

In an open court-yard, expos. ' to the cold wind by night and the fierce sun by day, and starved till they feared to put a finger near their mouth lest they should bite it off, hundreds of Christian captives thus lay, and rotted, and died in the gloomy years of war in which, in South India, the eighteenth century closed. To add to his sufferings, Wilson was seized with dysentery, known as the bloody flux, which was a scourge of the foreigner in the tropics till the discovery of the ipecacuanha treatment forty years ago. Death seemed at hand, and he would then have died as do the beasts ; but again God's longsuffering prevailed, tho he knew it not. Exchanging his miserable rice diet for a small and cheaper millet, he unconsciously effected a violent cure. When only thirty out of a hundred and fifty-four survived, after such a captivity of twenty-two months, Sir Eyre Coote inflicted the third defeat on Hyder Ali, the few captives were released, and Captain James Wilson found himself in Madras, penniless and impenitent.

He gladly shipped as a mate to Bencoolen and Java, where, when at Batavia, the putrid fever, which was so fatal to the Dutch, well-nigh carried him off. He never got rid of the effects of his awful captivity, but he persisted in his trading, became part owner and captain of the ship, and at last achieved the fortune for which he had been working so long. After more than one relapse, and all along ignorant of or indifferent to the Divine hand which held his soul in life and was gradually preparing him for the highest form of service to the Master, he resolved to retire to England. It is a curious coincidence that John Thomas was surgeon of the East Indiaman in which he sailed. That first of medical missionaries, who was about to draw William Carey away from the islands of the Pacific, on which the Northamptonshire shoemaker had set his heart, to Bengal, made James Wilson only more determined in his infidelity. Neither by the persuasiveness of his speech nor by the gentleness of his life did he, Dr. Thomas, lead to Christ the man who so closely resembled him in temper and in adventures. The two disputed about religion, and mere controversy seemed to drive James Wilson farther from Christ. Thomas remarked after one of these disputations that he had more hope of converting the heathen or Mohammedan lascars of the vessel than Captain Wilson. So it is that still, as in the days of our Lord and the twelve, some of His followers would call down fire from heaven. What a lesson to missionaries in all ages and lands, at home and abroad ! Wilson landed at Portsmouth, bought a house and garden at Horndean, in Hampshire, asked an unmarried niece to be his housekeeper, and soon became known in the country round as " a worthy gentleman who had retired to affluence and ease from the East India service. "

He was only thirty-six years of age, and was so well satisfied with himself that he had no conscience either for the teaching of Providence in his past eventful life and preservation, or for the warnings of Scripture, which he did not believe to be a revelation from God, or for the example