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THE MIRACLES OF MISSIONS.—NO. XXI.

[EDITORIAL, A. T. P.]

THE BEGINNING OF MODERN WONDERS.

The Society Islands were so called by Cook in honor of the “Royal Society ;” and the largest, having a circuit of one hundred and forty miles and containing about six hundred square miles, is known as Tahiti. It consists of two rounded peninsulas joined by a narrow isthmus, and is crowned with a majestic peak called The Diadem. The name was a prophecy, for this island furnished the first conspicuous diadem of modern missionary labors.

It was first seen by an English Captain—Wallis—in 1767. The inhabitants were tall, stout, brown skinned, with dark eyes, and seemed unusually good-natured and playful ; but they were thieves, liars, and murderers.

When the knowledge of the Tahitians reached England, the directors of the London Missionary Society determined to send the Gospel to this island, and at last found thirty men who were willing to go, four of whom were ministers, the rest tradesmen ; and six of them were married. A ship called the *Duff* was bought, and pious Captain Wilson took charge of it.

This memorable missionary band left the Thames on August 10th, 1796. A purple flag waved in the wind, with three doves bearing olive branches as its device ; and as they set sail they sang the hymn, “ Jesus, at Thy command we launch into the deep.”

A seven months’ voyage brought them to the shores of Tahiti, and they were welcomed by about seventy-five canoes, whose natives clambered over the ship’s side, and in various ways expressed their joy, hoping for knives and axes and other useful implements. They had brought with them hogs and fruit for the purpose of barter ; but as it was the Sabbath day the missionaries tried to make them understand that they neither sold nor bought upon the Day of Rest. Most of the natives returned in their canoes, but about forty stayed on deck, and the missionaries had a service. While they prayed and sang the natives looked on in silence.

Two white men were already at Tahiti, one of whom had been shipwrecked, and the other left on shore a few years previous. Their names were Peter and Andrew, and they were clad like savages. Being able to speak some Tahitian, they served at first as interpreters between the mis-