

present known. These were well received by the king and people, other missionaries were left at some of the other islands, who were also received with expressions of kindness, and great were the rejoicings in England when news of their favorable reception was carried home.

But the ship had barely left the port of Tahiti, when the natives began to plunder the missionaries; and after a series of annoyances and persecutions, eleven of their number were obliged to flee. They made their escape in a ship that had been driven for shelter into one of the bays of the island. However, others remained and labored on, learning the language, establishing schools, instructing the natives in the useful arts, and the preaching of the Gospel was not without marked and viable effects.

The boyhood of John Williams, like that of his distinguished contemporary, Moffat, to whose life his own ran parallel for more than forty years, was singularly full of moral sweetness and the promise of peculiar excellence in whatever sphere of life he might be placed. He was carefully trained in religious knowledge by his mother, and at a suitable age apprenticed to an iron-monger—not so much to learn the mechanical as the commercial part of the business. But the lad had a singular talent for mechanic arts; and in the intervals of time when he was not needed at the counter or the desk, he picked up so much practical knowledge at the forge or in the finishing shop as to become a really skilled workman, and was often entrusted by his master with tasks that none of the regular workmen could do so well.

At the age of eighteen, like many another just entering upon the activities of worldly business, he was growing to be less and less influenced by the religious teachings that had blessed his earlier years. But here God's spirit arrested him; and with his conversion came the entire revolutionizing of all his earlier plans and expectations. From the day he professed faith in Christ, he became an earnest worker in His cause. Recognizing the fact that now he had another Master, even Christ, while no less faithful in every particular to his earthly master, he embraced every opportunity to serve the Church. He became a teacher in the Sunday School, and at the same time improved every spare moment in the culture of his mind. The missionary zeal and earnestness of his pastor and his faithful setting forth of the duty of Christians in this respect, stirred up the mind of young Williams to diligent inquiry in regard to his own personal duty, and before the time of his apprenticeship had expired his mind was made up, and his application to the directors of the London Missionary Society was made. Though so very young, his suitability to the work was recognized, his master cheerfully released him from the remainder of his apprenticeship, and on the same day as Moffat, he was, as we have already seen, designated to the field of his future labors.

The Islanders to whom Mr. and Mrs. Williams were sent were, when first visited by Europeans, extremely degraded, cruel, addicted to infanticide and the most revolting pagan rites, and in a number of the islands cannibals of the lowest description. But in the majority of cases they very readily accepted Christianity; and as soon as converted not only became intense lovers of the Bible, but zealous missionaries to the heathen of the neighboring islands. In no part of the heathen world where Christianity has gone, have more willing and eager workers been found than among the people of these savage islands.

The coming of Mr. and Mrs. Williams was like the dawn of a new day upon the South Sea Mission; and from that day to this there has been steady progress, though not without some painful and bitter trials, such as the

murder of Williams in 1839, of Bishop Patterson in 1871, and the check that was put upon Protestant missions in Tahiti in 1842 by the French assumption of the Protectorate of the island.

Such were Mr. Williams' industry and aptitude in acquiring the language, that he preached his first sermon in the native tongue just ten months after he reached the islands. This progress was unprecedented, and greatly surprised the older missionaries, some of whom, on hearing him preach, affirmed that he had done as much in ten months as might reasonably have been expected in three years. But this, like every thing Mr. Williams did, was done in his own peculiar way. It was not accomplished so much by sitting down to solitary study, as by mingling freely with the natives, talking with them, as he was able, and thus familiarizing himself at once with the commonest words and simplest forms of expression, as well as with their peculiar pronunciation.

From the time he preached his first sermon his work was fairly begun. At once, in addition to preaching, he set about translating the Scriptures, establishing schools, opening up new stations, and, at the same time, turned his mechanical skill to good use in the building of a church and in the erection of a better class of houses for the missionaries. "It was my determination when I left England," he says, "to have as respectable a dwelling as I could erect; for the missionary does not go to barbarize himself, but to civilize the heathen. He ought not, then, to sink down to their standard, but to elevate them to his."

As soon as Mr. Williams' work was established, his mind began to go out toward other places. In the year 1823 he commenced those "Missionary Enterprises" by means of which a large number of the neighboring islands were reached and evangelized, and the sphere of operation and influence of the Missionary Society he served greatly enlarged.

In a letter to the Directors of the Society about this time he says: "A missionary was never designed by Jesus Christ to gather a congregation of a hundred or two natives and sit down at his ease as contented as if every sinner was converted, while thousands around him and but a few miles off are eating each other's flesh and drinking each other's blood, living and dying without the gospel. For my own part I cannot content myself within the narrow limits of a single reef."

The remainder of Mr. Williams' singularly busy life was a carrying out to the fullest extent possible to him of the principles here enunciated. In his mission-ship, the Endeavor called by the natives the Beginning—he journeyed from island to island, opening the way for Christian laborers, and leaving behind him native Christians to carry on the work in his absence.

But at length, after much foundation work of this kind had been done, and many islands visited, in consequence of complaints sent home by merchants of Sydney that "the bringing of the goods of the islanders to the colony interfered with their trade," the Directors of the Society were induced to sell the Endeavor, and by this suicidal policy the mission would for a long time have been crippled, but for the energy and pluck of their missionary.

Williams resolved that he would build a ship for himself. But how was this to be done without material, tools, skilled workmen, and the numberless conveniences that are deemed indispensable to such an enterprise? The missionary was the man to solve this difficulty. Never, perhaps, was the old adage "where there's a will there's a way," better verified than in this instance. Warmly seconded by his native Christians, he boldly set to work