before at Hallett (S. A.) 14 years ago. You are the only man who ever did this to me—you met me and asked me if it was all right with my soul." So the work appears after many days. I paid my first visit to the hospital this afternoon, and spoke to the poor fellows there. It is a bare, galvanized iron room with about 16 or 20 beds; the men will be roasted in it in the hot weather. I got a wire to-day from the President of the Geelong Convention. "Band's fraternal salutations, Intercession, Benediction, Psalm cxxvi. Hallelujah!" It came like cold water to a thirsty soul. It is now 8.30 p.m. at Geelong, and the meeting is in progress at which I was planned to speak with dear Macartney. I hope S. Chapman himself will be taking my place. God bless-them.

Have just returned (10 p.m.) from my first prayer meeting. To-day, while walking out to "Bayley's Reward," I had my first introduction to the W. A. dryblower. He was rather a mythological personage to me, I must confess, till I made his acquaintance. What he was blowing and how he was blowing were solemn mysteries! In the east the alluvial miner separates the gold from the wash-dirt by the aid of water, but in the waterless West he does this as best he can by using the wind. The simplest method is to take two ordinary dishes, fill one of them with the wash-dirt, raise it aloft, and allow the dirt to run more or less slowly into the empty dish. As it runs the wind blows away the dust and all the lighter material. This process is repeated until all is blown away that is blowable. Then the dryblower sits down on his haunches, and holding the dish up casts his practised eye over the gravel left, to see if there are any "slugs" visible. If not, raising the dish up to the level of his mouth he begins to blow the gravel slowly from side to side, until he has in this manner gone through it all,

meanwhile watching carefully for the "colour." If at the outset there is a dead calm, of course the dish-men are "dished" themselves till a breeze springs up. Then there are the "rockers," which are just dry cradles; and the "shakers," which are cradles that are "shaken" instead of being rocked. Nearly all these implements are home-made, so the styles are varied. Of course these dryblowers are the colour of the dust in which they work the livelong day—clothes and skin and everything. A "dry-wash" is all that hands and face and clothes may get for days and even for weeks together. No wonder that temporary deafness is very common among them, necessitating frequent visits to the doctor for the purpose of having their ears syringed.

COOLGARDIE, *September 24th, 1894.*—On Friday night the prayer meeting was double the size of the night before. It was good to be there, for "the very same Jesus" Who was blessing you all at the Convention, was blessing our souls richly in Conventionless Coolgardie. We could feel the glorious, gracious influence coming over us in waves. I bless God for such an experience in this thirsty place.

On Saturday night I went down to Bayley Street at 8.30, and gave my first message to Coolgardie in the Salvation Army open-air ring. Splendid crowd, and they listened well. A. came for a little, and as he stood in the crowd while I was speaking, he heard a man behind him saying, "Yes, that's the same chap I heard on the Temora rush (N.S.W) thirteen years ago. He is quite sincere, but he is as mad as a March hare. They won't barrack him; they'll listen to him; but the poor chap is as mad as a March hare!" When I was told of this I praised God for the splendid testimonial, and took courage. At my next open-air meeting I publicly thanked my unknown friend, to the infinite amusement of the crowd, and told him that I prized that

certificate more than any I ever received from my Theological Professors. Since Christ's day has it not been the madmen, and only they, that have been worth their salt in the service of God? Well, well, if I *am* mad, I have a grand Keeper, and a magnificent Asylum! On Sabbath, at 11, I had a most interesting congregation, a church nearly full, and only four women. At 3.15 I mounted a box for a pulpit in Bayley Street, close by the trees seen in the illustration. The Salvation Army stopped their meeting and came and joined. I scattered the hymn sheets which I had brought with me, and even the Roman Catholics were anxious to get hold of them. Then I gave out, "Oh, think of the Home over there." You should have heard the singing! About a thousand men standing close round and taking part—all so deeply interested and reverent. The whole place had a Sabbath look and calm about it, and I could not help remarking this to the men. They stood for an hour and a quarter. I was greatly delighted. At 7 p.m. the Wesleyan Church was crammed. People were sitting all over the platform, and even in the pulpit. It was a case of legs to right of me, legs to left of me, legs behind me, and faces in front of me. How many hundreds there were outside the building I could not say, and as the walls were only Hessian they could hear as well outside as in, and it was a great deal cooler. In the after-meeting we found men who were on their way to Christ, and kept at them for three solid hours. This morning my voice is a little husky from the strain of yesterday, a strain because I have been out of work for a week. Thus ended my first day's toil on the gold-fields, a weary but blessed day, a day I never can forget.

I wish I could do something for the poor blacks that are about this place, Such a stunted race!

Death is busy amongst the miners. One died in the hospital yesterday and another to-day. Both of them were delirious, and I could do little for the dear fellows. . . . This is the most delightful climate I was ever in; with plenty of water it would be perfect, the nights are so beautifully cool. Water is selling just now at a shilling a gallon. Washerwomen get 12s. 6d. a day, and (with the water they use at such a figure) washing-day is dreaded here even more than on "the other side."

COOLGARDIE, *September 28th, 1894.*—In the meetings sometimes we are a soft-hearted crew. I begin praying for the wives and bairns and other dear ones we have left so far behind, and we all get a bit foolish, and handkerchiefs and coat-sleeves are in great demand. Dear old fellows. There is a soft spot in most of them, and it does not take me long to get at it along that line. Fellow-feeling draws us very near to one another!

On Tuesday my trunk and the big box of Bibles, &c., were landed safely by the wagoner at my camp. My! how I appreciated a change of clothing. My "kahkee" suit is doing splendidly; it is always clean, never needs brushing, for it is the exact colour of the dust that lies everywhere from one to six inches thick. My bicycle was delivered safely yesterday morning. Had a ride down town. It is wonderful how the little thing with the big tyres rolls over the sand. I am preparing to start to-morrow for my first inland journey, east and north, and expect to be away prospecting for about twelve days. After the Bibles came, I had a busy time writing in every one of them "With best wishes from John MacNeil." I hoped the men would prize them more if a word or two was inscribed within. Yesterday afternoon I loaded up all my bags with Bibles, Testaments, &c., and rode round the tents, leaving one in each. Where I could not

ride I just walked beside my "camel," while it patiently carried the bags. All the books were so gladly taken. Several times on handing in a book we were told, "I've not ordered this; you have made a mistake"; but we soon explained. "Well, well! to see a fellow going round *giving away* Bibles," exclaimed one astonished man, as he looked at me and then at the blessed Book in his hand.

The (live) camels have been an increasing object of interest to me ever since my arrival here. Strings of them are continually on the move, some departing, some arriving with loading from Southern Cross, mostly attended by Afghans; others are on the way to the Government bore, where they are watered on brackish water at so much a head. It is a serious business giving a camel a drink of fresh water at 4d. or 6d. a gallon, for the animal will not thank you for less than twenty! The camel's average load is between four and six hundredweight, but they have been known at Coolgardie to carry half-a-ton. When they are to be loaded or mounted, they are made to kneel. This end is attained by seizing the cord and pulling on it downwards, calling out at the same time, "Hushtah, Hushtah," which, being interpreted, is (I suppose) "Lie down." This operation is usually attended by a series of most unearthly groans and yells. These (to a stranger) uncanny noises are kept up as a rule with more or less frequency and vigour all through the processes of lying down, saddling, loading, and getting up. During my first week in Coolgardie, the number of times I ran out of my camp at the cry of a camel to see who was ill-using the poor brute passes all reckoning. They are curious creatures, and sometimes "take notions" for which they will bear any amount of thrashing rather than give up. I heard of one that had been carrying two water barrels, one on each side. One morning, on being

loaded up as usual, he refused to rise; evidently he had been thinking and had got the "idea" that his load was the heaviest of the string, and that it was time some other ship got his cargo on board. No amount of persuasion could alter his mind. The casks were therefore unbound, and he was on his feet in an instant. He was then led between another load, and when he lay down, this load (half as heavy again as the water casks) was strapped to his saddle. Then, on being asked to rise, he at once complied with the greatest ease and readiness.

HANNAN'S (NOW KALGOORLIE), *September 29th, 1894.*—Here I am on the tented field at last. On Saturday we were up with the lark preparing for our first Missionary journey inland. By 10 o'clock my "bicycle" was standing loaded at the door, with "tucker" bags (filled with tea, sugar, damper, and water-biscuits), water-bag carrying half a gallon of water, billy, and as many Bibles and Testaments and portions as I could stow away in the two carriers. In addition to all this (which any sensible wheelman would have considered enough and more than enough), I had my swag (weighing 14 lbs.) strapped on the handle-bars. It consisted of an overcoat, a rug that made me sure of being comfortable wherever I might camp, and my calico flag.

Shortly after 10 o'clock my pilot, the Wesleyan Minister, arrived. He was going to run out a mile or two with me to put me on the road to Hannan's. How the men stared as we flew down Bayley Street. I would have stared too, if I had only known what I know now! Soon we got on a sandy track and my troubles began. The top weight of my swag made my machine stagger like a drunken man, and I could not keep her running steadily in the narrow way, no matter how hard I tried. About two miles



out my pilot left me. Before we parted we had prayer together, standing by our machines. He gave the directions, and said there was no danger of my missing the track. I got along as well as I could and as fast as I could, but my frequent "spills" began at last to tell on the handle-bar, and I found it bending under the strain of the swag.

About 1.30 I began to feel a little tired and hungry, so stopped and lit my first camp fire. I soon had the billy boiling and tea made, and was sitting with my Bible after dinner when two swagmen came up and sat near me. They soon told me that I was not on the road to Hannan's at all! I had missed the track some miles back, and was too far to the right! It spoiled the pleasure I would otherwise have had in my first camp in the Coolgardie bush, so I packed up, and loaded my machine as speedily as possible, and retraced my tracks. Soon fresh troubles began; the bush pad turned out to be too heavy for riding; I toiled along hoping every minute to see the road I was making for, but it was 4 o'clock before this gladdened my eyes, and by this time I was knocking up. I found a stable beside the road, and crept into its shade out of the blazing sun.

I had not been long on the pad again before I passed a mile-stone, and lo! I was only twelve miles from Coolgardie; six hours over what should have been done easily in one. I had still twelve miles to go to reach Hannan's, where they were expecting me to conduct a meeting at night. Presently I overtook a horse team; the driver knew me; had been at my meetings in Queenscliff. I gave him my swag and one of my bags, and pushed on much more comfortably. The track was a new one and very heavy, and I had to walk most of the way. Darkness overtook me, and I was told by some men whom I passed that I was still six miles from Hannan's. All hope of reaching it in

time for the advertised meeting was now taken away. While deeply grieved over this disappointment, to worry would only be sinful. There are two things you should never worry over—what you can help, and what you cannot help. Don't forget this! This disappointment came under the second head, so I just spelt the word with a capital "H" instead of with a small "d," making it "His appointment."

No more riding, so I just lit my lamp, sat there resting, and gazed at the "Southern Cross," praying and thinking. How still everything was there in the lonely bush—not a sound—the silent stars looking down on me—but He who "meted out those Heavens with a span" was with His child.

Soon I was at it again, working through sand inches thick. It was not till 9 o'clock that I reached the first house at Hannan's. I soon found the store where the young men were who had been expecting me for the service. Too late now! This was a bad start; lost my first service; but God knows I did my very best to get there in time. The young men took me in tow, and started through the bush for their camp. I declare to you, my troubles were not over yet, for the boys got lost in the darkness! We wandered round and round, and you can believe I was tired enough, and in no wise in need of a little bodily exercise. They asked at this tent and that, but no light came. At long last "we struck oil!" a man knew where the tents were in which they were always singing Sankey's hymns, and pointed out its camp fire, so we steered straight for it. Such a reception! It reminded me of Robbie's lines—

"In Heaven itself, I'll ask no more  
Than just a Hielan' welcome."

Some of them used to come to the Studley Park Meetings, and belonged to the Fitzroy Baptist Church. There are five of them in the camp,

It was now 10.15 p.m., and I had been twelve hours coming to a place only twenty-eight miles from Coolgardie. Surely I have put up a "record" for the "Raleighs" on this journey. They soon had the "billy" boiling, and placing tea, damper, and tinned beef before me, they ordered me to fall to. I emptied the billy, and ate as heartily and thankfully as ever I did in my life. By the time my meal was finished I was as fresh as a daisy. Isn't the Lord good? We gathered round the blazing fire for family worship, and read the parable of the Ten Virgins. In prayer, Heaven was never nearer to us than it was that night, under the starry sky, beside the diggers' camp-fire. When we rose from our knees, I noticed one of them—a Scotsman—still bending. Presently we heard him saying very softly, "Two more feathers (in his wings, he meant) and a little whiff, and I would be off." The dear fellow was "almost in." It is splendid to meet men of this stamp, out and out for their King, in the land that has been called "the land of sin and sorrow, sand and salt." Verily, I had hit upon an oasis.

One of the young men turned out of his own bunk and gave it to me, while he made a shake-down for himself elsewhere. He gave me a good red blanket and a counterpane of bags, and so, after kneeling down in the dust at the bunk-side to commit you all and myself to Father's ceaseless care, I lay down to pass my first night in a tent. I had slept under a tarpaulin before, but this was my first night under canvas proper. My tent-mate was up a little later than I cooking damper; this fact, coupled with the talking and happy shouts from the adjoining tent kept me awake for a while, but at last all was still, and I was off. For breakfast next morning we had porridge and condensed milk, with damper and coffee.

We had our Sabbath morning service in an old

deserted store which had been fitted up as an impromptu church. About 25 men were present, and we had a nice time over "the Vine" in John xv. On the way home from service we saw a crowd round a team that had just come in from the condensers with water. There is something like a water famine here. We dined on stew. There were onions *intilt*, and potatoes *intilt*, and tinned meat *intilt*, and there was also plenty of water *intilt*, so that we ate it with a spoon. I began to dine in the tent, but the heat was so intense that I feared I would melt and go *intilt* too, so seizing my plate and damper, I sat outside in the shade, enjoying what little breeze there was. I am sending my swag back to Coolgardie, and am going to trust that I will get along without it.

WHITE FEATHER, *October 5th, 1894.*—To resume my narrative. I preached last Sabbath afternoon in the main street of Hannan's, and in the evening stood on a heap of sawdust outside the old store in which we had had service in the morning. From this pulpit, and facing the Southern Cross, I began to sing. We soon had a congregation of about 500 men, some sitting at my feet on the sawdust, some in the dust of the roadway, some on stumps, and others standing in a solid semi-circle. How those men listened! The hush of God fell upon that crowd; it seemed as if they were listening for Eternity, as I pleaded with them in His name to turn from sin. Some of us will never forget that night. Then we got back to camp weary but happy, and as the exertions of the service had given me what we call in Scotland a "wet sark," and of course having no change of clothing, we piled the logs on the camp fire, and kneeling down close, with my back to it, I was soon as dry as a bone, and decidedly more comfortable. After family worship we turned in "all standing," *i.e.*, without undressing! as we nearly always



WHITE FEATHER IN 1894.

have to do when on circuit. I had no pillow to-night and so did not sleep so well. My pillow the night before had been "Long Bill's" Sunday clothes, and now, as the dear fellow had them on, I had to go without!

Next morning off to the White Feather about 10.0 a.m. Going down a rather steep incline my machine (which unfortunately has no brake) shied off a little to the right and we parted company. I landed on my head and shoulder—a real nasty spill. On picking myself up, I found my right wrist badly cut, but what a mercy that it was not broken! On again, having several gentler upsets, till about 1.0, when I thought it was time to camp and dine. The reason for all these upsets is, that the only place for the bicycle to run is in the narrow rut made by the horses' feet. It is only about 18in. wide, so that the wheel did not need to deviate much from the middle of the way in order to get rid of its rider. *Nolens volens*, off you had to come in a most unorthodox and unheard-of fashion. I might have been saved many spills and got along much more comfortably, could I have travelled "flying light," as cyclists love to do; but I am determined at all pains and costs to get these precious life-giving books through to the men on the remote fields.

At White Feather, I soon found a Scotch store-keeper, with whom I left my bags. Then I rode half-a-mile into the bush to see an English capitalist, who is working his own mine, and he kindly invited me to stay. Then off I rode round the field telling the men of the service at night. The "Flag" was hung on the store, and by 7.30 I was back at the meeting place. There were a few S. A. folk about, so they provided a box for a pulpit, near a big camp fire in the middle of the road where the men congregate each night. I gave out the hymn sheets and began. Soon there were

about 400 men all round in a circle, most of them singing by the light of the fire, others having private candles. My choir was at my back, in front of a friendly store, where a big hurricane lamp was hung up. To hear those men sing was an inspiration. When speaking I was facing the Southern Cross, so that "the banner with the strange device" being overhead, one could not but speak of the once crucified but now exalted Jesus. As we finished, one of them shouted, "When will you be back again?" I got advice from the men around that I should go on next to Kurnalpi, 45 or 50 miles east, and take two nights there, so I intimated that I would be back again on Thursday.

My camp proved to be a most comfortable one. I wanted to get away early on Tuesday morning, but they prevailed on me to stay for breakfast, a mistake I bitterly rued, and which I will never repeat. It was 9.0 before I got fairly under way for Kurnalpi. For awhile the track was good, lying through the salt lakes (dry, of course), and we flew as on the wings of the wind, for my machine is geared high, and she can travel when she gets a chance. I could hear the wind whistling through the ventilators of my cork helmet, just as I used to hear it whistling through the rigging of the ship. But alas, soon our wings were clipped, and we were going slow enough. Sand! sand! sand! Oh this everlasting sand! I could not possibly ride through it, I must get off and push. Out of these 50 miles I must have walked 20, pushing my heavily-loaded machine on loose, heaving sand, with a blazing sun overhead. You have not the slightest idea of what travelling on the West Australian goldfields is. Port Philip sand is beautifully level; mine was in ridges, so that I had to walk along the top of one of these banks, and to keep the wheels in the hollow beside me. How

many salt lakes were crossed I could not say, but it was splendid, whenever I came to them, to roll across their smooth wastes all glistening in the sun, and as I flew along, to hear the surface crackling under the wheels, as if you were running over frosty ground. Then how beautiful the mirage on these lakes! Not far off, but close at hand, you can see the lovely, cooling sheet of water! But no, it is only a make-believe! By 3.30 my drink-bag was nearly empty, but suddenly, on running down into a lake, I saw a tent on the farther shore. I knew it was a condenser's tent, so hurrah! Water! We flew across and dismounted, but there was no one in. Went to the tanks, and lo! they were all empty, and dry as the surrounding desert. After this experience, I can understand something of the feelings of a man dying of thirst, when coming to a well and finding it dry! How often do thirsty souls come to religious services and find nothing! I trust that every time I call the miners round me in Coolgardie they may find *water* in the well. What a criminal fraud if they don't!

Thank God, I was not yet in distress. I had a few drops left, and I knew that there was a condenser at work a few miles ahead. So on we went again, after leaving some messages at the tent for the next visitors. Some miles back I had come across an old Scotsman (for in Western Australia they are like the sand—everywhere, and everybody knows what Sandy is after!) who, when he saw the bags on the bicycle and heard where I was going, said "You're a letter carrier, I suppose." I immediately replied "Yes,"—delivering a New Testament to him, "I carry letters from the King." He took it up, and looking at it, said, "Oh aye! the good seed. May you have a big harvest from it all by-and-bye." With this drink of cold water in a thirsty land he sent me on my way rejoicing.



I soon ran down to the other condensers, and found that it was 5.30 p.m. "How far is it to Kurnalpi?" I asked. "Ten miles neat," one of them replied. Here was another brother, for none but a Scotsman could say that. He gave me a drink of tea, for which I thanked him heartily. "You're welcome, my boy," he said, and I asked him for a gallon of water to fill my bag. Something then seemed to arouse his suspicions. "You're no Mr. MacNeil, are you?" "That's my name, sir." "Oh, you should have told us that before, that we might have spoken to you with due respect." It never struck him that this helmeted, coatless, travel-stained wheelman, in "kahkee" nether-garments, could be one of the "cloth." "Have you any reading matter?" I asked. "Oh yes, I have my Bible and Shakespeare." I left them boiling the "muckle pot," and pushed on, but work my hardest, I could not keep the sun from setting. "Nae man can tether time nor tide," but I must confess to a strong desire that evening to tether old Sol in the Heavens. Darkness came down on me, and there were no signs of Kurnalpi. Presently I came up to a camp fire, and, on hailing it and asking "how far?" I got the crushing answer "Between five and six miles." My heart sank like the sunken sun. Nothing for it but to walk the whole way, and a weary way it proved. God gave me strength to keep at it, till at long long last I saw the diggers' fires blinking through the scrub.

It was now near 9.0, too late for the meeting for which I had done the hardest day's work of my life. Nobody knows I am coming, and I know nobody. Will anybody offer me a shake-down, or shall I have to spend the night at the foot of a gum tree? On reaching the first camp fire, the men directed me to a tent, in which a lady lived with her husband, the only woman on the field. I soon reached them and

was asked in. I sat down, more dead than alive, feeling dazed and foolish. I often wonder what those kind friends thought of me for the first few minutes. This was my fourth night out from Coolgardie, and I had missed two nights out of the four through being late. I am only in my apprenticeship yet, you know. Watch and see if you ever hear of me missing another for the same reason. No more genteel 9 o'clock starts for me. I'll begin with the sun, then see if we are not in by sunset. Fortunately the lady asked me presently if I had had tea. I felt better after this, and then came up the question of accommodation. There was an out-house, used as a lumber-room, made of bags and hessian, just beside their tent. It was the best they had to offer, and I gratefully accepted it. They made a bed for me on the ground; a tent served for a top and bottom sheet; a little blanket, a coat, and some bags served as a covering. I felt very much like following John Albert Bengel's example when reading and prayer time came before lying down, and simply looking up into His dear face, and saying, "Things are on the old footing between us, Lord Jesus," for I was so weary. Blowing up my air-pillow, and taking off my boots, I lay down and slept. Never did feather-bed or spring mattress give me such glorious rest.

After breakfast with my kind hostess (who, I found was a Peebles-body, and knew the Free Kirk Minister there, one of my old New College mates) I started off to stick up notices of my meeting at the various stores. I then rode off to the far end of the field, and began emptying my bags of their New Testaments and portions, placing one in every tent that I could see. This kept me busy till nearly 2.0, when my last shot was fired and my locker empty. By this time I was about dead beat, hungry, and not feeling very well, so I decided to

go in for a square meal. Soon found the butcher's shop, purchased what I thought would satisfy me, and was about to take them away and look for a frying pan or grid-iron, when the butcher himself volunteered to be my cook. He soon had a big camp oven over the fire, and my chops therein, and a billy to make tea. While cooking operations were going on, I found out that he gets his stock from Israelite Bay, between Eucla and Esperance, 250 miles away. So that in that shed at Kurnalpi, I was a great deal nearer you than I had been for weeks, being 100 miles east of Coolgardie. When I had finished my meal, I offered payment, but he would not hear of it. "I watched you all the morning walking in and out among the tents, and it isn't every day we get a visitor like you." I sat and rested awhile, then rode down to the store in front of which I was going to have the meeting. The young fellow who was managing it offered me a camp for the night. He had tea ready for me at 5.30, as he "didn't want to run me too close to the meeting," he said—a bit of genuine thoughtfulness, for which I have looked in vain at some camps in civilised countries. More chops! grilled this time, on the only gridiron on the Billa-Billa field.

At 7.30 I took my bicycle lamp and two borrowed lanterns, and went to the place of meeting. A gentleman had offered me his auctioneer's box as a pulpit. I fixed my lamp beside me in the box so that I could read by its light, and hung the lanterns on the fence around the box. When I mounted the pulpit, there was not a soul about me that I could see in the darkness, so first lifting my heart for a moment to my Master, I next lifted my voice and shouted, "Gentlemen, the sale is about to commence!" You should have seen the response. They came running out from everywhere, like ants from an ant-hill, and rushed to get a good place

near the auctioneer. There was a billiard saloon not far away, and though it was crowded a little ago, it was emptied quicker than it takes me to tell about it. Soon I had between 200 and 300 men around me, and every woman on the field in the person of my hostess of the night before! In my travel during the day I had learnt something of the open, unblushing sin prevailing here, and as I reasoned of righteousness and judgment, the Power of God fell on those men. It will be harder for some of them to sin in the future than it has been in the past. This was my pioneer gospel service. I had ridden hard and far to tell them of the Water for which they would not have to pay, but which they might have for the taking, and without which they would perish miserably. I was selling Gospel necessities—"Water," and Gospel luxuries—"Wine and Milk," without money and without price. Many of them were incredulous, and not inclined to buy at my price. Herein lay the difference between the auctioneer who usually occupied that box, and myself, its present occupant. "He has hard work to get you *up* to his price," I told them, "but I have hard work to get you *down* to mine."

"At the devil's mart all things are sold ;  
 Each ounce of dross costs an ounce of gold ;  
 For a cap and a bell our lives we pay,  
 Bubbles we earn with our whole souls tasking ;  
 'Tis only God that is given away,  
 'Tis only Heaven may be had for the asking."

My bed was on the stage of what had once been a theatre, but was now a store. As I lay on the stretcher I could see the stars quite plainly through the hessian roof ; did not sleep much, as my wounded wrist was painful. A few minutes after 5.0 I was in the saddle and away back towards the White Feather. Reached it about 6.40 p.m. I began the service at 7.30, wonderfully fresh. For about an

hour all went well, when suddenly a dust storm sprang up and nearly choked me. When I recovered I found that some of the men had beaten a hasty retreat, and so the service finished rather abruptly. If you only saw the state of my clothes, you would never say another word to the little boys for being dirty.

## CHAPTER XIV

WEST AUSTRALIAN GOLD-FIELDS.—*Continued*

COOLGARDIE, *October 12th, 1894.*—"Paradise Regained"! I am writing at my own kitchen table. The main business on hand is cooking; the porridge is boiling, and in this way I am filling in the intervals between the stirrings. Let me say to begin with that I am really alive and well! I got home on Wednesday morning as I had planned, and lo! there were your letters. Dirty as I was, I threw myself down on a deck-chair and read and laughed and cried. When I got through them it was, "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul" . . . . I had to stop here, and partake of my morning meal. You should taste my porridge, just perfect!

On Saturday morning I was up at 5 a.m., in a few minutes was on the pad for the "Broad Arrow," and about 5 p.m. came up to the first of the camps. Nobody there knew I was coming and nobody cared. I was weary with my twelve hours' journey, and it would have been so nice if a brother minister or some earnest Christian worker had been there to receive me, and to assure me that all that could be done had been done to make the meeting at night successful. I had just to begin riding round the field wherever I could see a hut or dry-blowers at work, telling the men of the meeting I was going to hold. This is not a big field, so we had not a

large meeting, but we had a real lively time around our blazing fire, and I delivered the King's message of love and peace. The dear fellows seemed to appreciate the service. At 5.0 on Sabbath morning I was up and away without breakfast towards the "Black Flag." I rode till I got tired and hungry, and stopped for breakfast just about the time you would be starting for Church. A strange weird feeling crept over me in the loneliness of my situation in the bush that Sabbath morning, but it was only momentary; my heart soon came in to itself, and back to its rest in God, for was I not looking out for some of the lost ones for whom my Lord had died? Got instructions as to the Twenty-Five-Mile road, and started, but soon found that I was astray. A Scotchman came along and offered to go across the bush with me and put me right, so we walked two miles, till we struck the track. As we were parting I said "Let us have a word of prayer together." We stood with uncovered heads, and I asked the Lord Jesus to put him on the right way for the Glory, as he had so kindly put me on the right track for the "Twenty-Five-Mile" to-day. When I ceased he was greetin' like a bairn, and as he wiped the tears away he said, "One's no used tae a word o' prayer i' these parts," and so we parted. May I meet him at the converging of the ways yonder!

Had a splendid run across some plains, and on climbing out of them met three men, and stopped to talk to them, I found that two of them were professing Christians, and knew me through being in the meetings at Coolgardie. I took out my Bible, had a short prayer with them, and pushed on. I reached the first tents of the "Twenty-Five-Mile" about 5.30 p.m., had tea at the first tent—a Roman Catholic's; he gave me also some water to wash in—very acceptable, as there had been no outward

application since the evening before! Worked among the tents till 7.30, when about twenty men gathered round the fire. I was disappointed at the size of my congregation; but the people were not there and so could not come! Still I had more than Jesus had at the well of Samaria, hadn't I? I am finding out by travelling the field over where the men are and where they are not. A storekeeper—a Scotsman too, who was one of my most attentive listeners—gave me his own comfortable spring bed, camping himself on the ground. I had breakfast before I started on Monday for the "Wealth of Nations," which I reached at 1.0. I began at once placing Testaments, &c., in the tents, when a little Jew noticed me, and asked if I had any place to stay. On getting my "No," he said, "Stay with us. Have you had dinner?" "No." So he put over some—what do you think? bacon! he had evidently just had some for his own dinner! Then he went over to the store and bought two eggs for me at fourpence apiece. That son of Abraham obeyed very literally, "Love ye therefore the stranger!" I asked him where the "Wealth of Nations" was. He pointed to a man at a windlass on the top of a hill near by, "That's the Wealth of Nations." My benefactor was the manager of the next mine! I hung out my flag, "Meeting here to-night." From the response which the sight of it drew from the dry-blowers, who were working close by, I knew that it was doing its work already.

Went through the tents and along the line of reef, telling the men of the service. Coming back, I went up and had a look at the "Wealth of Nations." One of the proprietors was on the ground, and shewed me where Dunn got his specimens, just out of a little hole at my feet—such a load that his poor camel was staggering under its weight through the streets of Coolgardie. Never was there such a



camel load seen in Coolgardie before or since! He shewed me the little tree, at the foot of which "Honest John," the big nugget, was lying, pretty well on the surface, waiting for some one to pick it up. He told me how this very reef had been prospected by two men before ever Dunn saw it, and how the poor fellows missed the chance of a life time. They had sunk trial holes to the north and south of where "Honest John" was lying and got nothing, so turned their backs on riches, calling the reef a "duffer." When the news of the find spread, one of the two men came up to see for himself the mistake which they had made, and his disgust was unutterable. We had a roaring fire at night on the slope of the hill opposite to the "Wealth of Nations," the valley lying between in which the dry-blowers work. There was a splendid muster and hearty singing. It was fine to hear one's voice re-echoing from the "Wealth of Nations" on the opposite side of the valley, as I told of the true riches. The boys kept me singing for a long time after I had closed the service, and a vacant tent was placed at my disposal. There was a good layer of bushmen's feathers (do you know what they are?—gum leaves!) on the ground, and I spread my flag on them for my bed. Two of the men had kindly lent me a rug each, so with my air pillow I was well off. I slept till 6.0, when a young fellow knocked me up. He was going to drive a spring-cart into Coolgardie, so he offered to give me and my "camel" a lift! A new experience this. I got ready as soon as possible, lashed the machine securely in the cart, so that it might be none the worse for the fearful bumping, and started. By 11.0 we reached the condensers, where the two horses got a drink that cost 4/6! They kindly left a little, which the driver divided with me, and we enjoyed the luxury of a wash. It was now mid-day on

Tuesday, and I had not washed since Sabbath evening. When C. told me of S. saying on Saturday night, "I don't want to be washed, I was washed on Wednesday," I thought that this would be the very reason for my dear boy! he would not be plagued with too much of that kind of thing. At 1.0 we reached a point on the "Ninety-Mile-Road," when I thought I should branch off into the bush, as I wanted to strike the Bendigo, Coolgardie, and Mount Burgess Mines, so leaving the cart, I just had to steer by my compass. After a good while I came across a dray track and followed it up. It soon brought me to a camp, where I advertised to-night's service, and found that I was not far from "The Bendigo." Had a nice little meeting round the camp fire.

By 11.0 next day I was in Coolgardie, and had to do some shopping before my dinner, after which I washed up, and tidied the kitchen, and then thought it was time to turn my attention on myself. Oh, the luxury of a sponge bath! Well may Lancelot Andrews bless God, as he does in his immortal "Private Devotions," for "water to wash in." Coolgardie men can say "Amen" to that. At 7.30 p.m. I was on a box pulpit for an open-air service in Bayley Street, with two torches made out of 2-lb. butter tins. The first hymn gathered only about six. We tried another and they soon began to come, till we had five hundred around us in a ring. At the close of the meeting we appointed a committee of twelve for the open air-work. Next night we had perhaps eight hundred men at the service, and I am conscious that God's word was with power.

COOLGARDIE, *October 18th, 1894.*—Last Sunday night we took the forms from the Wesleyan Church, and placing them outside, they were soon all occupied. Then a large crowd gathered round

those that were seated, and stood out the whole service. God was there in very deed. In the open-air meeting on Monday night I noticed a lady hanging round the outskirts, so at the close I spoke to her, and found that she was one of those awakened the previous night. She wept as she spoke to me about her soul, and I made an appointment with her to come and see me next day. We had a nice talk and prayer together, and I believe she is now in the kingdom of God. So the blessed work goes on. On Monday night a "rush" set in to the "Broad Arrow," so that my congregation on Tuesday was only half the size of the previous night. Men had been tearing away all Monday night on camels, in wagons, and on foot. A "rush" makes a difference to our population in an hour or two.

Yesterday I rode down to the "Londonderry," about 12 miles south of Coolgardie, and dismounted at the famous hole about 2.0. All I could see was a small yard enclosed with corrugated iron surmounted with barbed wire, roofed with zinc, and with a padlocked door. The lock was sealed, and the key had been placed with the Warden for safe keeping. All these precautions had been taken by the Earl of Fingall before he left for England to float the Company. I took my luncheon within a few feet of the golden hole, in the shade of the tool house, and wondered how those despairing, broken-down prospectors, returning to Coolgardie, had stumbled across this spot. A party of four or five men had been trying to "make their fortune some miles further south, but fortune wouldn't make." Discouraged and dispirited they were trudging back to Coolgardie, and on leaving the path for a little distance, suddenly one of them felt his heart in his mouth! Is he dreaming? Can he believe his eyes? There is gold lying on the surface of a rock partly overgrown with moss! His mates came running at

his call; they begin to dig; their fortune is *made!* It looks as if they have struck the richest thing in the world. They pitch their tents, and unearthen and hide thousands of pounds' worth of the precious metal. For days they kept it dark, but when they began to cart the ore into the bank the secret soon got out. They were the best hated men on all Coolgardie for daring to keep that "good thing" all to themselves for so long. Such unheard of meanness! The youngest of the party sold his share to one of the shrewdest of the band for two or three thousand pounds—a mere song. Subsequently he saw what a fool he had been and sought to escape from his bargain, but the law held him to it.\* It makes one think of the Old Testament simpleton who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat, and afterwards found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.†

I rode down the reef telling the men about the service, and inviting them to the store where it was to be held at 7.30. We had a splendid muster round a blazing fire, and so the first religious service was conducted at the world-famed "Londonderry."

Shortly after 6.0 next morning, a man in his shirt sleeves, with his trousers inside the tops of his boots, is seen flying out of the "Derry" towards Coolgardie; the pad is magnificent, the wind is keen, and the speed is high; he feels the cold going

\* The Supreme Court afterwards restored the money to him, it having been paid a day too late.

† Everybody is familiar with the story of the collapse of the Londonderry reef. When the Earl of Fingall returned from London, after floating a Company for three-quarters of a million, he put men on to open up the reef, when lo! it suddenly gave out. It was only a "pocket!" There is this great uncertainty about many of the reefs on the Coolgardie gold-fields; they *may* turn out well, or they may *not*.

through his bones, but the exercise brings a glow all over him, and he flies along merrily through the nicest country yet seen in Coolgardie—do you know him? Stopped once to give a Testament to a man I met and found that he was a Presbyterian from Collingwood; pulled up in Coolgardie at 7.15 a.m. . . . I am going to have a rest to-night, my first without service since I came, if you except the two nights I missed through being bushed at Hannan's and at Kurnalpi.

### SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

KURNALPI, *October 25th, 1894.*—Friday, October 19th, was my fortieth birthday. Loaded up my roadster, and started on this my second Missionary journey. Spent the afternoon riding to Hannan's where I "kept up" my birthday on damper and billy tea, and received some birthday presents from my Heavenly Father in the open-air service held in the street at night. On Sabbath afternoon I rode down for service to the "Big Boulder" mine. There are only a few men about, and they are not doing much just now. In the evening, back at Hannan's again. Service was held near a deserted store, which at the close of the open-air meeting we used as an enquiry-room. The men filled it, and there were signs of blessing. This is the most unsatisfactory part of the Western Australia work. There is, as a rule, no place in which we can hold after-meetings, so that we don't get the chance of pulling the net to shore to see what has been caught; we must just go on in faith.

How one's voice travels in this climate! A man told me that he heard my voice fully one-and-a-half miles away as he sat in his tent door! while another said he heard me as distinctly three-quarters of a mile away as if he had been at my feet.

This is owing to the extreme rarity of the atmosphere, and so, knowing that in some of the places there were hundreds of men in their tents within a radius of a mile—who would not trouble to come to the service, I used, Jotham-like, in the calm and quiet of the summer evenings to "lift my voice and cry." "Will they, nill they"—they could not help but hear the message. I preached Christ; I warned every man. Many and many a night, therefore, I was building better than I knew. Next day a man sought me out to "enquire," and to him I had the joy of "expounding the way of the Lord more perfectly." After his departure another came, and I began to bring before him, also, the great salvation. I thought, however, from his demeanour that my words were falling on an unresponsive ear, when presently I saw his under-lip begin to quiver. The Holy Spirit had struck a chord in his heart; his eyes were filling; so gathering myself up, I pressed him all I knew to surrender to Jesus instantly. He obtained relief in bolting! but he took away the book.

My poor bones have not yet forgotten the camp at the next stage. A Christian brother kindly insisted on giving up his tent and bunk to me, while he retreated to a chaff-house close by. I wished to be allowed to make the acquaintance of the chaff bags myself, but as he would not hear of it, I subsided into the tent, as clean and neat and "airy" a dwelling as was to be found on the fields. The sides of the tent were not down to the ground, so that as the wind was rather high, a beautiful young gale blew round me all the night. Nothing like fresh air! And then the bed! Talk of a wire mattress after that! My anatomy wouldn't—simply wouldn't—fit into it at all!

Next day at 10 a.m. found me at "I.O.U.,"

sixteen miles further on. After a little rest I set off on foot to visit the flat on which the men were working the alluvial. Passing from one to another I told them of the meeting to be held to-night near the store, and got the promise of a good attendance. I met one wicked Aberdeen man, full of swagger, and warned him that it would be knocked out of him some day. At 7.30 I borrowed a box from the store-keeper for a pulpit, and carried it to a fallen tree which had been previously selected as the meeting place. No one had yet come, so gathering some of the branches together, I struck a match and soon had the Church lit up! The next thing was to ring the bell, and to shout at the top of my voice, "Roll up! Roll up! Roll up!" Scientifically done, this answers here as well as the best church-bell ever cast. I then sat down on the pulpit, hymn sheets in hand, and the novel sight of a parson sitting alone on a box beside a huge bon-fire soon attracted some, and others came to see what these first were looking at! Then I jumped up, entrusted one of them with the distribution of the hymns, another with the feeding of the fire, and then, standing on the box, gave out a hymn and began to sing. The songs of Zion soon waked up the whole of the camp, and presently we had a splendid congregation. As I began to speak some of the lads thought it was a great joke, but a kind though firm rebuke soon steadied them, and when they saw that that line of conduct wouldn't answer, they settled down and listened most attentively. After service some young fellows from South Melbourne, who were working a claim close by, came and asked if I would not stay in their camp, as their "boss" was away and his tent was empty. I was only too glad to comply; it is wonderful how obliging one gets in Coolgardie!

My quarters turned out to be a fine big tent with

stretcher and rugs. My tent mates were a cat and five kittens, but as I was away in the morning before they awoke, they did not disturb me, and I don't think I disturbed them. At 5.0 o'clock, just as the sun was appearing in the glowing east, I was on the pad for Kurnalpi, 35 miles away. Camped at 7.15; my table is well spread at the foot of a tree. A pot of Liebig's extract of beef, pepper and salt, sugar, bread, biscuits, sardines, and tea—a curious jumble for a man who was once afraid to put almost anything into his mouth. With a truly thankful heart I sat down on the ground, with my back against a tree, and broke my fast, followed by a portion from the best of books, and a season of communion with my ever-present Companion and Friend. No matter how far and fast I travel, or into whatever out-of-the-way places I wander, He is always true to His word, "Neither will I in any wise forsake thee." I rode on for 3½ hours, and then met a buggy with two gentlemen in it, a most unusual occurrence in those parts. We looked hard at each other as we passed. Presently I heard a voice, "Is that MacNeil?" "That's my name; But who is wanting to know?" And lo! here is a doctor from Melbourne, who is persuaded that he has struck something better than mending broken bones. He is returning from inspecting a reef near Kurnalpi, "the richest thing in the world." Of course, I have better manners than to contradict. He is so elated that he must "shout." "But I'm a total abstainer!" "Have some hop beer?" "Will it go to my head?" asked I of my Scotch would-be benefactor. "Na, na, it'll go to your stummick!" so on the word of a medical adviser I partook, and found it cold and invigorating. About two hours afterwards I suddenly came in sight of the condensers, 12 miles from Kurnalpi. I am getting more accustomed to working the



machine in the sand, and therefore make better time. Shortly after 3.0 the Kurnalpi huts were sighted, and I began at once to sow the seed which I had carried from Coolgardie, beating up at the same time for the meeting. Since my last visit two "rushes" have taken place close by; one man obtained 19 ozs. of gold for one day's work! A storekeeper asked me where I was going to sleep. "I don't know." "There's room here," he said, so that was settled; and it is in a bedroom piled high with bags of sugar, etc., that I am writing now before the time of meeting.

#### BACK TO COOLGARDIE.

WHITE FEATHER, *Oct. 26th, 1894.*—I ought to be writing from "The Dead Finish" to-night; for, if I am not there in one sense, I am in another! After tea yesterday I was much exercised as to what to do for firewood, as the timber around had all been used up; but again my host, the storekeeper, came to my help, and told me to make what use I liked of his wood-heap. Then the men began to muster, some seating themselves on this same wood-heap near the fire, others on boxes borrowed from the store, but the bulk of them sat upon the ground, and proved most attentive. We have an aboriginal, Frank by name, as general servant in this establishment, and a real nice boy he is. You should have seen his delight over the service. He had never seen the like before, and at the singing he nearly exploded. "Big fellow, corroboree! White fellow, corroboree!" A new name for our meetings, is it not?

My voice has been a little husky for about a week. There has been an incessant strain on it night after night, singing and speaking in the open air. A draught last night, too, had told upon it, and nearly finished me. There was a rent in the hessian exactly

over my head, and as the wind rose it whistled straight down, as out of a funnel, upon the pillow, making it necessary for me to put the rug over my head, to prevent my hair from being blown away! How cold it gets towards morning! My voice was nearly gone when I rose, but I went on visiting and seed-sowing during the day, as long as the supply of Testaments lasted. A man told me that after my last visit, when he entered his tent and found what I had left for him, he did what he had not done for 20 years—read the Gospel of St. Matthew at one sitting. As the evening drew near my voice showed no sign of improvement; but I “lighted the church,” as on the previous night, and waited for the congregation. It was soon evident that they were waiting for me. Two or three came, and we essayed to sing, but such singing was never heard at Kurnalpi before or since! One effect of to-night was to make me more profoundly thankful than ever before for the voice my Master has given me, to compel men to hear on the “deefest side o’ their heids,” even when they will not gather.

At 5 a.m., just as the sun was appearing, I stole out, without disturbing any of the sleepers, and away we flew towards the White Feather. Our first stage of 12 miles was covered in about an hour. Crossing a lake at express speed, suddenly I saw a deep rut across the pad! To pull up was impossible, as I had no brake—a mistake I repented of times without number. In a twinkling I was on my back, the bicycle yonder, my watch there, and myself here! Picking myself up first, I found that there were no bones broken, but that the sinews below the right knee-cap were badly strained. It was very painful, and I went round, picking up the other pieces, and halting like Jacob. When I got the “camel” on its feet, I found its neck so broken that its head was turned about and facing

in the direction of the tail! The handle, too, was twisted completely round. In due time, however, I was off once more, thankful to God that the result was no worse. The knee was very stiff, and the strain of pedaling very painful; so, should the pain become worse and make it impossible for me either to ride or walk, I would certainly be in a queer strait, as the nearest help was fully six miles behind me. Yet I resolved to push on, lifted my heart to God, called upon Him in my distress, and soon, to my joy, the pain began to ease instead of increasing.

By 10 o'clock I was at the parting of the ways. Which way for me? I was not sure whether I should take the left and go to the "I. O. U.," to have a meeting there to-night, or whether I should go to the right, and make for the White Feather, to rest my voice and knee. Kneeling down on the pad beside the bicycle, I asked for guidance, and tried to sing, but it was only the tongue in the heart that could manage it! so, rather than risk another failure, I went to the right and struck off for the Feather. Lame and all as I was, I was making capital time.

At 11 o'clock I felt like stopping for dinner, but that was out of the question, as it was still cool, and therefore the best time for working; so I kept at it till noon, when really I had to give in. Picking out a large pine tree, I camped in its shade, and having fortified the inner man, proceeded to tighten the handle, as it was working loose again. I packed it afresh with more canvas, and then, when screwing up the bolt which tightens the clamp which keeps the bar in position, it snapped—to my horror. Immediately I saw visions—a vision of a twenty mile walk, leading the bicycle! The West Australian blackfellow's word for sick is "mindik," so here was a "mindik" bicycle and a "mindik" leg. What a splendid chance for showing the grace of patience! I had never been in a fix like this before.

It was twenty miles at least to the nearest water, and my bag was nearly empty! Could I walk that distance? I had grave doubts. Of course, there were no means of repairing the break, so I simply stood, and (Scotsman-like) scratched my head and looked, and looked, and looked. Suddenly a plan was suggested. Sawing off a young sapling with my pocket-saw, I ran it through a hole in the top of the fork, and then strapped the ends of this stick tight to the handle-bar above, hopeful that the strain thus brought upon the bar might keep it in position. Then I sat down and read Isaiah xl. It did me good, away there on that lonely Coolgardie pad, to read of Him Who faints not and never grows weary.

I started in much fear, but found that my plan answered admirably—my ship of the desert responding beautifully to her new steering-gear. Of my gratitude that day I may say what the old woman said of her religion, "It's better felt than telt." The prospect of spending the night out with a bad leg and a parched throat had not been over pleasant. Late in the afternoon I pulled up at the condensers, and had the dry bag and drier throat attended to. There were still five miles to be covered, and every yard had to be walked, the pad being too rough for my jury-rigged companion. The poor "mindik" knee wondered if we were ever coming to the Feather, but my heart was in better form than my leg as we sighted the tents at dusk, for I had given orders for my mail to be sent here, and there was a prospect of news from home. I got a warm welcome from my friends, and sat down at the camp fire, very thankful that I had not to begin beating up a meeting, for the weary frame was crying out "enough!" A fresh egg for tea was a great luxury—my first since I left civilisation. You should see me as I write—a fine big tent all to myself, and a stretcher *with a mattress!* I am seated on a bo-

with two dynamite cases (empty, of course) on top of another big box serving as my table. Here I stay till 5 a.m. on Monday, when I intend starting for the Broad Arrow.

COOLGARDIE, *Nov. 5th, 1894.*—You left me in camp at White Feather nine days ago. When the coach came in from Coolgardie on Saturday evening I expected a parcel of Bibles, etc.; also some clothing—the latter being sorely needed, but the driver told me that he had nothing for me. I was unfit to be seen now, and had another week to run before I could get to my reserves at Headquarters, so I came to the bold resolve to wash my wearing apparel, and on a Saturday night too! To cook a little I had been trained, but to wash I knew not how. I had not been educated up to this. What a pity! As my host owned a condenser, I did not feel much compunction at boiling a big billy of water and then retiring with it and with our common wash-basin to my private apartment. Stripping off my shirt, I put on my vest and coat to try to keep warm while I experimented with this stiff chocolate coloured fabric, once so soft and clean, and I wondered if it would ever be so again. Putting the shirt and a piece of soap into the basin, I poured the boiling water over it, and kept stirring it round with a stick until the water cooled sufficiently for me to put my hands into it. Then I rubbed vigorously as I have seen washerwomen do. After the shirt came the handkerchiefs and the socks, and these being finished, the next thing was to get the articles dry, so I took them up to the camp fire and hung them round. I crept as close to the fire as I could get, for it was very cold. I waited and watched, and kept turning the articles. By keeping up a good fire the process was completed in due time, and then gathering up the spoil I retreated to my tent a proud and happy man. Really there was cause to be

proud of the shirt and socks; the patent washing machine had answered admirably; but for the handkerchiefs I really couldn't say what colour they were, only they were *not* white.

Redressing, I was soon ready for bed, but awoke with a sore throat, as a result of last night's watching. On Sabbath morning I went down to the township, a billiard-room keeper having offered us the use of his room for service. One of the tables served as a book-board while the men sat round the wall. The owner was one of the congregation, and again offered the use of his "Chapel" for the evening. The response to the "Roll up!" at night was not what I expected. Twenty sly grog-sellers were at their nefarious traffic that day, so that my work was at a discount. How cheerfully men allow themselves to be "hoaxed" in spiritual things! but how mad they get when hoaxed over a new rush!

Monday, 6 a.m., off the Broad Arrow. This pad is the heaviest I have been on yet. I dreaded the journey on account of my lame leg, but through the good hand of God upon me, I got in at 3.0—just two hours quicker than at my first visit. Later on I was sitting beside a fire, resting, thinking of Heaven and home, of Jesus, of you and the bairns so far away, when I was recalled from my pleasant dreams by remembering that it was time for meeting. I was soon among the men, who had gathered and were waiting, and was just preparing to start when I heard a voice out of the surrounding darkness, "Costume is nothing, sir, I suppose?" "Oh, no, certainly not," I replied; and presently a gentleman appeared minus any legs to his trousers. He explained afterwards that while making his way through the scrub one of the legs had been torn off, and that he had torn off the other to make things equal! It may have been wicked, but I must confess to a severe struggle to avoid exploding, even during

the service, every time I caught sight of our friend in Highland costume à *la Coolgardie!*

After breakfast started for Bardoc, only twelve miles away to the north. It was near this that a poor man was cruelly murdered by his mate and then buried in the sand—the first murder recorded from Coolgardie. Had the murderer been caught by the miners, the hangman would have been cheated. I came across young men on this field who knew me through Studley Park, and they entertained me right royally. Another, who had been at our meetings in Western Australia ten years before, got the camp fire ready for the meeting, and actually rigged up *seats* for the congregation! Nearly all the men on the field mustered. How they enjoyed the singing! and I found amongst them one who had been a member of my old congregation in Jamestown fifteen years ago. Stayed with a young fellow that night whose relatives are earnest Christian workers on the "other side." Unfortunately for him, as he himself confessed, he had chosen to forsake his mother's way, and had turned his back on his father's God. He told me that the last word his Christian brother said to him as he was leaving for the gold-fields was, "Jem, remember the Name you bear."

Next day started for "Sorefoot," nineteen miles south. It got its name from the fact that on the morning after the discovery of the reef, the whole field was like an hospital, filled with crippled men. They had made such hot haste during the night to reach the field, and to be among the first comers to peg out the best claims, that in the morning they were so lame that they could not move, and lay all over the place suffering a recovery. This rush, after all, was a "duffer," and the men were leaving it fast. Instead of finding a thousand miners, there were not more than a hundred. Here I knew nobody; nobody was

expecting me; nobody wanted me; but after a little rest at noon I went off to let the men know of the meeting at night, keeping a sharp look out for a likely place in which to sleep. There were any number of deserted "wurlies" about, and I selected one and took its bearings, so that I could find it easily after dark. These "wurlies" are simply shelters made of branches, with plenty of leaves for a bed. But even here there was someone who knew me, and as I passed one of the tents a young man called out and asked if I had a camp. "Yes, I have just picked out one of the 'wurlies' close by." "Oh, come and camp with me, sir, and take tea with me too." Of course I went, and when the beating up was finished I returned to his tent, and found that he had prepared of his best. His wife was writing to him, saying that she needed £20 badly, and wondering why, when he was living in the land of gold, he was not getting it! He had been on the fields for months, but had not been able to send her anything; it had been as much as he could do so far to eke out a living for himself. The strange thing about this rush was that the "prospector" who discovered the gold was still getting it from his claim. I saw his party filling their match boxes, but the men all round had none. Gideon's fleece!

There was no fire and no audience at night; not very inspiring! I felt that this was the very place where I was *needed*, even though not *wanted*, so I set to work hauling branches to a fallen tree. For a time no one heeded my beacon fire; but, not to be beaten, I seized two meat tins (there are always plenty of them lying about a camp), and commenced beating them together most vigorously. Then, lifting my voice, I shouted, "Roll up! roll up!" and turning in the opposite direction, repeated the invitation. The call travelled marvellously; I heard my voice rolling down those plains in the still night air like a



railway train, and thanked God for restoring it again. This fetched them, for rattling on a tin dish is the signal for a muster here. Sometimes a man will gather the men thus if he has found a big "slug," and wishes to exhibit it. Perhaps, then, they thought that someone had something big to show them, and so I had; I could put them on to "gold tried in the fire." Mine host told me that one of the lads sitting near him was sobbing away as the word was being preached. God bless him, whoever he is.

After service I woke up to the fact that I had lost my knife, a serious loss to one in the bush, for it was my basket of tools! I had had it at dinner-time, so in the darkness I searched for the tree at the foot of which I had reclined. Found the spot and the knife. What joy as I felt that lost friend lying safe again in my pocket! When we reached our tent, "Gaius mine host" proceeded to make a camp for himself on the ground, and made me take the bunk. His pair of blankets were enough for one, but alas, when divided into two! It became bitterly cold, and I was glad when 4 o'clock came, showing light enough to get up. As soon as possible I was on the pad, trying to restore my circulation. I was soon warm enough, and by the middle of the day would have given something for the cold of the morning.

The flies now began to torment my face and eyes, but presently I met a gentleman driving a unicorn team, and going to Coolgardie. He enquired as to the state of my larder, replenished my bags, and then noticing that I had no fly-veil on my helmet, insisted on my taking his, much to my comfort. "I can get another," he said, "in Coolgardie to-morrow, and you won't be in for days yet." By 8.0 next day I was under way for the Wealth of Nations, and arrived there before noon. The evening meeting



MINER'S CAMP, WEST AUSTRALIA.

had been announced, and the boys were expecting me, so we had one of the best of the tour. I was on the way to Coolgardie in the morning before the sun appeared, and reached the city by 1.0 streaming and dirty, but thankful for *plenty* of water to wash in once more, and for clean clothes.

Next day I was ready to commence Presbyterian services in Coolgardie. The Theatre Royal was given up to the Salvation Army for the day, so we began in the Barracks. It was a happy day, for we felt the Lord's presence in our midst. After this I am bound to be back in Coolgardie every Sabbath, so that my missionary journeys must be between Monday and Saturday. For some time past I have been exercised over the want of hospital accommodation in Coolgardie. All the sick from the outlying fields make for the town, and often are refused admittance at the tents for want of room. I felt that the men themselves only wanted to have the matter brought before them to secure the required help, so in every field which I visited this journey I brought the hospital needs under the notice of the miners, and a strong local committee was formed to raise funds, to see that every case of sickness on their own field was attended to and sent on immediately to the hospital in Coolgardie. They were very grateful to me for taking action in this matter, and a good deal of suffering will in this way be prevented.

\* \* \* \* \*

My husband's next letter describes another missionary journey, with its usual hard work and hard fare. On the way home he had a narrow escape from being lost altogether. In his own words:—

By 5.0 next morning I was away for the

White Feather, 18 miles off. Our pad lay through the bush, and proved very difficult to pick up, because very rarely used. After careful search I found what I considered to be the track, and made very good time upon it. At 10.0, when by my reckoning I should have been at the Feather, with the day's visiting done and resting for the evening meeting, I struck a well-beaten track. Where am I now? I could not tell. I ran down the road a mile or so, but when it began to bear south I stopped, for it seemed to me that the Feather should be to the north. After considering a little I judged that the best thing to do was to steer a course due north, strike the Feather, or else the road that would lead to it. Getting out my compass I took my bearings, and started to walk through the scrub; ride of course I could not. I had not gone three hundred yards when a voice said to me "What if that is the Feather road which you have just left. If so, where are you going now?" A sudden fear seized me, and turning at once I was soon back on the pad again. I then resolved to run down eastward until I found out where I was. Mile after mile I went, and at last came into a salt lake which I recognised, and where do you think I was? Actually on the right pad, but running the wrong way! Here I was at 11.0, twenty-two miles from my destination, and four miles further away than when I started at 5.0 in the morning! Turned and rode back again. When I reached the spot where I heard the inward voice, how thankful I felt! For I was going into certain death. I was making north into untrodden, waterless country, and my water-bag was nearly empty! "He doth deliver."

By mid-day I was getting very tired and thirsty, but dared not touch my bag. Presently I met two prospectors camped for dinner; they had camels and plenty of water, and kindly gave me as

much as I wanted. Some people would say, "These things are coincidences," but I believe that our God is the God of coincidences. Reached the Feather at 5.0 just seven hours later than I expected, but had the best meeting there that we have had for weeks. At Hannan's next day I found the boys waiting, and in honour of my coming "Scotty," the cook, had made a tart eighteen inches in diameter and four inches deep. He made it in one of their wash-tins, and had put two pounds of dried apples "intilt." It wasn't at all bad and lasted a long time. Capital gathering in the street at night. Finished this week's work by holding a committee meeting on the Saturday, and opening tenders for a new church. On the Lord's day the theatre was filled to the doors at the afternoon and evening meetings. Only one or two women present.

While looking after the white people I have not been neglecting the blacks. It came under my notice some time back that these poor creatures were distressed for water, as the white man had used up all the natural supply at the "soaks" and "namma" holes, and they were therefore driven to the alternative of begging or stealing their supplies. I therefore sent a letter to the Premier, Sir John Forrest, pointing out to him the injustice that was being done to the aboriginals, and urging him to instruct the Government officials on the fields to provide the blacks with water at the expense of the State. An Inspector from the Aboriginal Board was immediately sent to Coolgardie, who interviewed me the other day, with the result that all the wardens on Coolgardie are being instructed to see that the needs of the blacks are attended to. Physically, the aboriginals of the Coolgardie district are inferior to those I have seen in Eastern Australia. I am greatly interested in the way the mothers carry their "picaninnies." They place the child in a hollow piece of bark, and

swinging it on their backs, their hands are thus left free for other duties. The poor little thing can cry away there to its heart's content—the mother taking not the slightest notice of it.

#### LAST JOURNEY EASTWARDS.

"COOLGARDIE, *Dec. 1st, 1894.* It was pitch dark ere I reached the "Six Mile." Lit the lamp and went foraging round for timber. Seeing a camp close by, I went over to it, and found that some of the young miners there were expecting me. Among them were a few members of a theatrical troupe, who had been at my first open-air meeting in Coolgardie. I told them that we needed a fire to give us light for the service, when the cheery response came back: "We'll make a fire for you here, sir!" My heart welled up in thankfulness. Soon they had a good blaze, and then standing out clear of the tents, I sounded the "Roll up!" We had immediate evidence that it was heard, for from all quarters of the field I got the call sounded back on the night air, "Roll up! roll up!"

You should have heard those theatrical fellows sing. We had a lovely meeting, and God blessed His word. After service I thought of going on in the darkness two miles to Hannan's Lake, to the camp where I had been welcomed before, but a store-keeper asked me to stay with him, and according to my invariable rule, the invitation was accepted. We had supper in the store, sitting on bags of sugar. Then the ex-leader of theatricals very kindly offered to recite for me "Mark Antony's oration over Cæsar's body," but privately and *sotto voce*, so as not to raise the camp. I expressed the pleasure it would give me; my entertainer commenced, and acquitted himself very creditably too; but the comical side of the whole thing would keep striking one, even when the oration

was in progress! This young man had come out from England to educate the people of Western Australia up to a taste for Shakespeare; but as they would not be educated, he, in disgust at their perverted tastes, threw up his laudable undertaking and took to digging!

On the way to the White Feather, 50 or 60 miles due west, stopped at a tent in the early morning, and offered to conduct worship with the two men who were there. One was willing to come in, but the other, a professing Christian, replied that he did not think he had time; yet all he had to do was to sit there and boil a big pot. At the next tent I offered some books to the man in occupation, but he replied that he did not need them. “Are you *saved*?” I asked him. He flared up at that, and I had to leave very tired at 7.30, but as soon as I started, heaviness, and everything else was completely forgotten, and I finished fresh and strong. Jesus is “a very present help.” Started what I believe to be my last meeting at Hannan’s. Some present tried to interrupt; I stopped for a moment, and then said: “Boys, there are some geese about to-night!” “Yes, sir,” was the immediate rejoinder, “it’s getting near Christmas!” The geese immediately subsided. Presently a drunken man came over and cursed us, but the men raised a shout that made the welkin ring again, the meaning of which was perfectly clear, even to the muddled head of the interrupter, who beat a speedy retreat. Those dear men! How they listened to the Word of Life! making one forget weariness in the joy of ministering to their weary, hungry hearts. In the congregation was a young man who had been converted in the beginning of the year at our meetings at Napier, in New Zealand. Here he was, “shining!”

Home by 7.30 a.m., having covered nearly thirty miles. as an appetiser, before breakfast.

The next chapter or two is a short account of my husband's last days in Coolgardie, written by him at the request (I think) of the editor of the *Australian Weekly*.





"HANNAN'S," NOW KALGOOLIE.

## CHAPTER XV

### LAST DAYS ON THE COOLGARDIE FIELDS

COOLGARDIE,

*Monday, December 10th, 1894.*

THE week before last, between Monday and Saturday, we—that is my “camel” and I—had travelled about 200 miles. Fields, as we have just seen, to the east of Coolgardie were visited for what proved to be the last time, and service held at each—The Six Mile, I.O.U., Kurnalpi, White Feather, and Hannan’s. On the Sabbath the usual three services were held in the Theatre Royal, Coolgardie, and intimation made that (D.V.) there would be three services held again next Sabbath. If I had only been blessed with the gift of second sight, that intimation would have been materially altered, the sequel will show why. At daylight on Monday, December 3rd, we were astir and “loading up” with “tucker,” Bibles, Testaments, and tracts for the longest run we had yet attempted. About 5 a.m. I was wheeling through the quiet streets of Coolgardie heading North, bound for Menzies’ Find, about 100 miles away. We had climbed the spurs of Mt. Burgess, about eleven miles out, and were flying down the slopes on the further side in splendid style, when, on emerging from the dry bed of a creek, prompted by the engineering spirit fostered in the old railway contracting days, I stopped to overhaul the bicycle

to see if all was running well, as it had just come out of the repairer's hands, and found to my dismay that the left hand side of the fork was breaking again, the very fracture that the repairer had been supposed to have mended! What is to be done? It is either, turn back, or, patch it and push on. If we turn back, a night will be lost, and the men at Menzies not reached at all, and they will be able to say "No man cares for our souls." "They'll not say that if I can help it," so I set to work. Sawing off with my pocket-saw a young branch from a tree close by, I soon had it fitted as a "splint" to the poor "camel's" broken fore leg, and bandaged as securely as possible with all the available twine that could be scraped together out of my bags. In this disabled condition we started again for the remaining 120 miles, and soon reached the Twenty-Three Mile condenser, where I boiled the billy and had breakfast. Here I obtained a fresh supply of twine, made the bandages stronger, and having filled the water bags pushed on.

Some weeks before, there had been a rush to the Forty-Three Mile, and I was purposing to camp there and to have service, but found the place abandoned, and only about half-a-dozen men left. On hearing of Cashman's Brilliant Mine, about seven miles distant and off the main track, I struck away for that, having first placed a Testament in each tent still left on this deserted field. The Brilliant was reached just at dusk. The few men found there all gathered around the camp-fire at 8 o'clock for service, and each of them received a Testament. The night was passed very comfortably on two bags of chaff in a bough shed, and at daylight on Tuesday I was off for the Ninety Mile, giving away tracts and Testaments and portions of Scripture to those met with on the way.

By 10.30 I had reached the Cane Swamp,

twelve miles from the Ninety Mile, where the condensers showed us no little kindness, providing abundance of water for a wash. Water had been very scarce for the last twenty-four hours, none being available for *external* uses, and one was very thankful when enough could be secured for *internal* requirements. They had an early dinner for our sake, gathered to a man in one of the tents to a short service, and then, to crown all, as I was preparing to leave, one of them handed over, proportionately, the biggest collection yet received towards the support of the Mission—at the same time apologising for its smallness. They promised also a hearty welcome when returning on Friday. I left them in the heat of the day, having twelve miles of heavy sand yet to negotiate before reaching the Ninety Mile, *alias* "The Roaring Gimlet," where a service was planned for the evening. Oh, that sand! How it burned! Oh, that sun! How it blazed! So heavy was the sand that I converted myself for the time being into a draught horse, and yoked myself by means of a rope to the "camel," which would neither carry nor go, and so, walking by its side, I pulled it through those Irish miles of sand. In the middle of the afternoon, as heart and flesh were fainting and failing, I had "afternoon tea" on a two-pound tin of Californian pears, which I had taken the pains to carry. This canned fruit, by the way, is one of the greatest boons and luxuries to the Western Australian bushmen. Thus refreshed I resumed, and at long last the sandy miles were all behind us and the Ninety Mile just before.

Nobody here knows I am coming, so my first business is to go round the mines and the tents and to tell the men of the service to be held near the stores at 7.30. How thankful one would have been to be able to lie down in the shade of one of the trees and rest till service time, after having been on the "pad"

since 5 a.m.! but then there would be no one but yourself at the service! So there is nothing for it but to pocket your weariness and go at it. At the very first mine I visited we were welcomed after this fashion:—

“I have come up from Coolgardie to have service with the men of the Ninety Mile to-night.”

“I don't believe in supporting them things.”

“My good fellow, I didn't ask you to support, I only ask you to attend.” After some further conversation, rather pointed and personal I'll admit, my miner brother summarily comprehended me thus:—

“Well, look here! (with suitable emphasis) you're either a rogue or a fool.”

After riding round all the tents that were visible, telling the men of the service, leaving a book on each bunk, and just as I was thinking that the rounds were finished, some one mentioned another camp some distance away over the hills. Setting off in search, several tents were discovered. One old man (busily engaged watering his horses at a condenser, and perhaps a little short in the temper because they *would* drink so long) on being invited to attend the service, and, no doubt, divining that the dusty, travel-stained, coatless mortal, clad in kahkee, and riding a bicycle, must be a schismatic, curtly answered:

“I belongs to the Church of England, I do and that's enough for me.”

“My good friend, you may belong to the Church of England and be damned.” For I had come too far to be put off with an answer like that, and my business was to see that they belonged to Christ. After a little further conversation, I received my dismissal from this denizen of the Roaring Gimlet in the following formula:—“We don't want no travelling field-preachers round this way, we don't.”

Perhaps he didn't *want* them, but one couldn't help feeling how deeply he *needed* them!

Riding back to the centre of the field, I purchased a gallon of water, boiled the billy, opened the "tucker" bag, and thankfully made my evening meal on hard biscuit—our staple article of diet when on the "pad"—and billy tea. By the time it was finished it was the hour for service, and I went forth to look for a place of meeting. After a good search some fallen timber was found in the midst of a rather dense piece of scrub, and there a big fire was soon blazing, and the usual rallying cry on the gold-fields in the absence of a church-bell, "Roll up! Roll up!" went ringing through the hills and across the valleys, waking the echoes amid the rocks and also many a half-dozing digger in his tent. The "Roll up" was well responded to, and soon a goodly band of men was seated around the fire with hymn-sheets in their hands, singing the Songs of Zion. A new sound this—floating out on the night air at the Roaring Gimlet! This was the pioneer service on this field. How earnestly some of those men listened to words whereby they might be saved! In the congregation, I afterwards discovered, was a young man who had been converted under my ministry fourteen years ago in South Australia, and had become an earnest worker and afterwards a missionary in the Presbyterian Church, but he was here "seeking his fortune," as he put it.

Service over, I got the use of an empty tent in which to shelter for the night, and where, by the aid of a blanket kindly lent by a digger, and of the air pillow (the only swag one could afford to carry), I made myself tolerably comfortable. Before lying down I went to pour the remainder of the gallon of water over from tea into the water-bag, in order to be ready for a start at daylight in the morning, when I discovered that the black ants had been out

"prospecting" during the evening, and had "struck" the water in the billy. In their unseemly haste to appropriate their "find," shoals of them had fallen in, and to their astonishment, no doubt, they found that their "find" had appropriated them! Weary and all as I was, I had now to set to work "specking" those ants, and after "specking" with a teaspoon till one was still more weary, and until the candle was nearly tired of burning, a happy inspiration seized my breast, "strain it through your handkerchief." This answered admirably—and soon the "precious" was separated from the "vile," and the water in the bag ready for the road on the morrow, for I knew not how far I might have to travel ere a fresh supply could be obtained. After this little trial of patience, "separating" ants when the weary frame was crying out for "nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," near midnight I lay down in the deserted tent, and was very soon oblivious of everything till the rays of the rising sun quietly struggling through the canvas gently awakened me, and shortly after 5 a.m. I was on the pad again, and had taken a big bite out of the day's journey in the cool of the morning ere we stopped to break our fast, as usual, on dry biscuit and billy tea.

Menzies' Find, after a weary journey over some very heavy sand patches, was reached in good time on Wednesday evening. Passed through the tents advertising the meeting. Found a hearty welcome and a comfortable camp at Mr. ——'s. The service was held alongside Menzies' shaft, where the men themselves had kindled a fire—in some places I have to gather the timber and "light up the church" myself—to give us light, and by the light of which, as they lay on the ground around, they sang the hymns from the sheets which I carried with me. How weird the sight around that camp fire with the bush and the darkness as a background! How

interesting! The bulk of the men were gathered close to the fire, others were at a distance from us, too timid to come close in; while others stood or sat away out there in the darkness where they thought they could not be seen, but where they could see and hear everything. Some of the young men here had almost run wild—one of them interjecting a remark during the address which will not bear reporting—he did not attempt it a second time!

Thankful at heart that the Master had carried me to my destination, and had granted me the privilege and joy of unfolding the Banner of the Cross on this outpost, and that I had seen those hardy pioneers gathered round it, listening, many of them, with hungry thirsty hearts to its message of Peace and Love, I walked back through the bush to my camp to get ready for the return journey on the morrow—a journey that proved so full of new and trying experiences. This made the eighteenth station on the Coolgardie gold field at which I had the privilege and honour of being the Pioneer Gospel preacher, the first to break the precious Bread of Life, in these places, to famishing men. The miners visited these places looking for gold; I followed them looking for jewels for Christ's diadem. The Wesleyan minister had been before me to the White Feather and Hannan's, while he and the Salvation Army had both been before me in Coolgardie township, but on the other fields the Presbyterian Church is the Pioneer.

I camped that Wednesday night at Menzies' Find in a weather-proof hammock with canvas sides and roof, so that once inside it mattered not to us, wrapped in blissful slumber, whether the weather outside was fair or foul. Should the weather be warm you could raise the canvas on one side or on both, and drop other sides made of mosquito netting, admitting the fresh air, but excluding winged insect life. Coolgardie! land of happy memory! for in all my



wanderings here, not one mosquito has yet been encountered. When I think of some of the beds in which I sometimes have had to sleep, it makes one sigh because the "camel" was not strong enough to carry one of those comfortable canvas hammocks, as well as the air-pillow for nightly use.

By 6.30 a.m. on Thursday I had started to run back the 130 miles lying between me and Sabbath's work at Coolgardie. On reaching the condensers, 16 miles out, I stopped to try and collect the men on the lake for service. While standing beside the canvas tank enjoying a "long" drink of the coolest, purest condensed water, a strange horseman was noticed emerging from the scrub, a mile to the north. He bore down across the lake upon us, and riding up to the condenser, called for water. He and his horse were famishing! How greedily the starving animal thrust its head into the bucket of water which was placed before it! I watched it stow away twelve gallons before it cried "enough."

How much the man took in I had better not tell, but he could eat nothing, because, like his horse, he was swelled out with water. I noticed him now looking intently in the direction from which he had come. He was looking for his mate whom he had left behind, more distressed than himself, with his horse almost done. He could bear the suspense no longer, so seizing a water-bag he filled it and started back on foot to the rescue. Away back yonder in the scrub, on the burning arid sands, he knew his mate was perishing, —perishing for lack of that which he had by him now in abundance. Not of such stuff was that prospector made as would allow him to sit contentedly beside his well-filled water-bags, enjoying himself to the full after his long "perish," while his comrade was in danger of meeting the death from which he himself had just been saved, that most horrible of all

deaths—death from thirst. Had he lacked the strength to go to the rescue of his mate, how swiftly would one of us standing by have started in search of the famishing man! But having the ability, had he lacked the *will*, how we would have scorned him for his heartlessness! He that has an eye in his head can learn from that bushman the proper course for those to follow who, through grace, out of the arid wastes have reached the wells of Salvation. But alas! how unlike him are whole battalions of those who say that they have the Spirit of Jesus.

After some time we noticed a man enter the lake leading a horse. As he came slowly towards us we saw that the poor animal was creeping after him with its nostrils on the ground, so far gone that it was mutely pleading to be allowed to lie down and die. It did not even pluck up heart when it came within sight and smell of the condensers. How many gallons satisfied it we did not hear, but after a bad "perish" (as the bushmen call it) of four days without water, larger horses have been known to take twenty and twenty-five gallons at a drink. Fortunately the day was comparatively cool, or these horses would never have reached the water, in which case it might have gone hard with the men. This was my first sight of actual suffering from thirst on Coolgardie in the quest for gold. "What won't we risk, what won't we suffer, and all for gold?" I heard one of them remark. In all probability the next day saw them off across those same trackless, waterless wastes, risking all again, for the thirst for gold was on them. Two or three days before this a prospector at Menzies' Find while out prospecting lost himself in the scrub. A search party turned out, led by a black tracker. Fortunately they soon picked up his tracks, and rapidly the West Australian "Jemmy" followed them up, but not too rapidly, for when they came up with the poor fellow he was

in the last stage, delirious from thirst, and in his delirium he was (as he imagined) enjoying himself eating ice-creams by the handful! There are "make-believes" ten thousand times more sad than this to be met with every day in Eastern Australia!

One of the condensing parties invited me to dine with them, and on the invitation being accepted, as the bread supply was short, one of the men, a Scotchman, a Presbyterian, a committee-man from one of the leading Brisbane Churches, suddenly assumed the rôle of baker. Mixing some flour and water in his dish, he threw little lumps of the dough on the huge heap of live coals and ashes always found beside each condenser's fire, making a very effective "girdle," aye ready by night and by day; then turning them as they required with a long stick, in an incredibly short time he had a good supply of scones cooked. As he pitchforked them off the fire he scraped them, cutting off the black and cutting out the ashes, and soon we, the three condensers and the minister, were dining on hot scones, billy tea, and tinned meat. After this I tried to get the other condensers to service, but failed, so as I could not get as many as I would, I took as many as I could, and gathering the three men who had ministered to me in carnal things into their tent, I ministered unto them in spiritual things, and so took leave, pushing on for the Ninety Mile. The pad lay through the largest salt lake I had yet seen in West Australia. Where I crossed it, it was about five miles wide; in some places it must be ten; while in one direction, due north, I could not see the shore at all. There are large islands in this inland sea, and the mirage is perfect in its deception. There is no water in the lake, but the whole surface is coated with a white saline matter. This sandy salt and salty sand is so soft that the cyclist, willy nilly, must become a pedestrian, and

then, as you try to walk, the mud—a gluey mixture of clay and sand and salt and water—sticks so admirably that you are “made to go heavily.” The glare of a noon-day sun on this lonely, shelterless bit of the pad may be more easily imagined than described. How thankful the man who pushes a bicycle across that wide expanse is to find himself near the scrub that lines its shores, only the man who has thus crossed it knows. On the edge of the lake someone has sunk a hole six or seven feet deep, and as I stopped beside it I found it filled to within two feet of the surface with the clearest water. How strong the temptation to strip and have a dip! An amphibious life would answer admirably in this climate; but the water is salter than the sea. At any rate I will have the satisfaction of washing my hands for once in *abundance* of water! Hands washed in that water, as soon as they dry, are covered in whiteness. Water of this quality can be obtained by sinking on any of the salt lakes, scattered so plentifully throughout the Coolgardie goldfield, but the services of a condenser are necessary before it can be of any use—except it be for pickling pork!

Shortly after getting through the lake it became evident that my “fires” must be getting low, as steam was falling; my driving power was getting weak, for the side rods of the engine were working painfully slow, and there were about ten miles yet to be covered before we reached the Ninety-mile, where I was advertised for service at 7.30 p.m. The steaming qualities of the “coal” taken in at the condensers could not have been very high; so there is nothing else for it but to stop and take in more fuel. A camp fire is soon lighted and the quart-pot set on. All over the Coolgardie goldfield firewood is as plentiful as sand. This quart-pot, endeared by its timely help in many

an hour of need, I must have a special dispensation to be allowed to hang in a place of honor in my study alongside the precious water-bag! My constant succourers in journeyings oft, in toil, and thirst and hunger, what memories will the mere sight of them awaken! This quart-pot, *alias* "the billy," is soon boiling, and fuel is administered internally in the shape of beef tea, made out of Liebig's extract (a nourishment that is hard to beat), followed by billy tea and hard biscuit.

Remembering that it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," I read a portion, and to this habit at every camp I attribute the fact that I was able, on the poorest and roughest fare, to go so well through harder physical labour than I ever went through in my life, even in the old railway contracting days.

Thus refreshed I was off again, increased driving power being very apparent, and ere long I was within sight (if not within hearing) of the "Roaring Gimlet" once more. The surveyed town site was examined as I passed, and I selected two allotments for Presbyterian Church and Manse. About tea-time we reached the Registrar's camp, where I was made welcome, and had a whole tent placed at my disposal with a comfortable bed. To my unbounded amazement I saw that the bed had sheets (what a luxury for Coolgardie!), and I did not forget to enjoy it to the full when the proper time came, only that was not yet. For the first time in my experience on the fields, as an hotel had been established here, I resolved to encourage local industry, and ventured there for tea. In proof of his proud boast that he was "no heathen even if he was a publican," the landlord would not take payment for value received! On proceeding at the appointed hour to the place agreed upon for service,

we found that the young men, whom on Wednesday evening we had asked to have a fire all ready for service to-night to "light up the church," had failed us; no young men, no fire, no congregation. What is to be done? There was no suitable timber near, and it was too late now and too dark to go "prospecting" for some. My old South Australian worker came to the rescue with a "lantern dimly burning," and taking our stand under a clump of stunted gum trees, we began to sing. The choir was presently reinforced by three young women, but the congregation was slow to gather: we sang again and yet again to give them time to assemble, but the painful conviction was soon forced upon us that the majority were not intending to heed the "Roll up" to-night. They knew of the service, but evidently they had no desire to hear of the "Reef" with "unsearchable riches" which we were sure we could "lay them on to," and had ridden so far to do. Perhaps they didn't want to be troubled by any "travelling field preacher." They had been getting on quietly in their sins for months, and no "disturber of the peace," no "tormentor" had been among them, and they resented intrusion now. Perhaps they did not relish the teaching of the first meeting that a good claim is not the *summum bonum*, that—

"It's no' in titles nor in rank;  
 It's no' in wealth like Lon'on Bank,  
 To purchase peace and rest;  
 It's no' in making muckle *mair*,  
 It's no' in books, it's no' in lear  
 To mak' us truly blest.  
 If happiness hae not her seat  
 And centre in the *breast*,  
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
 But never can be blest."

That's good poetry and it's good theology too, but the theology of it didn't meet with very general

acceptance amongst Coolgardie's gold-fever stricken men. How often were statements like these met with an incredulous laugh! The score or two, however, who ventured near listened well. The results of this, my second and last meeting at the Ninety-mile, the irresponsive "Roaring Gimlet," are with the Lord. This was one of the very few disappointing experiences of this kind on the Coolgardie fields. The meeting dismissed, I replenished my "tucker" bags at the store, and then sought the quiet and rest of one of the most comfortable of camps—those luxurious sheets of evergreen memory.

As the sun appeared above the eastern hills on Friday morning I was off for the Forty-three Mile. The heavy twelve miles of sand, where I might again have been seen "yoked" to my "camel" and dragging it after me, were crossed before breakfast. Ample justice, after that morning's work, was done to the morning meal kindly prepared for me by the friends at the Cane Swamp condenser. Bidding them good-bye, all went well with us till about 5 o'clock. The "camel's" broken leg in splints had now carried me 200 miles, but just as we had got through the worst and heaviest of the road and on to a splendid stretch of pad, where we could have rolled along at 12 or 14 miles an hour, and had settled down to work, the tyre of the back wheel collapsed! the *pneuma* had escaped, and it was a *pneumatic* tyre no longer! Nothing for it but to haul aside into the scrub out of sight and set about repairs—out of sight, mind, for I had just passed in fine style some cameleers, and it would have been a mighty humiliation to let them, as they sailed so steadily past on the ships of the desert, see us engaged in "repairs"! On unshipping the wheel and taking off the "Dunlop" tyre, I discovered that the leak was in the joint of the

inside tube. The intense heat of the sand through which the wheels had been travelling all day had perished the solution by which the joint was "made." The trouble being thus located, in about half-an-hour repairs were effected, and I was off.

Lost time had now to be made up, and as there were several miles still between us and where the men were camped with whom I was intending to hold service to-night, I was pushing ahead at "express" speed. Suddenly, on running out of one of the storm-water channels by which the pad here is crossed, the bicycle utterly collapsed! On examination I found that the other side of the fork had carried away, so that now *both* the fore legs of the "camel" were broken, and also that the back tyre had again given out. The machine could now neither carry nor be pushed, the sun was fast setting, we were still five miles from the place where I was intending to have service, and 45 miles from Coolgardie, with the Lord's Day and its appointments so perilously and inconveniently near! What next?



## CHAPTER XVI

### LAST DAYS ON THE COOLGARDIE FIELDS

(Concluded.)

"**T**HAT thou doest do quickly" had a new application for me now. I knew that there was a bush store about two miles further ahead. Can I get the disabled "camel" that far? Turning the machine on its back, I made a diagnosis of the fracture and decided on another "splint." Sawing a suitable branch from one of the trees, I fitted it and then bound it in with bagging twine, a good supply of which, fortunately, was on hand. The "bandages" were tightened in a most unsurgeonlike manner, by twitches. This operation took considerably longer to perform than it takes to tell, and by the time the "camel" was inverted and on its legs again, the shades of evening were gathering round. The splints, however, answered; the machine would *go*, though to *carry* was out of the question. So quickly gathering up, as I thought, *all* our belongings lying scattered around, tea and sugar bags, Testaments, biscuits, tracts, tools, &c., I replaced them in the carrier and started for the store, but unwittingly left behind the one thing needful for a pneumatic. Finding about half a dozen men in camp, whose souls were precious in God's sight, I resolved (though I did not arrive till an hour after sunset) to try and muster them for service, so ventured to say to the storekeeper, "You won't object to them meeting in the store, would you, my good friend?"

“Not at all, sir, not at all; for if it won't do us any good, it won't do us any harm at any rate.”

In a few minutes I had run round, and all the men mustered except one poor fellow, who was too ill to leave. So the service was held with my little congregation sitting around on bags of sugar, boxes of tinned meat and of jam, and on the beds—for this hessian hut served as bed-room and dining-room as well as store room, and was now being put to a new use as a Sanctuary. Are we not encouraged to “sow beside all waters,” and beside no waters too, by that God

“Who marks the down of the thistle  
The wandering winds have sown’?

Service over, now for the repairs—as the splints were only a temporary expedient. On the journey to the store I had been planning how best the break could be repaired, and the machine again made capable of carrying, for the prospect of a forty-three mile walk to Coolgardie was by no means inviting, especially after the two hundred miles already covered that week. The grocer's assistant volunteered as assistant engineer, and we set to work to execute the plan which I had formed. The crown of the fork being broken meant that the neck of the machine was broken, so that it could not carry its own weight, much less a rider. What was wanted was in some way to mend that broken neck. Cutting two saplings of “gimlet” or “salmon” gum, as it is called, we lashed them, one on each side of the front wheel by means of wire kindly provided by my assistant, one end of the sapling to the end of the axle, and the other end resting on the handle-bar. Then we bound the top of the fractured fork to these sticks, and thus the fracture was relieved of all strain. Experience next day proved that the plan was an admirable one, as the machine thus strengthened would have carried me

to Perth. Great was the wondering interest on the following week among cyclists in Coolgardie when they saw the style in which that "Raleigh" came home from Menzies' Find!

This finished, the back tyre had next to be repaired. The leak was again found to be in the joint of the tube. I then opened the carrier to get out the little canvas roll, in which to find the repairing gear, but to my amazement and sorrow, it was nowhere to be found. It had somehow been overlooked and left behind at one or other of the repairing places of the afternoon. What was to be done now? What could be done but to do what Christian did when his roll was lost—go back and look for it. So tired, so late, Coolgardie still so far, and now to turn and tramp back again! One might be tempted to sit down and cry, "all these things are against me," and if I had allowed this circumstance to get me under its feet, that is what I would have been crying. Seizing the bicycle lamp, I struck back at a swinging pace, on the pad again, by a young moon's fading light, singing

"This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour, night and day long!"

In due time I reached the place and discovered the siding into which I had run for repairs. Looking anxiously around, I saw the missing canvas roll partially covered under some leaves and branches. Comparing very small things with great, I am helped now to better understand a little bit in "The Pilgrim." "Looking down he espied his roll; the which, he, with trembling and haste, caught up and put into his bosom. But who can tell how joyful this man was when he had gotten his roll again? . . . . . He gave God thanks for directing his eye to the place where it lay, and with joy and tears betook himself again to his

journey. But O! how nimbly did he go up the rest of the hill!"

"Perfect submission! all is at rest,  
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,"

was still my "song in the night."

"And now I have flung myself fearlessly out,  
Like a chip on the stream of the Infinite Will,  
I pass the rough Rock with a smile and a shout,  
And I just let my God His dear purpose fulfil."

On reaching the store I found my assistant fast asleep, but soon roused him from his slumbers, and we worked away together till 1 a.m., when everything was finished, and as ready for the road as we could make it. Before leaving, I offered to pay him for his hard night's work, but he would not hear of it, only expressing sorrow at it being necessary for me to start again at once. Taking my leave of one of nature's gentlemen, I started in the dark (for the moon had now set) on my last stage of forty-three miles. Of course if I had been certain that the bicycle would carry, I might have rested till morning in the store, but I was not at all sure, and I might have to walk every foot of the way, and, if so, I certainly had no time to lose. In the stillness and darkness I toiled on, the lamp showing the pad. Several camps were passed during that morning's forced march, the men lying on the ground around the waggon with which they were travelling, each one covered from head to foot, wrapped like a mummy in his blanket, so that you really could not tell at which end was his head and at which his feet. Though I had a good look at them all, and scattered some "seed" about for them to pick up in the morning, none of them were conscious that there was someone about with "bluey up" at that hour.

About 2.30 a.m., my legs began to shew unmistakable evidences of a desire to "strike," and my eyelids sometimes evidently did not hear the

command to keep open, so, sorely against my will, I was compelled to haul off the pad and camp. Having selected a big gum tree as a breakwind, I managed to prop my eyelids open while I read by the light of the lamp the first chapter of Hebrews, and then lay down at the foot of the tree on the lap of mother earth, "as a child upon its mother's breast," with the air pillow under my head. I had not strength left even to pluck a few "bushman's feathers" for my bed, and so I slept.

About 3.45, as the cold grey dawn was breaking—for no matter how hot the day has been in Coolgardie, the nights are cool, and towards morning generally quite cold—consciousness began to return, and I felt very chill. Half asleep and half awake I thought I had kicked the blankets off, and tried to get hold of them to tuck them round my back again, when lo! I awoke, and there were no blankets near me at all! Driven by the cold from my bivouac at the foot of the tree, I was astir before the birds were up, and after thanking Him Who had kept watch above me during the darkness, I was soon going my hardest on the pad again, seeking to drive out the cold which had been getting into my very bones. As daylight increased I was able to examine the candlelight job, and to see that so far it was answering admirably. It was doing well, but might it not do better? I resolved to try, and the way in which I stole into that saddle on reaching the next level piece of the pad reminded me of nothing so much as how in my younger days when backing colts I used to try and steal into the saddle "unbeknownst" to them, so that I might be firmly seated before the play began. Thus gradually and softly I stole into this saddle that morning. As I was getting into it how light I tried to make myself! Then when I was fairly on, and found that the machine was still running, with what a feeling of

rest and joy I let the last pound go, and still it carried! Now my prospects brightened considerably with the increasing light, and it looked as if I was going to get into Coolgardie very comfortably after all.

About 6 a.m. a strange sight on the left of the pad attracted my attention. Turning aside to see I found myself standing beside a newly-made grave! A rough bush railing formed of saplings marked off the spot, and a rough board at the head of the grave told its story. An old man from Abbotsford, my old parish in Melbourne, had fallen on the pad, and his mates had given him decent burial where he fell. Like many another he had gone to the far West seeking his fortune, and had found his doom. As with uncovered head I stood beside that lonely grave, what thoughts came crowding into my mind. Did his loved ones know where and how their breadwinner had fallen, and where he was lying? Would they ever know? I prayed for them, and wondered if this old man of 70 had ever been one of my congregation in the open-air in Abbotsford or at Studley Park. As he lay on the ground there dying in the lonely bush so far from help and home, I wondered if he were able to say or sing:—

“Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill;  
For THOU art with me, and Thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.”

Hunger by this time was making itself felt, but I tried to forget it till I reached one of the mines at the Twenty-Five-Mile about 8 o'clock, when I found the manager at breakfast. He invited me to join him. No pressing was needed, and ample justice was done to all that my kind friend set before me, for it was the first proper meal I had had since breakfast time yesterday.

At 10.30 I moved on, but had not gone more than

two miles when the back tyre again collapsed! I knew that there was a cart coming behind, so waited, and was carried to the condensers a mile further on. There I laboured till 1 o'clock patching and re-patching that tyre; but each patch which I put on would need another to make it tight in some corner or other, and then that one needed still another! till at long last it looked as if the leak had "taken up." I essayed to move, but in a few yards it had gone again! I then pushed it to the next condenser about a mile further on, where I was welcomed by the Scotsman who owned it, and given every facility for mending, but all our efforts were in vain. I could not get the patches to hold, so in despair I started to walk into Coolgardie, about twenty miles away. I hadn't gone far through the burning sands when my heart failed me! the sand was actually scorching my feet; to walk was impossible! Then it struck me to do what should have been done "lang syne,"—to rip open the leaking joint and to made the whole joint afresh. I turned back into the shelter of the tent which I had just left, spent an hour making a fresh joint, found that it was tight, mounted, and in my joy was off to Coolgardie in earnest. This was the first time the tyres had given me any trouble. I was raw and inexperienced and *uninstructed*, for if I had been properly taught I would have made the joint, and then given it an hour or two to set—in which case how much time and fatigue had been saved. After running about eight miles the joint gave way again! I tried to make it afresh, but alas! now my supply of "solution" was nearly exhausted. I used it all in this last attempt at repairs. This "joint," however, carried me two miles further on the way to the Coolgardie side of Mount Burgess, when, to my dismay, thud again!

Now we are done for and no mistake! Now certainly I must walk, eleven miles still lying between

us and the City, and push the disabled bicycle all the way. By this it was tea time, so I camped and lit the fire. The billy was on boiling, when for the first time in all my journeyings the can upset, and every drop of water was lost! Rather a serious loss, as there was but a scanty supply left, and many a weary mile yet to be covered, and not a drop to be had all the way for love or money. I was more careful, and therefore more successful next time. The tea being ready I looked round for a place in which to sit, but the neighbourhood seemed alive with ants. The clearest place I could find was the middle of the roadway, where I squatted and partook of tea and biscuit. By 7 o'clock I was ready to start again: 8 o'clock found us at it: 9 o'clock still tramp, tramp, with a mouthful of water very occasionally to freshen me up a little: 10 o'clock it was trudge and push still, when for the first time on the fields I began to get footsore. In the darkness I could not tell where we were, or how far we had yet to go. I could hardly keep awake with fatigue, but Coolgardie must be reached, so I kept at it—pegging away as fast as I could—though, truth to tell, that was not now very fast. By 10.30 there were signs visible that we were near the golden city, and then I knelt beside the “camel” and sucked the last drop of water out of the bag. Oh, but it was weary, weary work till 11 o'clock, when the lights of Coolgardie showed ahead. By 11.15, footsore and dead beat, I wheeled the disabled roadster into its shed, having, since leaving that shed on Monday, covered over 260 miles. I would have been thankful if I could have thrown myself down beside it and slept. But my camp was deserted and dark, and to-morrow was the Sabbath, so some rations had to be procured ere the shops closed. My last bit of business was to trudge through the dust of the Coolgardie streets shopping! I got back to camp shortly before midnight, had a



wash and some supper, and then lay down on my stretcher at 12.30 utterly exhausted, wearier than I had ever been in all my life before, and scarcely any wonder, for I had been on the pad since 5 a.m. on Friday, 43 hours in all, with the exception of the 1½ hours when I was lying at the foot of the gum tree. I would now, however, be able to keep my appointment on the morrow, and "duty done is the soul's fireside."

At 7 a.m. I was wakened up to go and see a lad dying with typhoid. He had been here four months, and, although a Presbyterian, had never been to any of our theatre services—had no time! but now he had to take time and lie there and die. I saw him again after the close of evening service, when he whispered to me, "I have given my heart to God." He gave his life to sin and to the world, and now at the fag end he comes with the leavings—the scrapings of the pot—to Jesus! One short week spent on a fever-bed is all he may have left for Him! No wonder that another big strapping fellow, down too with typhoid in the fever ward of the hospital, said to me, "Don't you think it would be awfully mean of me to come now?" His was the worst case in the ward, and I had said to him, "You are very bad, my boy." "Yes, sir." "I hope you'll get better." "I hope so, sir." "Perhaps you won't." "Perhaps—not—sir." "In case you don't, are you ready? Do you know Jesus?" The very mention of the name so dear to many of us seemed to galvanize him with life, and he cried, "Don't, sir, please, don't speak—to me about Him." "Why not, my boy? I have nothing else to speak to you about here." "I've lived—an awfully wicked life—Mr. MacNeil—I never thought about—Jesus Christ when I was well—only thought about sin—and don't you think—it would—be awfully mean—to me—to come to Him—now—when, perhaps—I am

dying?" "True for you, my boy," I replied, "but you had better be mean and come. Wouldn't it be *meaner not to come* after all that He has done?" Yesterday's three services have left me rather spent after all the experiences of the week, so I will rest to-day.

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My husband's last open-air meeting in Coolgardie was prevented by a flood! Many of the people took off their shoes and stockings and paddled about in sheer delight at seeing so much water. Farewell services were held in the Theatre on the Sunday, and a committee was left in charge of future work, while John came away to try and secure them a Presbyterian Minister, as well as a Missionary for Hannan's, as quickly as possible. His last act before springing into the saddle to begin the ride to Southern Cross was to plead with a young fellow, a regular attendant at the services, to give himself to Christ. He describes the ride down on the much-mended machine, when he tried to overtake the coach, thinking it safer to be before than behind it, in case of accident! Though it had an hour's start, he passed it triumphantly and got far ahead, but again that poor machine collapsed, and both rider and "camel" had to be taken up by the driver and carried ingloriously to Southern Cross. "Rather humiliating" he says, "for the machine which had carried me so far, to be itself carried over the last fourteen miles of our long and weary journeyings together. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*" He goes on: "Wednesday afternoon found me in Perth, enjoying a basin *full* of water for a wash, and the luxury of fresh vegetables and milk—common mercies that I had not seen for three months. It was only when nearing Albany that I got sight of a cow again."

At Albany, intending passengers were filled with

dismay at seeing the yellow flag flying from the foremast of the "Ormuz," and hearing that there was a case of small-pox on board. He writes: "After some hours of suspense, the Health Officer was satisfied that it was not the dreaded disease, the flag was hauled down, and we scrambled on deck. Several Coolgardie men came on board with me, and by afternoon we were under way. We are having some informal meetings during the passage to Adelaide, and it is most encouraging to see the way in which the lads from Coolgardie receive the man who has been so recently labouring among them. They are not very sure whether they believe in Jesus or not, but they are telling their fellow passengers that they 'believe in that fellow.' Surely they are not far from believing in the Master if they believe in the servant. In no more fitting way could I close this story than by quoting the whole of Deuteronomy viii. I will content myself however, with part of verse 2, the message which you telegraphed to me on my 40th birthday:—'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee (these forty years) in the wilderness'"

Thus he returned from the goldfields, thin, sun-dried, but supremely happy in the feeling that there he had *tried* to "preach the Gospel to every creature." "That is a *white* man," said the Coolgardie miners, as he rode away from them. They could not express themselves more forcibly, for what is cleaner than white? and to them a "white man" is a clean man—one in whom no self-seeking, no double purpose, and no ulterior motive can be found.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *"THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE." A THIRD VISIT TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA.*

THE first edition of "The Spirit-filled Life," published in August, 1894, was sold out before Christmas. It was the outcome of many years of thought and study. Ever since the little band of ministers had begun to meet, and especially perhaps since the Geelong Convention of 1891, causing information and teaching on the "Higher Life" to be in constant request, he had been using his Bible readings as a means to this end. He began to drop the delightful Bible readings, which were always intensely appreciated on such subjects as "Jewels," "Ruth," "Soul winning," etc., and to take up what at first appeared to be a drier subject. This new series was not at once so popular; it lacked the sparkle and point of its predecessors, and this seemed rather a matter of regret.

Ideas and illustrations, however, soon began to crystalise around the central truth in his own mind, and the truth itself gradually came into bolder relief, until his teaching was eagerly sought after, and he became a recognised authority on the matter. Interest also was being aroused in all directions; numerous conventions familiarised the people with the name of "Keswick teaching," and it began to be apparent that a handbook was

necessary for those who wished to study the question at home. Amongst very many books on the special aspects of the Higher Life, he could not find one which treated of the whole subject in a sufficiently small compass, and couched in simple enough language. This led to the throwing of his Bible readings into the form of a little book, of which he had such a modest opinion that he allowed it to be sold for sixpence! When, however, a second edition was called for, Messrs. Marshall Brothers, of Keswick House, London, were communicated with, with the result that they expressed a desire to publish it at 2s. 6d., and subsequently brought out a 1s. 6d. edition, which has had a wide sale.

A friend who saw the MS. before it was printed, and observing that it was condensed, concise, clear, and complete, expressed the opinion that it would become a standard. It has, moreover, had a wide circulation in its American edition, with an admirable preface by Rev. Andrew Murray; it has also been translated into French; permission has also been asked to translate it into two Hindustanee dialects; while in Sweden it has been made a means of great blessing in a large University. Furthermore, it has been widely distributed among Missionaries—one whole edition being used for this purpose. It was a great joy to my husband last year to meet Mr. John R. Mott, whose work among us is so well known, and who told him that the book had been highly recommended in the United States, and had greatly helped College Students. When Mr. Mott left Australia, he ordered 300 copies for his eastern visit, which, according to a letter from Mrs. Mott, "are now in the hands of Missionaries all over China."

Mr. Moody has just asked permission to bring out a cheap edition, to be published in America, and to be carried about by his colporteurs; while from private

and public sources the most gratifying testimonies to its usefulness are constantly being received. "That it might be made a blessing" was John's constant prayer over it. It was born in prayer, and prayer was made for every possessor of it, I believe, every day. His object was, primarily, *not* that it might have a wide circulation, but that it might bring light and blessing to every individual reader. It now seemed that a wider sphere of influence was opening up before him, and that by his pen as well as by his voice he might be insisting on the upward walk of the people of God; but with the exception of the two little books which have been published since his death:—"Some One is Coming" and "Honey Gathered,"—he had written nothing more. By these, however, he is still speaking.

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As my husband passed through Perth on his way to Coolgardie, arrangements were made with the Presbyterian ministers for a return, not to the gold-fields, but to the centres of southern population—really, in short, to re-visit the scenes through which we had passed just after our marriage. Arriving then in 1895 we found the character of the Colony entirely changed. The old exclusiveness had gone; Perth had become Melbourne, though of course on a much smaller scale; full of rush and bustle, and of feverish anxiety to be rich. The opening up of the gold-fields had brought thousands upon thousands of people from every quarter, all anxious to make their fortune in the shortest possible time, and to get back to their homes and families. Eleven years before this there were not 100 miles of railway, all told; telegraph lines were almost comparatively recent institutions, and primitive conditions reigned supreme. Now we found 300 miles of railway between Albany and Perth, 200 miles between Perth and Geraldton, a line from Perth to Southern Cross, with a projected line to

Coolgardie, and another from Geraldton to Dongara, through the Greenough flats. These changes were much appreciated by such inveterate enemies of the ocean as ourselves. Tedious as train travelling may be under some circumstances, even a wheelbarrow would have been, to both of us, a delightful alternative from anything that floats. It was a pleasure to meet old friends again, and also to come across those brought to Christ during the earlier visit. It was a great surprise to find, in the Old Men's Home at Perth, one or two who remembered that time. To us the eleven years that had passed had been years of activity, with twice as much to do as there was time to do it in; to them they had been eleven years of vegetation, painful to think of—the days dragging their weary length along one after another.

After three months of pleasant work, we came home again to Victoria, where, among many missions, one may be singled out as being "one of the most manifest works of grace I have seen for many a day." The following account of it was published in the *Geelong Advertiser* :—

#### A REMARKABLE MISSION.

BY REV. A. STEWART, M.A., OF ESSENDON.

A religious movement, very noteworthy in its course and results, has been going forward during the past week among the farming community whose centre is Batesford. By invitation of the Rev. A. S. Houston, the Evangelistic committee of the Presbyterian General Assembly sent their agent, the Rev. John MacNeil, B.A., to conduct a Mission in the district, which began on Thursday, June 27th (1895), and closed on Wednesday evening last. Meetings were held each day, and were well attended. The last of the series saw audiences brought together, notwithstanding unpromising weather, that completely filled the Batesford church, and made it necessary to procure extra sitting accommodation on all the available floor space. The young men and women of the neighbourhood attended from a long distance round—some of them coming regularly from 10 to 15 miles. Their interest in the services was profound, and sustained to the close. Sometimes the

preacher was humourous, sometimes pathetic, always earnest and effective. No fewer than 71 persons professed to be under deep spiritual anxiety as to their state. A large proportion of them were young men, and their decision to follow a religious life is, probably, the most notable feature of the mission. The issue of such a movement, involving so many from a limited population, should be an immediate and distinct elevation of the moral and spiritual tone of the whole neighbourhood. At the close of the work it was remarked, that in many respects (and notably in the absence of sensationalism and hysterical extravagances, while the interest in spiritual truth was unmistakable); the mission resembled most closely those preliminary movements that preceded the general revivals of Evangelical religion in the United Kingdom and Ulster a generation ago. . . . .

"How are you off for money, John?" friends would ask sometimes; "do they give you enough to keep you?" "My dear fellow, the Lord gives me bread and butter, and sometimes sugar on top of that; never fear." "Well, remember, if you ever need anything, I have a long pocket at the Lord's disposal." "All right; many thanks," he would reply; but at the same time he would have felt it an infinite degradation to have had to confess, even to his dearest friend, that in the matter of supplies his Lord had failed him.

The cry that is sometimes raised, that to the Evangelist the whole business is a money-making one, was in his case, as it usually is, too absurd to require much attention, but it occasionally became necessary to speak out. "Do you think," he has now and then asked his audience, "that if it was money I wanted, I should have left railway contracting for evangelising?" It is a curious thing that the Christian public feels aggrieved at the idea of an Evangelist being rich, while no man who is not an Evangelist thinks that a fortune can possibly do him any personal harm. Why an Evangelist should not make as good a use of his means as a private individual is a question hard to answer. As



a matter of fact, however, there was no reason for a grievance in this case. His income was never more than a moderate one. Large returns from one place would be equalised by very small returns from others. The liberal giving of a large congregation would mean that he could take up one or two poor places not able to pay much more than local expenses. These smaller towns, seldom touched by other Evangelists, lay heavily on his heart. He was particularly happy when working in the backwoods among the country people, and often considered that he obtained by far the best proportionate results among these less privileged people.

It was now currently reported that he had come back from Coolgardie a wealthy man, but most people knew enough of him to be sure that he would never touch speculation in any shape or form. He preached most strongly that "No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life"; but although assured that he had never held a mining share in his life, it was said that a friend of his did the speculating while he shared the profits. "I have heard to-day," he said, in one place where these rumours were *really known to be true*, "that I came back from Coolgardie a rich man." Then, with a radiant smile, "Bless the Lord, so I did; I made a fortune over there that will last me through all eternity." Lessened vitality and shortened years was the only earthly reward which he reaped from those months of terrible toil. It was not the gold of Coolgardie, but the souls in Coolgardie that had attracted him thither. Before his marriage his rule had been to keep £100 in the bank, and to give away everything else. That might do for one, but would not answer for two, so the plan had to be altered. Every pound was then tithed, and the strictest account kept. His ledger shows page after page of figures headed, "John MacNeil in account with the

Lord Jesus Christ." Nothing was allowed to encroach upon this fund, and at the same time it was never allowed to encroach on the rest of the income. He regarded the just settlement of every claim as a Christian duty, just as important as the duty of giving. He detested debt, and would have none of it. He had a true Scotchman's care of the pence, keeping his books to a halfpenny. "What an awful thing it would be," he would say, so solemnly as to cause great merriment among us, "if I should ever incur obligations that I could not meet! What a handle that would be for the devil."

He was very sparing about expenditure on his own person, and would wear his old clothes with great pleasure, always provided that they were *clean and whole*. A slovenly minister vexed his spirit. "Whatever can the man's wife be thinking about?" he often asked when he came into contact with one of this kind. When his mother unpacked his box after his return from Scotland, she cried out at the shabbiness of the suits. "Tut, mother," he said, "they're right enough; the money was much better spent in taking bread and coals to some of my old Pleasance folk than in putting it on my back." A cravat in this same chest caused great amusement. It was a coarse, dingy thing, "a workhouse cravat" his people christened it; but John would not have it laughed at. He valued it, and would have worn it had it been allowed. "Poor old Nannie made me that," he said. "My! she would throw boiling water over any of the other workers, but she knitted that for me. I'm proud of it." We had to use a little art sometimes in persuading him to buy himself something new, and used to use his own argument that it "did not reflect much credit on his Father's care" for him that he should be wearing such plain garments; but even this was not always successful. There were always "too many people

wanting food," "too many missionaries wanting help," or "too many waifs waiting to be rescued," for him to take any pleasure in spending money on himself. Thus, by letting the tailor wait a little longer for his order, many a free-will offering was added to the tenth, which was always set aside as a first charge on his income.

Once, and once only was he taxed with being *vain*. A sensitive hearer in New Zealand noticed that he wore a pair of gold solitaire studs, which naturally flashed with the movement of his arms. Next day he received a letter, pointing out that the wearing of gold was not becoming to a man of his profession. His reply was something to the following effect :—

My dear Brother,

I am sorry that my studs have offended you. They were a present to me several years ago. I should be much pleased to wear bone or pearl, as you suggest; but having these, I cannot afford to waste money over a new set. If you will be kind enough to present me with a pair, I shall be happy to wear them.

Yours,

JOHN MACNEIL.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### "BY HIS AIN FIRESIDE"

TO casual acquaintances it might appear that to John home did not count for much—that home ties had little holding power over him. But even a short conversation with him (if the subject were introduced) would quickly dispel this idea. To those who saw him, night after night, at meetings, or heard of him here, there, and everywhere, it might appear that for such a man to think of setting up a home would be a great mistake. What it cost him to give up, not the comforts—for they were small things in his eyes, but the companionships of home, only his Master knows. His heart yearned over his children with unusual love; our little circle had increased to five—three girls and two boys, and the name of each of them is well known in heaven. The wealth of prayer expended over them is beyond estimation. Only one thing had power to draw him from his home circle, and that was his Master's work. Nothing else offered him the slightest temptation. When holding services within a radius of twenty miles of Sandringham, he would return home every night, no matter how weary and no matter how late, and our intimation of his approach would be the sound of his voice, singing as he came up the quiet hill. Occasionally, when he has missed the last Sandringham train, he has taken train to Elsternwick and walked the remaining five

miles. When remonstrated with, and begged to stay for his own sake, he would plead, "Oh don't make me stay; I get little enough of you all."

We had chosen a site for our house quite in the country, for two reasons. First, for the sake of the children; and secondly, that he might be more free from incessant demands for "a service" here, and "just a little address" there, in his all-too-short seasons of rest. It was his delight on coming home to doff his clerical garb, and to become a working man for a week. He found his rest in change of employment. He was no mean carpenter, and could turn his hand to almost anything about a house. He had a peculiar taste for fitting and repairing, and after a visit from him, we always rejoiced in the screwing up of everything generally. All the locks would be put in order, and everything that was shaky would be firmly fastened together, so that it was quite usual to relegate all dilapidation until the time "when father comes home." He liked to see "everything taut and trim."

It sometimes surprised those who only knew him on the platform, if they visited him in his own home, to find him hardly recognisable—a most un-ministerial-looking man, putting up fences, rolling asphalt paths, building sheds, or otherwise busying himself for our comfort. The last piece of work he did was to build a room for the children to play in during wet weather, so that the house might be relieved of noise; and still it was his especial delight to have all five of them with him, as co-adjutors in his work. What would be well calculated to drive most men distracted, was to him the purest enjoyment. He never was irritated, although he dispensed his criticisms freely as to their manner of assisting; and when the work was done, he would come in at night as bright and cheery as in the morning.

There was no monotony when he was at home

Full of fun, and playing many a prank upon us all, the house would wake up to a new life as soon as he entered the gate. He was all sunshine, and lightened toil everywhere by a pleasant or approving word, or by some manoeuvre of his own which set us all laughing. We used to wonder how his spirits kept so buoyant, for there was much to extinguish them; but his last cheerful words, "it's all right," were intensely characteristic of his whole life. From his children he exacted the most implicit obedience. He could be very stern, and the weight of his anger was something to be felt; but to the repentant little sinner he granted forgiveness as full as it was free. He made pardon a very pleasant thing for the offender. Although he could be very wrath, his nature was utterly free from fret or fume. He knew nothing of what is called "nerves," and so he was the "jolliest" playmate his children ever had. The first evening of his return home was always devoted to the "bairns," no matter how tired he might be, and the mirth grew uproarious as he became a whole menagerie for their amusement. A chance visitor would sometimes look on in comical dismay, scarce believing that any six voices could create such a noise. He would be "camel" or "elephant," with the whole five on his back. He would be a "buck-jumper," a "tiger," a "lion"—anything and everything that they wanted; the night was theirs, and he was at their disposal. He was as intensely natural as he was deeply spiritual, presenting somewhat of a theological problem in that respect.

With the children who could write he kept up a regular correspondence, giving a small prize weekly for the best letter. The strokes of the little ones were warmly welcomed, and answered on tiny notes. Some specimens may find a place here.

CHARLTON,

*Tuesday Night.*

My own dear Elsie,

Thank you for your letter received in Mother's this evening. Very well; of course, if your present would spoil by keeping it, it is right that you should give it at once, and so I suppose mother has been enriched before this. We will have to try and "keep it up" next Tuesday. You had better tell mother what I say, and see if you can arrange with her. I think you took great care over most of this letter, but there are some slips in it. I am pleased to see that you have not written such heavy strokes as usual; in that way it is a great improvement. I had such a fine children's meeting in the State School this afternoon. Hope to see you on Monday night. Thank you for all the kisses; they will keep me going till I come.

FATHER.

My darling Elsie,

Well done; that *was* a nice letter yesterday. Such a lot of young people have given themselves to the Lord Jesus this week. Be sure and tell Cora\* that God is "bringing the boys and girls to Jesus." It was so wet last night, but it is clearing up now. I hope to be home to-morrow week.

FATHER.

MACKAY.

My dear old darling Cora,

That was a lovely, just lovely letter you sent me, and what a host of kisses. When I come home won't I hug and squeeze you till you squeak like a little guinea pig! I am very pleased to hear that you got on so well at your examinations. Do you learn French, too? It is very funny to have my Cora knowing what I don't know. Please will you teach me? I send you a penny for your fee. What a lot of treats you have had lately! Good-bye dear old coax. Who is trying to please Jesus best, and to be father's *best* girl? I have three girls, one for *good*, one for *better*, and one for *best*. Which is Cora?

Your loving

FATHER.

T ORDAY,

*Wednesday.*

My darling old Cora,

You will be five years old to-morrow. Wouldn't I just

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\* The little one whose nightly prayer was, "Please Sir, bring the boys and girls to Jesus."

like to give you a hundred kisses for each year you have lived. Ask Elsie to tell you how many that would be altogether. I am sure you are trying your best to be a good girl, and to be as little trouble as possible to grandmamma. When mother and I were going up the hills on Monday, we saw three wild kangaroos hopping away from us into the scrub. Wouldn't you like to have seen them? Good-bye, my darling.

COLAC,

*Friday.*

My precious little Cora,

You see I have not forgotten that to-morrow is your sixth birthday, and I am writing to you to wish you a very, very happy day. I would like to have been at home to give you a big birthday kiss, but instead I am sending you a shilling in stamps for you to do what you like with. I am so thankful to Jesus for giving us our little Cora, and for lending her to us for six happy years. She has made us all happy, and I know she is going to try this year to make mother and father happier still. Do you know the way in which you can do that? By pleasing Jesus. Tell mother we had two pretty good meetings yesterday. Many of the boys and girls have been brought to Jesus, and this makes us all glad. Perhaps this is in answer to little Cora's prayers. There is a little girl in the home in which I am staying named Elma, just about your age, and she says that she loves Him. There is also a little boy named Harold; he is such a nice little fellow, and runs after me and calls me "Neil." Now good-bye, my little six-year-old daughter.

Your loving FATHER.

My dear old Neil,\*

Ask mother to give you a penny for your letter; I have no stamp to send you. You are a grand little beggar.

FATHER.

TORBAY, W. A.

*March 3rd, 1895.*

My darling Ella,

I got your letter on Saturday night with your big scold in it, and I am quite frightened. What am I to do now? I can't send mother back alone, and I can't bring her back till I am finished. Can you advise me? I will do my very best to look after her as well as she was looked after when she had you and Elsie and Cora to do it at home. I am glad you miss

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\* His baby, three years old. This little note was received about August 25th, 1898.



mother. Now you will have an idea of what poor father has to put up with for so many months each year. Now don't you think it is fair that I should have some of mother as well as you? Ask Elsie what she thinks. If grandmamma is so good as to say to mother "you can go," I fancy you should be glad for her sake, and also for my sake, because I have mother's help in my work and her company all the time. Tell me what you think of all this when you answer this letter. Elsie will tell you about our little camp up here. After dinner yesterday I left mother to mind the house and to have a meeting, while I went away on the engine up the hills. I visited the three houses where there were wives and children, and then gathered all the men who would come into Mrs. Scott's sitting room and had service. Mrs. Scott's little girl, two years old, sat in her mother's lap and went to sleep. Then after service I had a long way to come through the bush in the moonlight to where I had left mother. And do you know how I managed it? Walked? No. Rode on horseback? No—but I got on a truck which the engine-driver left for me. I lifted the brake, and it ran all the way down the hill for five miles till I got home to the mill, when I put down the brake and stopped it. Wouldn't you have liked to have been on that truck with father as it was flying through the bush in the bright moonlight? It did not take me many minutes to do the five miles. We are going to have dinner to-day at Mrs. S——'s, and then to visit the houses in the afternoon, and then going back by the 5 o'clock train to Albany, where I have a meeting to-night. I am trusting dear Ella to be a true little Christian all the time mother is away. You won't forget. Give dear old Neil a hug and a kiss for me.

Your loving  
FATHER.

NORTH QUEENSLAND,

June 26th, 1896.

My darling Elsie,

I got your letter yesterday as I was going to get on board the little "*Palmer*," at Cairns. I was delighted, because I was not expecting it. This is such a dear little steamer. I am writing in her saloon; it is about the size of the breakfast room. We are in the Johnstone River at Geraldton (see and find it in your atlas), fastened to the pier, and here we must wait for eight hours yet, as the tide is going out and we must wait till it makes again. It is like fairyland—this steaming down these rivers in the moonlight. I have a meeting with the

children here this afternoon. I visited them in school this morning, and they sang for me about the cat eating the sparrow, Tra-la-la-la-la! I am keeping marks for your letters till I come home.

Your loving,  
FATHER.

It was when all the household were gathered together each morning and evening that John was seen at his best in his family relations. That family worship should not only be held but be enjoyed, was his dearest wish. Occasionally he would write to me, when troubled by some formal mode of conducting it—"Do let us be careful to keep our family worship bright, that it may not be a hardship for anybody to have to attend. Family worship in some houses I visit is a *gey dreich* thing; no wonder that the children shy off from it as they grow older." He could not bear it held without singing, and started the morning and evening hymn in many a home. He himself had been brought up on the Psalms, and loved them dearly, but he preferred simple hymns such as the children could sing; it did not please him that the little voices should be silent. I remember him coming home one night from his friend, Rev. Andrew Hardie's house, delighted with the brisk hearty singing of his boys; he had "never heard it so good," he said.

He could not understand a Christian home where the servants were not brought in to take their place round the family altar. "I declare, if some Christian people don't treat their servants as if they had no souls at all." "You are responsible," he used to say, "for every soul under your roof." He had a way of enforcing this truth, and he practised all he preached. How his family altar appeared to a visitor is thus expressed:—

It was a very great pleasure to be present at family worship, conducted by Mr. MacNeil. It was so unique, so characteristic of himself, and so thoroughly enjoyable.

The first time I was present his two little girls, Elsie and Ella, were aged about 5 and 3 years old. A hymn was first sung, Mrs. MacNeil playing the organ. Before beginning to read, he elicited from Elsie, by suggestive questions, all she remembered of the previous evening's reading. She answered very nicely, and her little sister re-echoed each answer, so that every question was answered twice in the very same words. Then came a chapter, each person present reading in turn. Then Mr. MacNeil, in his own dramatic style, made the story *live*, but in words so simple that the very youngest child could understand the meaning. Prayer was then offered in equally simple but heartfelt language.

The last time I was present at worship conducted by him, all his five children were there. During the singing and reading he had a little one on each knee, their faces beaming with happiness. The three eldest took their turn in reading, then came the questioning, and then the picturing out of the subject. Family worship was made a most enjoyable, happy, profitable time for old and young alike.

He was always the same strong, bright, resourceful soul to whom all the doubts and fears and perplexities of life were brought, whose faith in God never suffered eclipse, and who could drop into close communion with his Master at any moment. There was nothing incongruous to him in saying, "Let us have a word of prayer" immediately after a peal of the heartiest laughter; his laugh was as pure as his prayer. What he was in private supplication, it is no use my attempting to describe. Mr. Morton says, "Such a prayer as his I never heard before. He seemed to be literally besieging the gates of Heaven with earnest entreaty, and such changes of feeling would come over him. Sometimes he would be as gentle as a child; sometimes he would show the Barnabas spirit; but the tones of the son of consolation would ere long be exchanged for claps of thunder. No one who only heard him pray in public could form any idea of what he was in private. Those who were privileged to kneel with him will never forget it; while those who have never been with him on the hill top can never

understand from any description what such an experience was."

Speaking of his relations with his own children naturally leads one to think of his Children's Meetings. In my own private opinion, he never showed to greater advantage than when taking charge of a gathering of the young. To be a children's man is no sinecure. He wished, and generally had, every Sunday afternoon devoted to the schools. It meant a hall full of buzzing, excited youngsters, who felt that they were that day free from ordinary restraints. They sometimes numbered from 1,000 to 3,000, when several schools were in combination. This in itself is a source of excitement. Four or five of the front seats would be filled with little mites of from five to six and under—a most distracting sight, and yet he would keep them all literally hanging on his words, would convulse them with laughter, and then in a moment hush them, to drive home some solemn truth.

Order he would have. Sometimes an unruly boy or a giggling girl, not understanding the man they had to deal with, would try to show that they were not amenable to authority. If, after a kind warning, they showed that impudence was at the bottom of it, a little muscular Christianity would be resorted to; but usually the stamp of his foot, the flash of his eye, and a vigorous use of his glorious voice would cow the most rebellious. It was a remarkable thing that a boy singled out for discipline would very often remain to the after meeting, subdued and penitent, and would thereafter become, not only a follower of Christ, but John's most devoted servant. His treatment, therefore, may be said to have been most successful. It is an ingredient in a boy's nature that his highest respect for a man always rises after he has been kindly vanquished, and Sunday School boys seem to form

no exception to the rule. He always considered the young as his most delightful, as well as his most fruitful, field of work. It was very usual, on his return to a place, ten or eleven years after his first visit, when asking a young man or woman if they had found Christ, to be told "Yes." "When?" "When you were here last, sir." "Why, you must have been very young then?" "Yes, sir; just eight or nine." In one case a young man said: "Six years old." He was now an active Christian worker! After that, he felt that he could never despise the day of small things.

He not only interested children, but, as one teacher said, "drove theology into them." All the heads of his address would be distinctly remembered years afterwards, and that means always. In his own Waverley Church it was his custom, before beginning his sermon, to catechise the children on the sermon of the previous Sabbath. He thought, too, that it was better to preach so that children could understand him, than to give them a little sermon to themselves. By asking them questions, he soon found out whether they had missed any point, and took this opportunity of enlightening their eyes. He thought it a great pity to under-rate children's intelligence and to preach down to them. He believed that they could grasp most ideas that their elders could grasp, if only the language in which they were clothed were sufficiently simple. If any reader thinks this an easy thing to do, we have but one word of advice—try it. He was a theologian to his finger-tips. At first sight, this may be received somewhat incredulously, but it is true. Children trained under him will be found to have a most unusual hold of fundamental doctrine.

He had, moreover, fully possessed himself of the grand secret of how to win our young men and

women. "Get them when they are children; win them to Christ when their hearts are tender; train them up carefully and prayerfully in Christian faith and works; and then, when in a very few years they become young men and women, they will be, not anxious problems in themselves, but a body-guard to their minister, and a means of *solving* problems." His "bairns," as he called all his converts, young and tender, and old and grey-headed alike, are now serving God in many a field, as missionaries, ministers, evangelists, teachers, and open-air preachers; and it will be a royal day for him when, all being gathered home, he can say "Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given me!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### *PROPOSED VISIT TO AMERICA. QUEENSLAND*

IT was rather a grief to my husband that, as regards "methods" in Evangelistic work, he was almost a self-taught man. He had never heard Moody, had missed Dr. Somerville both in Scotland and in Australia, and had, indeed, seen no successful Evangelist at work, excepting the American Revivalist, Mr. Inskip, whose meetings he attended in Sydney, and whom he admired very much. In the winter of 1894, however, Rev. Thomas Cook, Gipsy Smith, and Rev. John McNeill were all here, and he attended their meetings with his eyes wide open to see what he could learn, for he was always on the alert for "improvement." He had latterly become very anxious to rub shoulders with some of the foremost Evangelists of the day, and had he lived, would probably have been this very year (1897) in America, at the Northfield Convention. Mr. Mott and he had arranged that he should try and time his visit so as to visit the Students' Conventions, which are held yearly through the States. A visitor of note, to whom he had confided his wish to get into contact with the leading spirits of the Old and New World, remarked sententiously, "Ay, ay, very good! and the result will probably be that you will come back better satisfied with your own ways than ever."

It is very likely that he, too, might have had a little to teach, but that view of the case did not strike

him at all. He thought himself a very *tyro* in the Lord's work, and owed an everlasting debt of gratitude to any man who would show him how to become a more skilful fisherman. And yet, from whom he could learn how to deal with individual souls more carefully, more scripturally, more definitely, and more successfully, it is hard to say. His after-meetings were quiet and impressive in the extreme. He liked the Christian people to stay, to pray silently and to sing softly while he himself dealt with enquirers. He was terribly afraid of "daubing with untempered mortar" in his after-meetings. It was a matter of great surprise and grief to him that he found so few people really capable of dealing with the anxious. Those who were willing were often unfit; while those who were supposed to be fit too often shrank from the task. On one occasion he asked an old Minister, to whom he looked up as a father, to speak to some young people who were kneeling. He did not object, but John was surprised presently to see him walking up and down close to where he himself was dealing with someone else. "John," confessed the old man afterwards, "do you know what I was doing there?" "No," "Well, I was just listening to what you were saying, and trying to find out how to do it."

"Why didn't you stay to the after-meeting last night?" said an employer to one of his men, whom he had seen at the meeting. "If I had," he said, with a knowing shake of the head, "I'd have been a gone coon!" It was hard to go through one of the after-meetings without yielding to Christ. "Down, down upon your knees, men; get down upon your knees, women, if you want Christ to save you. If you do not want Christ, then keep your seats." It was a solemn deliberate choice. "Thank God," he would say, when after an ineffectual attempt to sit still and look comfortable, one after another would



sink down, and make the decision that would transform their whole future life. Every man has his own way of working. The after-meeting was indispensable to my husband, while at the same time, he took it as an indication of the best kind of work when on asking "Are you a Christian?" and "How long?" he got the reply, "I decided in the meeting, Sir." Without any human intervention the thing had been settled on the spot. This was often the case, but even then searching was necessary, and none were the worse for being shown the solid foundation upon which to build their hopes. How plainly the truth used to be put may be gathered from the following:—An old Roman Catholic Irish-woman had been persuaded to attend. "Well, and how did you like him?" asked a friend when she got home, "Did he make it plain now?" "Plain," she said, impressively, "*plain!* it was that plain that a blind man could feel it wid his shtick!"

To sit then at the feet of leaders in aggressive work at home was not to be his portion. He was to be the "Australian John MacNeil" to the end. He was to be allowed just once to go all over his parish—and then to stop. He had been preaching in all the Australian Colonies, except Queensland, and he was anxious to break ground there also. He had, however, been kept so busy that he had not time until towards the end of 1895, when he began to think definitely of extending his labour northwards. Just at this time came an invitation from the Presbyterian ministers of Brisbane, asking for an extended mission in and around that city.

A short time before leaving for Queensland my husband resigned his commission as Evangelist of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, which office he had held for about five years. His attention had been called to an amount of raffling which, in spite of the Assembly's resolutions to the contrary, was

being carried on at many bazaars in connection with Presbyterian churches. In order to call to this fact the attention which he thought it demanded, and in order that the Assembly, by more stringent legislation on the subject, might not only "enjoin" that her ministers and people should keep clear of this evil, but should forbid them to touch it, he laid down his commission as a distinct protest against gambling at church bazaars. It was an important part of his own work to expose and to denounce a vice so terrible that it is undermining our young land, and he was struck dumb when the edge of his weapon was turned against himself by the remark, "Clear your own churches first, and then come and speak to us." The world calls raffling gambling without hesitation, and the Assembly, by since making the law which he requested, has proved that he was right in making the protest.

Soon after this he asked for his certificate, and withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Victorian Church, in order that he might be the more free to serve all the churches. That he severed his connection with the Presbyterian Church, as was supposed by some, is altogether a mistake. He was too thoroughly and too loyally a Presbyterian ever to dream of doing that. His work lay in *all* the Colonies, and so he thought it hardly necessary that he should be controlled by the Assembly of only one of them. It was for this reason that he retired, leaving himself thus in the position of a Presbyterian minister, unattached to any particular Church Court, but free to labour anywhere.

To the Rev. W. C. Radcliffe, through whom he had received the invitation to Brisbane, he wrote thus :—

Queensland has been laid on my heart for some time, for Australia is my parish. I have been witnessing in every other colony of the group, and my heart was disquieted because

Queensland was not yet touched. I was coming, though I did not know very well how. Now I will come in answer to the Macedonian cry, through you.

Of his journey up, and arrival at Brisbane, he writes:—

SOUTH BRISBANE,

*September 30th, 1895.*

. . . It seemed wicked to be here on Saturday, and nothing to do. I was quite set up in the train with my pillow and candle, all to myself, reading so comfortably. I am independent, now, of carriage lights. "Carry your own"—that's the way to do it. After leaving Toowoomba, we got into the mountains. I never knew there was such scenery in Queensland; something like the Blue Mountains. There was only cloudy moonlight, but I will be returning by daylight, and will see all that there is to see. How we did twist and twirl on the edge of precipices, and in and out of tunnels. Up to Toowoomba, we were crossing the magnificent Darling Downs. Such soil! plains for hundreds of miles inland. No wonder that General Booth said: "I would like those Downs for my Over-Sea Colony." I should rather think he would! From Ipswich we ran express to Brisbane, and got in, after our long journey of 1300 miles, only five minutes late! I am praying for 1000 souls for the ten weeks. The Parliament here has just passed a law making raffling illegal at Church Bazaars. Hurrah!

BRISBANE

*(Undated).*

. . . I felt very weary to-day, so I have just had an hour's sleep. I will not push myself at all. I promise you I will only run when I feel able to run; otherwise I will walk or creep. He will keep me going. Be sure and tell the bairns about the great and gracious work last Sabbath afternoon. The cases I am meeting through the week prove that the work was very thorough and genuine.

MOWBRAYTON,

*October 7th, 1895.*

I took a walk down to the river on Saturday afternoon; it is a lovely spot. I had no conception that Brisbane scenery was so good. Big coasting and ocean steamers come up and moor in the centre of the town. Yesterday was a glorious day of the "Right Hand." Some of the people were crying half the service through in the morning. Church packed to the doors at 3.0 p.m. and a grand after-meeting. Nearly *all* the

biggest boys and girls stayed, quite young men and women. At night the Church was full again, and such power! Mr. S., who knows MacDonald of Ferintosh, McCheyne, Burns, and Andrew Bonar, said, "This is just like the old days. I never expected to see the like in Australia. I was watching their faces, and the look was just the very look of the olden days." Oh, I am humbled and thankful for this testimony. . . . I forgot to say that Friday night was pouring wet. I had no more than fifty people out; they won't brave the rain.

*Tuesday.*

It was pouring wet last night, and black dark, but, glory to God! He brought out about a hundred people to the prayer meeting! and the Church was chock-a-block. The tide is rising. My next man intimated on the Sabbath that he would have a prayer meeting each evening this week, and if no one else was there, he would be there himself!

The Mowbrayton mission (he writes in his diary) was "a new chapter in the Acts of the Apostles."

TOOWONG

*(Undated).*

Had a grand gathering at the meeting last night. Church crowded, pulpit, vestry and all, and there were drops of blessing in the after-meeting. Things are shaking. "We're a'deid together here," an old Scotch woman was heard remarking on the way home.

*Wednesday.*

There is a quiet work going on here, not as big or as broad as I would like to see, but He will get His own; won't He? I made the fortunate discovery when in Brisbane yesterday that General Booth and I would be in collision at Maryborough and at Gympie. So much the worse for the General, of course? but I am a merciful man, and do not wish to spoil any of his meetings, so I took immediate steps to transpose the two places. In this way I will avoid the pain of ruining him! I am getting very slovenly here in this heat—preaching without cuffs! Be thankful if I don't do it *a la Coolgardie*—with rolled-up shirt sleeves—before I am done.

DIARY.

*Maryborough, November 9th, 1895.*—I had a remarkable week at Enoggera Terrace. The church was thoroughly aroused, and the blessing will, no doubt, abide. Rev. W. C.

Radcliffe is most sympathetic. He is my Agent General for Queensland for the following year. I think the Master has made it clear to me, that, if He tarry, I must return here in May. Had at times, in Gympie, the largest congregations that I have yet had in Queensland. The work there did not seem to catch the grown-up people. Oh that Thou mightest do a greater work in Maryborough!

*Toowoomba, November 23rd, 1896.*—Owing, perhaps, to holidays, and one wet night, I did not get a grip of Maryborough as of Gympie. Had a happy time at Ipswich; the meetings were very even. Church *full* every night, except when it was packed!

*Toowoomba (undated).*—Last night we had the most dreadful crush I ever saw in a church—seats, chairs, stools, in every corner—a solid mass of souls, not a vacant spot anywhere, and about 200 men outside the front door. Best of all, it was a good meeting; several cases of clear conversion. The church is seated for 400, and they declare that there were 700 present. A minister from out west has been in to dinner to-day. He says that I should come out his way next year. Perhaps I will.

*Saturday.*—Gave Mr. C. the names of 148 seekers. I am dissatisfied with the quality of the work done here, but the Lord will have His own. A little boy gave me back his card last night in an envelope. I felt there was something else in it, and asked: "What is this my little man?" "It's some money that I saved up, and I thought I would like to give it to you for your expenses, sir." When I came home I found 3/- inside. The dear lad! I thought at first not to take it, but felt that that would be an injury to him, so I am retaining it, and pray the Lord to bless him.

*Killarney.*—Arrived here in pouring rain! It is a "black soil" district, so you may imagine the state of the roads. I can't describe it. It is quite possible that instead of 250 people at the meeting to-night I may not have any. A Dingwall man, who had travelled about 30 miles, came to see me just as I was leaving Toowoomba. . . . So my ten weeks' work, arranged by the committee, are now over and done. Have just made up my returns for the period, and find that though we only asked for 1000 souls, He has given in good measure, and running over! Blessed be His Holy name.

I can't yet see the mountains here for the mist. Their brows are night-capped all the day. Hope it will clear before morning. Sandeman\* was supplying here for eight months. His memory is fragrant.

*Home, January 5th, 1896.*—Have been away 13 weeks;

\* Mr. MacNeil's assistant at Waverley

1289 names have been given to the ministers with whom I have been working. Never before have I seen such sustained blessing. Oh that the New Year may be still more memorable in that way. . . My motto for 1896 is: *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

*April 11th, 1896.*—I have taken a new departure in my Evangelistic work. I am going into places to which I am not "called," but to which I am bidden. Oh what need of close walking, lest I should "run unsent." Lord, from this day let me be absolutely certain as to Thy *leading in every case.* Keep me from blundering or from judging by apparent results, whether Thou hast sent me or not. Where the results are nil, apparently, may I be as certain that God sent me there as where they are gloriously manifest.

## CHAPTER XX

### *THE LAST JOURNEY.*

ON Wednesday, June 3rd, 1896, my husband left home again for Northern Queensland. The arrangements for his work there were not to be made known to him until he reached Brisbane, so that he was somewhat in the dark as to where he would go, and how long he would be absent. His own letters will give the best idea of the kind of work done. On the afternoon of this June 3rd, after a brief stay of only five days at home (most of which time was spent in preparation for his absence), he gathered the children into his study, as he always did before leaving them for any length of time, and kneeling among them, commended us all to the special care of our Heavenly Father, while he was away about His business. His own emotion was great, making some of the children cry with him, while the little boys stared with open mouths at the unusual sight of father in tears. To me it seemed that each successive parting was becoming more painful to him, but no anxious premonition disturbed our hearts. We sent him off cheerfully, thinking that even Northern Queensland, far away as it might appear, was not to be compared with Coolgardie in point of distance, hardship, or isolation.

TO REV. W. L. MORTON.

SANDRINGHAM

*June 1st, 1896.*

Beloved,

Just off to Northern Queensland. Enclosed is a little (£2) for the Missionary Department of your big ship. Has each of your Missionaries got a copy of my little book? If not I will send you a supply on receipt of a post-card. United love. Pray for us—toiling far north.

JOHN.

WALLANGRA.

(En route for Brisbane)

*June 5th, 1896.*

When we crossed the Murray Bridge, I felt my heart-strings quiver as the bridge vibrated. . . . Not much to say, but thought you would like to get an envelope at any rate. Have just passed the Queensland border. We are waiting while the railway men tranship Dampier's Theatre Co's luggage; they had a truckful. . . . Posted a letter to you at 3 a.m. I had been asleep, and could scarcely see my way about on the platform to find the pillar box, but got it in safely so that you should receive a word on three successive mornings—if the Post Office folk do their duty! Have just received a pleasant surprise; an officer came into our carriage asking our names for the press. On giving him mine, he handed me a letter. I found it was from dear old J.M.—sent to the care of the Station Master here—to welcome me to their home to-night. I will be well looked after. Dr. P. and I have fixed up the Railway Ticket and sent it to the printer.

◊ The "railway ticket" he refers to is a small tract, in that striking form. He had been using it before, but thought it capable of improvement.

"S.S. ARAMAC,"

*June 8th, 1896.*

Who do you think is on board? dear old David Ham. I saw him in the morning and looked at him hard, but thought it could not be he! I went over to him at once, but found that he had fallen asleep. I stopped him as he was coming up from dinner, and as soon as I got near him he cried: "Is this our John?" . . . Do you remember, this ship was nearly wrecked in the typhoon at Townsville, in February? She was on a



coral reef all night, with 200 passengers on board, and slid off at high water in the morning. Her captain is a Scot. . . . Will telegraph as soon as I get to Cooktown on Friday, so that you will know on which day I open the cannonade. After leaving Keppel Bay last night, a squall of rain came on. We lost our course, and had to stop and turn round and wait for an hour. I was fast asleep all the time, but Father was on deck keeping us off the rocks. We are far on in the tropics now. My! isn't it hot! I have hundreds of miles of northing to do yet. We are inside the great Barrier Reef. Reef forsooth! it is a chain of islands rather, some of them standing up hundreds of feet out of the sea. The passages between them are sometimes very lovely.

R.M.S. "ARAMAC."

June 9th, 1896,

NEARING TOWNVILLE.

Another chance of posting to-day—my last before reaching on Friday. We are having perfect weather. The sea is as calm as a mill-pond. At 7.0 this morning we crept up so cautiously to the Bowen pier. I found out that we would be there for one-and-half hours, so off I went to hunt up—. His home is near the water, but I met him coming down the pier, which is about a mile long. . . . There are only about 1,000 people in this place. I hope to touch the country, too. I do not like to pass it by, although it is so small; but if I go at all I must stay seven days, as there is only a weekly boat. They tell me that Cooktown is the hardest place in Australia. "Am not I the God of *all* flesh?" We were soon under way to Townsville; it is the most perfect sail I ever had in all my life; I am not even a bit squeamish. . . . Last night I went into the fore-castle and had a talk with the men. They were pleased to see me, dear fellows. They work 365 days a year—Sunday just the same as other days. Will try to have a little service of song with them before I leave. There are some Solomon Island boys on board, but I cannot make much of them. My cabin-mate is a pearl fisher; his father is from Beaulieu, a few miles from Dingwall. We laughed as we found all this out a little while ago. He lives on a ship in Torres Straits, and has only been home twice in four years. He has told me a great deal about pearl-fishing. It is for pearl to make buttons that they are looking, not for *pearls*. Did you know this? Once I leave Cooktown I will feel as if I was coming home. Every week will see me a stage nearer. Oh, that the power may fall as soon as I begin the campaign, Pray hard.

S.S. "ARAMAC,"

8.20 Thursday night, June 11th.

We have just felt the heart of our good ship stop beating. Found that we were at Port Douglas, within sixty-five miles of my farthest-away point. After finishing your letter in the Townsville Manse, I was walking the streets in the semi-darkness when a young man accosted me. "Are you Mr. MacNeil?" "Whoever is this that knows me here at the ends of the earth?" "I am —'s son. I remember when you were in Strathalbyn fourteen years ago." The dear lad thought it was like me, and stopped to see. He then took me to the gate of the Manse, and I went in and laid my plans of campaign with Mr. G. . . . On Tuesday, 23rd, and Wednesday, 24th, I am to be at Mareeba; will see the lovely Barron Falls *en route*, to be described in a future epistle. . . . In a little while I will (D.V.) have all my plans complete, and will begin to run down the list of eleven or twelve Missions that are before me. If souls come in, the weeks will soon fly by, and, please God, I will not have any more absences this year. . . . Have been up in the fore-castle again to-night, and had forty men. Our last hymn, "Out on the ocean sailing," went grandly.

COOKTOWN.

4 p.m. Friday.

Have engagements made till near the end of August, so you may be expecting me to tea on September 4th, if the Lord does not come before. I will have done the coast of Queensland then pretty thoroughly down to Maryborough. Oh, the godlessness that abounds! Pray harder than ever you did in your life. It is hard *graft* this, and it means hard praying.

S.S. "WODONGA,"

June 20th, 1896.

(BETWEEN COOKTOWN AND PORT DOUGLAS).

Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. There has been an earthquake, the graves have been opened and many that were dead have come to life at the voice of the Son of God. . . . Now first you will blend your songs of praise with ours! Next, I am actually on my way home, and this evening will be a hundred miles nearer than I was at Cooktown. Small congregations on Friday night and Sabbath morning, but in the afternoon the Presbyterian Church was full, and again at night. Souls began to come in in the afternoon—a really lovely work of grace among the children. Had another service for the children after school on Monday, and they

flooded the Church. In the evening, lecture on "Coolgardie"; the Church again filled. It brought some whom I never saw again, so they got the Gospel. Lectured on "Gambling" in the Primitive Methodist Church next night, and lo! the power of God fell, and close on a dozen were captured for Christ; so it went on each night. The heat in the Church was unbearable. One of the Presbyterian trustees came to me at the close of the Thursday night service and said, "Why not take the Presbyterian Church to-morrow night, and I will send the bellman round?" I agreed, and the town was soon awake. "Rev. John MacNeil's last meeting is in the Presbyterian Church! Everybody roll up!" So they did. One side of the Church was full of men, and I opened my broadside on them; it was my last shot, and my last chance. Christ has got a lot of souls, and the spiritual contour of the place is changed. In one part of the town all the mothers within a certain radius are saved. . . . Well, I have seen the spot where Captain Cook beached his ship, the "Endeavour," for repairs. On Thursday, Mr. W. and I started at 9 a.m. to ascend Mount Cook. It was a hard climb, and took us about two hours, but we managed it. I wish you had been there to behold the panorama. We could see the Barrier Reef in patches, and noticed three eagles soaring beneath us over the lower hill tops. We frightened the birds there and the rock-wallaby; they wondered who we were invading their solitudes. We were on seldom-trodden heights up there. Oh, to be like that in the spiritual world! How cool and moist everything was up above—all dry and hot at the bottom. The "lawyers" (brambles) disputed my ascent, and did all they could to keep me back. I still bear the mark of one of them on my forehead. When I came down from the Mount I saw the sorrows of sin! We went into a yard where were the remains of a poor man's livelihood—just a few young cattle; all the rest had been killed by the tick plague. He put two of them into the bail that I might see the tick at work. Parts of the poor brutes are literally covered—the parasites holding on, not by their legs, but by their own barbs, which they plunge into the skin, through which they inject the poison and suck the blood. Northern Australia is ruined with them. One station that used to muster 200,000 cattle has just mustered something like 3,000—all the rest dead with the plague. When out yesterday I saw rice growing, and also the way the Chinamen clean, thresh, and winnow it. Wonderful! Tried to speak to one Chinaman for Christ, but could not make him "savey." The blacks here are very numerous; they live on the townspeople, but at night have to cross the water to camp

at the other side of the harbour—a very good rule. You would laugh at their style of dressing. The gins help in the house-work, and scrub and wash for “Ki-ki” (food). If they are wanted early they have to come “Chookie, chookie,” *i.e.*, when the fowls begin to move. We were looking for alligators yesterday, but they would not oblige.

CAIRNS,

*June 22nd, 1896.*

I have a whole house all to myself, so can sing and make as much noise as I please without disturbing anybody. . . . The Salvation Army lasses said that they would unite with me for the open-air meeting at night. I said, “I will unite with you;” so at 8.30 I turned up, just as they were finishing their collection, and asked how much it was. “Between six and seven shillings.” “We’ll put the hat round again presently,” I said; “they must give you fifteen shillings at least.” I told the crowd some Coolgardie stories, intimated my own Sabbath meetings *well*, and then said, “Now I want you to double the collection.” They passed my hat round and got the exact sum. I thanked the people for what they had done, bowing to them politely. “You’re a gentleman,” shouted one of the crowd. “Thank you, sir,” I immediately replied, “and you are another!” and so we parted on good terms. Tidy meetings on Sabbath morning and afternoon, and the big hall full at night. Got two Scotsmen in the after-meeting. We are in another world as to temperature. The house that I am camped in is on piles twelve steps high; the parsonage next door is the same.

*Tuesday morning.*

If ever there was a paradise it is this place to-day. It is beautifully cool, but so balmy in the bright sunlight. The sea is in front of me, and the everlasting mountains at the back. Cairns is on a dead level plain, between the sea and the mountain range up which I shall have to climb to-night to go to Mareeba. . . . How beautiful in to-day’s chapter—“When the praise was *perfect*, the glory filled the House of the Lord!”

S.S. “PALMER,”

GERALDTON WHARF,

JOHNSTONE RIVER.

. . . I gave — 41 names for the two days work at Mareeba. The captain called me at 6 a.m. yesterday, and at 6.40 I was in the train and away for Cairns to catch the boat for Townsville. For nearly twenty miles we ran alongside the Barron River, then came to the Falls, and began a descent of about 1000 feet.

It took us about an 1½ hours to do it, but the river! lo! it did it in a leap. The drop must be about 800 feet. The train runs alongside the Falls, and then along the cliffs, descending all the way. As we went down, there opened up before me in the bright sunlight the loveliest sight in all Australia. Perhaps New Zealand can beat it, but the railway ride between Barron Falls and Cairns will hold the palm against all Australia. The river after the Falls runs between two mountain ranges, 1000 feet high, steeply sloping to the edge of the water and wooded from top to bottom. Now and then, as we glide slowly down the sideling cut out of the mount on the southern side of the river, we can catch glimpses of the water close on 1000 feet below; sometimes we are on a tressel bridge with an awful ravine yawning underneath. No wonder that some folk keep to the other side of the train and push, to keep the carriage from toppling over! I stood at the carriage door with my head out of the window the whole way down, holding on to the sides in case the door flew open. At one spot the train slowed up to six miles an hour, and as I looked ahead I saw another waterfall, leaping and tumbling down the mountains above us to the right. We had to go over it—spanned by a tressel bridge on a curve! No wonder we slowed up. When we reached the Falls the water was not in as great volume as it sometimes is. Then you have to keep the windows shut, as the spray douses the train—a regular shower bath. One wanted to be on both sides of the train at once! The Falls are on your right hand, the boiling stream is underneath you, and the Barron River, into which the second Falls are flowing, is 600 or 700 feet below. Such a sight! It was interesting to see the engineering. The line had sometimes to be cut out of the brow of a peak, and the navvies had to do their work suspended by ropes which were tied to the trees above. I thought as I saw the cuttings on the mountain's brow at a distance that they were huge landslips, but it was the work of John Robb's men. . . . How many tunnels we passed through I cannot say. Poor Buchanan, the engineer who perished in the Melbourne sewerage tunnel, was Robb's engineer on this line. It was one of the most awe-inspiring journeys I ever took. "This God is our God for ever and ever." Banana trees are growing wild on the side of the line, and the tropical vegetation is thick. . . . I am really homeward bound, three days' sail nearer now. At 6 a.m. we anchored at the mouth of the Johnstone River, eight miles up, made fast at Geraldton, waiting for the tide. The boat was to go still further up, and to return in the morning, so I had service at night.

TOWNSVILLE,

*June 29th, 1896.*

To resume :—I was going ashore after finishing the above, when I slipped on the gangway and very nearly fell into the water; but I managed to hold on, and escaped with only nearly breaking my left thumb! Do you know the rainfall at Geraldton last year? Hold your breath! Six yards, two feet! Its average is five yards and a half. No wonder that there is plenty of tropical vegetation. One crop of sugar cane has been bearing for thirteen years without replacing. Had a nice little meeting with the children, but some of them were as wild as blacks. At 8 p.m. we were outward bound. I stood on the bridge with the captain for nearly two hours. It was like fairy land, sailing down the broad river in the clear light of the full moon. About 10.0 we steamed into the Mourliyan Harbour—a lovely spot—heads narrow and very high. Looked out for crocodiles as we steamed down the Hinchinbrook Channel next morning, but unfortunately it was not a sunny day, so my gentlemen were not up yet. Some of the mountains on Hinchinbrook Island are 4000 feet high. At 7.30 we made fast to Townsville Wharf.

I have just received a letter from Mr. W., of Cooktown, full of thankfulness and good news. Oh! Alleluia! . . . That was a lovely letter from England, another "handful"—"of purpose" for poor me. Bless the hand that drops them. A fair congregation in the morning, yesterday; preached on "Maranatha," and gave them something to think about. Fine meeting at 3.0—many young people arrested. At night, church packed to the doors, and a happy service. I took them gently in the after-meeting. *Festina lente* is the order of the day up here. There is great expectation, I hear, at Charters Towers.

TOWNSVILLE,

*July 2nd, 1896.*

I am glad to be within a week of you now. . . . We had a tremendous crush on Monday night, even the big porch was full. It was a glad surprise to me when I heard that Revell had got an introduction from Andrew Murray for the little book. So dear old H. has not seen the event to which he has been so loyal all these years—"the coming of the King," but he sees Him in His beauty, "in the land of far distances." The truth of the Advent is very interesting to the people here, and the chart is a great help. I leave for Charters Towers at 7.20 a.m. tomorrow, 80 miles inland; it takes four hours in the train. There was a bigger move in the meeting last night, and I came across people who had decided in the other meetings, without

anyone speaking to them. So my blessed Master is faithful still. Oh! I love Him for His goodness.

I must tell you another time about my climb on Tuesday. The Manse is at the foot of Castle Hill, about 900 feet above the sea level, and from the window of the room in which I am writing now I can see it towering and frowning above me. It is eerie-looking from the top! a fine place for suiciding. On Wednesday I took the 'bus and went to the Ross River Meat Works—very interesting. They had finished killing, so I did not see that process. The chief engineer took me over the freezing works and into the chambers. It was blazing hot outside, but inside my ears tingled. Had to button my coat, for I was being chilled to the bone; some of the chambers were 3 or 4 degrees below zero. They sew up every quarter in calico, the meat being just as hard as a stone. I saw nice little roasts lying all over the floor in heaps like logs of wood. I saw also the store room, where they can keep 2,000 tons, while waiting for the ship. The snow was hanging thick from the ceiling in some places, so I hit it with my umbrella and brought it down in patches. The men were working with mufflers on, and slapping their fingers to keep them warm! Then when you go out into the sunshine again, what a shock you get. I also went over the room in which they were canning the beef—the “tinned dog” that we used to try to eat at Coolgardie. It is boiled in steam in the tins—a little blow-hole being left in the top while boiling, and this hole is soldered over as soon as the meat is cooked. Each boiler boils about 1,000 tins at once. Walked home, four miles—a very instructive afternoon.

On Wednesday night I was lecturing on “Betting.” They filled the church, but oh, what a rush to get out from the after-meeting. Spoke on the Lord's coming last night, and gave them my mind plainly about their conduct, and lo! I had a big congregation to work on afterwards, and many blessed cases.

#### CHARTERS TOWERS,

*July 4th, 1896.*

. . . Charters Towers got its name from the fact that there are hills about with turrets or towers like the pipes of a big organ, and “Charters” was the name of the first Gold-Warden on the field. Have just arranged to stay here over Sabbath week, and have rented the School of Arts for the afternoon and evening. The Continental Sunday is in full blast here—offices at work all day Sabbath, getting ready for the mail on Monday at 7 a.m.; 3,000 people at a football match, and gate money taken; theatres open for concerts! What need of the power of Pentecost here. God help me to agonise in prayer: “Is any-

thing too hard for the Lord?" . . . Have just come in (10 p.m.) from a walk down the town. Oh, the crowds! how many poor shepherdless sheep! Oh God, give me Christ's heart to feel for them, and to love them with a true pure "Calvary love." I have got the people to work upon here, but I fear they will not come near the church. I will go into the streets on Saturday, if Jesus tarry. They say that if I had only got on a bicycle, and gone down the street with one of my "Roll up! Roll ups," the advertising would have been done at once.

*Sabbath.*—Just come in from the afternoon meeting. The School of Arts was full to the doors, and we had a lively service. Scores of young people professed decision; every hand went up for another service next Sabbath. Delighted to find that Mr. — is one of the 1859 men in Ulster. Splendid muster of young men this morning.

CHARTERS TOWERS,

July 8th, 1896.

. . . Out to dinner yesterday; began with *beche de mer* soup for a first course, then got lost in the count. My hostess said she wanted to give me North Queensland dishes! There are fruits here I have never seen or heard of before. Had prayer before leaving, much to their astonishment, but I fancy gratification, too. The "Cell" bills were put out on Monday, and a crisp paragraph in the paper yesterday. We were much in prayer and expectation for the night, and lo! we had a great throng; they were crowded tier behind tier in the porch; the young fellows stood like rocks for an hour and a quarter. The Minister's Union met yesterday. We had a nice talk and prayer; it was good to be present. I hope my visit will cheer the hearts of these weary toilers, holding the fort on the outposts of the kingdom. They are trying to fight Sabbath-footballing, open public-houses and fruit shops, betting places, etc. The Lord prosper them. The work of salvation is going on—always getting some—a few last night.

July 11th, 1896.

. . . I am told that I am the first man who has been seen here who believes in the Higher Life! I am fulfilling the mission for which He sent me—heralding His coming, and telling them of full salvation, so that they may be ready for it. Had a fine big house the night before last, when giving my lecture on "Gambling." It was needed here badly. Last week, over £16,500 went through the Tote in two days! God helped me to speak, so that they will not very easily forget.

Mr. — and I climbed up Towers Hill to-day—a fine view



of the town from the summit. It is a big place, just like a gold-field's town, with little cabins stuck everywhere—poppet-legs and mullock-heaps *ad lib.* . . . Glad to hear that darling Stewart has begun to be a help. May he be spared to run many an errand for his King, if so be that He tarries. . . . On Monday morning I will be moving homewards again, and will be close on 200 miles nearer you at Bowen than I am just now. We had a rattling meeting last night, and over twelve conversions—two husbands and their wives, a mother and two grown-up daughters, and one girl who fought her way gallantly through dear Thomas Cook's mission, but surrendered at discretion last night. Oh! how I would love a lull in the heavy cannonade for a little! but courage, John! No resting yet awhile—but—"in the sweet by-and-bye!"

BOWEN,

July 20th, 1896.

I believe that about twenty of the biggest girls here have been soundly converted. Our Sunday afternoon was the best we have had. I was asking the children what my morning text was. "Maranatha" they replied. I asked then "Is that English?" "No." "Greek?" "No." "What then?" "Scotch!" bawled out one of the youngsters. I fairly roared. . . . Have written forty-seven pages of my tractate on "His Coming." Am wondering what your criticism will be when it gets into your hands.

MACKAY,

July 22nd, 1896.

Drove out on Monday night to the Meat Works, near Bowen. Found that a lot of the men had gone to the circus, admission to which was four and five shillings. Got the shed lit up, and rang my Coolgardie bell, much to their amazement. By the time I was under way I had about fifty present, and we had a capital service. It was the first ever held among these butchers. At 12.0 I was aboard the "Wodonga." Soon the circus horses, baggage, etc., began to arrive, and it was nearly 5 a.m. before we left. At 8.0 I shook myself and went on deck; found that we were between the Barrier Reef and the main land. High islands innumerable form the Reef, and it was pretty sailing in and out among them. The sea was as calm as the table on which I am now writing. At 1.0 saw signs of Mackay. Found that the Tenders could not get in over the bar till 7 p.m., and that it would be 8.0 before we got up. I had ten miles to go to the meeting place at Walkerston, so looked anxiously for a boat to land me; saw a

sail beating towards us, but alas, she passed and went to a steamer near—a labour vessel just up from the islands with 150 boys on board. Giving up all hope, I began to try and settle myself to a useless wait and waste of time, but as I was watching the horses and lions being slung over into the Tenders, some one touched me and said, "Are you Mr. MacNeil?" The boat I had been watching *was* coming for me after all, but had to go to the schooner first with a pilot, so I soon had my luggage and myself in the pilot boat, and we started to pull two miles against wind and tide into the mouth of the Pioneer River. Once in the river we hoisted sail and got along a little quicker, but we had a long detour to make, and the men feared that I would be very late, when suddenly we heard a man crying out. We pulled round and ran for the bank, and sure enough, there was Mr. — and another! He had waded out from the land to the edge of the stream, so I took my boots off too, and stepped out into the water—leaving the boat to bring up the luggage at its leisure, while we three struck off across the wet sand and through the pools which are all covered when the tide comes in. . . . Reached Walkerston at 7.0, and Mr. — (the Kanaka Missionary), soon hove in sight, and lighted up; then the boys and the "Marys" began to stream in. I had a good crowd of black faces.

This Church was for the Kanakas, but also for any Englishers who like to come. I was astonished at the singing; they turned up the hymns and sang like Britons. We had a nice service; didn't my darkies listen! I talked the best and purest English I knew, and they understood. They don't care to be spoken to in *pidgin* English. Nearly all the darkies stayed to the after-meeting, and I found that they nearly all profess to be Christians. Some of the whites also stayed, and I spoke to some, who professed to decide there and then. So ended my first Kanaka service. Going out again for Friday, and will spend Saturday in the cane-fields, to see the boys at work and how they live.

July 27th, 1896.

. . . After tea started for Walkerston—not to preach in the Kanaka school, but in the white-fellows' church. There was a small congregation of the latter, but the dear darkies came and filled the church nicely. They enjoyed seeing the magnet at work. Next day I had to give a "private exhibition" for the benefit of the plantation children. Had a look through the sugar mill—idle just now—and then went into the cane fields to see the hoeing and planting. The "Marys" carry great loads of cane to distribute in the furrows, and then the boys come on with their hoes and plant it in. I planted

one bit to their great delight. They all look as happy and contented as you please. What do you think they feed the horses on here? Tops of chopped sugar cane and molasses, with a little maize thrown in! The horses' faces are as sticky as the childrens' when they indulge in treacle. Drove back to Mackay in the entrancing moonlight. I never saw anything more glorious on earth than the moonlight nights here and the bright sunny mornings. What will the mornings in the Glory Land be? Hurrah! it is enough to make a man shout 'Hallelujah.'

ROCKHAMPTON,

*July 30th, 1896.*

You see I am creeping nearer to you—200 miles further down than when I wrote last. I am declaring to myself that once I am at Bundaberg I shall look upon myself as at home! I have had three weeks of comparative failure, but there is a spirit of expectancy here and in Mount Morgan. At 11.30 on Monday night I went aboard the tender "Porpoise" at Mackay. At 2 a.m. she started for the sea, and after anchoring we lay till 7 a.m. I tried to sleep with my rug around me, but it was "thin" sleep. Then I got up and found R., the lighthouse man, going off in his boat to Flat Top Island, where his family live, so I asked him if he would like me to come and have service. "Yes." So I got my magnet, and we pulled to the island, about three-quarters of a mile away. I had breakfast with them, and afterwards had a delightful little service, singing, prayer, and a lesson. "All the inhabitants" were present, about ten! I saw the "Arawatta's" smoke coming from the north; the tender whistled, and I had to bid farewell. Three Salvation Army boys were on board the "Arawatta," so we had some singing, and one of the passengers took up a collection for them.

ROCKHAMPTON.

*August 1st, 1896.*

. . . I went down to the "Fitzroy Meat Company" on Thursday morning, and saw the Works. They actually employ about 1,000 men and boys, and have no Missionary! It is a very wicked place. There is a saying that the devil won't admit any "Lake's Creek" men into the nether regions for fear of corrupting his other subjects! I stuck up a lot of bills for Friday night, and ——— drove me down. We had about 200 in the Reading Room. They were interested, and voted me back again. I shall go in hope. I must get closer to their consciences than I got last night. There is a man here who is sparing no expense to make the meetings a success. This week the theatre and

circus have been in full blast, but next week the town will be quiet—with nothing to do but to listen to me. May they hear the voice of the Lord through his poor weak servant. Oh, that I may get *compressed* blessing this month, because of the poverty of the weeks now closing. . . . I think I will be finishing the little book on "His Coming" to-day. A man in Charters Towers told me that the "mark of the beast" was on me, because I keep the "Lord's Day" instead of the "Seventh Day."

The window of my room opens on the Fitzroy; it is a tidal river, and it helps me to pray to watch the tide running in. It covers the mud banks, and lifts dredges and hulks, steamers and lighters; *up* they all go bodily—no effort about it. Oh, for the incoming of the spring tide of the Holy Ghost. I don't like neap tides.

. . . Am greatly delighted to hear that God is blessing the men of the Evangelisation Society so greatly. More, more, more! Had a great meeting on Sabbath afternoon, and splendid results. I should not wonder if there were 100 decisions; I got the names of some scores.

*August 5th.*—Two or three hundred children were waiting for me at the Lake's Creek "Barracks" yesterday, and a number of adults as well.

The "Barracks" is the dining-room of the men at the Meat Works. Perhaps 400 of them can sit down at one time. The children sat or stood on forms and tables, tier above tier, and we had a really good service. I had to be done at 5.0 to let the men's tea be set on. We would otherwise have had a big haul in the after meeting, but the Lord will get His own. Last night's meeting was a big drop from the night before; the Hall is frightfully draughty, and I got a slight sore throat on the platform. Everything had a rather depressing tendency, but the blessed Lord lifted me up, and there were several good cases of conversion. . . . The outlook is dark, but glory! the uplook is as bright and inspiring as ever. Our Jesus is "*Semper Idem.*" His love is warm; His power is not waning; He is our Refuge; to Him we run; in Him we hide. Soon all will be behind us. Let us be of good cheer.

*August 7th.*—A man has started studying as a chemist with a view to being a foreign missionary. Two fine meetings yesterday. No church in town would have held the evening congregation. There is great interest in the Lord's return, and souls are being saved. I leave at 10.15 for the richest mine in the world—10 miles train and three hours coaching.

MOUNT MORGAN

*August 11th, 1896.*

. . . I am pleased to be able to give you some real

humming news of revival. At every meeting since Sabbath morning people have been turned away from the School of Arts. Last night was grand—sinners behind, before, right side, left side, and outside—on the verandah. It was a *good* meeting. God was with me. I felt the inspiration of your prayer, "*Lord, stand by him.*" He *did* stand by me yesterday, and I could feel every shot telling. The miners are catching fire, and the churches are united. . . . There is work enough opening up here to keep me till the end of the year. . . . I was all over the Mount Morgan Mine yesterday. The manager rigged me up, and conducted me through. They have taken 46 tons of gold out of it! All the newest processes—will describe when I come home.

ROCKHAMPTON,

*August 17th, 1896.*

Some good news for F. Three young men (converts in the mission) came to me as volunteers for foreign service last night, and they are coming again to-day. One is from Mount Morgan. . . . I expected to be off to-day, but the boat is delayed till noon to-morrow (Saturday)! That is bad news, as it means that I will get to Bundaberg on Sabbath too late for morning service. If I am not too late for the afternoon I shall be grateful. Last night the church was full up, and I intimated a farewell meeting for to-night, as I could not be idle. I shall have to wire to the Bundaberg Ministers to take the morning service themselves in the Theatre. If I only had my bicycle I would be there in time.

S.S. "EURIMBLA,"

*Saturday afternoon.*

Am actually started on my last sea trip. But alas! I will miss *all* my Sabbath work; it will be Monday morning before we get to port, and so the three Theatre services will be lost for me. Travelling in North Queensland is not all plain sailing. . . . A good many souls were blessed during those last two days. One young man sent me a letter asking me to meet him last night at a certain place. I guessed he was a Nicodemus, so went to the tryst, and sure enough it was so. He was gloriously saved before I left him. He confessed Christ on the road with me coming home after the meeting before three others, so his Nicodemusism is dead and gone. Quite a party came to see me off—such a waving of handkerchiefs! quite inspiring. One little pet of six brought me a lovely bouquet of roses.

BUNDABERG,

*Monday afternoon.*

We had a lovely sail down the Fitzroy, round Cape Capricorn, and across the Tropic of the same name. At 11.15 I heard them making fast at Gladstone, so put on my great coat and sallied forth to discover — ; found his house, and seeing a light, made bold to knock. Presently he appeared in pyjamas, and guessed who I was. We had a little talk, and then started for the ship. Passing the church I asked, "Could we not have prayer?" In we went, and by the light of a match saw our way to the pulpit, and then in the darkness we knelt and prayed. It was the best prayer meeting I have had since I left T. P. At 9 a.m. (Sunday) we were under way for the Meat Works. I landed and went up to the men ; gave some papers away, and had a talk with several about Christ and their souls just at service time. At 8 p.m. I tried service in the saloon ; the bell rang, and I went down with Bible and hymn books, but nobody turned up except one gentleman who was already reading there. After waiting a little I gave out the 100th Psalm and sang it ; *perhaps* the gentleman joined in ! Then I prayed and gave out hymn No. 25, and was nearly through the first verse when the stewardess came and a lady, and then a second-class passenger, so I conducted service with a congregation of *four* ! I opened the skylights, however, so that they could hear on deck. . . The winch was at work all night, so that sleep was impossible. They had a good day here yesterday ; the ministers took the meetings themselves. I purpose staying in Victoria till the end of October, and then going to New South Wales to work that Colony as thoroughly as I can. . . I kissed the rails when I saw them last night.

BUNDABERG,

*August 18th, 1896.*

. . . Splendid meeting last night. Theatre packed, and how they listened ! We are in the Presbyterian Church to-night. D. has coupled on to a C. E. President, who is going to run me in Sydney. They have secured the Paddington Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches, and intend to hold missions all through the city. They also want me to have mid-day meetings for business men on Holiness lines in the Centenary Hall. So we are going to be fairly launched in New South Wales again. I am so glad.

The following letters have a peculiar sacredness since I knew, as each was received, that the hand that wrote them would write no more.

BRISBANE,

*Monday, August 24th, 1896.*

. . . I have just come in from a three hours' walk through Brisbane, and am going to give directions about your last letter. Next week I will be home if Jesus tarry. . . I am coming by the express, and so will be with you on Friday morning at the proper time. Did I tell you that I am going back to Bundaberg on Saturday for next Sabbath? Ten hours by train; three services in the theatre. Yesterday was good at the Tabernacle. About 600 in the afternoon, and a few good cases in the after-meeting. Fine congregation in the evening, and the people heard me well. I trust we have had a good start. Just as I was leaving Bundaberg, got a post card from Rockhampton saying that Mr. —, one of my best workers in the mission, died 24 hours after I left on Saturday. *Pneumonia*—it is very deadly in this Colony.

BRISBANE,

*Tuesday, August 25th.*

. . . Well, we had a famous start last night, considering that the S.A. Rescue Meeting, with the Governor in the chair, was within a stone's throw of us. About 400 turned up, and God was there; a very solemn and searching time, and many Christians were moved to confess "dryness" of soul in the after-meeting. I was going for "arid Christians" last night. God can do great things for us this week if we will let Him. I am just waiting upon Him, and all my expectation is from *Him alone*. . . . Actually this time next week I will be travelling home—no more stops—straight on like a "homing dove."

BRISBANE,

*Wednesday, August 26th.*

Had a pretty good meeting last night, considering that the theme was "Holiness." Such a number of Christian people are openly confessing their lack, and also their determination to have all that the Lord Jesus has purchased for them. This afternoon I begin on "His Second Coming." Oh, that the tide may flow strong ere Friday night. . . . I am glad to be fortified with that letter from D., and am so thankful that B— has passed my chart; he is one of the best Bible

Scholars I know, and it makes me all the surer of my ground to have his Imprimatur on my interpretation of the Holy Word.  
. . . Oh, but it's fine to ken that this time next week, if all is well, I will be thundering along through New England, and making for Sydney. Oh, for the joy of getting home once more! It is fair intoxicating.



## CHAPTER XXI

### HOME

\* We think awhile that Home is Heaven ;  
We learn at last that Heaven is Home."

THE rest of the story must be told by others. My husband's last letter to me was written just before he left Mr. McNab's house on the morning of Thursday, August 27th. It is in his usual merry strain, is only half finished, and ends with, "Will add a line at the G.P.O." His hostess accompanied him to the door as he left the house, bag in hand, and watched him as he walked away briskly, thinking how vigorous he looked. At the gate he turned and waved her a good-bye, saying "I'll be back in time for lunch." He took the car down to the town, went into Mr. McNab's shop, packed, roped, and directed a box to Melbourne, drawing with his pen a big bold dash under the address in sheer exuberance of spirits, because he was really getting ready for home.

Leaving Mr. McNab's, he went along the street to the Wesleyan Book Depôt, made some arrangements about the sale of literature, and thence walked quickly along to the shop where he had left his Gladstone bag to be repaired. Walking cheerily in he asked if his bag was ready, as he would need it to take to Bundaberg on the following Saturday. The shopkeeper ordered it to be brought that he might see what they had done—he meanwhile

waiting, and leaning against the counter with folded arms. The bag was brought and the repairs pointed out. "That's all right," he said heartily—and fell. What had happened? Surely it was that he had caught the tones of a well-known Voice saying, "Come," and springing with his usual promptness to obey it, John MacNeil "went in and stood before his Master." Without a sound or a sigh, without a groan or a pang of farewell, his life went out as it came in—with joy. To others was left the weeping; to him came "pleasure for evermore."

"Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark !  
And may there be no sadness of farewell  
When I embark."

He had often quoted this, and God "granted him that which he requested." Of the days that followed it is hard to speak—those weary days when the closed eyelids brought before us only the constant tossing of the ship in which the loved body was taking its last sea voyage. How can I write—and yet I must—of the night when we sat listening with hearts, not ears, for the rumbling of the carriage which was to bring him home? It came at last—ending the long suspense, but thrusting upon us the awful reality. We sat quite still while strange hands laid him on the table in his own study among his own books and his own old familiar surroundings. This then was the home-coming to which we had looked forward so long and so longingly. Oh the irony of it! Instead of the merry shout and the ringing laugh, waking the house from end to end and infusing fresh life into all the inmates, there was the muffled tread of the undertaker, and the silence in which we could hear our own hearts beating. As we gathered round him, gazing in perplexity and grief at the strong, vigorous looking form lying there—so careless of our tears, so unresponsive to

our touch, it seemed that he *must* speak to us ; but *no!* the silence was unbroken ; the heavy pall of sorrow settled on us ; we had "entered into the cloud." One of our number began to read—

"I shine in the light of God ;  
His likeness stamps my brow ;  
Through the valley of death my feet have trod,  
And I reign in glory now !"

\* \* \* \* \*

As we listened the edge of the cloud began to silver ; presently it lifted, and we found ourselves close up to the very gate through which he had passed only a week before. Not one of us would have felt surprise could we have heard with our ears the echoes of the new-born melody with which we knew the walls of heaven were ringing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not for many men does sorrow belt a Continent. "It reminded me," says an aged saint, "of the wail that rang round Scotland when McCheyne died." There were tears from Geraldton, far away on the extreme west, to Cooktown, on the eastern coast of Australia. In Tasmania and in New Zealand devout men and women made great lamentation over the man who had joyfully shortened his life to serve them ; and yet they all felt, as Professor Harper so exquisitely put it, "That while to him to live was Christ, to die was only more of Christ."

And here I feel that I ought to make mention of the wonderful tide of sympathy which at once flowed in from all parts of Australasia to this little home—especially of the tender kindness of the amazed, sorrowing, and mourning friends in Brisbane, from the very midst of whom my husband had so suddenly departed. Anticipating every wish of mine, and lavishing every attention on the dear body, they have laid me and all my husband's friends

under a debt of gratitude which we can never repay.

\* \* \* \* \*

Late on Friday afternoon, September 4th—the very day it will be remembered on which he had told us to expect him home—all that was mortal of John MacNeil was laid away to rest until the night be past and the morning breaks. The members of the "Band," whom he so loved, held a short service in the house, singing first a hymn which he had often sung himself in his meetings, "The very same Jesus"; then one of them followed with the "Shepherd Psalm"; and then a third breathed out when praying "that the River of Death had never looked so narrow as now—that it seemed as if he and we could almost join hands across it!"

The funeral procession, as it reached Prince's Bridge, had to make its way through a throng of people—mostly young men and women—who, with uncovered heads and solemn reverent behaviour, watched it pass, and then followed in its train to the Melbourne General Cemetery, where another large concourse had already assembled. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. D. Gordon (of whose church my husband was a member), by Rev. D. S. McEachran for the Presbyterian Church, by Rev. H. B. Macartney for the Church of England; by Rev. S. Chapman for the Baptists; and by Rev. J. Watsford for the Wesleyans. They each spoke of the influence exercised by the Evangelist among all the denominations, and the throng around testified with sobs and sighing that what they said was true. Thus amid tears because of present grief, bright recollections of the past, and radiant expectations for the future, the coffin was lowered into the grave. It had been all lined with flowers by loving hands, and there, within, resting from hard but willing service, lies

JOHN MACNEIL—"Waiting."

LETTER FROM REV. T. LEITCH OF QUEENSLAND.

BRISBANE,

*Friday, Aug. 28th, 1896.*

Dear Mrs. MacNeil,

Deep, deep sympathy from warm loving hearts in Brisbane. We are all sad and sorrowing over the departure of our beloved brother and sainted leader. Many of us knew nothing of the sad event until we reached the place of meeting at the City Tabernacle yesterday afternoon at 3.0. He delivered his first address on the Lord's Coming on Wednesday afternoon (Aug. 26th); was to finish yesterday (Aug. 27th); and to answer questions to-day. I cannot tell you now, how, looking back on what has taken place, his words on Wednesday afternoon seemed almost prophetic. He delivered his address with his usual energy and enthusiasm. To me, he looked pale and worn, but declared himself never to have been better. We sat and chatted for a little time at the close of the meeting, and he explained to me his programme.

During his address he took out his purse, and opening it told us that he had a return ticket but might never use it, as the Lord might come, and he would meet his wife and children in the air. He opened the meeting by singing hymn 363, and led us with spirit and earnestness. During the collection he asked us to sit and sing "Till He come," excepting the last verse. It was the last hymn I heard him give out, and cannot but feel how sad and true it is for you and your little ones. The last time I saw him alive was walking in George Street, close to our Lands Office, and wondered that he should display such energy after an exhausting service. Yesterday (Thursday) I saw him "asleep," so peaceful, so triumphant looking. His meetings

had been largely attended, and were successful in every sense. Yesterday, of course, was very sad; the congregation there, the ministers there, the chart hanging on the platform, but the man of God gone!

Rev. A. C. Smith, Rev. J. Southey and others engaged in the service, and you and the children were specially remembered, and many tears were shed. Your noble husband has been called suddenly to the glory. His work to us seemed unfinished, but finished it was no doubt in the eye of the Master Whom he served. I feel that he has gone as he would like to have gone—falling in the fight—in the midst of service—in the thickest of the fray—leading on the Lord's hosts to Victory, with no rust on sword or armour.

It has been my privilege to take some part in all his services when present, and to-day I feel sad and sick at heart because he is gone. Who is to fill his place? We have none like him, so single hearted, so whole hearted, so devoted, so well taught, and so wholly consecrated. All the Churches of Australasia, yea and beyond, are the poorer to-day, because a prince with God and a great one has fallen in Israel. Oh that his mantle may fall on some!

On Tuesday he spoke of his little boy, and repeated several times, "I love that boy," and on Wednesday gave the old illustration distinguishing between "blameless" and "faultless." To-night we shall have a memorial service at the City Tabernacle, which I have no doubt will be crowded. I called yesterday and looked at his room, as he had left it a few hours previously—your photos all spread out on a shelf, his Bible and notes on the table, his slippers on the floor, his books as he had laid them down—himself gone; the Master had called him up. We had asked God to deepen our spiritual life through our brother's visit. Surely, surely, our spiritual life has been deepened. Our brother gave

his noble life for the spiritual life of Brisbane. God has visited us in a strange manner. Praying that all grace may be given to sustain and comfort and guide,

Yours truly,

T. LEITCH.

#### EXTRACT FROM MR. McNAB'S LETTER.

. . . . The doctor tells me that the cause of death was the bursting of a blood-vessel on the brain. All the organs of his body were perfectly healthy, but this was the means of his sudden release, for it was quite unexpected, as far as physical health was concerned. On Wednesday evening Mr. MacNeil had his last and best meeting. Going home with him, he said to me: "Dear brother, the Lord *has* been good to me! Here have I been at His work, hammer and tongs, all these weeks, and, bless His name! I feel as fresh to-night as the first day." And he seemed so, indeed. He was in great spirits that night, breaking out every now and again in thanksgiving and praise. On Thursday morning he took a hearty breakfast and was in fine trim, playing with the children, who loved him dearly.

That was the last I saw of him alive. My wife wants me to tell you what an honour we esteem it to have had the privilege of your husband's company, during the few days he was with us. She and I, and a host of others (many of them his spiritual children) join in earnest prayer to our loving Father that you may realise, as we are sure you will, the fulfilment, to the uttermost, of all His gracious promises. God bless the dear children.

Yours faithfully,

D. McNAB.

**LETTER FROM REV. JOHN SOUTHEY (CHINA INLAND MISSION), TO REV. H. B. MACARTNEY.**

My dear Mr. Macartney,

Knowing how much you loved and esteemed dear John MacNeil, I thought I would send to you, and through you, to the members of the Band, a short account of the last two or three days. I met him for the first time on Monday, August 24th—the Monday before he fell asleep—in the Wesleyan Book Dépôt, Brisbane. He greeted me in the warmest possible way, and urged me, as I could not get down for the Geelong Convention, to try and be at the Ballarat Convention; and although he had not known me before, he said in his own warm-hearted way: “Now when you reach Melbourne, if sea air agrees with Mrs. Southey, come and stay with us at Sandringham.” After comparing notes as to his work and my own, we parted, and as I had C.I.M. meetings, I could not attend his. On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, he was to hold afternoon meetings in the City Tabernacle, and I kept myself clear of engagements on these afternoons so as to be able to stand with him on the platform.

Thus it was that on Wednesday afternoon I met him again, and at his own wish, opened the meeting with prayer. His subject was: “The coming of the Lord for His people,” and there was a fairly large and decidedly attentive congregation. He dwelt very specially on the Scriptural designations, “the dead in Christ”; and, “them that sleep in Jesus,” and he pressed home upon the listeners, that if they had relatives or friends who had fallen asleep in Jesus, they were not to sorrow as those that had no hope, but to comfort themselves with the assurance that those absent from the body were present with the Lord, and that the Lord might come at any moment for His bride



and that then the living saints should not take precedence of "them that are asleep," but that the "dead in Christ" should first be raised, and that afterwards the living ones should be "caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air."

He kept dwelling, too, with what I may rightly call tremendous energy, on the words: "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord shall come," and: "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." In closing the meeting he said, with most marked emphasis: "If the Lord tarry, and if I am spared, we will resume this subject to-morrow afternoon."

The whole address was intensely spiritual, and was delivered with a great expenditure of physical force, and yet he did not seem at all tired when it was over, nor was there any sign of an over-taxed voice. Excepting that there was a certain amount of pallor about his face, which I have since been told was natural to him, I should have taken him to be in the most perfect health. We said "good-bye," and parted at the close of the meeting, little thinking that it was to be our last farewell.

Next morning I went to see Mr. McNab, who told me that the last night's meeting was the best that had been held, and then after a little talk about our dear brother and his work, I went to the Wesleyan Book Depôt, and was writing letters in a room at the end of the shop. Soon after 11 o'clock Mr. MacNeil came in, but as the door of the room I was in was shut, I did not see him. Very, very shortly after this, the manager of the Depôt said to me: "Isn't it sad? Mr. MacNeil is dead!" I said, "Surely there is some mistake." He said, "No; he has fallen dead in a shop in George Street." I said, "Let us go and see." Three or four minutes rapid walk brought us to a portmanteau shop, and pushing our way in, we saw the house of clay—the earthly

house of this tabernacle"—of our dear, dear brother lying with a pillow under his head, and a white cloth over his face. He looked so lifelike that I could hardly believe that he had really fallen asleep; indeed, it was not till I took his dear hand into mine that I could realise that John MacNeil had finished his course, and was with the Lord.

The meeting he was to have held that afternoon was largely attended, and we turned it into a prayer meeting, specially remembering the dear wife and children. He was to have spoken on "The Three Judgments"; and we could not help thinking that, instead of looking on a little audience in a building of stone, he was even then "getting used" to the wonderful brightness of the glory.

On Friday evening a memorial service was held in the Tabernacle, and it was crowded to the doors. Ministers of the different churches were on the platform, and the coffin, covered with flowers, lay just in front. It was a solemn service. The Holy Ghost rested on those who were present; and the hymns and prayers, the reading and addresses, all seemed to bring us very near to God. Faith looked through the veil and caught a glimpse of glory unspeakable. At the close of the services the lid of the coffin was removed, and the great congregation quietly passed by and looked on the face of him whose eyes have seen the King in His beauty. But we that are alive and remain, what of us? Oh! to have no arrears of work, to have everything done that ought to be done, to be where He would have us be, to do what He would have us do, so that we may "not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Affectionately yours in the blessed bondage,

JOHN SOUTHEY.

. . . . .

Out of the many hundreds of letters of sympathy received I have chosen one to insert here. It is a kind of epitome of all the rest, so is chosen to represent them:—

28th Aug., 1896.

Dear Mrs. MacNeil,

I am greatly stricken in this heavy bereavement which has fallen on the Church of God. None can enter into your sorrow—that the Lord alone knows with you, and He will be your stay; but it may help you to know of the great company that is weeping with you and with your children. Such a sense of loss as has fallen this day never fell upon my ministry before. The brother beloved, the matchless friend, the spirit pure and clear and high, the heart dauntless in the cause of truth, the voice that never quavered into an uncertain sound, the man ablaze with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, great preacher of the word, mighty winner of souls, most tender counsellor of the penitent, the worker strenuous yet meek, earnest yet patient, to whom self was nothing and self-sacrifice a delight in his ardent zeal, steadfast, successful, blessed in his travail and toil for the Christ Whose follower he was—and not “afar off” to our eyes—surely his Master was training him among us for higher place and honour near Himself; and now, having found him ready, has called him suddenly into His glory, and we ought to lift up our hearts and rejoice. Alas, I cannot! for I look around me and think how sorely needed was his testimony in this degenerating church and land. I can only in heaviness of soul for the desolate cause touch hands with you through the darkness and say: “The Lord reigneth.” May He be your Comforter and the Father of the fatherless, and send us all light into this dreary shadow.

Yours in sorrow.

WARRIOR, WORSHIPPER, FRIEND OF  
GOD.\*RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LATE EVANGELIST,  
JOHN MACNEIL, B.A.

BY REV. H. B. MACARTNEY, OF CAULFIELD.

IT was love at the first sound of his voice; not at first sight, for there was nothing Absalom-like in the dark hair and beard which his own dear hands and his five dear children and the rough winds of heaven kept for ever tossing; the magnetism lay in the tone. We were together on the platform of the Temperance Hall; we had finished our annual Christian Convention; we were holding an Evangelistic service on the Friday evening, and he was giving the address. I never knew before that a Scotchman could be so like an Irishman. I never heard before singing introduced into a sermon; I never saw so much animation from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot; nor did I ever in all my life hear a gospel more crystal clear!

I know but little of his history. He was, I am told, the son of a railway contractor, and certainly he could drive an engine, for he once said to me with great emphasis, when talking about *More of the Spirit*: "Brother, it's not so much more of the Spirit that's wanted; it's *more room* for the Spirit. If I want to drive a long line of loaded trucks up an incline, I don't need more steam for the steam-chest, but more of the steam-chest for the steam!" He graduated in Melbourne, and then went home to the Edinburgh Divinity Hall. There he not only became master of exact theology, but was a flame of love among his fellow-students and the "poor of the people." Once, when wanting an audience, he stood at a street corner, and with that rich, glorious shout of his, which could be heard a

\* From the Melbourne "Southern Cross," Friday, Sept. 4th, 1886.

mile away, rang out, "Fire! fire!" "It hasn't descended yet, my friends," he said, when the crowd gathered, "but it's on its way. Oh, flee from the wrath to come!" That was John MacNeil exactly!

Returning to the Colonies, he did some hard work in South Australia, and kept a journal, which some day may see the light. Then came his marriage with Miss Thomas. . . . Their wedding trip was to Western Australia for a mission, and there, just there, a cloud gathered and a shadow fell, which lasted for many a year. It was an insidious internal malady, which caused him at times to roll on the ground in an agony of pain, and compelled him to become the pastor of a small charge at Waverley, near Sydney, instead of an itinerant. I was holding a mission one winter for Rev. T. B. Tress, at St. Peter's, Woolloomooloo, and we were just preparing for the after-meeting, when in came John MacNeil, all muffled up, and his face as white as a sheet; but he was able to tell us something worth hearing, with singular point and sweetness. About this time a friend said to him, "A man like you has no business to be ill, with such a reserve of power for body as well as soul treasured up in your Lord Jesus!" He thought about it, but took no decided step, till, one Monday morning, he saw in the paper that a Mr. Barker, a Church of England clergyman, and a relative of the Primate, was to deliver an address in the city at 11 a.m., on "Divine Healing." Immediately he arose and went, heard the teaching, grasped the truth, laid hold of Jesus in His new capacity as "My Lord that healeth me," and went on his way rejoicing. He dined at 1 o'clock at the Y.M.C.A., taking the same food that the others did, and there and then offered himself as organising secretary for good old George Müller's mission, just then impending. A fortnight later the symptoms

returned; so he went into his chamber, locked the door, and casting himself down before the Great Physician, said: "Lord, if I relapse into ill-health, it will not affect my honour, but it will affect Thine!" Then, stretching out his whole being on the promises of God, he claimed that power for service which lasted him without a break until his dying day.

I wish that I could have had a month instead of a day to set these recollections in order; but here are some of my uppermost impressions concerning my most unique and unconventional friend.

*John MacNeil was a wonderful man in the Word of God.* His Bible was a marvel to see. He got at the Hebrew of it, the Greek of it, the Revision of it, the gist of it, the syllables of it, the harmonies of it, the references of it, the surface meaning, the hidden meaning, and the illustrative power of it, in a way that few could surpass. He was a gold digger! He had quite a genius for tracking out a subject, and for committing it to paper. I remember once going to meet him at Spencer Street, when on his way through from Sydney to a mission in Ballarat. His manuscripts, the accumulations of years, were in a little black bag, which he let out of his hand for a moment in the excitement of arrival and conversation with friends; but, lo, when he looked for it, it was stolen, and he never heard of it more. He went to Ballarat like one bereft; but the Lord was his Shepherd, and he "did not want"; from that day he learnt a new lesson—the blessedness of dependence. "It is not ye that speak!"

*John MacNeil was a wonderful man in prayer.* Once in Launceston he lay on his face before God a whole day, saying over and over again the same words—"Lord, give me devil-driving power!" He believed, moreover, in getting answers to his prayers; and he *did* drive the devil out of thousands of souls. He has added to the genuine "Sorrows of Satan" up and

down through New Zealand, up and down through Tasmania, and right round our great Island Continent from Perth to Cooktown—the last touch being given to his pan-Australasian work just a few days since. The chains that his prayers have broken would, if massed together, make a mountain ridge as high as the Andes.

*He was a wonderful man for orthodoxy.* You would find him as gentle as a lamb, and with a voice as low and soft as a woman's, if talking about the Lord or about the heart-life; but get him on hostility to the Atonement or to the Saviour's Deity, or on the "Down grade," or on immorality in or out of the Church, and his whole soul would begin to flare and flame, and he would roar like a lion. There was no compromise about him, no reticence about what might prove unpalatable, no adaptation of Sinai's earthquake or the blood-storm on Calvary to modern effeminate taste. He was perfectly dauntless in stating and defending the faith which he had imbibed from the Scriptures, and to which, as a Presbyterian, he had pledged his allegiance.

*He was a wonderful man for sinners.* He was weighed down far more than most of us with the burden of souls. There never was a doubt, even in the minds of his bitterest foes, about his fervour and sincerity. He believed in Hell just as he did in Heaven. He had the same conviction that we all have, only in more tremendous measure, that, apart from the new birth and a holy life, there can be no escape from doom. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he was always "persuading." Specially did he seek to win the young. A young man himself, and charged with that solemn "Message from the Cell" of a youthful prisoner condemned to die, he went everywhere warning the heedless and the guilty; but it was always in love, always in tender-

ness. His wrath was reserved for "professionals" who were untrue to conscience, to oath, to trust. Nothing but a positive *passion* for souls could have kept him going as it did year after year.

*He was a wonderful man for saints as well as sinners.* He longed to see believers enjoying larger, brighter blessing. He was till quite lately secretary to that "Band" which has "Revival" for its special object, the early members of which used to spend half-nights and whole nights in prayer when Allan Webb was preacher in Albert-street. He was the moving spirit in Conventions, such as those of Geelong, Adelaide, Ballarat, Brisbane and Sydney, for he thirsted that by their means the people of God might come to a white heat of love, and manifest the life and light of Christ in the midst of surrounding darkness.

*He was a wonderful man for breadth as well as depth.* How narrow soever he might seem to be when standing for his Lord, or for the plenary inspiration of the Bible, let him only know that anybody loved that Lord or that Book, and his soul went out to him in an instant. It never crossed his mind to ask to what section of the Church such an one belonged.

*He was a wonderful man for liberality.* It comes within my private knowledge that he maintained a native Evangelist in India entirely at his own expense, and that he presented 1,000 labourers in India and China with copies of his own book, "The Spirit-filled Life."

*He was a wonderful man for anecdote.* There was one, and it was prophetic, in which he took unusual delight. A teacher was asking her children one day all about Enoch, and having put the question, "What became of Enoch?" she got this beautiful reply from a little thoughtful girl: "Enoch used to walk with God, you know; and one day he walked so far that God said to him, 'Well, Enoch, as you've



come so far, you may as well come in.' " This was his very own experience; "he was not, for God took him." His power of illustration may perhaps be best exemplified from the book above-mentioned; and here let me add that God is signally blessing it. The Melbourne edition was instantly sold. The English edition is now in all lands; and lastly, an American edition, introduced by Andrew Murray, is circulating through the States.

*He was a wonderful man for his own family.* Could you but see him just before stepping into a railway carriage, to go away on a three months' tour; could you but see him (as I have done) clasping his children in his arms, you would have known something of his natural affection; or could you see him returning home, and hear the children raising the cry "Father!" and running in wild and glorious tumult to climb up upon him, as if he were a mountain-side, you would know that he was not only loving, but beloved.

*Above all, he was a wonderful one for his Lord.* Loyalty is no word for it. Love is no word for it. It was a fathomless attachment. It was as if his whole system was highly strung to respond to a word or a look or a suggestion from his Master. For Jesus to will a thing, was for John to do it.

And now for closing scenes. On his way down from Cooktown the other day he stood at the terminus of that railway system which connects Melbourne with the Far North, and thinking in his heart, "This is the line which is so soon to carry me home," he stooped down and kissed the rails! Who but John MacNeil would have thought of that! His letters grew more and more joyous as the time for his one-week's holiday approached. He had only to hold a Convention in Brisbane, and to see some brethren about a new campaign in Sydney, and was timed to arrive in Melbourne to-day (Friday,

September 4th). I was to spend to-morrow forenoon with him at Sandringham, for he wanted to read over the MS. of a little book, to which he thus refers in his last letter, dated Mount Morgan, August 12th :

"When you have a minute to spare, look through the enclosed Chart, and thus place me deeper in your debt. I am bringing every place I now visit face to face with 'MARANATHA.' I have written a fifty-page tractate explaining the Chart; and I want to know if you will let me read it to you before I print it, as I did 'The Spirit-filled Life.' Souls are coming in every day. Oh, the joy of seeing Jesus getting His own! Many here are finding something richer than Mount Morgan gold; about twenty in three days. Last week 139 professed decision at Rockhampton. Glory!"

On August 21st he wrote from Bundaberg to Dr. MacColl: "Beloved in the Lord, Greetings from the Northern Battlefields! The enemy is strongly entrenched up this way; but Holy Ghost artillery is stronger still. Hallelujah! The Christians of Ballarat, at the closing meeting of my mission in May, requested me to organise a Convention for that city. The dates are October 20th to 23rd. Meeting place, Mechanics' Institute. Friends there would like you to come up. 'Advise, and see' what the Master wants. I say, old warrior, could we not arrange for a night of prayer the week I am home? I hunger for fresher and fuller manifestations. This is the first year in which we have had no 'all-night.' it won't do."

So ends the correspondence just now at my command: A prayerless life "won't do!" and "glory!" for souls being saved. He reached Brisbane after Bundaberg, began the Convention there on Tuesday, August 25th, and was suddenly translated on Thursday, the 27th. His "light was

like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal."  
—*Rev. xxi. 11.*

LETTER FROM THE "BAND."

MELBOURNE,

*September 4th, 1896.*

Dear Mrs. MacNeil,

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."—Ps. cvii. 29. We, the members of the Melbourne "Band," of which Mr. MacNeil was for so many years the devoted and honoured secretary, cannot let this season of your deep affliction pass away without a united message of profound sympathy.

What your husband was to the whole people of Australia, as a man evidently sent from God, who seemed to stand ever in full view of Eternity, and who was for ever engaged in seeking their salvation, we know, at least, in part.

What he was to the Church at large as the stern enemy of error, laxity, or compromise; as the eloquent advocate of whole-hearted self-surrender, and as a pattern of patient endurance and joy in service, we know in fuller measure.

What he was to ourselves as a loving companion, leader, champion, and torch of heavenly flame, we are only just beginning to realise.

But what he was to you and to your children we can only faintly imagine.

We are well aware that we cannot estimate the greatness of your loss or the depth of your sorrow, and we therefore only ask your permission to stand almost in silence side by side with your beloved Lord, Who, while He is stooping down to wipe away your tears, is also lifting up His hands to crown His servant's head with a wreath of undying glory. In that holy, solemn, compassionate

Presence, we wish to assure you that we desire nothing more earnestly than to drink more deeply, as Mr. MacNeil used to drink, from the Fountain of Zion's waters; to follow the Master more fully, as he used to follow, with cheerful, unfaltering step; to breathe, as he used to breathe, only, always, and altogether for his King; to die, as he died, in the very thick of battle; and to shine, as he shall shine, like the stars for ever and ever.

We wish, moreover, to express our confident belief that his name will never be forgotten in our Australasian Churches, and that his words will be re-echoed by his spiritual children as long as we are a nation.

And now reminding you, dear Mrs. MacNeil, that you stand in a relationship to God which was impossible before—even to God as “The Father of the Fatherless and the God of the widow”; that the most exquisite balm for your grief will be found in seeking to enter more and more into your husband's joy, and in the perpetuation of his prayer for the “Great Revival”; in looking, as he used to look, for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in realising that the separation is only for a “little while,”

We are, yours in the blessed hope,

ALFRED BIRD,  
W. Y. BLACKWELL,  
SAMUEL CHAPMAN,  
WILLIAM H. GEORGE,  
EDWARD HARRIS,  
J. EAST HARRISON,  
MATTHEW G. HART,  
W. H. HOSKEN,  
EDWARD ISAAC,  
S. C. KENT,  
SAMUEL KNIGHT,  
CHARLES LANCASTER,

H. B. MACARTNEY,  
D. S. MACCOLL,  
D. O'DONNELL,  
THOMAS PORTER,  
JOSEPH ROSS,  
GEORGE SOLTAU,  
GEORGE SPROULE,  
E. S. SUMNER,  
JOHN WATSFORD,  
ALLAN W. WEBB,  
W. WILLIAMS,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

## A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

ANTICIPATING RESURRECTION-GLORY.

I shine in the light of God ;  
 His likeness stamps my brow ;  
 Through the valley of death my feet have trod,  
 And I reign in glory now !

No breaking heart is here,  
 No keen and thrilling pain,  
 No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear  
 Hath roll'd and left its stain.

I have reached the joys of Heaven ;  
 I am one of the sainted band ;  
 For my head a crown of gold is given,  
 And a harp is in my hand.

I have learn'd the song they sing,  
 Whom Jesus has set free,  
 And the glorious walls of Heaven still ring  
 With my new-born melody.

No sin, no grief, no pain ;  
 Safe in my happy home ;  
 My fears all fled, my doubts all slain,  
 My hour of triumph's come !

Oh! friends of mortal years,  
 The trusted and the true !  
 Ye are watching still in the valley of tears,  
 But I wait to welcome you.

Do I forget ? Oh, no !  
 For memory's golden chain,  
 Still binds *my* heart to the hearts below,  
 Till they meet and touch again.

Each link is strong and bright,  
 And love's electric flame,  
 Flows freely down like a river of light,  
 To the world from whence I came.

Do you mourn when another star  
 Shines out from the glittering sky ?  
 Do you weep when the raging voice of war  
 And the storms of conflict die ?

Then why should your tears run down,  
And your hearts be sorely riven,  
For another gem in the Saviour's crown  
And another soul in Heaven ?