

# Lancelot Edward Threlkeld.

## His Life and Work.

1788—1859.

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## PART I.

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### INTRODUCTION.

The name of the Reverend Lancelot Edward Threlkeld seems to be very little known to the present generation, although he was a well-known figure for over forty years of the first part of the nineteenth century—in missionary and other religious activities—at first in the South Sea Islands, and later in the Newcastle district and Sydney. During his long period of service, his efforts in the cause of religion were many and varied. Filling the roles, firstly, of a missionary to the natives of the Society Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and afterwards to the darker-skinned aborigines of his adopted country, New South Wales, and, secondly, as minister to two congregations in Sydney, he seems to have been generally respected in the colony. However, owing to certain circumstances and to various traits of character, he at times antagonized quite a number of prominent people. He is known in historical and scientific circles on account of his work among the Australian natives, and, especially in the Newcastle district, respecting his mastery of the native dialect. Thus it is with a view to reviving the memory of this rather remarkable character that this brief biography has been written.

A prominent official of the London Missionary Society in London, Mr David Chamberlain, the Official Librarian, writes:—

I hope you will be able to give some publicity to Threlkeld's work . . . because full justice has not been done to his dogged efforts in a hard task.

Mr James Jervis, A.S.T.C., a gentleman well versed in the early history of our country, when writing to the author, stated that Threlkeld deserves to be remembered. The material from which this paper has been compiled consists of contemporary records and the writings, published and otherwise, of the missionary himself.

#### ANCESTRY.

The name of Threlkeld figures in English history at a period prior to the Norman Conquest. The old family papers state that the first owner of the name, a remote ancestor of the subject of this memoir, was one of the retinue of Canute the Dane when he invaded England in 1017 A.D. A detailed account of the origins of the Threlkeld family, together with its genealogy up to and including the greater part of the eighteenth century (with a wide gap from Canute's times to those of James I.), appears in a very remarkable manuscript in the possession of connexions of Mr Threlkeld, viz., the Arndell family of the Hawkesbury district, who willingly made both this and other valuable family records available for research purposes.

The manuscript in question is somewhat in the form of a "commonplace book." It was written in a bold, legible hand by one James Threlkeld in 1748 and subsequent years, and contains many interesting items besides the "Genealogy." Regarding the original Threlkeld, the manuscript, or, as we shall call it, "The Genealogy," states:—

Sr. Thomas settled at a place called Longbrough and founded the Colledge at Kirkoswald, now the seat of the Fetherstones. . . . There is a small town with a Districh belonging to it, about four miles to the East of Keswick in Cumberland, called Threlkeld, which I have been in and set up at when last in that country. It has a Church in it, with a large old Yew Tree in the Church Yard. Many names are local, as Carlile, Penrith . . . &c. The name of Threlkeld and Family seems to be a local name from that Manor of Threlkeld. The word Threlkeld Signifies "Tirr-ceol" a woody Land, as the Town of Dunkeld in Scotland. . . .

Of the abovementioned ancient church I have received a photograph from the friendly Postmaster of Threlkeld, County Cumberland. Behind the church rises the moun-



THRELKELD CHURCH, NEAR KESWICK, CO. CUMBERLAND.

tain of Blencathara, or Saddleback (2847 feet), mentioned by the poet Wordsworth in "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle":—

And see beyond that hamlet small  
The ruined towers of Threlkeld Hall,  
Lurking in a double shade,  
By trees and lingering twilight made!  
There at Blencathara's rugged feet,  
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat  
To noble Clifford.

"The College" mentioned in the following is referred to in Burke's *Landed Gentry of the United Kingdom* as being the seat of the Fetherstonehaugh family (called "The Fetherstones" in the old manuscript). The first of the line was a Henry Fetherstonehaugh, originally of Southwall, near Dacre, County of Cumberland, in the vicinity of Penrith. He purchased "The College" in 1590.

Another photograph sent from England is of interest, as showing the rugged yet beautiful country in which this ancient family of Threlkeld dwelt. It shows Derwent-water, one of the celebrated Lakes of England, and is taken

from a spot not far from Keswick, an important town in the Lakes district, at the northern end of Derwentwater.

Resuming the history of the Threlkeld clan, James Threlkeld writes in his "Genealogy," quoting in full a letter from his "Couzin Thomas Threlkeld of Keyburgh" under date January 22, 1759, and quaintly remarks:—

But he adds before (he can) give any certain account he must jump down so low as the year 1613.

However, from other records we are able to bridge this wide gap of six hundred years. The first span is a tenuous one, and "jumps down so low" as the years of Edward I.'s reign (1216-1272). A Threlkeld, of Threlkeld of that period, is mentioned in Burke's *Armoury*. We take another jump of a couple of hundred years, into the middle of the fifteenth century, when England was torn through-out by the bloody Wars of the Roses. Historians tell of a Sir Lancelot Threlkeld of Threlfeld, who figured in a romantic episode, which was the subject of a poem by Wordsworth, quoted above. Shakespeare (Richard III., Act I., Scene iii.) and Drayton also refer to phases of the story. One version was copied out by the Rev L. E. Threlkeld, and the manuscript is included in the Threlkeld papers. It is endorsed "Curious Extract Respecting the Ancesters (*sic.*) of the Family of Threlkeld," and the extract is followed by the subjoined note by the missionary:

My father was informed that we have a claim on the Estates in Cumberland called Threlkeld. the Genealogy of the family & arms were sent him to Establish the title but was never pursued in a proper manner from some unknown cause.

(Signed) .. Lancelot Edward Threlkeld—1834—  
New South Wales, August.

Briefly, the story is this: Lord Clifford, who owned considerable estates in the North of England, played a prominent part in the Wars of the Roses. At the Battle of Sandal, in Yorkshire, he killed the Duke of York, cut the head off the corpse, crowned the grisly trophy with a paper coronet, and sent the whole to the Queen. Meeting the Duke's youngest son, the Earl of Rutland, after the battle, he murdered the child in cold blood. Lord Clifford was killed some time afterwards at the Battle of Towton, in 1460, and his widow, fearing the vengeance of the House

of York, fled with her two infant sons, the elder being only in his seventh year. She managed to get the younger away to the Low Countries, where he died, and hid herself with the elder boy at Londesborough, or Londesbury, in Western Yorkshire. Here the lad lived in the cottage of a herdsman, in very humble circumstances, passing as the son of a married servant. Even his own mother could not have access to him. He became known as "The Shepherd Lord," and was celebrated in song and story. The idea that he had died abroad gained currency, but when he was about twelve years old reports of his existence revived, and his hiding place became no longer safe. At this time, about 1465 A.D., Sir Lancelot Threlkeld of Threlkeld married the widow of Lord Clifford, and the lad was taken away into the fastnesses of the Cumberland mountains, although he was still obliged to live incognito. It was not until the final overthrow of the House of York, and the accession of the Earl of Richmond as Henry VII. to the throne of England in 1485, that the Lord Clifford, now thirty-two years of age, was restored to his rightful position at the Court. He afterwards achieved military distinction in the reign of Henry VIII. This story explains the reference in Wordsworth's poem above quoted: "Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat To noble Clifford." This Sir Lancelot's family became extinct in the male line in the reign of Edward IV. (1461-1483), but the name was continued through a younger branch of the family, that of Threlkeld of Melmerby. Sir Lancelot, however, provides a link with the "Genealogy," inasmuch as we learn that his eldest daughter Anne was married in Henry VII.'s time to Sir Hugh Lowther, of Lowther, in Westmoreland. The Lowthers were for centuries, and in fact still are, a very prominent family in the Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, having held high office in various reigns both at Court and locally. One of the Lords of the Manor was concerned in an event in the life of one of Threlkeld's ancestors, which is akin to a scene in a historical novel. The genealogist relates the story after having "jumped down as far as 1613":—

The first I need (or can) name for our Descent is Thomas Threlkeld son of Richard Born at Lowther in Westmoreland, had an hereditary tenement of Land, Lying just before the Hall Door,

which coveted and Envyed by the Lord who wrested it from him without a valuable consideration. He then got a beneficial lease of Land called Sow Barrons, which was also wrested from him by the same Lowther.

Apparently this Threlkeld was a "poor relation" of the gentlefolk!

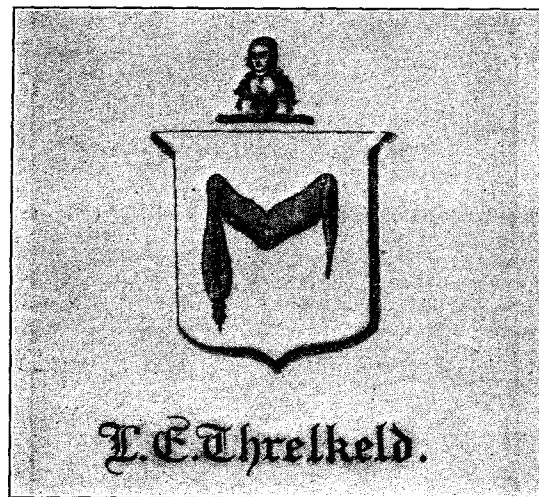
He then rented a farm called "Nunnery," in the Parish of Ainstable, County Cumberland, where he married, his wife bringing him a fortune. Apparently the high-handed action of the bold, bad baronet was a blessing in disguise—a happy ending such as is beloved by novelists. Thus Threlkeld was able to build him a mansion, at a place named Keybergh, where he had acquired property. He also made purchases of land at Slack, nearby. We were unable to locate these places on the maps at our disposal; the names may have belonged to properties since incorporated in neighbouring estates. Thomas Threlkeld had two sons—John, to whom he bequeathed his Keybergh property; and Thomas, who obtained that at Slack. Thus they were known as John of Keybergh (or C'aber) and Thomas of Slack, respectively.

The history of the Lowther family is bound up with that of the border city of Carlisle, County of Cumberland. The family seat was at Lowther, in Westmoreland, to the south of Carlisle. The name is an ancient one, and has had a prominent place in English history, members of the family having taken part in Cromwell's Revolution and that of 1688, when Sir John Lowther raised a force of retainers to assist in the landing of William of Orange, who was expected in the North. As William actually landed in the South of England, Lowther used his force to seize Carlisle for him. In later times the Lowthers became interested in national and civic politics, members of the family representing Carlisle in the House of Commons, and others being Mayors of Carlisle. At the elections in 1768 the County seat was contested "in a manner so regardless of expense that the elections were said to have cost £100,000." Sir James Lowther was created first Earl of Lonsdale in 1784.\* The Earls have

\**Memories of Old Carlisle* : Geo. Topping, Carlisle, Eng., 1922.

forty benefices in their disposition in the Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, among those in the former county being the living of the Parish Church at Threlkeld, mentioned above.†

The Rev L. E. Threlkeld sometimes used a seal on his documents purporting to be the family coat of arms. It has been described as "a coat of arms suitable to the use



THE THRELKELD COAT OF ARMS.

of a baronet of the realm." This was the coat of arms, belonging originally to an ancestor, Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, to be used by Threlkeld's father as evidence in support of his claim to the Threlkeld estates. (See p. 282.) In heraldic language the device is "argent a maunch gules"—a red sleeve with long hanging ends on a white background. The photograph reproduced herewith was taken from a copper plate in an official envelope from the College of Heralds obtained by a member of the family in the 1790's, marked "Herald Office, London, No. 752—plate of

†*Burke's Peerage*.

arms"; the name has since been added. An interesting reference to the Coat of Arms appears in the "Genealogy," quoting a letter dated January 22, 1759:—

About Sixteen years ago (1743) in digging a grave in the Colledge burying round In Kirkoswald Church a Seal was found engraved with the Threlkeld Arms.

A distinguished member of "our Truly Honest and Industrious Family" was one Dr Caleb Threlkeld, M.A. (Glasgow, circa, 1700), M.D. (Edinburgh, 1712). He had a large family, one of the sons, James, being the writer of the "Genealogy." Caleb Threlkeld was ordained on July 4, 1700, and was called to the charge of the congregation at Huddlescough, in the Parish of Kirkoswald, County of Cumberland. Here he ministered until 1712, as recorded by the *Congregational Magazine*, July, 1822:—

On the 9th. November, 1712, Mr. Threlkeld was induced to resign his charge of this people. So it is certified in a christian friendly manner in the register. The elders, deacons and others, "heartily recommending him in his labours to the grace of God, wherever Divine Providence shall cast him, praying, that through grace he may be further useful, as a burning and shining light."

Caleb Threlkeld thereupon removed to Dublin, where he settled down with his family in the dual capacity of clergyman and physician. Not long before his death he published a learned work entitled:—

*Synopsis Stirpium Hibernicum*—a Short Treatise of Native Plants especially as grow spontaneously in the vicinity of Dublin &c. &c.

The volume is a small one, of octavo size, in large print, having five words in a line and nineteen lines in a page. A copy may be found in the Sydney Public Library. The phraseology is rather quaint to modern ears. Dr Threlkeld writes of "Collyflowers," "Skirrets," "Apricocks," and such like. Referring to the "Apricocks," he states:—

... in so early a fruit the Moister the Soil the Pulp of it must be easier plumped up and so the fruit fuller and larger.

From a dictionary I found that "Skirret" is "a species of Water-parsnip, *Sium sisarum*, the tuberous root of which was formerly eaten as a relish."

The "Genealogy" whimsically records the death and burial of the Rev Dr Caleb Threlkeld:—

... Who Dyed in Dublin the 28th. Day of Aprill 1729, was buried In the Cabbage Garden belonging to St. Patrick's Church aged 53 years.

We are unable to trace, with any degree of accuracy, the continuity of the line from any of the branches of the Threlkeld family, up to the year of the birth of Lancelot Edward Threlkeld (1788), owing to the fact that the "Genealogy" concludes before that year. In the absence of definite data on the point, mere conjecture is futile. However, the foregoing brief perspective of the ancestry of the Rev L. E. Threlkeld will serve to give some idea of the race from which he was descended. The character of the average representative of the House of Threlkeld is quaintly but strikingly given in a statement by James Threlkeld in the "Genealogy":—

#### A DISSERTATION ON THE GENIUS AND TEMPER OF THE THRELKELDS.

The Genius or Disposition of this Family is truly Heroick there never was one of that Family who would pocket up a personal abuse Tho no virtue can be denied to them yet some of them are more degenerate than others; They can fight in their youth, & counsell in old age; Generally lovers of learning, & knowledge conversable; ... Steady in their Resolution, & true to their Principalls; Great lovers of some, but not lovers of many; Not vainly popular A Family that would be rather primus in Villa than Secundus in Roma: who would be rather Master of a Cottage than eringe to a great Man for a Pallace. Stout of Heart, Rather extenuating than magnifying their possessions; Good neighbours if you grant them their Rights, Men of a self-denied Humour, and will not put to their strenght unless urged thereunto, Much more might be said, but this sufficeeth. This Genius I have found punctually true & exactly corresponding to my dispositions by experience of a life through various scenes of Sixty years come next June 4th. 1768 Old Style.

Dublin, Novr. 30th., 1767.

The spelling of this and other extracts quoted from the "Genealogy" is that of the original manuscript.

Judging by his own writings and by the opinions we have of his character, vouchsafed by his contemporaries, the "Dissertation" could have been written concerning the subject of this paper. We find each and every charac-

teristic enumerated, coming to the surface in all his actions. His is evidently a case of atavism, and we see in him history repeating itself to some extent. We note in his character certain traits that are apparent in the brief glimpses of those ancestors with which we have been favoured—Caleb's love of learning; Thomas's doggedness and perseverance in the face of adversity and persecution; and so forth. For that reason we have given at some length an account of the ancient Threlkeld family, so that it may be realized that a man's actions are often decided by the "Genius and Temper" of his ancestors. It will be necessary, therefore, for readers to follow the narrative closely, so as to be able to judge of the character of our subject, and see if the above-quoted passage, written over twenty years before his birth, fits him.

#### BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

In the eighteenth century, several members of the Threlkeld family left their native mountains in the North of England. Some moved to London; one, Dr Caleb Threlkeld, to Ireland, as narrated above.

Lancelot Edward Threlkeld was born on October 20, 1788, in the Parish of St Mary Overs in the Borough of Southwark, in the South of London. He was the son of Samuel Joseph Threlkeld, who was born in 1759, and died in 1820. His mother died in 1831 at the age of seventy years. Thus his parents were respectively twenty-nine and twenty-seven years of age when Lancelot Edward was born. His grandfather was Joseph Thomas Threlkeld. Among the Threlkeld papers is an indenture of apprenticeship, couched in the quaint phraseology of the period, and dated April 11, 1774, binding Samuel Joseph Threlkeld, son of Joseph Threlkeld, to the trade of a brushmaker.

The parish Church of St Mary Overie is now Southwark Cathedral. The source of our information relating to the birthplace of L. E. Threlkeld has the name of the parish as "St Mary Overs," but it is evident that the title should be "St Marie Overie." Although the erstwhile parish church now has the dignity of a cathedral, known as St Saviour's, the old name still persists in St Mary Overy Docks, nearby. An interesting account

of the ancient church is given in a *Guide* published in 1885\*. Its history dates back into the very early years of the twelfth century.

The Borough of Southwark borders on the River Thames on its southern bank, and it was in this district that Lancelot Edward Threlkeld first saw the light of day. He seemed to be always in trouble, even when a boy. While very young, he was run over by a carriage and picked up nearly dead. At the age of seven years, "a female relative"—presumably an aunt—took charge of him with a view to giving him both secular and religious education. When fourteen years of age he was due to go for a trip with a relative to the West Indies, as a prelude to a sojourn in the East Indies. However, he had a bad fall after he had been a few days aboard, and returned home again. Not long afterwards, an aunt died and left him some property. He then contracted a severe fever, and his life was despaired of. After recovering from his illness he was apprenticed to a trade, but of the nature of this we are not aware. He was directed by his guardians to become apprenticed "to any trade which he might choose." It may have been his father's trade, that of brushmaking. In view of more than one reference later on to Threlkeld's knowledge of medicine, he may have been apprenticed to an apothecary. However, this may refer to the business which he conducted later at a loss. While serving under his indentures, he relates that on a Sunday, while swimming with a number of his fellow-apprentices, he was nearly drowned.

When about seventeen years of age, Threlkeld conceived a desire to go on the stage. He accordingly bought himself out of his apprenticeship, and signed on firstly with the Royal Circus, and then at the Royalty Theatre. He does not state what role he played while in the theatrical world. Leaving the theatre, he decided to go into business. Again he is not over-careful of details in his Ordination confession, from which we have culled the particulars of

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\* *A Guide to St Saviour's Church (St Marie Overie), Southwark. Compiled from Various Sources, by the Rev S. Benson, M.A., London, 1885.*

his early life.† We are not informed of the nature of the business; but whatever it was, he did not make a success of it, owing to lack of experience, according to his own testimony. But we suspect other contributory causes of his failure, in view of his manifest lack of business ability in the colony of New South Wales in later life. While in business in London he married a Martha Goss, of Southwark, the ceremony taking place in St George's Church in that locality; this was in 1808. He had the idea that perhaps Mrs Threlkeld would shape better at running the business, while he went on the stage again. Twice he tried to sign on at a theatre, but each time he was told that there were no vacancies.

Disappointed, he went down to Devonshire, and lived for a time at the village of Hatherleigh. There he was often in contact with the vicar, the Rev C. Glasscott, whose talk led his mind to spiritual matters. He began to reflect that perhaps he had displeased the Almighty, seeing that his affairs were not prospering. His conscience was awakened, and he began life anew. He at once took to preaching locally in company with the Rev G. Moase, and soon the spiritual needs of the heathen occupied his attention. He wished to go out into the mission fields, but was deterred by his wife. Mrs Threlkeld just then became ill, and thereupon Threlkeld thought that she was going to die, thus freeing him for missionary service. It would almost seem, by the wording of Threlkeld's Ordination statement,‡ that his religious fervour was at such a high pitch that he would have preferred his wife to die, thus releasing him for his mission work. However, the lady recovered, and Threlkeld ultimately brought her round to his way of thinking, so that in the end she consented to allow him to offer himself for missionary work, and, what was more, she agreed to go with him. His friends then interviewed the directors of the London Missionary Society on his behalf, and he was duly examined—in the country—and accepted. He went up to London, and subsequently

†Rev L. E. Threlkeld's Manuscript from which he read his answers at Ordination in London.

‡*Ibid.*

attended the Congregational Seminary at Gosport, in the South of England.

The Seminary, or as it is sometimes called, the Missionary College, was conducted by the Rev David Bogue, M.A., who has been described as "a theologian of no mean attainments." Mr Bogue was one of the founders of the great London Missionary Society; in fact, he was the prime mover in connexion with the origin of the Society.\*

The first definite step which led to the formation of The London Missionary Society was the writing of a letter by the Rev. David Bogue, M.A., of Gosport, which was printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* for September, 1794—(appealing to the Churches for support in founding a missionary society)—A few met privately to consider the appeal. At length on the memorable 4th. of November, 1794, the first concerted meeting with a view to this Society took place. It was a small but glowing and harmonious circle of ministers of various connections and denominations.

Threlkeld was ordained in Mr Leitchfield's Chapel in Kensington, in company with Mr William Ellis, who has been denominated as "The Missionary Historian,"† on November 8, 1815. He was originally accepted for missionary work in Africa, but his destination was ultimately changed and he was delegated to the South Sea Islands. Early in the new year—January 23, 1816—he sailed from Portsmouth with his colleague, the Rev William Ellis, in the ship *Atlas* (Captain Meriton), for the Island of Otaheite, or, as it is now called, Tahiti, in the Society Group. We learn from the *Missionary Register* of 1815 something of the circumstances surrounding the sending of these two brethren to the Islands:—

The change which has taken place in the South Sea Missions . . . induced the Directors to determine on sending additional labourers. . . . Messrs. Threlkeld and Ellis, with their wives, are nearly ready to embark: but it is judged expedient to detain them for a short time, till they can be joined by two others. The brethren . . . are acquainted with some useful arts, particularly with printing and gardening, together with some knowledge of medicine, and will be able, when they arrive at Otaheite, to print whatever may be wanted for the use of the Mission, as well as to promote other branches of civilisation.

\**Ten Decades*: The Australian Centenary Story of the London Missionary Society. Rev Joseph King, London, 1895. p. 11.

†*Ibid.* p. 54.

According to one authority, it appears that Messrs Threlkeld and Ellis left without the "two others."<sup>†</sup> The next pair to be sent out were the Revs J. M. Orsmond and C. Barff, who left in another Government ship, the *Surrey*, which sailed on July 14 following.<sup>§</sup> Threlkeld did not arrive at the scene of his future labours direct from London, as on the outward voyage more misfortune befell him. The *Atlas* called at Rio de Janeiro on March 20, 1816; while in that port Mrs Threlkeld became ill, and her husband was obliged to leave the ship in order to stay with his sick wife and their infant. Ellis continued his voyage and reached Sydney on July 2, 1816. While at Rio the child (the first-born) died, and Threlkeld has left it on record that he was subsequently written to by the Board of Directors in London as follows, regarding the death of the baby<sup>||</sup> :—

You should have gone on with the ship. The illness of the babe was a flimsy pretext for staying. I believe the child was not then at all likely to live and whether it died on shore or on board was a matter of very little moment compared with the souls of the men on account of which you were sent.

The death of the child was another addition to the missionary's burden of sorrow, and he naturally took to heart this obviously callous condemnation of his actions.

Threlkeld stayed at Rio until January, 1817. While there he was instrumental in calling together the Protestants of the city and formed them into a congregation, himself ministering to their spiritual needs. In the meantime, a third detachment of missionaries had set out from England on November 17, 1816, in the *Harriet*, bound for the South Seas. They were the Revs David Darling, R. Bourne, G. Platt and John Williams. They called at Rio, embarked Mr and Mrs Threlkeld, the latter having by this time recovered, and departed on January 22, 1817, arriving at Hobart Town on March 21 following. The party of missionaries remained at Hobart Town for five weeks.

<sup>†</sup>*Missionary Register*, 1816.

<sup>§</sup>*Ten Decades*, pp. 55, 56.

<sup>||</sup>L. E. Threlkeld, from Lake Macquarie, December 16, 1829, to the Rev W. Orme and W. A. Hankey, Esq. (per the Rev S. Marsden).

There "they found the country very destitute of religious knowledge, but preached where they had opportunity."\*

While in Hobart Town they obtained their first, although somewhat remote, contact with the mission fields. There they met young Thomas Hassall, son of Rowland Hassall, of Parramatta, who was on his way to England to be trained for the Anglican ministry. Rowland Hassall was one of the celebrated *Duff* missionaries. These were a band of thirty men who had volunteered for missionary duty in the South Sea Islands, being among the first to go out under the auspices of the newly-formed London Missionary Society. They embarked on August 10, 1796, in the barque *Duff* that had been purchased especially for the purpose, and arrived at Tahiti direct on March 4, 1797. Owing to disturbances among the natives, a number of the missionaries returned to Sydney and settled there. Though in certain quarters the propriety of this action in seemingly deserting their posts was questioned, the agent of the London Missionary Society, the Rev Joseph King, in his book, *Ten Decades* (a History of the century's activities of the London Missionary Society in the Pacific), which we have freely quoted in this paper, indicates that the advent of these missionaries in the colony of New South Wales at that time was most opportune, as they thereby reinforced the thin ranks of the few religious teachers and ministers of the colony.<sup>†</sup> Rowland Hassall was one of these men, and when he arrived in Sydney he was given employment by the Rev Samuel Marsden, who took a liking to Hassall's son Thomas. On Marsden's advice, and with his assistance, Thomas Hassall proceeded to England, where he was duly ordained in 1821. He then returned to New South Wales, becoming Assistant Chaplain at Parramatta, where he married one of Marsden's daughters. No doubt the newly arrived recruits to the mission field were able to glean some information from young Thomas Hassall concerning his father's experiences in the Islands where they were to make their future home, and which were to be the scene of their labours for many years to come.

\**Ten Decades*, pp. 56, 57.

<sup>†</sup>*Ibid*, p. 30.



The *Harriet* arrived in Sydney on May 12, 1817. Threlkeld missed his friend, the Rev William Ellis, who had already gone on to Tahiti. The former, with his fellow-passengers and the Rev C. Barff, whom they met in Sydney, formed a band of workers who busied themselves with the duties of their sacred calling until the time came when they must embark for their destination. They left Sydney in the *Active*, a vessel of one hundred tons owned by the Rev Samuel Marsden, and used by him both for trading and for the purposes of the mission in New Zealand which he had so successfully inaugurated and maintained under the aegis of the Church Missionary Society. Marsden now placed the vessel at the disposal of the London Missionary Society, on the condition that if the ship did not pay her way on any voyage both the missionary societies were to recoup him for the deficiency. Such were the fortunes of sea voyaging in those days that, although the *Active* made a smart crossing of the Tasman Sea in nine days, when within a short distance of their first port of call, the Bay of Islands, in the North Island of New Zealand, the little vessel was blown three hundred miles out to sea by a gale, and she did not anchor until another ten days were past. The missionaries went ashore at the mission station, where they stayed for nineteen days as the guests of their kind fellow-missionaries, who gave them valuable information concerning the work among the natives.

The *Active* having been made ready for sea, the party sailed for the Society Islands, arriving at the Island of Moorea on November 17, 1817. Here they found Ellis busy with his printing-press. This great worker wrote enthusiastically on December 4 of the same year to the effect that several thousands of school books had been run off the press, and that an edition of several thousand copies of a portion of the Scriptures was being contemplated; also that hundreds of natives had learned to read since the advent of printed matter on the Island.\*

The newly arrived missionaries, soon after landing, were involved in another yet very practical form of activity.

\**Ibid*, p. 62.

One of Threlkeld's fellow-passengers from Rio was the Rev John Williams, who later was killed by the natives on the Island of Erromanga, in the New Hebrides, on November 20, 1839. Williams was an expert, versatile tradesman, also a man of action, and still in his early twenties. He was a born leader, and when he arrived at the scene of his labours in the Islands he wasted no time in getting to work. Like the Apostle St Paul, he was not ashamed to work with his own hands. On the long voyage out from England in the *Harriet* he explored every nook and cranny of the ship, or, as one might say in nautical language, from stem to stern, and from truck to keelson. He conceived the idea that the knowledge of shipbuilding would be of use in the Islands, and so it proved. Ships were only sighted at rare intervals, an occasional man-o'-war or a vessel putting in for water being the only arrivals. One missionary reported as not having sighted a sail from his island for twenty months.†

When John Williams and his friends landed on Moorea they found, according to the Rev Joseph King, the hull of a vessel under construction on the slip "by a very slow evolution" assuming "a more or less elegant form."‡ According to another writer, the form must have been "less elegant," as only the bare ribs of the vessel were seen sticking up into the air. Construction had been held up due to lack of the necessary materials, occasioned presumably by the absence of regular communications, but also possibly by absence of initiative or by ignorance of the shipwright's trade. However, John Williams provided both materials and skill, and got to work, with the result that in less than a fortnight the ship, a seventy-ton schooner, was launched. She was named the *Haweis*, after the Rev T. Haweis, D.D., one of the founders of the London Missionary Society. The missionaries in the Islands were thus in a position to open new mission stations in the neighbouring islands, and to make inter-island visitations, without the necessity of waiting long periods for a ship to heave in sight. As a missionary ship, however, the

†Rev Charles Pitman from Rarotonga, October, 1830, to the Rev L. E. Threlkeld.

‡Quotation not traced.

*Haweis* had a short career. Being unable to earn her own working expenses, she was disposed of, and afterwards traded between Sydney and Hobart Town.

Mr and Mrs Threlkeld first settled on the island of Eimeo, or Moorea, a small island adjacent to Tahiti on its north-west side. While there he wrote a letter to a friend under date May 26, 1818, in which he reported signs of progress in the work of the mission. In July of the same year, a party of missionaries consisting of the Revs Davies, Ellis, Orsmond and Williams sailed in the *Haweis* for the Island of Huahine, the nearest to Tahiti and Moorea of a group extending north-westerly almost in a straight line. These men were soon afterwards followed by the Revs Nott, Barff and Threlkeld. Thither they went with all their livestock and other property. While living at Huahine they were sent a request by Tamatoa, king of the next island in the group, Raiatea, that some of their number settle on his island, as he had learned of the good work done by them at the other islands of the group.

#### RAIATEA.

John Williams decided to go, and to take with him Mrs Williams and another missionary. The choice was Threlkeld, who is said to have replied to the query of Williams as to whether he was willing to take the risk: "Certainly. It is the voice of God, and for what am I here but to go where God sends me?"\* If the account is true, this might seem to be a striving after the dramatic, where a quiet affirmative was sufficient. In any case, it is typical of the man.

The missionaries, with their wives and young families, were soon busy at their new location (September, 1818), attempting to ameliorate the living conditions of the natives, erecting a church, and a school and a home for themselves. The help of the natives was at first given grudgingly, but afterwards willingly, as they came to know the missionaries better, and at last to love them. Raiatea

\**Heroes of the Cross* (No. 4)—John Williams—Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London and Edinburgh.

was recognized in those islands as the native "Olympus of the Gods," the headquarters of the heathen religion of those parts.† John Williams set up a printing press and utilized what leisure time he possessed to translate the Gospel of St Luke, and when the translation was complete he and Threlkeld printed the required number of copies. They projected the introduction of Indian corn on the island; and

Mr. Threlkeld having found that castor oil is useful in most of the diseases of the natives, intended to manufacture it. . . . He also thinks opium may be raised.‡

Thus all the virtues previously referred to (see p. 291), which were the especial recommendations of one of these good brethren, were called into play, viz., "their skill in gardening and printing, together with some knowledge of medicine."§

Some time after he had arrived at Raiatea, Threlkeld addressed a letter to Mr and Mrs Rowland Hassall couched in the following pessimistic terms, and criticizing the work of the mission in the Islands¶:—

We are all confused in these Islands, and I fear things will go on worse and worse. . . . The religion of this people is all shew and I am grieved to my very soul to see their iniquity and that encouraged too by those who ought to check it . . . we are all by the Ears no unanimity nothing that ought to, exists among us here . . . as a body, for the sake of peace and usefulness we came to Raiatea (Mr. Williams) but am confident one good station is all that is wanted in this uncivilised place, and that should be either at Eimeo or Tahiti.

Here we have the first indication of that officiousness, self-opinionatedness and pessimism that tainted practically the whole of Threlkeld's missionary activities. The wail concerning the lack of unanimity and the confusion may be a piece of unconscious self-revelation. We pause and wonder if it was by accident or design that Threlkeld was the only missionary available to proceed to Raiatea! According to

†*Ten Decades*, p. 63.

‡*London Missionary Society Report*, 1820, p. 10.

§*Missionary Register*, 1815.

¶L. E. Threlkeld from Raiatea (undated) to Mr and Mrs R. Hassall.

an official of the London Missionary Society, George Bennet, to whom I shall refer again, who was in a position to judge, Threlkeld himself had something to do with the friction among the personnel of the Mission staff. A move was later made

to prevent his return to the S.S. Islands where he was not wanted, and thus to keep away from amongst them one who had ever been a lover of strife. . . .

In the woods of N. S. Wales, we hoped . . . being alone, he could have nobody to quarrel with. . . .\*

The Rev John Williams, with whom Threlkeld was closely associated for six years at Raiatea, makes very little mention of his assistant. When he does notice him, however, his remarks are all very appreciative. Thus:—

We, with our native teachers, took an affectionate leave of our people, and our beloved colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Threlkeld.

This was at Williams's departure for Sydney at the latter end of 1821.† Later on he refers to his "esteemed colleagues, Threlkeld and Bourne."‡ At another time he learns of "the painful intelligence of the death of Mrs. Threlkeld, the wife of my excellent coadjutor."§ It appears that Williams was often away from Raiatea, and possibly absence made the heart grow fonder.

Reverting to Threlkeld's letter to the Hassalls, he goes on to complain of irreligion in the island, but does not foreshadow any increasing determination to attempt to overcome it. His are the counsels of despair¶:—

I hope religion flourishes better in the Colony than here; there, there are some who follow on to know the Lord among the natives I know not one. What will be the end of these things God only

\*L. E. Threlkeld: *A Statement Chiefly Relating to the Formation and Abandonment of a Mission to the Aborigines of New South Wales, etc., etc.* Sydney R. Howe, Govt Printer, 1828. Copy in the Commonwealth Parliament Library, Canberra, annotated by George Bennet.

†*A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands.* By (Rev) John Williams. London, 1837. (Public Library, Sydney).

‡*Ibid.*, p. 58.

§*Ibid.*, p. 94.

¶L. E. Threlkeld from Raiatea (undated) to Mr and Mrs R. Hassall.

knows. The Publick's hopes have been raised beyond what they ought reasonably to expect, and I fear it will terminate in flat despair when they know the truth.

The subsequent history of the Tahiti Mission proves him to have been quite wrong.

Raiatea is the largest and most central of the North-western or Leeward division of the Society Islands, as a glance at a map will show. It is distant about one hundred miles from Tahiti. The Rev John Williams wrote a book on his missionary activities styled *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*. It was published in London in 1837 and consisted of no less than 590 pages, and was copiously illustrated with the author's own drawings. One of the sketches is of the missionaries' house on the island of Raiatea. The house contained three front rooms, with four in the rear; front veranda, French windows and Venetian blinds all complete. The general ensemble gave an aspect of extreme neatness. John Williams, as we have already discovered, was a very versatile man: "He was his own carpenter and mason, architect and surveyor; with the office of a shipbuilder as a side line"\*—to which formidable list we add the role of author and artist. He made an excellent concrete with powdered coral and sand, and also made whitewash out of the coral-lime. A flower and a vegetable garden and a fowl run made the missionaries' home complete. The king of the island, Tamatoa, was so impressed with the results of the missionaries' building operations, that he had a house made for himself—or should we say a palace?—on the same pattern.

John Williams stated in his book that the work at Raiatea was so well known at that time through other sources that he would pass over the Raiatea period. While Threlkeld complained about the work of the missions in the islands not being centralized, the energetic Williams after a time felt that all that could be done on Raiatea had been done, and he was eager to extend the work to other islands. Thus he was led to discover Rarotonga,

\**John Williams, the Shipbuilder.* Basil Matthews, Oxford University Press, 1915.

in the Hervey Group, hundreds of miles to the westward, where much of the work of his only too brief life was done. His book closes with four chapters devoted to observations concerning the native races.

Apparently the only exciting episode in the life of the missionaries on the island of Raiatea was a conspiracy by the natives to do away with Messrs Williams and Threlkeld and the King of the Island, Tamatoa. The dark deed was to be done while they were travelling to a neighbouring island in a native canoe, but the dusky plotters were foiled.† Another source of excitement, though of quite a different kind, was the arrival of an overseas ship. The lack of constant communication with the outside world was only one of the drawbacks of a missionary's life in the islands. Perhaps it is little wonder that sometimes in the circumstances tempers become somewhat hasty, and nerves rather frayed.

Threlkeld's wife died at the mission station on the island of Raiatea on March 7, 1824, at the early age of thirty-four or thirty-five years. The *Missionary Register* of October, 1825, gives an account of her death. There were five children by the marriage, the eldest of whom was buried at Rio. Thus the missionary was left in the Islands, together with a young family, but before the end of the same year he had found a new mother for them. In the meantime, however, two eminent visitors had arrived in the Society Islands, an occurrence which was to alter entirely the tenor of Threlkeld's life.

#### THE DEPUTATION.

In 1824 the London Missionary Society sent out as a deputation two gentlemen, the Rev Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, to report on the Society's numerous mission stations throughout the world. The Rev Joseph King states‡ that, in 1818, such was the growth of the Society, there were fifteen stations in South Africa, including Capetown; nine in India and Ceylon; four in the West Indies. There were also stations in Madagascar,

Mauritius, and the Greek Islands; those in the South Seas have already come under our notice. Thus the deputation were obliged to circumnavigate the globe in the course of their duties, and it is no wonder that their mission occupied eight years. The Rev Daniel Tyerman was a Congregational minister, and Bennet was a layman who undertook the task at great expense and inconvenience to himself, the directors having persuaded him to become one of the members of the deputation against his own personal inclination. He was obliged to realize on some of his property at a loss in order to raise the funds to cover his expenses, as he would not be chargeable to the Society.\*

The deputation first visited the Sandwich Islands, and from thence proceeded to Tahiti and the other islands of the Society group. Here they were hospitably entertained by the missionaries, and were able to obtain first-hand information as to the progress of the work and the conduct of the mission. No doubt they heard many tales also. It appears that Threlkeld harboured a grudge against Bennet, although he generally has commendation for Tyerman. Threlkeld's antipathy, which was reciprocated by Bennet, commenced some time later on in Sydney. Threlkeld—

... was angry with Mr. B. for not expressing so much confidence in him as Mr. Tyerman did.†

In a lengthy *Statement* which he published in 1828, and which we shall often quote in this paper, Threlkeld attacked the London board of directors of the London Missionary Society, the secretary and treasurer, the deputation (by which term he generally meant Bennet), and the Rev Samuel Marsden, the Society's local agent. He stated that a coolness occurred between the members of the deputation shortly after they left England, persisted right throughout their itinerary, and this sad state of affairs was patent to all with whom they came into contact. According to Threlkeld, they were both always at odds.

I do protest against the conduct of Mr. Bennet as a member of the Deputation, who could devote the whole of his time to visiting

†A *Narrative*, etc. John Williams, p. 127.

‡*Ten Decades*, p. 53.

\*L. E. Threlkeld's *Statement*—G. Bennet's annotation.

†*Statement*.

instead of paying that attention to the concerns of the Mission, which he was in duty bound to do, and for which the public was striving for his support. Mr. Tyerman would have entered fully in more instances but the unhandsome conduct of Mr. George Bennet frustrated every attempt.‡

The foregoing quotation is a sample of the paltry, and often untrue, accusations which occur throughout the *Statement*.

Elsewhere in the *Statement*, Threlkeld indulges in a cheap sneer at the deputation's acceptance of the unstinted hospitality of the missionaries while sojourning in the Islands; thus he ignores the injunction not to let his left hand know what his right hand did.

The year in which the Deputation was expected . . . every exertion was made after due discussion to use the hospitality without grudging which could not have otherwise been shewn towards them, had we depended on the stipend or presents received from the Society. This prevented the Deputation feeling those privations which we had all—the elder Missionaries most especially—suffered—"Love conquered policy."\*

The missionaries' stipend was said to be £30 per annum, with £20 for the wife and £5 each for the children. Following is Bennet's rejoinder:—

A very large and handsome present which the Deputn. took out with them, put it comfortably in the power of the Missionaries to exercise hospitalities towards the Depn. for which the Dep. was very thankful, and did not fail not only to acknowledge it, but in every case besides many other presents in goods, they presented to every Missionary family in money so much that would more than cover the expenses which had been incurred on their account.

Thus we have one man's word against the other. However, the point is this: Threlkeld was at Raiatea throughout the stay of the deputation there, and must have received the presents in cash and kind mentioned by Bennet! Therefore, to say the least, Threlkeld's criticism is quite uncalled for, and small-minded in the extreme. Bennet more than once records that "one of the deputation," presumably himself, was opposed to certain projects upon which Threlkeld had set his heart, thus

‡*Ibid.*

\**Statement*.

†*Ibid* (annotation).

rousing Threlkeld's ire, which, however, apparently was not vented until four years afterwards. In this and such like cases he actually did "pocket up a personal abuse"† (see the *Dissertation*, p. 287), but, changing the metaphor, he awaited his opportunity and then blazed away with both barrels.

"Our esteemed friends, Messrs. Tyerman and Bennet"§—thus John Williams—duly took their leave of the Island of Raiatea, Threlkeld departing with them. He gives as the reason for his leaving, the death of his wife; stating that he intended visiting England, but he does not mention the object of his visit. The party proceeded by way of the various groups of islands on which there were mission stations, calling also at New Zealand. They arrived in Sydney on August 19, 1824, and remained until June 9, 1825. The Rev Joseph King rather naively remarks||:—

Their stay in Sydney was much longer than they intended, but the time was well employed, and was followed by important results.

This statement has an explanation not contemplated by the worthy Mr King. The time was well employed by one of the deputation, so much so that the other member of the deputation had quite a lot of time on his hands. This was personal work in which only the former member could be involved; whether it was followed by important results we are not informed. Let Bennet tell the story, which contains a touch of comedy\* :—

The writer of this paragraph [see p. 301] knows that Mr. B. only visited where Mr. Tyerman did. While visiting at the Revd. Mr. Marsden's, the Society was saved so much expense, nor did those visits at all interfere with any of the Deputation's duties, but otherwise promoted them—tis true that Mr. B. spent more time at the Parsonage than Mr. Tyerman, where they were both freely and hospitably entertained by the worthy family there whenever they chose to go for as long a period as they could conveniently stay—Two reasons prevented Mr. Tyerman's visiting Mr. Marsden's more frequently, the first his being of the Established Church, and second and principally because for many months he was by almost daily assiduity endeavouring to win the favour of a very respectable lady

‡James Threlkeld's MS. 1748.

§*A Narrative, etc.*—John Williams, p. 103.

||*Ten Decades*, p. 68.

\**Statement*—(annotation).

in Sydney. This latter reason, however, was not known to Mr. B., until from parties concerned he learned the facts! This also was a reason as it proved why they did not leave the Colony sooner, nor did in the meantime visit Van Diemen's Land.

The quotation from the Rev Joseph King's book refers to an entirely different matter, although it had important results for one of the party from the South Seas, who was *not* a member of the deputation. He was engaged in similar pursuits to those of Tyerman. Threlkeld, who was presumably awaiting suitable transport to England, spent his time courting an estimable lady, Miss Sarah Arndell, a daughter of Dr Thomas Arndell, of Caddie (now Cattai) Creek, near Windsor, New South Wales. Arndell was a surgeon in the First Fleet, and obtained a grant of land at Pennant Hills. He also acquired land by grant in 1804 in the Hawkesbury district. He has been tersely described as "physician, magistrate, wool and wheat grower." The remains of a windmill are still standing on the Arndell estate, just off the Windsor-Wiseman's Ferry Road. Here Dr Arndell had the wheat ground which was grown on his property, and the neighbours also ground their grain at the mill. It was built of stone, and is situated just across the river from the historic old Ebenezer Presbyterian Church. When at Cattai, Threlkeld used to preach at the church, and it is said that the name Ebenezer was given to his property at Lake Macquarie on that account. Threlkeld also owned property at Cattai adjacent to that of the Arndells.

Threlkeld's suit was successful, and exactly two months and a day after his arrival in the colony from the Islands, that is, on October 20, 1824—his birthday—he was married to Miss Arndell at Parramatta. A day or two before that event he was approached by the deputation and was asked if he would undertake a new venture, that of evangelizing the Australian aborigines, a proposition which he readily accepted. This more or less casual interview was destined to bring much worry and trouble upon the devoted head of the missionary. The whole history of the establishment and the subsequent abandonment of this aboriginal mission has been set out in Threlkeld's abovementioned *Statement*. It would there-

fore not be out of place at this present juncture to introduce more fully the said *Statement*.

This remarkable effusion was written and issued by Threlkeld in 1828. It consisted of over seventy pages of closely printed quarto, and was printed in Sydney by the Government Printer, R. Howe. A copy of this book is in the Commonwealth Parliament Library at Canberra. The margins of the pages are covered with annotations written in what is said to be the handwriting of George Bennet, one of the members of the deputation. These notes contain a constant protest against the gross mis-statements and inaccuracies in the *Statement*, some of which would seem to be little short of libellous. The *Statement* comprises mostly the correspondence, *in extenso*, between the missionary and the London Missionary Society through its officials in London, and its agent in Sydney, the Rev Samuel Marsden. The letters and other documents are interspersed with explanatory statements on the text by Threlkeld, together with endless criticisms of the direction of the Society and recriminations against the officials. The tone is generally querulous and petulant, sometimes officious and arrogant. In the letters that he reproduces, Threlkeld at times became abusive and personal.

The *Statement*, according to the author, was not for public circulation, but was intended to be distributed among the Society's agents throughout the world, and also among the Committee of Direction in London.\* His version of the reception that the *Statement* received among his fellow-missionaries is contained in a letter which he had the effrontery to write to the directors of the London Missionary Society when his troubles had been more or less settled, under date October 26, 1829:—

It affords me much pleasure to receive at this time communications from many Missionaries in the different parts of the Globe in reply to my statement all highly expressive of their abhorrence of the unlimited control you have usurped over missionaries and their families to dispose of as you see fit, or to turn them adrift in the wide world with some stigma on their character if they refuse to acknowledge this degrading usurpation.†

\**Ibid.* Author's "fore-note."

†L. E. Threlkeld, from Lake Macquarie, N.S.W., to W. A. Hankey and Rev W. Orme, October 26, 1829.

This, from an insignificant member of the rank and file of missionaries, to a group of keen influential men controlling a world-wide organization! His attitude was doubtless stiffened by a distance of twelve thousand miles!

The object of publishing the *Statement* was that the missionary might vindicate himself regarding the termination of the mission, the circumstances which led up to this event having gained much publicity in New South Wales, which was then a small community. Threlkeld also considered that his credit had been damaged, and, needless to say, his personal pride had been deeply hurt. The whole pamphlet, to our minds, is a vivid revelation of the character of the missionary, and a remarkable commentary on old James Threlkeld's "Dissertation on the Genius and Temper of the Threlkelds." In view of the fact that all differences had been practically settled at the time of the publication of the *Statement*, it might have been better to have allowed matters to rest there. However, Threlkeld was a man who must have his say; he was "a man with a grievance," real or fancied, and the *Statement* is actually the outpouring of at least three years' pent-up feeling, although at times he expressed his sentiments concerning men and matters very forcibly in his voluminous correspondence.

#### ORIGIN OF THE MISSION TO THE ABORIGINES AT LAKE MACQUARIE.

##### ABORIGINAL MISSIONS IN GENERAL.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, certain missionaries who had given up the work in the Islands turned their attention to the possibilities of evangelizing the Australian aborigines. The Revs Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden both carried out experiments with individual natives, on educational lines, in their households. In 1824 the Rev Robert Cartwright had seven native boys for instruction, but till then no concerted action in the shape of a mission had been taken. The first organized missionary effort was made by the Wesleyans, who in 1821 commenced work among the aborigines, the Rev William Walker having been sent out from England upon representations made by the Rev Samuel Leigh. In

spite of his earnest efforts, in 1824 all Walker could show was a school consisting of seven little girls.\* John Harper for a time conducted the mission at Wellington Valley, with the financial assistance of Sir Thomas Brisbane, the then Governor of the colony, but this mission was abandoned in 1831. Another mission was commenced at that centre in 1832, and it continued for some years under the care of the Revs J. C. S. Handt and William Watson.

##### NEGOTIATIONS FOR A MISSION.

The deputation intended, while in Sydney, to find out all they could about the state of the native population of New Holland.

All attempts to civilize the savage occupants have been fruitless. Want of success in such a case is no argument to prove that the poor people are intractable.†

These sentiments made them direct their thoughts to the possibility of a Mission to the blacks. The idea generally appealed to the Rev Samuel Marsden, the agent in Australia of the London Missionary Society, although later correspondence indicated that at the time he had his doubts as to the success of such a venture. The deputation were informed that Sir Thomas Brisbane was keenly interested in the welfare of the aborigines: in fact, they had opportunities to discuss the matter while enjoying the Governor's hospitality at Parramatta. They canvassed the opinions of a number of influential citizens of Sydney as to the possibilities of commencing a mission. Accordingly, when they were invited by the Governor to state their views as to the best thing to do for the welfare of their dusky fellow-beings, they expressed the opinion that the blacks should be taught by missionaries set aside especially for the purpose of learning the language, and to instruct them in spiritual matters.‡ They were led to this conclusion doubtless after they had seen the successful results of a similar policy in the Islands.

\**Ten Decades*, pp. 69, 70.

†*Journal of Tyerman and Bennet*, 1824. Quoted in *Ten Decades*, p. 68.

‡*Journal of Tyerman and Bennet*, 19/10/1824, *et seq.*

Sir Thomas Brisbane concurred, and after certain formal negotiations had been completed the project was sanctioned. The site of the first mission station was to be at Moreton Bay, and, the location of the mission having been decided upon, the next thing to do was to select a suitable person to take charge of the venture. The *Journal* of the deputation states:—

19/10/1824. At a special interview with the Governor this day, His Excellency was officially formed that, after much deliberation, we were disposed to recommend that Mr. Threlkeld (who had accompanied us from the South Sea Islands, intending to return to England from thence) to remain here as a missionary to the aborigines to which he also had freely consented.

Thus we find Threlkeld committed to a fresh project, which he took up with alacrity. He himself stated that, a day or two before his second marriage on October 21, 1824, Tyerman and Bennet addressed him on the subject of a mission to the aborigines, to know if he would engage to conduct one at Moreton Bay, to which he consented, and provided accordingly.\* The reasons they tendered to the directors of the Society for choosing Threlkeld are given in their report dated Sydney, November 12, 1824:—

It occurred to us that if Mr. Threlkeld would direct his views to the aborigines of the country, he would be a most suitable missionary both from his talents and his experience in his missionary work. We proposed it to him, and it met with his decided approbation, and he expressed his entire willingness to go anywhere that we might wish so that he might be useful in the best of causes.†

The deputation had another motive for Threlkeld's appointment (see p. 298), that of keeping Threlkeld away from the Islands for the sake of peace and harmony. If Bennet is to be believed, then the action of the deputation was quite justified, as ill-feeling and disharmony were rooted out from among the missionaries:—

... mutual good understanding was perfectly restored as all their correspondence shews; and the Depn. rejoiced that since Mr. T. had left them there was so much less likelihood of a return of Misunderstanding.‡

\*L. E. Threlkeld, *Statement*.

†Quoted in *Ten Decades*, p. 73.

‡*Statement* (annotation).

So far, so good, as regards the South Seas Mission, but Bennet later on regretted the action of the deputation in appointing Threlkeld to the mission to the aborigines. He writes: "The author" [of the *Statement*] "was on the spot, and so was unhappily selected."§

Owing to certain circumstances, the project of a mission at Moreton Bay was abandoned. This change put Threlkeld to considerable expense, as he had purchased extra quantities of stores on account of the distance from Sydney, the cost of which, of course, was charged up to the Society. A new site was required, and various experienced persons were consulted to that end. The Government Botanist, Allan Cunningham, who had made several journeys of exploration into the backblocks of the colony, was approached. Both Wellington Valley and Bathurst were suggested,\* but were rejected as unsuitable. The Newcastle district was proposed, and the deputation and Threlkeld proceeded thither. They stayed for some time, and made extensive enquiries. They availed themselves of the advice of several notable residents of Newcastle, or, as it was then called, King's Town, after Governor King. Among these were Dr George Brooks; Captain Allman, the Commandant; the Rev G. Middleton, the Chaplain of the settlement; and one of the Government surveyors, who was working in the district.

The outcome of these investigations was a suggestion to place the mission station at a place known as Reid's Mistake, on the shores of Lake Macquarie.† One reason given for this choice was that numerous blacks congregated there—this requisite, of course, being the all-important one for such a venture. Another reason was that the activities of a mission there would not encroach upon the preserves of any other mission then established. Strange to say, this site was decided upon without any prior inspection. The reason for this was stated to be the absence of any form of conveyance! Apparently "shanks's pony" was *infra dig!* We consider that by using a little initiative the site could have been reached, as there were already

§*Ibid.*

\*Journal, Tyerman and Bennet, 31/12/1824.

†*Ibid.*, 20/1/1825.



one or two settlers on the shores of the Lake. Besides, several pleasure excursions at about that time, and even earlier, are on record. Captain Wallis and Major Morisset, successive Commandants at Newcastle prior to this period, visited the Lake, as also did John Bingle, who has left us a delightful word-picture of Lake Macquarie in its primitive uncivilized state. This would be just prior to the period in which the deputation were seeking a site for the Mission (*viz.*, 1821):—

Our Parson, the Rev. G. A. Middleton, (who was an especial favourite with the blacks) started with myself with the whole tribe of upwards of 100 on a walking trip to Lake Macquarie. Our necessary supplies, blankets etc. they carried on their heads. On arrival I was enchanted with its beautiful scenery, and can never forget it. The whole surrounding country and Lake were serene and still; solitude reigned, no tree disturbed, and no trace of the white man's civilization, and all in its natural wild state. We enjoyed all the wild sports of Australian bush life, in its primitive state, as the aborigines of that day (before they were contaminated with our vices) were accustomed to enjoy them. Shooting, fishing, kangarooing, & hunting—our game was ample for us all. They supplied us also with the finest mud oysters, for which the waters of the Lake are noted. These we scalloped on our bush fires, and we spent 5 or 6 days of as much enjoyment as I ever had in any part of the world.\*

In any case, the entrance to the Lake was only a few hours' sail from King's Town, and, according to Henry Dangar,† the visitors missed a real treat:—

The sail in a boat sufficiently large is exceedingly pleasant to . . . King's Town, being from the entrance of the Lake fifteen miles. . . .

Perhaps a "boat sufficiently large" was not available.

Reid's Mistake was ultimately decided upon, and on January 20, 1825, the deputation addressed the Governor, stating that they had chosen that site for the mission, and Threlkeld as the missionary. They also requested that an area of land be set apart for mission purposes, and that Threlkeld or any other missionary be permitted to reside

\**Past and Present Records of Newcastle, N.S.W.*, John Bingle, Newcastle, 1873.

†*Index and Directory*. Henry Dangar. (For full title see Appendix on page 330.)

there, learn the language, and then teach the natives.‡ A personal letter from Sir Thomas Brisbane in reply, dated January 26, 1825, granted their requests, and suggested that they name the area required, whereupon the said land would be surveyed and reserved for the purposes of the Mission. The "area required" was a modest ten thousand acres, and was the subject of prolonged negotiations with the Government. Contrary to the general belief, the promised grant was never confirmed, and the land never vested in the London Missionary Society or its agents, as before the final steps to vest the land were taken the mission had been terminated by the London Missionary Society. As Threlkeld points out in his *Statement*, the land was not to be given to the Society, but was to be held in trust for the natives. He quotes the following memorandum from the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Alexander McLeay, to Governor Darling (in December, 1826):—

Ten thousand acres of land are granted by the King in trust for the aborigines with permission for the London Missionary Society to place L. E. Threlkeld or any other Missionary, to instruct the Blacks agreeably to the printed instructions accompanying this Memorandum.

Trustees: Robert Campbell Esq., Rev. S. Marsden, J. Oxley Esq., Wm. Weymss Esq., William Lithgow Esq., Alexander Berry Esq. One vacant:—Edward Riley Esq., deceased.

Threlkeld also mentions a Deed of Trust, and certain conditions therein which are referred to in the memorandum of the Colonial Secretary.\*

In 1828 Henry Dangar, "six years Second Assistant Surveyor of Crown Lands in the Colony" (of New South Wales), published a book in London, the title of which occupies a whole page. We have been fortunately able to peruse a copy of this rare publication, kindly lent by Mr Scott of Wallalong, Hinton. The wording of the title appears as an appendix to Part I. of this paper. It was published for the benefit of prospective emigrant settlers from the Old Country, and described Newcastle (then

‡Journal, Tyerman and Bennet, 20/1/1825. Tyerman and Bennet, at Sydney, to Sir Thomas Brisbane, quoted by Mr Threlkeld in his *Statement*.

\*The *Statement*.

King's Town)† and district, and the Hunter Valley. Dangar mentions the Lake District, giving a brief description of the locality. He describes "Reid's Mistake," and has several other matters of local interest relative to this paper which will be quoted in their appropriate place. This book was written, as stated in the preface, to while away the tedium of a long voyage to England. On his return Dangar entered the service of the Australian Agricultural Company.

In his *Past and Present Records of Newcastle, New South Wales* (1873), Captain John Bingle adverts to the matter of the naming of Newcastle:—

I am not aware that the name of our city was first given by any authority of the Government; and am inclined to think that it was called Newcastle by the unanimous voice of the people. For some time after its discovery, it was known as the Coal River, but as its trade increased it was necessary that a name should be given and from the similarity of the river with that of the Tyne, and the mineral deposits also being alike, the name of Newcastle was naturally suggested and adopted.

Mr. Surveyor Dangar, however, when marking out the town, was not favourably impressed with the name by which it was generally known, and he, in a small work published by him [*The Index and Directory*.—B. W. C.] styled it King's Town. His authority, however, was not sufficient to override that of the inhabitants, and to few even now is either his book or the projected name of King's Town known; and to show that no intention was ever entertained of changing the name of the town, it will be seen from the fact that the letters-patent granted by our most Gracious Queen to the present Bishop of the See was under the style and title of the Lord Bishop of Newcastle.

Following is Dangar's description of the country surrounding Lake Macquarie‡:—

The next division of the country I feel necessary to describe, is that bordering on the Lake Macquarie, on the banks of which, besides the Station of the London Missionary Establishment for the instruction of the aboriginal natives, are only one or two settlers. The lands in the vicinity of this Lake partake of the characteristic quality of the country along the sea coast viz: thin strata of light sandy soil, tracts with sand and gravelly surface; but on the margin of the lake, together with the vallies [*sic.*] surrounding it, are occasional tracts of productive land. For this reason, the district

†(See note herewith). King's Town.

‡*Index and Directory*.—Henry Dangar—pp. 95, 96.

of Lake Macquarie is not adapted to the settler who contemplates becoming the proprietor of large flocks and herds, or a busied agriculture,—but is well suited to the retired naval, military, and civil officer, or merchant, inclined to "quit the busy scene"—one who is fond of shooting, hunting, fishing, or boat sailing; where he can enjoy cheap living, with a most salubrious air, and amply gratify all his wishes. Here the kangaroos, ducks, swans, pi(d)geons, quails, as well as fish, particularly oysters, which are of a very superior quality, and caught (!) in great abundance.

The kangaroos are all gone now, and most of the game. The swans have left their name at Swan Bay at Marks' Point. Fish are there, and oysters may still be "caught."

Dangar makes mention of "Reid's Mistake," which Threlkeld states was the name generally given to the locality at the eastern side of the lake. Dangar recounts the well-known story of the naming of the place§:—

Reid's Mistake is situated fourteen and a half miles to the south-south-west of Port Hunter, and so called in honor of its discoverer, whose name was "Reid," being master of a colonial coasting vessel, and intending to run into Port Hunter, whither Colonial craft then resorted for coals, which were dug out of the cliff by their crews; instead of Port Hunter, this sagacious seaman took his bark into this opening, and thus, in memory of his error, the name has been given.

One writer states that the name should be spelt "Reed"; but the form "Reid" is the one appearing on the maps and charts. Threlkeld, in one of his publications,\* states that Reid on this occasion loaded a cargo of coal from an outcrop in the lake.

The entrance to the lake even at that early stage in the history of the district was the subject of much adverse comment. Dangar writes‡:—

The entrance to Reid's Mistake is unfortunately obstructed by a bar, so as to prevent the access of any vessels but those of the smallest class, there not being more than from five and a half to six feet on the bar at high water. This is also the entrance into Lake Macquarie, a spacious and interesting sheet of water; the banks of which, on being occupied, will cause a small-craft inter-

§*Index and Directory*, p. 57.

\**An Australian Grammar*.—L. E. Threlkeld, 1834. See Part II. of this paper; and list of Threlkeld's works, Appendix I., Part II. of this paper.

‡*Index and Directory*, p. 58.

course coastwise between this place and Port Hunter. . . . Larger vessels can, however, lay under the island off the entrance, and load or unload into lighters.

Threlkeld, in the *Statement*, also refers to the entrance: "A bar entrance of not more than four or five feet of water, through a narrow intricate channel." Ludwig Leichhardt, the explorer, commented on it when he visited the lake in the 'forties. Dangar again mentions the mission station§:—

On the south side of the Lake the Government have engaged to grant 10,000 acres of land to the London Missionary Society, in trust for the aboriginal natives, and which society have formed an establishment there, under the direction of the Rev. — Threlkeld, with a view of instructing the natives and preaching to them in their own language.

He goes on to say that on the proposed grant Kendal coal had been found, the first to be discovered in the colony. It was of superior quality, and it was anticipated that it would sell readily in Sydney. Dangar concludes: "A trade in this article may, therefore, in a short time be calculated upon."¶ He meant "cannel" coal (the word cannel is a variation of "candle"), which is a hard, bituminous coal, burning with a bright flame.

Such was the nature of the country in which the apostle to the aborigines was to make his abode. According to Bingle and Dangar, it "were Paradise enow"; but to Threlkeld it was, at first, no Promised Land. He styled it "a howling wilderness"||; but then, Threlkeld never in his life looked through rose-coloured spectacles. He received his instructions in a letter from the deputation dated February 24, 1825, which contained a flattering reference to the missionary's capabilities:—

It yields us no small satisfaction in feeling confident that your talents, your devotedness to your work, and your extensive experience, as a Missionary of the Cross render you in our estimation a suitable instrument to be employed in this important engagement.

The deputation appealed to Threlkeld for the exercise of prudence and activity, perseverance and patience, in carry-

ing out his duties, inasmuch as the projected mission to the aborigines was in the nature of an experiment, and the eyes of the world would be upon him to witness its success or failure.

According to his written instructions, Threlkeld was to learn the language of the blacks, so as to be able to teach them in their native tongue. He was instructed to pay special attention to the rising generation, and generally was to improve the lot of those blacks with whom he came in contact. While concentrating on the evangelization of the natives, it would be within his province to minister to the spiritual needs of the white settlers in the vicinity, when the opportunity offered. In all these labours, or rather, those consistent with the duties of her sex, the good lady of the missionary would participate, so the "Instructions" suggested. The deputation paid a graceful tribute to the new Mrs Threlkeld:—

We rejoice that Providence has directed you to a partner in life, likeminded with yourself, we trust, as to Missionary views and feelings. Her intimate knowledge of the natives will qualify her to take an active part with you, in promoting their welfare, and especially the good of her own sex, to which we are confident, to the extent of her domestic convenience, she will devote herself.\*

Threlkeld was instructed to live in Newcastle until a house could be built on a suitable site, the means of building being left to his own discretion. The deputation pledged the funds of the London Missionary Society to defray expenses, and the missionary was exhorted "to use all the economy which is consistent with domestic convenience and comfort." He was accordingly authorized to draw on the treasurer of the Society for the necessary amount for his subsistence, consistent with the dictates of prudence in expenditure. This more or less vague permission to operate on the funds of the Society was the cause of much misunderstanding and acrimonious correspondence between the missionary and Mr Marsden, as the agent for the Society in Australia.†

§*Index and Directory*, p. 58.

¶*Ibid.*

||L. E. Threlkeld's *Statement*.

\*Tyerman and Bennet, at Sydney, to L. E. Threlkeld, 24/2/1825.

†See Part II. of this paper.

The missionary set sail from Sydney in March, 1825, for Newcastle, in company with a friend whom he does not name, to look over the sphere of his future labours. They arrived just when a seven months' drought had been broken. They were detained for three weeks in the town, not being able to proceed to the Lake but once, and that to a spot not fit for settling on. Threlkeld is tantalizingly vague as to the localities visited and settled on, and the names of his friends in Newcastle and his neighbours at the Lake, with the probable exception of Mr (formerly Lieutenant) Warner, who had a grant at the head of the Lake, at what is now Warner's Bay. The proposed grant for the mission was to the east and south of Mr Warner's grant. After repeated requests by Threlkeld over a period of three or four years, a memorandum was received from Major Mitchell, the Surveyor-General, to the effect that the northern boundary of the proposed grant had been marked out on the maps eastward from Warner's grant to the sea. This line was actually a prolongation of Jonathan Warner's southern boundary, and it touched the coast at a point north of Red Head. Thus the promised reserve contained an area shaped like an inverted triangle, having as its base the line just described, and its opposite sides the eastern shore of the lake and the sea coast respectively, the apex being at the entrance of the Lake at "Reid's Mistake." With such an area to be covered in the search, it is not to be wondered at that there was difficulty at first in selecting a suitable site for the mission station. Threlkeld returned to Sydney without making a choice. He appealed to the deputation for their sanction to a proposal to engage a manager to take charge of the agricultural side of the mission, or as he termed it in his pompous manner, "The Civil Department"—in contradistinction perhaps to the "Ecclesiastical Department," which he would superintend personally.

The deputation vetoed his proposal for an agricultural overseer, the disadvantages of such an appointment, in their opinion, outweighing the advantages. They even suggested that the reverend gentleman should exercise the

necessary supervision himself.\* It would seem by this and by other hints in Threlkeld's *Statement* and other documents that he planned the operations of the projected mission on a grand scale, no doubt commensurate with the magnitude of the area of land reserved for mission purposes. While it is evident that Threlkeld had no idea of ever engaging in manual labour, it must be borne in mind that he was not of a practical turn of mind, unlike the versatile John Williams, his former colleague, who was a man of many parts, and who could turn his hand to almost any trade. From the moment when Threlkeld received his "Instructions" from the deputation, his sole object, his ruling passion, was to master the aboriginal language. All other matters were to be made subservient to this great task. Hence his request for assistance in the merely material side of the work of the mission. It has almost invariably been the case, that pioneer missionaries have been obliged to perform many and varied jobs of work, other than merely learning the language of those natives among whom their lot was cast.

According to the Rev Samuel Marsden, who was well qualified to voice such an opinion, other qualities were required to make a successful missionary:—

In my opinion a man of a melancholy habit is altogether unqualified for a missionary; he will never be able to sustain the hardships attending his situation, nay, he will magnify his dangers and difficulties, and make them greater than what in reality they may be. . . . A gloomy, ignorant clown will be disgusting, even to savages, and excite their contempt. The more easy and affable a missionary is in his address, the more easily will he obtain the confidence and good opinion of the heathen.†

The first part at least of this statement well fits our subject, as shown by subsequent events and by his own self-portrait; and bearing Marsden's picture of a model missionary in mind, it is no wonder that the Chaplain, who was a shrewd judge of character, had misgivings as to the suitability of Threlkeld for the office of missionary to the blacks.

\*The deputation to L. E. Threlkeld, 14/4/1825—quoted in the *Statement*.

†Quoted by the Rev Joseph King in *Ten Decades* (p. 39)—source not quoted.

## LIFE AT NEWCASTLE AND LAKE MACQUARIE.

Threlkeld finally left Sydney for Newcastle, with his wife and family and all their impedimenta, on May 7, 1825. Here he was to reside while a home was being prepared on the shores of Lake Macquarie. The Lake country at this period has already been described, and a brief account of the town of Newcastle as the Threlkelds first saw it may be of interest. Henry Dangar's book has a double-page frontispiece, which is a sketch of the eastern portion of the town. It is somewhat similar to one of a series published in 1821, described by the writer in a previous paper.\* It comprises a view of the township and port extending from the Anglican Church on the left to the gaol on the right. Captain Wallis's breakwater is shown extending half-way from the mainland towards which appears as an island of somewhat pyramidal form. The southern face of the island is perpendicular, and the surface slopes downwards on the northern side. On the northern side of the Signal Hill appears a dwarf tower described as "The Light"; the flagstaff stands nearby. A little further to the south is the gaol, a two-storeyed structure; a short distance away the hospital, a small building, is shown. The line of Watt Street is plainly visible, with the old wharf at its foot projecting into the harbour. This wharf is described by John Bingle in his *Past and Present Records of Newcastle*.† On the left of the picture appears the original Christ Church, complete with its towering spire, just over the brow of the hill. The breakwater, hospital and church have also been described by the author in the article on Captain James Wallis stated above.‡ In the foreground of the picture are a couple of natives attending a fire among the scrub on a flat part of the hill above the church. The inscription reads, "A large portion of the town lies to the left between the Church and the River"—being hidden by the hill, as observed from the view-point of the picture.

\*"Captain James Wallis of the 46th Regiment": R.A.H. Society's *Journal*, vol. XIX, pp. 372-373.

†Published in 1873. See note (49).  
tp. 37.

Henry Dangar's book gives a description of the settlement as it was not long after Threlkeld arrived there. It mentions the church, and the removal of the spire, which was considered to be unsafe. Other public buildings, besides those already mentioned, were the Police Magistrate's residence, parsonage, surgeon's quarters, court-house, officers' quarters, commissariat store, military barrack and guard-room, mining manager's residence, two windmills, and last, but not least, the fort.§ John Bingle waxes merry over this lastnamed feature of the port:—

There were also seven guns placed on the point of the hill [Beacon Hill] in the shape of an earthen battery. They were used for salutes on high days and holidays, King's birthdays and other rejoicings, and on more than one of those occasions the gunners suffered mutilation in body or limb, and it affords them no doubt a lively recollection of the memorable Fort Fiddlestick for the remainder of their days. However, these formidable weapons will neither frighten our foes, nor prostrate their gunners for the future.\*

Twenty-five or thirty private houses completed the architectural landscape of the Newcastle of the day. The population numbered two hundred, "amongst which are storekeepers, or mercantile men, shop-keepers, inn-keepers (five in number), carpenters, bricklayers, brickmakers, blacksmiths, etc., etc."—thus Henry Dangar.† John Bingle says that these storekeepers were ticket-of-leave men. Dangar had "laid out" the township in 1823, and in a few years a large number of allotments had been taken up, the holders being mostly prominent colonists—citizens of Sydney and settlers in the Hunter Valley.

## BAHTAHBAH, LAKE MACQUARIE.

On arrival at Newcastle, Threlkeld set about in earnest choosing a site for the mission station. The first attempt proved abortive. After ten acres of the locality chosen had been cleared by dint of much hard work, it had to be abandoned on account of the poverty of the soil. The natives carried out the work, under the direction of an

§*Index and Directory*, pp. 47, 48.

\**Past and Present Records of Newcastle, N.S.W.* John Bingle, 1873.

†*Index and Directory*, p. 48.

Englishman. On the advice of a friend and that of a Government Surveyor, who had gone out to inspect the site, another location was decided upon.† By the way, it would be interesting to learn the names of the Englishman, the friend, and the Government Surveyor. Threlkeld wrote in his *Statement* :—

They [the natives] worked well under the direction of a Free-man and his two sons.

And, further on, he mentioned

a confidential free man who has been known for twenty years to Mrs. T's family, and who left his own little farm on the Hawkesbury to carry on the Agricultural Department, and to assist the natives.

The Government Surveyor may have been Mr Heneage Finch, who had been some time working in the district; as Henry Dangar stated in his preface to the *Index and Directory* (p. iv.) :—

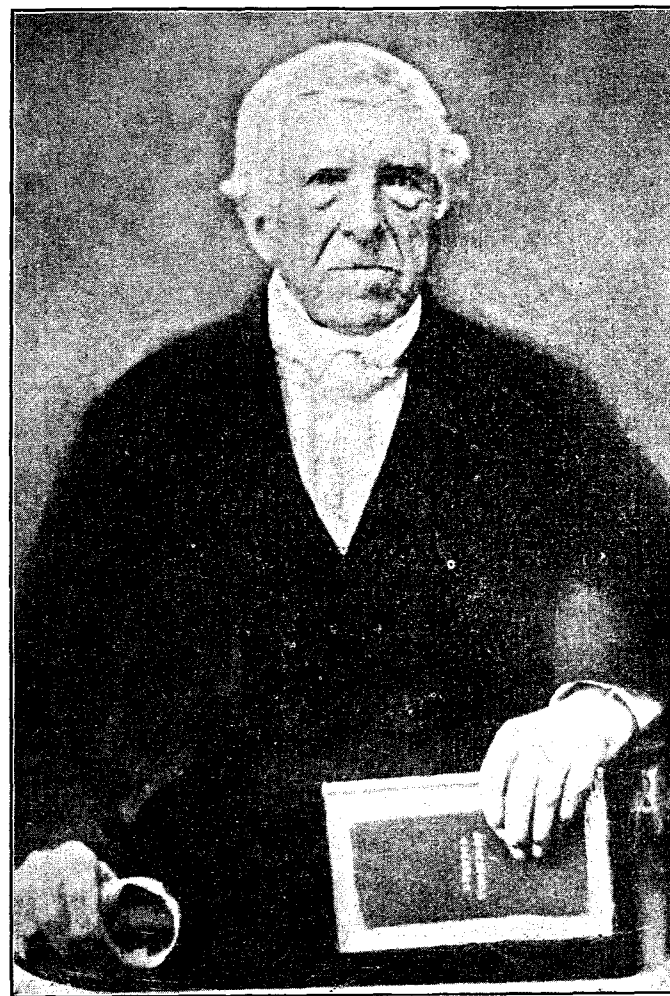
I am indebted to . . . Mr. Finch, Crown Surveyor . . . for the survey of . . . the locations . . . on the north shores of the Lake Macquarie.

In fact, the surveyor mentioned by Threlkeld may have been Henry Dangar himself.

With regard to the initial site, a friend of the writer's§ has volunteered some interesting information, which fixes with tolerable certainty the location of this first clearing. On a recent trip to Swansea he had occasion to visit the site of the present Signal Station at "Swansea Heads," on the southern side of the entrance to Lake Macquarie. On the southern bank of the channel, in a very old cottage surrounded by shady trees, about a quarter of a mile from the Signal Station, lives a gentleman of the name of Forbes, who went there from Newcastle with his parents to live, when very young, over seventy years ago. Forbes's father was a master mariner, in charge of sailing craft plying between Lake Macquarie and Sydney and Newcastle. At that time there was a depôt at the Heads, with a wharf. Coal was won from a colliery at Belmont, punted over the Pelican Flats, and then loaded into ketches at the depôt.

†L. E. Threlkeld's *Statement*.

§Mr N. O. Whale, A.C.A. (Australia), Newcastle.



The Rev L. E. THRELKELD.

(Photo. by courtesy of the Mitchell Library authorities, Sydney.)

Then the channel swept along the southern bank; but since the building of the breakwater, the channel is on the northern side. Near the old home on the banks of the channel was a primitive ferry. There was no bridge then, nor any made road; merely a track. Travel was on horseback, and persons wishing to cross the entrance were rowed across at sixpence a head, and the horses were swum behind the boat over the deepest part, which was only a short distance. Miners going to work at Wallarah were ferried across in this manner. The locality on the opposite (northern) side is named "The Blacksmith's"—surely an appropriate location for a forge!

Readers will, no doubt, readily visualize the pretty scene at the Signal Station, Swansea Heads. The flagstaff is set on a high bluff, which is covered with verdant green. Forbes stated that, in his early years, there was always a definite impression in the locality that the grassy land referred to had been cleared for an aboriginal mission station by a missionary of the name of Circle or Thirkle (evidently a corruption of Threlkeld).

This area was certainly utilized by the missionary, but not for a mission station. Reference to the advertisement for sale of the Ebenezer property in 1844 (see Appendix to Part II. of this paper) indicates that it was the "Depôt" mentioned by Forbes. The advertisement runs:—

LOT 2—Brings before the Public (though and with great perseverance only obtained specially from the Crown for the purpose . . . FIVE ACRES . . . constituting that valuable portion of land at the entrance of the Lake. . . . The Depot and the Wharf . . . for the shipment of coal on board the colliers employed in this trade.

With reference to the early crossings of the entrance to Lake Macquarie at Reid's Mistake, Mr G. B. Carleton, of the Public Works Department, furnished the author with some interesting supplementary information. He writes (February 19, 1939):—

I was at Swansea at the week end and had the opportunity of talking to William Forbes who worked with my father there over 54 years ago—[building the breakwater.—B. W. C.I. He remembered me well, Christian name and all without the slightest prompting,

from which you will gather his recollection of events &c. of that time is likely to be accurate.

He informs me that before the first bridge was built, on the present site [the present one is apparently a later structure] there were two crossings—one at the present bridge site, attended to by the elder Boyd, and another at the survey camp and attended to by the men at the camp. . . . Both of these were made by means of a rowing boat, the horses being swum behind; the charge was 6d. per foot passenger and 1/- per man and horse. . . .

Mr Carleton kindly made available for this work a helio of a large scale chart of "The Entrance" used in connexion with the harbour works mentioned above. The soundings marked thereon clearly prove the statement as to the shifting of the channel; and an excellent aerial photograph of Swansea and the Lake Heads in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* of February 10, 1939, shows the location of the present channel.

Standing on the headland at the Signal Station, and looking northward, the whole sweep of the Nine Mile Beach to Red Head is seen, with the range of hills terminating in that rugged bluff in the background, and the low rise where Bahtahbah was situated in the middle distance. One may then, while appreciating the panorama, sympathize with the missionary in his difficult task of choosing a suitable site for his station, and commend him for his action in obtaining the good offices of a Government Surveyor in connexion with the search.

With reference to the ultimate disposal of "Bahtahbah" and its vicinity, Forbes remembered the owners of the hundred-acre conditional purchase, Thomas Williamson and Robert Kirkaldy. Kirkaldy kept an hotel at Newcastle; Williamson also kept an hotel, at Belmont, at the foot of the rise entering the township of Newcastle. The vineyard referred to occupied the whole of the slope from the edge of the lake to the line of the present main street of the town, the Pacific Highway.

Another reminiscence of this old lakeside identity which is of passing interest in this paper is that of Black Ned, an aboriginal of the locality (Black Ned's Bay, Swansea, is named after him); and Margaret White, a full-blooded aboriginal woman who lived at Swansea for many years. She had worked for the White family, was quite

handsome for an aboriginal, and was also very intelligent. Dr John Frazer, B.A., LL.D., in his book on the language of the aborigines, to which we shall refer later,\* shows an actual photograph of this woman, whose features are somewhat different from those of the average aboriginal woman. She had an orchard, and was therefore very popular with the small boys of Swansea. Latterly she lived at the southern end of the town, near the turn-off to the Caves Beach.

A few years ago, a tunnel mine was commenced at the entrance to the lake, on the southern bank of the channel not far from the old Forbes home. It was subsequently abandoned for certain reasons, and only the tunnel entrance, some old skips, and an unsightly mullock heap remain to tell the tale of this mining venture.

To return to Threlkeld. The second attempt to find a suitable location for the mission station was more successful, and the clearing began anew. The trees had to be felled and burnt off before there could be any question of building a house. Then, again, Threlkeld considered it necessary to discover a line of road from Newcastle to the mission station, in order to bring up supplies. He considered this method of transport cheaper and more convenient than communication by sea. All this preliminary work involved a considerable outlay, for which Threlkeld was to be called to account later on. Henry Dangar thus describes the method adopted in laying down a new line of road:—

The first settler, or party of settlers, proceeding with their men, teams and baggage into any new and distant country, having, as is usual, before made a journey to such, and having obtained every information the Crown Surveyors of the district can give, he or they, on entering on their journey, keep two or three men following the carts, and with axes mark the trees, by fractures in the bark, denoting the route the carriages pursue. This done, the settler's men can proceed back with the teams, and get up their second loadings without any apprehension of losing the road; and thus, in a short period, the track is so beaten (some improvements to the right and left being made occasionally), as to be designated the road; and is frequently used as such, without any repair, for a great number of years. This, indeed, is the description of roads

\*Part II. of this paper.

in general use in New South Wales, before it is made to appear to the Government, through the representation or memorial of those concerned, that the traffic and commerce of any neighbourhood require the route being scientifically laid off, and the road properly formed and metalled.†

Up to the present time, there has been much conjecture as to the actual site of the mission station on the eastern side of Lake Macquarie. If, in fact, it was originally proposed to pitch camp at Swansea Heads, such a situation would have been practically useless. It would have been necessary either to effect all transport by sea or to form a depôt on the opposite (northern) side of the entrance and instal a ferry. One opinion was vouchsafed that the site was well to the south of Swansea, on the shore of the Lake. Yet another theory was that it was in the vicinity of Warner's Bay, at the northern end of the Lake. The nearest guess that has been hazarded was the site of the Belmont Colliery. We are now in a position to state definitely that the actual site of the original mission station was at the present site of Belmont township.

A search by Mr Bernard T. Dowd, of the Lands Department, Sydney, among the old maps at the Lands Office, resulted in the solving of the mystery surrounding the site of the mission. One large map of the colony, compiled by that excellent cartographer, Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, the then Surveyor-General, in 1834, has the word "Threlkeld's" inserted at the spot where Belmont now shows on present day maps, on the shores of Village Bay, a name that still persists in the locality. The line of road made by Threlkeld from the mission to Newcastle is clearly marked. The search produced also a detailed plan of the present site of Belmont and its environs, compiled in the 'sixties by the Lands Department from the data of a survey, in respect of an application by Messrs Kircaldy and Williamson for an area of one hundred acres.

A quaintly-worded advertisement appeared in *The Newcastle Chronicle* of January 14, 1869, offering on lease "The Farm of the late Mr. Threlkeld, now called Mount

†Index and Directory, pp. 59, 60



Mulberry." The following references to Messrs Kirkaldy and Williamson appear:—

Mr. Williamson, of Belmont Farm, has considerably erected a building on the Newcastle side of the Lake, about twelve miles distant, on the Government Road, the varied views along which are very interesting, and is willing to accommodate ladies and gentlemen with refreshments off his farm.

From his residence across the Lake to Mount Mulberry is a pleasant sail, or row in a boat, about four miles, which can be hired in the vicinity.

For cards to visit the farm, please apply to Mr. James Kirkaldy, at the office of the Examiner of Coalfields, Newcastle, who has recently been on the property and can describe it. . . .

This portion was duly taken up as a Conditional Purchase, and its extent may be seen on the map of the Parish of Kahibah. On this plan of Belmont the "Old Mission House" is shown at a spot just off the present main road in Belmont; the site was either at or adjacent to the site of the Belmont Public School, at the end of the street that runs from Belmont Railway Station to the Pacific Highway. At the northern end of the 100 acres is drawn a rectangle marked "Banana Plantation"; in the centre two areas adjoining one another are shown, that on the eastern side being described as an "Orchard," whilst the other is marked "Vineyard." Across the road from the Mission House is located a "School House." A perusal of the records in the Lands Department disclosed that no grant had ever actually been issued in respect of the much-discussed 10,000 acres reserved for mission purposes. They contain a copy of a letter from Sir Thomas Mitchell to Threlkeld dated September 4, 1829, to the effect that "a Reserve of 10,000 acres had been noted on the maps," and gave the northern boundary as described on page 316.

Sir Thomas Mitchell's map of the colony is remarkable for the detail of the topography of the district contained in a comparatively small scale map. The actual ridges and watersheds of the country south of Newcastle are minutely recorded, even the line of the Glebe Hill. Threlkeld's track can be seen leaving this ridge and merging into the line of road known as the Old Lake Road. An old survey chart of the Lake district shows in greater

detail the actual line of the road. Following the route of the Pacific Highway north out of Belmont, it branched off to the westward side of that thoroughfare. It then ran northwards through Floraville and Violet Town, then veered westward towards Lymington (now the village of Warner's Bay). Turning then in a north-easterly direction, it crossed the line of the Pacific Highway south of Charlestown, passing through the vicinity of Kahibah township over the ridges towards Merewether, and so into Newcastle as described. Portion of this route coincides with the existing road to Warner's Bay.

Difficulties of transport only began with the construction of the road. Trees were often blown across the road, and fires sometimes caused the burning trunks to fall and obstruct the track. This, together with

. . . the closeness of the trees renders it absolutely necessary that two persons should always be with the cart and oxen when going in or coming out with necessities from Newcastle.\*

Threlkeld stated that twelve miles of road had to be cleared, and he gave the total distance to Newcastle as fourteen or sixteen miles.

Apparently Threlkeld was in no hurry to leave Newcastle and "reside in the woods." He states that he waited there many months, and offers as an explanation the excuse that he was unable to obtain labour for the construction of his house either in Sydney or Newcastle. He ultimately decided to let a contract for the building. It was to consist of four rooms, fourteen feet by sixteen feet under the roof, and two small rooms ten feet by twelve feet under the veranda, one on each side; the tender price was £298/13/6. A comparison of this contract with a similar one at the present time would be of interest. The house was not ready for occupation until September, 1826, sixteen months after the arrival of the Threlkeld family at Newcastle. Threlkeld's own explanation in defence of this inordinate delay in furthering the project of the mission is given in his *Statement*:—

It was originally intended, when the Deputation was in the Colony that mechanics should be obtained from Government, and

\*The *Statement*.

that under my superintendence the house should be put up, it being considered the most economical plan. On my application to the Governor himself, Sir Thomas Brisbane, he informed me that he was sorry that not one could be spared, but that when a vessel arrived from England, then we should have a Carpenter. Six or eight months elapsed, and the peculiar circumstances of the Colony were such, that no mechanics could be obtained. . . . The heavy expenses of housekeeping, where so many were to be fed, determined that the building of the house by Contract, for a certain sum, in a given period, was far preferable to hazarding the hiring of job workmen, for whom provision must be purchased, at all times exceedingly high, and carried out to them according to the custom of the Colony. Competent judges respecting the terms of the contract were consulted, and the house nine months after the time specified, was completed.†

Even when the house had been completed, the tenor of his remarks seems to indicate that he was reluctant to leave Newcastle "to reside in the woods, fourteen miles from any civilised being—exposed to the attack of Bush-ranging prisoners and uncivilised blacks"—although the danger of attack was very slight. He did not welcome the change of residence with enthusiasm; he was becoming apprehensive at the mounting costs of the preliminaries of the mission. The idea of quitting at least crossed his mind; he felt that to remain apparently idle any longer would expose him to the charge of holding a sinecure. One motive for his finally deciding to make the plunge was the necessity of assuring the authorities that the mission would be actually launched. He writes to the effect that he had received intimations from the Government that, owing to the long delay in commencing the mission, it would be essential for the confirmation of the proposed grant to the Society by the Home Government that the Crown be convinced of the definite occupation of the mission station.‡

So in much fear and trembling Threlkeld and his family entered into their new surroundings. He called his new residence "Bahtahbah," which was the name of a tribe of blacks in the vicinity. He set the natives to work clearing an area of twenty-five acres with a view to

†*Ibid.*‡*Ibid.*

growing grain. To supervise this work, Threlkeld hired a free man and his two sons\* at £65 per year, and rations. They planted Indian corn, which the blacks tended. However, the blacks would not allow the corn to ripen; and so the "Agricultural Department" was a failure. Threlkeld condoned the natives' theft of maize, and characteristically declined to protect his crops in the usual manner of the settlers, for fear of giving offence to the blacks. True, this altruistic attitude was quite in order from a missionary point of view, but fatal to the object of making the mission pay for itself. But why worry? The Society was a munificent Alma Mater!

Let us take a peep for a moment at the missionary "at work":—

Myself being among them—[the toiling aborigines and their white overseers.—B. W. C.] amid surrounding fires, and under a vertical sun, with my book, collecting words and phrases and endeavouring to converse with them in their own tongue.†

Threlkeld admitted to an ignorance of agriculture; but the field of philology was waiting to be tilled. The study of the native dialect became his hobby—his pet obsession—his *idée fixe*—and was to continue to be so right up to the time of his death. Among his beloved blacks, Threlkeld, book in hand, studying the language, had no more than a premonition of the storm that was to break over his devoted head.

(APPENDIX OVERLEAF.)

(To be continued in Part V. of "Journal.")

\*See note, p. 320.

†The *Statement*.

APPENDIX.

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EMIGRANT'S GUIDE.

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BY H. DANGAR,  
SIX YEARS SECOND ASSISTANT SURVEYOR OF CROWN LANDS IN  
THE COLONY.

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