

New South Wales. Aborigines: Reports of the mission to the Aborigines at Lake Macquarie, and at Wellington Valley / L. E. Threlkeld ; William Watson, James Gunther. AUCH - RB/COLL Q305.89915 NEWS-3
Digitised and Threlkeld Report transcribed by Gionni Di Gravio March 2005

N E W S O U T H W A L E S .

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A B O R I G I N E S .

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R E P O R T S

Of the Mission to the Aborigines
at Lake Macquarie,

A N D

At Wellington Valley.

Ordered, by THE COUNCIL, to be printed.

ABORIGINES.

Report of the Mission to the Aborigines at Lake Macquarie, New South Wales.

TO THE HONORABLE,
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, &c. &c. &c.

EBENEZER, LAKE MACQUARIE, NEW SOUTH WALES.

December 30, 1837.

SIR,

The period having arrived in which I am directed by the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department annually to report progress, it would afford me greater pleasure could a more favorable statement be presented, consistently with truth, respecting the Aborigines than the one now submitted for the year 1837.

The disappearance of so many of the Blacks latterly in this District, induced me to address a letter to His Excellency the Governor stating the circumstance, and requesting the loan of the official returns of the Black Natives throughout the Colony, for the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, in order to ascertain whether the decrease was merely local or general, and then to consider if better measures could be devised, than those at present adopted, to make more effective my employment amongst the Aborigines. Two modes of proceeding presented themselves, namely; to remove to a more populous part of the Colony, as respects the Blacks; or, to alter my original plan of proceedings, on which I have hitherto acted, to suit the exigencies of the Mission. His Excellency was pleased to favour me with the Official Documents from which a tolerably correct general return of the Aborigines within the four Divisions of the Colony has been compiled, and is attached to this Report. It appears clearly from the Returns, that the decrease of the Black Population is not local and temporary, but, general and annual. The returns shew that the greatest portion of the Aborigines is found in this North and North-west District of the Colony, the majority being within my sphere of action, whilst their language differs not materially from the Dialect in which I have made some progress. Such being the case, it seemed preferable not to remove, but rather to suspend the translating for the present, and endeavour to render available to the Natives the works which are finished, and have been mentioned in last year's report.

It

It would be very gratifying to possess printed copies of the Four Gospels, and the Acts as originally contemplated, previous to any attempt at oral instruction being extensively made; but the unexpected great decrease of the Blacks, and the conviction that a further advance in the knowledge of their tongue will improve the translation, reconcile to the post-ponement of an application to "The British and Foreign Bible Society" for aid to print, until some future period, when it may be found necessary to furnish the objects of our attention with the inspired Epistles, which are "The Commandments of the Lord," and the sole rule of life for our conduct. Having therefore, deliberately considered the peculiar state of affairs, the only course that appears suitable to the pressing occasion is, for me "To do the work of an Evangelist" in visiting the neighbouring districts during the ensuing year, and endeavour to meet at stated periods, or, as occasion serves, the various Tribes at Port Stephen and its vicinities, the returns of which contain about 500 Blacks; Hunter's River and its Dependencies, having about 300; and other contiguous Tribes consisting of about 200 more, with whose dialect I am acquainted and orally teach them "The first Principles of the Oracles of God." The dialect of the Tribes to the Southward, being different to those of the Northward, the Southern district is not contemplated in the present itinerant arrangement. A circumstance occurred recently which induces me to hope that the attempt may not prove in vain in their behalf. At all events no possible loss of time or labour can arise, should disappointments ensue on the part of the Aborigines, but good may result, situated as we are amongst so many of our own countrymen who do not refuse to have dispensed unto them and their dependents, "The words of Life." An unforeseen event occasioned my visiting Maitland last month, and being requested to preach at Morpeth, I subsequently met at Hinton, the junction of the River Hunter and Paterson, a small Tribe of Blacks, who exhibited much surprise at being addressed in their own tongue. After a number of conjectures, they concluded that the speaker must be the person of whom M'Gill the Aborigine had spoken, and they appeared to be apprised of the nature of my pursuits. After some conversation they were requested to attend again at the same place on the next full Moon, to hear of "The Chief of Chiefs" whose dwelling is in Heaven." Whether the refusal to accede to their solicitation for money to drink may prevent the fulfilment of their promise to assemble, the event must determine. I trust also to be enabled to visit Port Stephen, and surrounding districts early in the next year, to make if possible similar arrangements with other tribes; could my Aborigine assistant be induced to act with propriety, and accompany me in such efforts, the result might be more pleasing, but, like Brainard's in America, my most useful Aborigine is the most intemperate in drink. Years of painfully close application have been sacrificed to the injury of my sight and health, in endeavouring to acquire a knowledge of the Native language, with a view ultimately

imately of pursuing the same course, which at this juncture it becomes necessary immediately to adopt, to save if possible the feeble remains of the Native Tribes. The numerous disappointments, and pecuniary losses to my family arising from the peculiar nature of my employment during the period necessary to be spent in qualifying for such engagements, have also severely exercised my mind: Even now, we can only endeavour "In patience to possess our souls," and hope almost against hope that "In due season we shall reap if we faint not." The present decreasing state of the Aborigines, whilst it urges promptness in our measures, presents a far from pleasing prospect for Missionary enterprise, their speedy annihilation being certain, unless it please God quickly to accompany with the influence of his Holy Spirit the means used of his own appointment to save them. But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

During this year one case only has arisen for Trial in the Supreme Court, the which I attended as interpreter, "Wombarty" an Aborigine, belonging to the Interior, near Port Macquarie, was charged with being concerned in the murder of four Europeans. The Court humanely appointed Counsel for the prisoner, and I visited the culprit in goal to ascertain his defence. The dialect spoken by him being different, I could only elicit through the means of my assistant Black, M'Gill, and he communicated partly through another Black belonging to Port Macquarie, who was under confinement at the time. It appeared from his disclosure that the murder was committed by a strange Tribe which he named, he looking on, in revenge, for two Blacks who were confined in a Lock up-house, charged with spearing and slaughtering cattle; that the Tribes were collecting for the purpose of further retaliation on the Whites, but, that he, only partook of the spoil. His Excellency the Governor was immediately apprised of the movements likely to take place in that District, that means might be adopted to secure the lives of the unprotected. We thus ascertained the committal of a dreadful murder by parties named, elicited the occasion of such a murder, and discovered designs for further atrocities; but, when the same means of interpreting were tendered in open Court, the Black could not be sworn with myself as assistant interpreter, and ultimately the prisoner was discharged. Thus that just and equitable principle which declares that "The Aborigines are subject to and under the protection of British Law," becomes a mere Legal Fiction, in consequence of means not being duly provided to meet the case, and afford Legal protection to its subjects in its own Courts; and thus the strictness of the administration of the Law becomes the height of injustice to all. It cannot be denied that our circumstances, as a Civilized People in connection with these Aboriginal Barbarians were never contemplated by the British Constitution, but, it remains to be ascertained, whether this
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Age of Intellect will provide a suitable remedy in some specific enactment, or, suffer year after year, the Aborigines to be frittered away from the Land by private vengeance for injuries publicly sustained ; which injuries the Executive at present cannot punish but by the horrors of Martial Law ! Surely it is a matter worthy the prompt attention of Legislators belonging to a professed Christian Nation, lest there be found “ Those who shed innocent blood,” and our “ Heavens become brass, and our Earth iron, and the rain of our land be made powder and dust,” through the voice of a Brother’s blood crying aloud for vengeance unto God. The very weakness of the Blacks, forms to noble minds, the strongest appeal to Justice, nor should Equity forget the price of the Land of their birth which fills the coffers of our Exchequer with Gold, exalts Britain amongst the nations, and establishes her Colonies in the destruction of the Native Inhabitants thereof, and thus presents a powerful claim to the tender sympathies of our Christian Charities ; whilst the certainty of Legal punishment to the guilty, would save the innocent, “ Be a terror to evil doers,” and ultimately prevent the increase of crime. Under present circumstances the guilty escape, and human justice can only announce the Law as it exists, which bars the door of Equity against the Blacks, and leaves them to public vengeance, or, to the private revenge of injured Europeans, which steady to its purpose, will surely, secretly, and speedily annihilate the Aborigines from the face of this land.

Generally speaking, however, there is a kindly feeling, a friendly disposition, manifested towards the Blacks by the Colonists, and many of the out-stations prove places of refuge in cases of danger, whilst other stations are dreaded on account of the alleged barbarity and violence inflicted on the Aborigines. A Black refused to conduct a European to one of such suspected stations, stating that he might be shot, as many of his countrymen had been, without any provocation on their parts. But aggressions of the most irritating nature have been committed by the Blacks in the Interior, in destroying cattle, and in the destruction of Human Life, and a severe retribution has been made. But, the mode of surrounding a herd of cattle, the slaughtering of the beasts, the preserving of the flesh by smoke, and the plaiting of whips from the hides, were the lessons of a convict stockman ; and under such tutors, so numerous scattered amongst the Tribes in the Interior, it is not marvellous that they become adept pupils in such arts. Upwards of eighty were shot in retaliation for this affair.

In accounting for the very great decrease in the Black Population, it unhappily occurs that the very means used by many to express their kindly feeling towards the Aborigines, tends to their destruction, namely—supplying their wants with ardent spirits, as the wages most acceptable for any little service which they are often required to perform. Thus a thirst is created for more ; they are then urged on to maddening intoxication,

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the besetting sin of this Colony, too often to the loss of Human Life. A determination, from the formation of this Mission, not to adopt the prevalent practice, may be assigned as a potent reason why the Missionary Establishment is least likely to become the favourite resort of the misguided Aborigines in their Pagan state—Divine authority forbidding to “Do evil, that good may come.” The mortifying circumstance of the frequent desertion of the few Aborigines left alive, from this station, must be borne with patience, in the exercise of just and conscientious principles. We are responsible for the means we employ—we are not for success. Another cause of decrease amongst the Tribes, may be traced to the swelling tide of Emigration which has universally swallowed up the petty streams of Barbarism, and the Aborigines have generally been either driven back to the Forests by force of arms, or, have become amalgamated with the overpowering people who thus “Multiply, Replenish, and Subdue the Earth.” In this Colony, local circumstances have occasioned the total destruction of the Blacks within its limits to be less rapid, but, not more ultimately certain than when martial force has been employed. The un-matrimonial state of the thousands of Male prisoners scattered throughout the country amidst females, though of another colour, leads them by force, fraud, or, bribery, to withdraw the Aboriginal women from their own proper mates, and disease and death are the usual consequences of such proceedings. The official return from one district gives only *two women* to twenty-eight men, two boys, but no Girls! The continued ill-treatment and frequent slaughter of the Black women can only be deplored, perhaps without remedy. One Black of the number sentenced to work in irons at Goat Island, had previously shot several females and clopped in pieces others with his tomahawk. On his return from confinement he joined his Tribe, sat with them around a fire in the Bush, seized a woman, was about to despatch her, when a Black started up and cleft his skull with a hatchet, whilst another was buried in his heart. Frequently have I noticed in the retributions which have taken place amongst the Aborigines the fulfilment of that Divine decree, which declares: “Your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every man’s Brother will I require the life of Man.” Of the surviving culprits it is pleasing, and not irrelative, to state, that no depredations have been committed by them on Europeans since their release from irons in Goat Island, for which release they are indebted to the humane consideration of His Excellency the Governor Sir Richard Bourke. The severity of their punishment, which necessity required, was such to them, that several died whilst under confinement on the Island.

The last, but not the least, cause to mention, as occasioning the rapid diminution of the Aborigines of this Territory, is far above the controul of Mortal Man, and not confined to the limits of the Colony. He who “Increaseth the nation,” or, “Destroys that
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there shall be no Inhabitant," has visited the Land; and the Measles, the Hooping cough, and the Influenza, have stretched the Black victims in hundreds on the earth, until, in some places, scarcely a Tribe can be found. Of one large Tribe in the Interior, four years since, there were 164 persons, there are now only three individuals alive! Many suffered from the ire of Human vengeance, for alleged acts of aggression, but, the most died by the act of God. At our former residence on the Lake, upwards of Sixty Blacks lie mouldering into dust, of whom many were destroyed by the effects of licentiousness, but, more by the epidemic of the time.

The Providence of God having hitherto sustained us amidst many discouragements, through Evil report and Good report, in humble, but firm, dependence on his opening a door of usefulness, and a small remnant of the Aborigines being yet preserved, to whom the glad tidings of good things may be reported, we can only hope, "That a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation," and that, "The Lord will hasten it in due season."

Having thus endeavoured faithfully to report the affairs of the Mission to the Aborigines, and stated the plan of operations for the ensuing year, which the present exigencies require in order to carry into effect the benevolent intentions of the British Government towards the Blacks; it is, with the highest assurance of respect, hoped, that the abject state of the decreasing Aborigines of the Colonies may not be forgotten in the considerations and gracious sympathies of Her Majesty the Queen, whose reign, may the Almighty God, prolong, bless, protect, and govern to the happiness of the nation, and her own Royal Person, to the Glory of God, and to the peace and good will of All.

I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Your most Obedient Humble Servant,

LANCELOT EDWARD THRELKELD.

An ABSTRACT from the Official General Returns of the Black Natives, taken at the Annual Distribution of the Government Donation of Blankets to each Tribe, within the four Divisions of the Colony, for the years 1835, 1836, 1837.

		Men, Women, and Children.
1. South and South-western District, from Sydney to Twofold Bay inclusive, 5 Returns	422
2. Western District, Bathurst, Wellington Valley, 1 Return	127
3. North and North-western District, from Sydney to Port Macquarie inclusive, 10 Returns	1220
4. Home District, Sydney and Windsor inclusive, 8 Returns	325
Sum-total of 24 Returns in 1835		Individuals 2094

	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Total
1835—Description of Persons, from 24 Returns	904	681	291	217	2094
1836—Ditto ditto 15 ditto	727	461	225	169	1528
1837—Ditto ditto 16 ditto	735	454	195	147	1531

PROPORTION OF SEXES, INCLUDING CHILDREN.

1835—Of 2094 Persons, there were	75 Females to	100 Males.
1836—Of 1528 ditto	66 ditto	100
1837—Of 1531 ditto	64 ditto	100

Decrease of Females in two years, 15 per cent. !

	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
* From 11 Returns of the most populous Districts, there were, in 1835	535	405	196	136	1272
From the same 11 Districts, in 1837	538	343	154	120	1155
Decrease in two years	62	42	16	117

NUMBER OF ADULT MALES, OF THE SUPPOSED AGES,
(the Women's are not returned.)

	10 years to 20	20 to 30	30 to 40	40 to 50	50 to 60	60 to 70	70 to 80
1835—Of 850 Adult Males, from 24 Returns, there were	99	318	219	100	63	21	—
1836—Of 632 ditto, 15 returns,	74	261	211	86	39	11	—
1837—Of 702 ditto, 16 returns,	129	253	193	65	49	10	3

* The Returns not being complete sets, only eleven were found to correspond for the years 1835 and 1837.

L. E. THRELKELD,

December 30, 1837.

Report

Report of the Mission to the Aborigines at Wellington Valley, for the Year
1837.

The Missionaries in presenting this their fifth Annual Report, are happy to state that their prospects of success amongst the Aboriginal Natives are gradually becoming brighter, and that the progress made by the Natives during the past year in the respective departments of Instruction—civilization, &c., afford abundant encouragement for perseverance.

On the Reverend James Gunther's arrival at Wellington Valley in August 1837, to assist in the Mission at that station, he was agreeably surprised to find that the Aboriginal Natives in connexion with the Mission, had made greater improvement, and afforded more encouragement for Missionary labour among them, than he had been led to expect from the opinion generally formed in the Colony, in reference to the state and prospects of the Wellington Valley Mission. The children, by being constantly in the house, and under the more immediate notice of the Missionaries, have made much more improvement, in reading, in the attainment of religious knowledge, &c., than others, who although under daily instruction, usually sleep at the Camp. Six Children have been added to the Mission family during the past year, given by their parents wild from the Bush, three of whom averaging about seven years of age, have in the course of nine months become able to read the Holy Scriptures, as well as the book of Common Prayer, and to find the Lessons, Psalms, Hymns, &c. The order and regularity with which they respond—their singing, and indeed their whole behaviour at Divine Service, presents a most pleasing and interesting spectacle, especially when contrasted with their early wild heathen habits. It is a circumstance as pleasing as it is remarkable, that all the children taught to read at the Mission House, are much attached to Books, consider it a severe punishment to be deprived of them, and esteem the present of a new one beyond almost any thing else. While they are learning the alphabet and to spell, they feel no interest, and the work of Instruction is tedious to both Teacher and Pupil; but when they have overcome these preliminary difficulties, and are able to read so as to understand, their attention becomes excited, they begin to feel a pleasure in the employment, and appear to be never wearied with it. The Aboriginal Natives are indeed capable of attaining to the knowledge of any thing in which they may be instructed. Several respectable gentlemen who have at various times visited the Mission, have expressed their gratification and surprise at what has already been effected
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amongst these heathen Children. During the year some of the Boys left for the purpose of being initiated into the circle of young men, not willingly, but compelled by their elderly friends; however all of them except two have returned, and those are daily expected. The number of Aboriginal Natives, that have during the year regularly and occasionally been taught to read, has been from thirty to fifty. Had the Missionaries been able to devote more of their time to them, more would have attended, and those who have been under instruction would have made greater proficiency in reading and in the attainment of Scriptural Knowledge.

There is perhaps amongst no Aboriginal Females a more general willingness to be instructed, than is found amongst these, and it is a most affecting circumstance, that on account of the inefficiency of the means forthcoming for the support of the Mission, a more eligible system, than the present one, could not hitherto be adopted for bringing them into a closer, and more intimate connexion with the female members of the Mission, by whose constant care and instruction, under the Divine blessing, there is no doubt they would become faithful wives, tender mothers, and useful members of society. It is however a lamentable fact that those who are under instruction, but sleep at the Camp, can scarcely go a short distance to fish, &c., without being drawn into evil by Europeans, who sometimes prevail on them to accompany them to their huts and to remain with them for the night; the following day the females have been so ashamed as on that account to absent themselves from the means and place of instruction.

From twenty to thirty Natives generally attend morning Family Worship in English, the camp being too remote for them to attend in the evening regularly, though several of them frequently do. They have also a daily service in their own language, in the Church, at which from twenty to thirty usually attend. On Sabbath services both in English, and in their own language, occasionally from fifty to sixty have attended. Many of them profess to believe the Scriptural truths in which they are instructed: acknowledge the wickedness of their hearts and lives, and express a desire to become better; but although there is reason to believe that the instruction given has produced in some a moral reformation, as yet no decided change has appeared in any of them that are now living.

There is an increasing attachment to the Missionaries evident in the Natives, and a greater willingness to leave their children at the Mission House than was formerly the case with them.

Perhaps no set of men in their attempts to attain the unwritten Languages of Aborigines

rigines have had difficulties to encounter greater than those experienced by the Missionaries at Wellington Valley. The broken English which the Natives have acquired; their frequent use of Barbarisms which have no radical signification; the rapidity with which they speak and above all their extreme unwillingness to teach their own language, renders the attainment of it long and tedious. But as no extensive good could be expected to result from instruction unless communicated to them through the medium of their own language, the Missionary has ever considered the attainment of it as one of his first and most important duties, and to which he has endeavoured to devote as much of his time and attention as his circumstances would allow. Accordingly there have been during the past year, including the revision of former attempts, translated into the Aboriginal Language, the first nine chapters of the Book of Genises: the whole of St. John's Gospel: the nine first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and most of the Liturgy of the Church of England. A portion of these translations is regularly read with the natives in Divine Service, and which they all profess to understand. But it is not to be supposed that a perfect knowledge of the idiom and construction of this very peculiar Language has been already acquired; to effect this very important point, the Missionaries must be free of all other engagements, and spend much of their time in the company of the Natives; because it is only by close observation and study that it can be attained.

In the month of November, the Rev. W. Watson took a journey of about two hundred miles amongst the Aboriginal Natives, but as the Rev. J. Gunther has not yet been a sufficient time at Wellington to have acquired a knowledge of the Language, and as there are generally so many Natives on the Mission, it is not deemed prudent at present to take any extensive journies in the Bush; although for the benefit of the wandering Natives, and the distant Tribes, they feel it to be very desirable that one of them should be always itinerating.

During the past year, many of the Natives have been usefully employed in various departments of labour, as Threshing, Tending Sheep, and Cattle, fetching wood and water with the Dray, Ploughing, Working in the Garden, &c. In the harvest season more than twenty were employed in Reaping, Leading, Stacking, &c.

There are generally on the Mission not fewer than fifty or sixty, frequently eighty, and occasionally upwards of a hundred Aboriginal Natives. A disposition to locate themselves, and to reside with the Missionaries, is becoming prevalent among them; several are engaged in building two substantial Huts for themselves, each containing a sleeping room, and a room for cooking and sitting in. One of the Huts measures twenty-seven feet by twelve; and the other twenty-five feet by twelve without the chimnies, which

which are erected outside the Buildings. The cutting the wood, splitting the slabs, and the whole erection of them, is done by themselves, except a little assistance in fixing the roof. Other Natives have promised and are expected to follow their example. Several are disposed to cultivate the ground for the purpose of sowing wheat. Hitherto the success of the Mission has been much retarded by the want of pious servants, and proper persons to teach the Natives, useful arts, direct and encourage them in their work, &c. The Missionaries having the sole management of secular affairs, as well as their Missionary duties, have not time to devote to leading the Natives forward in civilization as is required. But as arrangements are being made for relieving the Missionaries of the burden of secular matters, which has hitherto been so oppressive, they will be enabled to devote themselves entirely to the Natives, and then the friends and advocates of the Mission will see a prospect of success opening before them, which it is hoped will be realised to their gratification, in the moral and spiritual improvement of the Aboriginal Natives, who require only to be under proper direction and management, as well as instruction, to prove that they are, in their capabilities, but little, if at all inferior to the Aboriginal Natives of the Neighbouring Islands.

GENERAL REMARKS.

For upwards of two years, all the provisions required for the Missionary Establishment had to be purchased, which rendered the expenditure very high. It hence became evident that Wheat must be raised, and some live Stock kept on the Mission Land; but as all the Implements of Husbandry and other Articles requisite for the Establishment, had been purchased out of the annuity of £500, it was sometime before means could be spared to procure any live Stock likely to be of Service to the Mission. As the number of Natives desirous of locating with the Missionaries, is gradually increasing, the demand for Provisions, Clothing, &c., is becoming proportionably greater, and it is questionable whether the Sheep and Cattle belonging to the Mission will be found sufficient to answer the supply required. The daily issue of Meat to the Aborigines for the last four months has been one hundred pounds, besides Wheat and other articles.

Had the Missionaries to labour among the Aborigines, apart from the influence of such a European population, as is every where in the Interior planted among them, or had the Aboriginal Natives those resources which they possessed when they were the
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sole proprietors of the soil, the Mission would have few difficulties to encounter, and the annual expenditure would be comparatively trifling. But it is a well known fact, that, wherever Europeans have been located for any length of time the natural resources of the Aborigines for food are in a great measure cut off: hence these houseless wanderers are seldom found living in the Bush, except when on a fighting expedition, &c., but generally in the immediate neighbourhood of Europeans. The Dialect spoken by the Aborigines at Wellington Valley, is spoken by Natives over a Tract of Country not less than 200 miles by 150 miles. The Natives scattered over this wide range, constitute the spiritual charge of the Missionaries at Wellington Valley. Mingling with these Natives there are perhaps not fewer than two thousand Europeans. Every Overseer must know, and few Gentlemen, who either live on their Establishments in the Interior, or occasionally visit them so situated, cannot but know, how very generally the Europeans take the Native Females into their places of abode, and make them the partners of their vicious conduct. To what indeed but to such a system of iniquity, and to the, it is believed, frequent murders of half cast infants, is to be attributed the gradual diminution of the Aborigines, wherever Europeans have become located. To counteract this widely spreading evil and ruin to the Aborigines—to stem this swelling torrent of iniquity—only two Missionaries are employed, and a sum not exceeding four hundred and thirty pounds forthcoming to cover the whole annual expenditure of the Mission. Thus, notwithstanding the strictest economy is observed in the management of the secular affairs, the energies of the Missionaries are cramped, and the object of the Mission retarded. The following statement will show that the annuity is not lavished on the Labourers of the Mission.

Annual Salary to an Ordained Clergyman £40.

Ditto to his wife £20.

With a weekly ration as follows:—

	Wheat.	Beef.	Tea.	Sugar.	Soap.
To an Ordained Clergyman . . .	14 lbs.	8 lbs.	2 oz.	1 lb.	4 oz.
To Wife of ditto	10 lbs.	6 lbs.	2 oz.	1 lb.	4 oz.

This with the free carriage of any articles they may want from Sydney, constitute the whole of what is contributed to the support of the Missionaries at Wellington Valley.

The Aboriginal Females being so generally drawn, or compelled to live with immoral Europeans, by whom they are encouraged in sin and wickedness, and rendered more impervious to religious instruction when they hear it from the Missionary, it becomes highly desirable to afford an asylum and support, for so many of these wretched and injured Females, on the Mission, as may be willing to remain under instruction with the Missionaries, and to allow them the like comforts as they receive from Europeans while they

they are the victims of their licentious passions. By this means no small numbers of Aboriginal Females would be preserved from disease and premature death; would become reformed characters, and, under the Divine blessing, sincere Christians.

On the Missionary Establishment it has long been necessary for arrangements to be made, for accommodating all the Aboriginal Females that are under instruction, especially those who are left with the Missionaries, by their husbands when they go into the Bush. Hitherto because there was no accommodation at the Mission House, they have slept at the Native Camp, where they are nightly sought out by Europeans for illicit purposes; to prevent which the Missionary has frequently to remain near the Camp the most of the night, or at midnight to rise from his bed and proceed thither.

It must appear clearly to all, who seriously consider it, that there is nothing but Missionary effort to save these wretchedly corrupted Natives from becoming extinct; but Missionary effort if duly supported and properly directed is capable of doing this, and more; it will under the Divine blessing raise them to a level with civilized nations, and elevate them to the standard and enjoyment of true believers in Jesus Christ.

These general remarks, the Missionaries have thought it their duty to make for the information of the Christian Public of New South Wales, who seem to have been most seriously misled in their opinion as it regards the Wellington Valley Mission, both in reference to the efficiency of the means of supporting it, and as to the probability of its success.

WILLIAM WATSON, }
 JAMES GUNTHER, } Missionaries.

NEW SOUTH WALES

ABORIGINES

REPORTS

Of the Mission to the Aborigines
At Lake Macquarie,

AND

At Wellington Valley.

Ordered, by THE COUNCIL, to be printed.

ABORIGINES

Report of the Mission to the Aborigines at Lake Macquarie, New South Wales.

TO THE HONORABLE
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, &C. &C. &C.

EBENEZER, LAKE MACQUARIE, NEW SOUTH WALES.
December 30, 1837,

SIR,

The period having arrived in which I am directed by the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department annually to report progress, it would afford me greater pleasure could a more favorable statement be presented, consistently with truth, respecting the Aborigines than the one now submitted for the year 1837.

The disappearance of so many of the Blacks latterly in this District, induced me to address a letter to His Excellency the Governor stating the circumstance, and requesting the loan of the official returns of the Black Natives throughout the Colony, for the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, in order to ascertain whether the decrease was merely local or general, and then to consider if better measures could be devised, than those at present adopted, to make more effective my employment amongst the Aborigines. Two modes of proceeding presented themselves, namely; to remove to a more populous part of the Colony, as respects the Blacks ; or, to alter my original plan of proceedings, on which I have hitherto acted, to suit the exigencies of the Mission. His Excellency was pleased to favour me with the Official Documents from which a tolerably correct general return of the Aborigines within the four Divisions of the Colony has been compiled, and is attached to this Report. It appears clearly from the Returns, that the decrease of the Black Population is not local and temporary, but, general and annual. The returns shew that the greatest portion of the Aborigines is found in this North and North-west District of the Colony, the majority being within my sphere of action, whilst their language differs not materially from the Dialect in which I have made some progress. Such being the case, it seemed preferable not to remove, but rather to suspend the translating for the present, and endeavour to render available to the Natives the works which are finished, and have been mentioned in last year's report.

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It would be very gratifying to possess printed copies of the Four Gospels, and the Acts as originally contemplated, previous to any attempt at oral instruction being extensively made; but the unexpected decrease of the Blacks, and the conviction that a further advance in the knowledge of their tongue will improve the translation, reconcile to the post-ponement of an application to "The British and Foreign Bible Society" for aid to print, until some future period, when it may be found necessary to furnish the objects of our attention with the inspired Epistles, which are "The Commandments of the Lord," and the sole rule of life for our conduct. Having therefore, deliberately considered the peculiar state of affairs, the only course that appears suitable to the pressing occasion is, for me "To do the work of an Evangelist" in visiting the neighbouring districts during the ensuing year, and endeavour to meet at stated periods, or, as occasion serves, the various Tribes at Port Stephen and its vicinities, the returns of which contain about 500 Blacks; Hunter's River and its Dependencies, having about 300; and other contiguous Tribes consisting of about 200 more, with whose dialect I am acquainted and orally teach them "The first Principles of the Oracles of God." The dialect of the Tribes to the Southward, being different to those of the Northward, the Southern district is not contemplated in the present itinerant arrangement. A circumstance occurred recently which induces me to hope that the attempt may not prove vain in their behalf. At all events no possible loss of time or labour can arise, should disappointments ensue on the part of the Aborigines, but good may result, situated as we are amongst so many of our own countrymen who do not refuse to have dispensed unto them and their dependents, "The words of Life." An unforeseen event occasioned my visiting Maitland last month, and being requested to teach at Morpeth, I subsequently met at Hinton, the junction of the Hunter River and Paterson, a small Tribe of Blacks, who exhibited much surprise at being addressed in their own tongue. After a number of conjectures, they concluded that the speaker must be the person whom M'Gill the Aborigine had spoken, and they appeared to be apprised of the nature of my pursuits. After some conversation they were requested to attend again at the same place on the next full Moon, to hear of "The Chief of Chiefs" whose dwelling is in Heaven." Whether the refusal to accede to their solicitation for money to drink may prevent the fulfilment of their promise to assemble, the event must determine. I trust also to be enabled to visit Port Stephen, and surrounding districts early in the next year to make if possible similar arrangements with other tribes; could my Aboriginal assistant be induced to act with propriety, and accompany me in such efforts, the result might be more pleasing, but, like Brainard's in America, my most useful Aborigine is the most intemperate in drink. Years of painfully close application have been sacrificed to the injury of my sight and health, in endeavouring to acquire a knowledge of the Native language, with a view ultimately

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of pursuing the same course, which at this juncture it becomes necessary immediately to adopt, to save if possible the feeble remains of the Native Tribes. The numerous disappointments, and pecuniary losses to my family arising from the peculiar nature of my employment during the period necessary to be spent in qualifying for such engagements, have also severely exercised my mind: Even now, we can only endeavour "In patience to possess our souls," and hope almost against hope that "In due season we shall reap if we faint not." The present decreasing state of the Aborigines, whilst it urges promptness in our measures, presents a far from pleasing prospect for Missionary enterprise, their speedy annihilation being certain, unless it please God quickly to accompany with the influence of his Holy Spirit the means used of his own appointment to save them. But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

During this year one case on has arisen for Trial in the Supreme Court) the which I attended as interpreter, "Wombarty" an Aborigine, belonging to the Interior, near Port Macquarie, was charged with being concerned in the murder of four Europeans. The Court humanely appointed Counsel for the prisoner, and I visited the culprit in goal to ascertain his defence. The dialect spoken by him being different, I could only elicit through the means of my assistant Black, M'Gill, and he communicated partly through another Black belonging to Port Macquarie, who was under confinement at the time. It appeared from his disclosure that the murder was committed by a strange Tribe which he named, he looking on, in revenge, for two Blacks who were confined in a Lock up house, charged with spearing and slaughtering cattle; that the Tribes were collecting for the purpose of further retaliation on the Whites, but, that he, only partook of the spoil. His Excellency the Governor was immediately apprised of the movements likely to take place in that District, that means might he adopted to secure the lives of the unprotected. We thus ascertained the committal of a dreadful murder by parties named, elicited the occasion of such a murder, amid discovered designs for further atrocities; but, when time same means of interpreting were tendered in open Court, the Black could not be sworn with myself as assistant interpreter, and ultimately the prisoner was discharged. Thus that just and equitable principle which declares that "The Aborigines are subject to and under the protection of British Law," becomes a mere Legal Fiction, in consequence of means not being duly provided to meet the case, and afford Legal protection to its subjects in its own Courts; amid thus time strictness of the administration of the Law becomes the height of injustice to all. It cannot be denied that our circumstances, is a Civilized People in connection with these Aboriginal Barbarians were never contemplated by the British Constitution but, it remains to be ascertained, whether this

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Age of Intellect will provide a suitable remedy in some specific enactment, or, suffer year after year, the Aborigines to be frittered away from the Land by Private vengeance for injuries publicly sustained; which injuries the Executive at present cannot punish but by the horrors of Martial Law! Surely it is a matter worthy the prompt attention of Legislators belonging to a professed Christian Nation, lest there be found "Those who shed innocent blood," and our "Heavens become brass, and our Earth iron, and the rain of our land be made powder and dust," through the voice of a Brother's blood crying aloud for vengeance unto God. The very weakness of the Blacks, forms to noble minds, the strongest appeal to Justice, nor should Equity forget the price of the Land of their birth which fills the coffers of our Exchequer with Gold, exalts Britain amongst the nations, and establishes her Colonies in the destruction of the Native Inhabitants thereof, and thus presents a powerful claim to the tender sympathies of our Christian Charities; whilst the certainty of Legal punishment to the guilty, would save the innocent, "Be a terror to evil doers," and ultimately prevent the increase of crime. Under present circumstances the guilty escape, and human justice can only announce the Law as it exists, which bars the door of Equity against the Blacks, and leaves them to public vengeance, or, to the private revenge of injured Europeans, which steady to its purpose, will surely, secretly, and speedily annihilate the Aborigines from the face of this land.

Generally speaking, however, there is a kindly feeling, a friendly disposition, manifested towards the Blacks by the Colonists, and many of the out-stations prove places of refuge in cases of danger, whilst other stations are dreaded on account of the alleged barbarity and violence inflicted on the Aborigines. A Black refused to conduct a European to one of such suspected stations, stating that he might be shot, as many of his countrymen had been, without any provocation on their parts. But aggressions of the most irritating nature have been committed by the Blacks in the Interior, in destroying cattle, and in the destruction of Human Life, and a severe retribution has been made. But, the mode of surrounding a herd of cattle, the slaughtering of the beasts, the preserving of the flesh by smoke, and the plaiting of whips from the hides, were the lessons of a convict stockman; and under such tutors, so numerous scattered amongst the Tribes in the Interior, it is not marvellous that they become adept pupils in such arts. Upwards of eighty were shot in retaliation for this affair.

In accounting for the very great decrease in the Black Population, it unhappily occurs that the very means used by many to express their kindly feeling towards the Aborigines, tends to their destruction, namely supplying their wants with ardent spirits, as the wages most acceptable for any little service which they are often required to perform. Thus a thirst is created for more; they are then urged on to maddening intoxication,

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the besetting sin of this Colony, too often to the loss of Human Life. A determination, from the formation of this Mission, not to adopt the prevalent practice, may be assigned as a potent reason why the Missionary Establishment is least likely to become the favourite resort of the misguided Aborigines in their Pagan state - Divine authority forbidding to "Do evil, that good may come." The mortifying circumstance of the frequent desertion of the few Aborigines left alive, from this station, must be borne with patience, in the exercise of just and conscientious principles. We are not responsible for the means we employ - we are not for success. Another cause of decrease amongst the Tribes may be traced to the swelling tide of Emigration which has universally swallowed up the petty streams of Barbarism, and the Aborigines have generally been either driven back to the Forests by force of arms, or, have become amalgamated with the overpowering people who thus "Multiply, Replenish, and Subdue the Earth." In this Colony, local circumstances have occasioned the total destruction of the Blacks within its limits to be less rapid but, not more ultimately certain than when martial force has been employed. The un-matrimonial state of the thousands of Male prisoners scattered throughout the country amidst females, though of another colour, leads them by force, fraud, or, bribery, to withdraw the Aboriginal women from their own proper mates, and disease and death are the usual consequences of such proceedings. The official return from one district gives only *two women* to twenty-eight men, two boys, but no Girls! The continued ill-treatment and frequent slaughter of the Black women can only be deplored, perhaps without remedy. One Black of the number sentenced to work in irons at Goat Island, had previously shot several females and chopped in pieces others with his tomahawk. On his return from confinement he joined his Tribe, sat with them around a fire in the Bush, seized a woman, was about to despatch her, when a Black started up and cleft his skull with a hatchet, whilst another was buried in his heart. Frequently have I noticed in the retributions which have taken place amongst the Aborigines the fulfilment of that Divine decree which declares: "Your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every man's Brother will I require the life of Man." Of the surviving culprits it is pleasing, and not irrelative, to state, that no depredations have been committed by them on Europeans since their release from irons in Goat Island, for which release they are indebted to the humane consideration of His Excellency the Governor Sir Richard Bourke. The severity of their punishment, which necessity required, was such to them that several died whilst under confinement on the Island.

The last, but not the least, cause to mention, as occasioning the rapid diminution of the Aborigines of this Territory, is far above the controul of Mortal Man, and not confined to the limits of the Colony. He who "Increaseth the nation," or, "Destroys that

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there shall be no Inhabitant," has visited the Land; and the Measles, the Hooping cough, and the Influenza, have stretched the Black victims in hundreds on the earth, in some places, scarcely a Tribe can be found. Of one large Tribe in the Interior, four years since, there were 164 persons, there are now only three individuals alive! Many suffered from the ire of Human vengeance, for alleged acts of aggression, but, the most died by the act of God. At our former residence on the Lake, upwards of Sixty Blacks lie mouldering into dust, of whom many were destroyed by the effects of licentiousness, but, more by the epidemic of the time.

The Providence of God having hitherto sustained us amidst many discouragements, through Evil report and Good report, in humble, but firm, dependence on his opening a door of usefulness, and a small remnant of the Aborigines being yet preserved, to whom the glad tidings of good things may be reported, we can only hope, "That a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation," and that, "The Lord will hasten it in due season."

Having thus endeavoured faithfully to report the affairs of the Mission to the Aborigines, and stated the plan of operations for the ensuing year, which the present exigencies require in order to carry into effect the benevolent intentions of the British Government towards the Blacks; it is, with the highest assurance of respect, hoped, that the abject state of the decreasing Aborigines of the Colonies may not be forgotten in the considerations and gracious sympathies of Her Majesty the Queen, whose reign, may the Almighty God, prolong, bless, protect, and govern to the happiness of the nation, and her own Royal Person, to the Glory of God, and to the peace and good will of All

I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Your most Obedient Humble Servant,

LANCELOT EDWARD THRELKELD