

first European to look on the waters of the South Seas, in 1513, when he formally "took possession of them" in name of his master the king of Spain. Seven years later, Magellan, the Portuguese navigator, passed through the entire expanse of waters and gave it the name of the Pacific Ocean. John Oxenham, an Englishman, followed forty years later. Dutch navigators gave their names to New Holland, New Zealand, and Tasmania, in 1616, and explored the Fiji Island in 1642. But our acquaintance with the South Seas dates from the voyages, in 1768, 1772, and 1776, of Captain Cook, who was the first to give a scientific and detailed account of those regions. The first British settlers were doubtless the crew of the ship "Bounty" who, having raised a mutiny against Captain Bligh, and sent him and some of his officers adrift in an open boat, landed upon Pitcairn Island and founded a colony, that is still in existence. (See page 216).

September, 1795, is an important date in the history of Missions. It was then that the London Missionary Society was formed for the propagation of the Gospel in heathen lands. At first it was undenominational, and supported by the Christian people of all the evangelical churches. But as the Church of England, the Methodist and the Baptist Churches had already established missionary societies of their own, this new association came eventually to be distinctively connected with the Independent or Congregational Church. During its whole history it has been managed with great wisdom, energy, and zeal, and has been eminently successful in carrying out the purposes for which it was instituted. It may be said to have originated in a missionary sermon, preached by Rev. David Bogue, of Gosport, in 1794. The recital of Cook's discoveries in the South Seas, and the letters and addresses of a few sanguine men, among whom were the Rev. Rowland Hill and Rev. Dr. Haweis, created at this time an extraordinary enthusiasm in regard to Foreign Missions. Dr. Haweis directed the attention of the Society to the South Seas as an eligible place to commence, and drew such a glowing account of this virgin field as induced them forthwith to embark in what subsequently proved to be the most successful enterprise of modern Christianity. Men and money were promptly furnished for the good cause. In August, 1796, the ship "Duff," Captain James Wilson, sailed from London, having on board twenty-nine missionary agents, who had volunteered their services. Only four of them were ordained ministers—Messrs. Jefferson, Eyrie, Lewis and Cover. The others were mechanics and artisans. In March, 1797, the "Duff"

reached Tahiti, the principal island of the Society group, where the adventurers met with a friendly reception from the natives. It was arranged that the four ministers and thirteen of the others should remain there, that ten should proceed to Tonga, the chief of the Friendly Islands, and two to the Marquesas group. All commenced their labours with the best intentions, but it soon appeared that most of them were unsuited for the work they had undertaken. They had neither the education, the judgment, nor moral courage equal to the occasion and the circumstances. Some proved unfaithful and abandoned the work. Others were discouraged: the rest struggled on as best they could, and the Missionary Society learned a valuable lesson.—that every man, and any man, will not do for a missionary. In the meantime, however, they had begun well. Pomare, the king of Tahiti had years before this entertained the crew of the "Bounty," and in expectation of their return had built a large house for them, and which was now placed at the disposal of the missionaries. The natives were delighted at the newcomers, were amazed at their handicraft, listened eagerly to what they had to say, and so inspired the missionaries with hope that the "Duff" returned to England with such an account of the beauty and fertility of the Islands, and of the reception the Gospel had met with, as filled the English mind with the utmost enthusiasm. The conquest of heathendom was regarded as within easy reach. Nothing could appear more promising. These savages were represented as "listening with silent awe, and ready to embrace the message as quickly as it could be communicated to them." That such inflated accounts were wide of the truth, the subsequent history of the mission proved.

Again the "Duff" sailed in December, 1798, for Tahiti, with five ordained ministers and twenty-five assistants. She had not proceeded very far on her voyage when she was captured by a French privateer, and her crew and passengers were made prisoners of war. During many months they endured incredible hardships. Most of them got back to England. Only a very few of the party ever reached their destination. And when they did, the first news they received was that it had fared badly with the first missionaries on Tahiti. No sooner had the "Duff" left the island than the natives turned against them, robbed them, threatened their lives. Three, indeed, of those who had settled on Tonga were killed, and, to end their hopes, war broke out in Tahiti and the missionaries, one after another, were compelled to flee for their lives. Meanwhile, before these evil tidings reached England, a third party, of twelve missionaries, sailed for Tahiti and landed in