

them as well as to many who still send us help for my Teacher's Fund, that would be to me a great pleasure. But I cannot get the time, and it is better to be frank at once.

However, now that we have a monthly mail service I am resolved to attempt frequent short notes instead of long annual letters and reports.

Mrs. Robertson and myself, our youngest child (a little girl of three years) and the native nurse expect to get away from Sydney early in May, if not by the end of April. We will get to Erromanga in May, if we do not stop at Aneityum to attend Synod, which meets at Mr. Laurie's station (late Dr. Geddie's), about the 19th June.

For some time while here I engaged to visit congregations and Sunday Schools in town and country, and seek to stir them up in reference to Foreign Mission work generally, but specially in relation to the Churches work in the New Hebrides group of islands. I worked for nearly six months for the Heathen's Mission Committee and they paid all my travelling expenses and gave me something besides. As I was most kindly received by ministers and other friends where ever I went there were no hotel charges to pay.

It would be vanity in me to say I did much to foster a missionary spirit and active work and more liberality during those months. It would also be vanity to say I did nothing to accomplish such a spirit, such work and such giving. When I began work the Committee was £700 str. in debt. At their last meeting they had a balance on the right side. I am thankful to know I did something to bring about this good result.

I travelled by train, buggy, (as they call a waggon here) or in the saddle, saw much of country and enjoyed the society of many ministers and ministers' families, and laymen, who now are among my many missionary and personal friends. I travelled as far as the border of Victoria, and saw its snow-covered mountains.

Except in the older,—i. e., long settled—districts the population is, as yet, small and much scattered. The farmers' houses are, for the most part miserable and without any idea of comfort, while as regards such barns and stables, I never saw one, except on the estate of some rich squatter, who, perhaps, owned land by the mile and had thousands of sheep and hundreds of cattle. I never saw one well ordered, comfortable farm with good dwelling houses, out-buildings and neat gates and fences, and trig farm-yards and fields as are so common in England, Scotland, America, or Canada. Good fields I did see, but no good barns or stables near them. The backyards and many fields where horses

and cattle were grazing I noticed everywhere almost, were receptacles for old rags, old shoes, empty tins and broken bottles. What lamentable want of taste and thrift! But the people are not poor, not a bit of it, many of them have thousands of pounds in the bank. I have never seen in any part of New South Wales anything like as fine, or as well-kept farms as I saw in Ontario, or even in the Sea Province of Canada. But they call everything *farming* here.

As regards scenery, no part of New South Wales can compare with places in Canada. Even little Cape Breton far surpasses this country in point of scenery, and you will see better scenery in Earlton, or on the East River of Picton, than on the Illawarra line, or Shoalhaven districts. New Zealand and Tasmania are remarkable for the grandness of Mountain ranges and varied scenery, and New South Wales in its Sydney Harbour surpasses, in that particular, any country I have ever seen.

All these Australasian Colonies have a magnificent future before them, however, as regards wealth, and even already they are very wealthy. There is certainly an enormous wealth in these colonies. In all the capitals and larger cities in these Australian and New Zealand colonies, magnificent public buildings are now being erected, and even many of the private houses are palatial. Six years ago there was not one fine hotel in all Sydney, now there are many splendid ones, and others are being built constantly.

There are many godly people in these fair colonies; but the great masses, rich and poor, seem to be living for two objects, and only two; namely, riches and pleasure; not religion and happiness, which latter is obtainable alone by the possession of the former. Perhaps one-third of the people out here observe the Sabbath, two thirds are practically heathen—that is civilized pagans. Boat excursions, pic-nics, parties, driving, visiting, novel reading, and hotel and small shop business are the occupations of every Sunday in Sydney by the great mass of the people, and that too by the so-called, educated, respectable people. Being a British Colony, law forbids general business, or Sydney would be as godless as Paris to-day. As it is, I don't think it is any more religious than San Francisco.

Our three daughters, Chrissie, Nellie, and Annie, are at Miss Ellis' school, about three miles out of Sydney. Gordon, our son, is in the Coenull Academy on the Blue Mountains, and about 100 miles West of Sydney, while Mrs. Robertson, our youngest child (Mabel) and I are boarding in Sydney. We kept house until about three weeks ago ever since we came up to Australia, but on giving