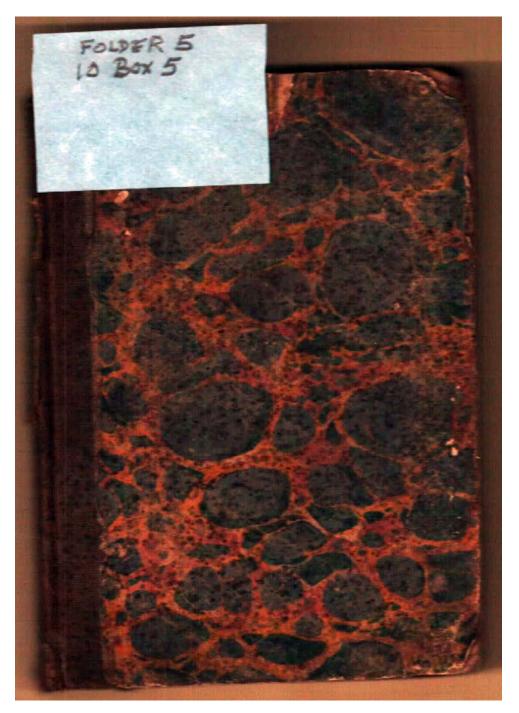
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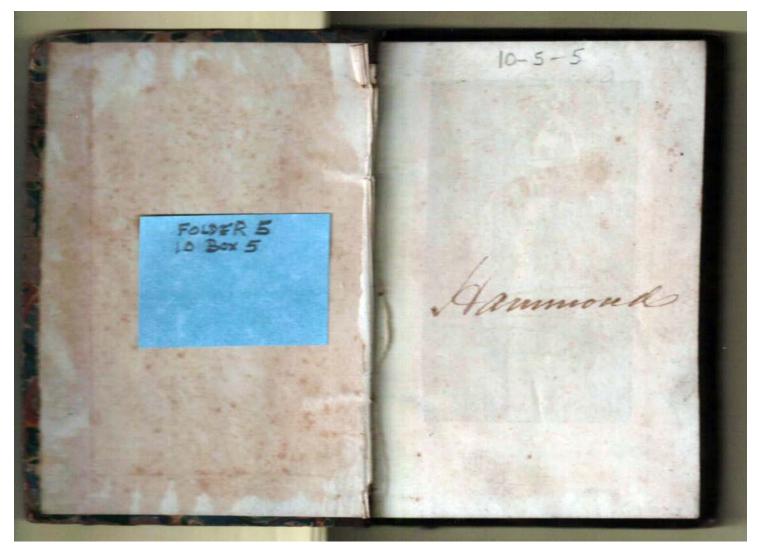
Names:

Memoirs of Captain James Wilson

Types:

book cover

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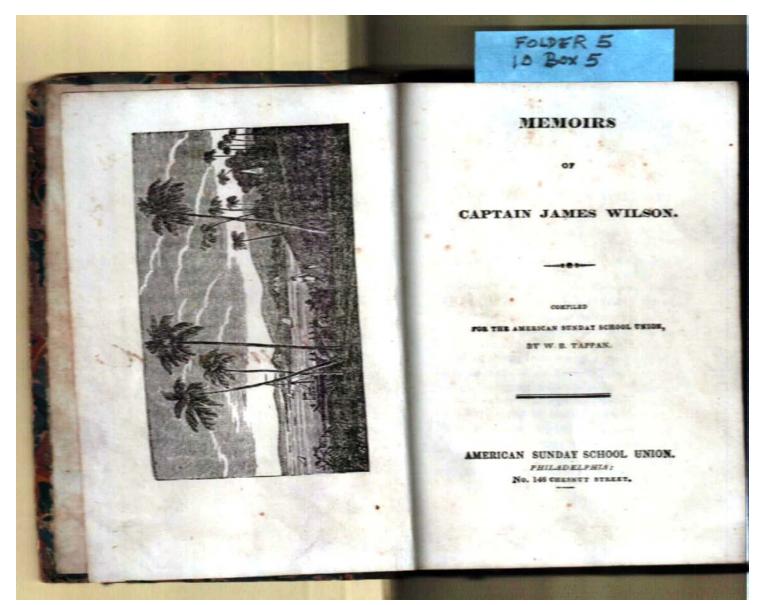
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Names:

Memoirs of Captain John Wilson Tappan, W. B.

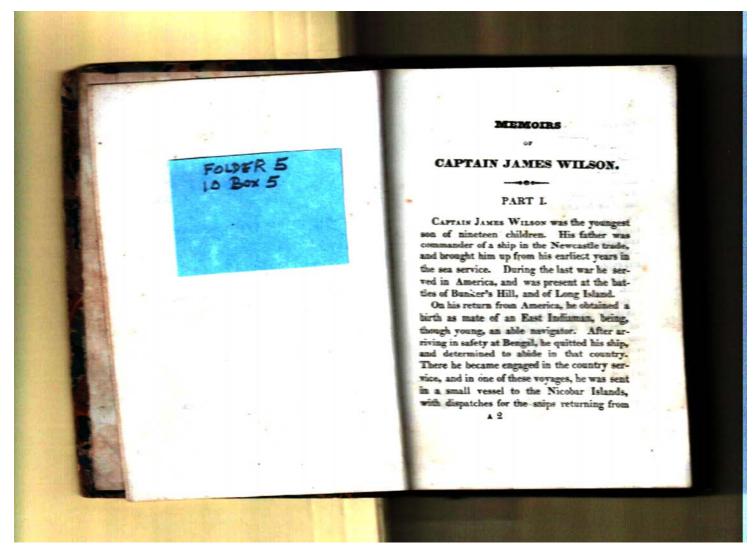
Places:

Philadelphia, PA

Types:

book

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Names:

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the east, to advise them of the arrival of the French squadron, under Suffrein, on the coast, and to put them on their guard. The ship he commanded was ill found, and in the voyage her stern-post grew so loose as to admit so much water, that with difficulty she was prevented from foundering. He was therefore obliged to run for Madras, and off Pulicat, discovered the French fleet going down the coast: he expected them to chase, and pressed with all sail for the shore, where a dangerous shoal probably prevented pursuit and capture; but the ship was so leaky he was obliged to run her on the beach to save their lives. He proceeded thence to Madras, just at the critical moment when the settlement was in the greatest distress. Sir Eyre Coote had marched to the south, and was so sur-rounded by Hyder Ally's army, that no supplies could reach him by land; and the French squadron anchoring at Pondicherry, had cut off all supplies by sea; so that the British troops were reduced to great difficulties, and in danger of famine, their stores being nearly exhausted.

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Several ships had been loaded with rice at Madras, but as the French fleet lay directly in the way, they dared not attempt the passage to Cuddalore, near which Sir Eyre Coote was encamped. The Governor of Madras had heard of Mr. Wilson, and though a young man, sent for him, and inquired if he would attempt to carry down the ships with the supplies for the camp, stating the danger and hazard of the run, and offering him four hundred pagodas for the service, and more if he should be detained beyond a fortnight. The Captain undertook to attempt the passage, and immediately made preparations for his departure. The vessel in which he embarked was about five hundred tons burden, with three others under his command, all navigated by black men, himself being the only European, except an officer, who went down as passenger to the army. He pushed on as far as Sadras, about sixteen leagues, where he took refuge under the Dutch flag, and dispatched two messengers to Sir Eyre Coote, to inform him of his approach and to expect his orders; but the roads were all so obFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 6r1005-05-000-0006ContentsIndexAbout

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structed by Hyder's horse, that to avoid the maranding army, they were obliged to take a great circuit; and as they ventured to travel only by night, they were eleven days before they returned. They brought from the General, the most urgent orders to proceed, at all hazards, and without a moment's delay; adding, that if the Captain brought only one vessel, and lost the rest, it would be of the most essential service. He accordingly immediately weighed anchor, proceeding at such a distance from Pondicherry, as to see from the mast-head the French flag, and if possible, to pass them in the night undiscovered. The French fleet that very evening weighed anchor, occasioned by a singular circumstance, which was afterwards known. Suffrein had sent his water-casks on shore to be filled, and they lay on the beach. Sir Eyre Coote had detached a corps of grenadiers and light infantry, who entered Pondicherry, which was open on the land side, since the fortifications had been demolished; they found and staved all the casks, destroying them entirely; and this induced Suffrein to run down

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to Point de Galle, to repair the loss, just at the moment when Captain Wilson was passing in the offing. As Suffrein's ships sailed so much better than his, they were off Cuddalore in the morning, and Captain Wilson arrived in the afternoon; thus providentially escaping, and bringing in the whole of the cargoes entrusted to his care, and so much wanted by the army. They had then been reduced to their last forty-five bags of paddy, and not a grain of rice to Le procured. This supply rescued them from impending famine, or the necessity of cutting their way through the enemy; and under God, was the means, as all acknowledged, of the preservation of the army and of the Carnatic. Captain Wilson had some stores of his own, which were greedily siezed and devoured as soon as landed. The next day he was invited to dine with the General and his staff, was placed at Sir Eyre Coote's right hand, and received the most cordial acknowledgments for his services. He informed the company of the seizure of his stores; they bid him prepare an account of them, and gave him a paFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 7r10_05-05-000-0007ContentsIndexAbout

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goda [81.94,] for every bottle of wine, and for the rest in proportion; so that this successful trip produced him about a thousand pounds, and a testimony of Sir Eyre Coote's high satisfaction in the services which he had performed.

Returning to Bengal, he continued to be employed in carrying down supplies, till he was captured by the French, when he was going with a very valuable cargo of military stores for Sir Edward Hughes, whose ammunition had been exhausted in the well known conflict with Suffrein. He was carried into Caddalore, which had been taken by the French, and there he found the crew of the Hannibal in the same captivity. He was permitted, with other officers, to be at large on his parole, and hoped shortly to be exchanged.

Hyder had at that time overrun and wasted great part of the Carnatic; and in conjunction with the French, after taking Cuddalore, hoped to expel the English from all that territory. He had lately defeated Colonel Baily's detachment, and made them prisoners, and used every effort to get as many

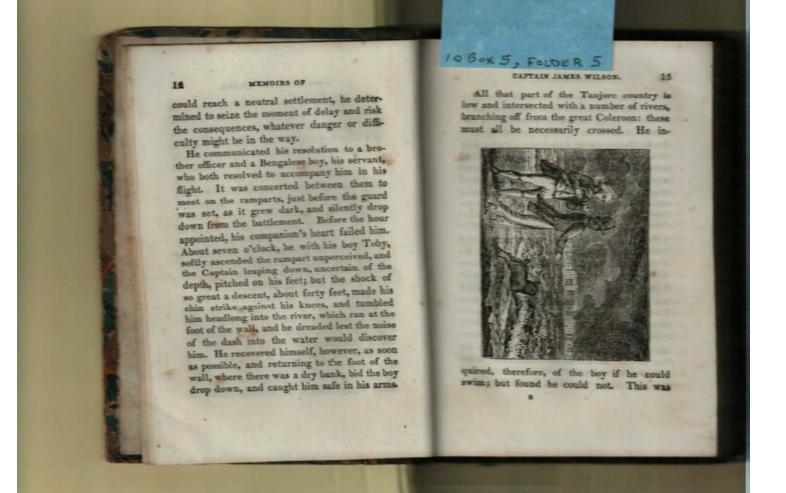
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of the English as possible into his power, in order either to tempt them into his service, or to gratify his brutality by exposing them to a lingering death. He had bribed Suffrein with three hundred thousand rupees, [a rupee is about 50 cents,] to surrender up to him all his prisoners at Cuddalore; and the order being communicated to the commander of the fort, nothing could exceed the indignation and grief which he and his officers testified at such an infamous bargain. However, as he dared not disobey the orders of his superior, he informed the gentlemen on parole of the transaction, and his necessity of delivering them up the next day, to the escort appointed to carry them to Seringapatam.

to carry them to Seringapatam. Captain Wilson no somer received the intelligence, than he determined that very night, if possible, to attempt his escape from a captivity which appeared to him worse than death. He had observed, as he walked the ramparts, the possibility of dropping down into the river; and though he neither knew the height of the wall, nor the width of the rivers which were to be crossed, before he Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 8r10_05-05-000-0008ContentsIndexAbout



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very embarrassing, but he resolved not to leave him behind, and therefore took him on his back, being an excellent swimmer, and carried him over. They pushed towards Porto Nuovo, about four leagues and a half from Cuddalore. They had passed three arms of the river, and advanced at as a great a pace as they possibly could, to make use of the night, since their hope of safety depended chiefly on the distance they could reach before the morning light. Not far from Porto Nuovo, a seapoy centry challenged "Who goes there:" on which they shrunk back and concealed themselves, turning down to the river side. The river in that place was very wide, and being near the sea, the tide ran in with great rapidity. He took, however, the boy on his back, as he had done before, and bid him he sure to hold only by his hands and cast his legs behind him; but when they came into the breakers, the boy was frightened, and clung around the Captain with his legs so fast as almost to sink him. With difficulty he struggled with the waves, and turning back to the shore, found they must 10 Box 5, FOLDER 5 CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON

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inevitably perish together if they thus at-tempted to proceed. Therefore setting the boy safe on land, he bid him go back to Doctor Mein, who would take care of him, but the poor lad has never since been heard of, though the most diligent inquiries were made after him. As delay was death to him, he plunged again in the stream, and buffeting the waves, pushed for the opposite shore; but he found the tide running upwards so strong, that in spite of all his efforts, he was carried along with the current, and constrained, at a consi derable distance, to return to the same side of the river. Providentially, at the place where he landed, he discovered by the moonlight, dry on the beach, a cance, which he immediately siezed, and was drawing down to the river, when two black men rushed upon him and demanded whither he was going with that boat. He seized the outrigger of the cance as his only weapon of defence against the paddles which they had secured, and teld them he had lost his way; had urgent business to Tranquebar, and thither he must and would go; and launching with all his reFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 10r10_05-05-000-0010ContentsIndexAbout

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maining strength, the canoe into the river; the good-natured Indians laid down their paddles on the shafts, and whilst he stood in the stern rowed him to the opposite shore. He returned them many thanks, having nothing else to give them, and leaping on the beach, immediately pushed forward with all his might. He found he had as great a distance to pass to the Coleroon as he had already travelled, and therefore continued his course with full speed, the moon shining bright; and before break of day reached this largest arm of the river, of which those which he had crossed were branches. Exhausted with the fatigue he had undergone, and dismayed with the width of this mighty stream, he stood for a moment hesitating on the brink; but the approach of morning, and the danger behind him being so urgent, he stretched out his arms to the flood, and pressed for the shore. How long he was in crossing he could not ascertain, for somewhat near the centre of the river, he came in contact with the mast of a ship, or a great tree floating with the stream; on this he reclined his hands and

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his head, in which perilous position, he thought he must have slept by the way, from some confused remembrance as of a person awaking from a state of insensibility, which he supposed had lasted half an hour at least. However, with the light of the morning he had reached the land and flattered himself that all his dangers were passed and his liberty secured; when, after passing a jungle road which led to the sea-side, he ascended a sandbank to look around him .- There, to his terror and surprise, he perceived a party of Hyder's horse scouring the coast, and being discovered by them they gallopped up to him; in a moment seized him and stripped him naked, unable to fly or resist, and tying his hands behind his back, fastened a rope to them, and thus drove him before them to the head quarters, several miles distant, under a burning sun, and covered with blisters. He supposes he must have gone that night and day more than forty miles, beside all the rivers he had crossed. But to what efforts will not the hope of life and liberty prompt? what sufferings and dangers will not men

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brave to secure them? yet these were but the beginning of his sorrows.

The officer at the head-quarters was a Mahometan, one of Hyder's chieftains. He interrogated the poor prisoner sharply, who he was, whence he came, and whither going? Mr. Wilson gave him an ingenuous account of his escape from Cuddalore, and the reasons for it, with all the circumstances attending his flight. The Moorman, with wrath, looked at him and said, Jute bat, _- " that is a lie," as no man ever yet passed the Coleroon by swimming; for if he had but dipped the tip of his fingers in it, the alligators would have seized him. The Captain assured him the truth was so, and gave him such indubitable evidence of the fact that he could no longer doubt the relation; when lifting up both his hands he cried out, Gouda ka Adami? " this is God's man." So Caiaphas prophesied. He was indeed God's man. The Lord had marked him for his own, though as yet he knew him not.

He was immediately marched back, naked and blistered all over, to the former house CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

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of his prison, and in aggravated punishment for his flight, Hyder refused him permission to join his fellow officers, his former companions, and thrust him into a dungeon among the meanest captives. Chained to a common soldier, he was next day led out, almost famished, and nearly naked, to march on foot to Seringapatam, in that burning elimate, about 500 miles distant. The officers beheld his forlorn condition with great concern, unable to procure him any redress; but they endeavoured to alleviate his misery by supplying him with immediate necessaries. One gave him a shirt, another a waistcoat, another stockings and shoes, so that he was once more covered and equipped for his tail-some journey. But his brutal conductors, had no sooner marched him off to the first halting place, than they again stripped him to the skin, and left him only a sorry rag to wrap round his middle.

In this wretched state, chained to another fellow sufferer, under a vertical sun, with a scanty provision of rice only, he had to travel naked and barefoot, five hundred miles, inFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 12r10_05-05-000-0012ContentsIndexAbout

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sulted by the the men goaded him on all the day, and at night thrust him into a damp, unwholesome prison, crowded with other miserable objects.

On their way they were brought into Hyder's presence, and strongly urged to enlist in his service, and profess his religion, and thus obtain their liberty: to induce them to which, these horrible severities were inflicted on them, and to escape these at any rate, some of the poor creatures consented. But the Captain rejected these offers with disdain; and though a stranger to a nobler principle, and destitute of all religion, so great a sense of honor impressed him, that he resolved to prefer death, with all its horrors, to desertion and Mahomedism. In various villages through which they passed, in their long march, he was placed under cover, and exhibited to the country people as an object of curiosity, many of them never having seen a white man before. There he was forced to present himself in all possible positions, and to display all the antics of which he was capable, that his conductors might obtain money

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from these poor villagers at the expense of their captive.

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In consequence of the dreadful nature of this march, exposed by day to the heat, and cooped up in a damp prison by night, without clothes, and almost without food, covered with sores, and the irons entering into his flesh, he was, in addition to all the rest of his sufferings, attacked with the flux; and how he arrived at Seringapatam alive, so weakened with disease, is wonderful. Yet greater miseries awaited him there-naked, diseased, and half starved, he was thrust into a noisome prison, destitute of food and medicine, with one hundred and fifty three fellow sufferers, chiefly Highlanders of Colonel Macleod's regiment, men of remarkable size and vigour. Irons, weighing thirty-two pounds, were fastened on him, and this peculiar rigour, he was informed, was the punishment for his daring to attempt an escape, as well as for his resolute rejection of all the tempting offers made him. While the other officers were at large, Captain Wilson was imprisoned with the

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common soldiers, and chained to one of them night and day.

It is hardly possible to express the scenes of unvaried misery, that for two and twenty months he suffered, in this horrible place. The prison was a square, round the walls of which was a kind of barrack for the guard. In the middle was a covered place open on all sides, exposed to the wind and rain. There, without any bed but the earth, or covering but the rags wrapped around him, he was chained to a fellow sufferer, and often so cold, that they have dug a hole in the earth, and buried themselves in it, as some defence from the chilling blasts of the night. Their whole allowance was only a pound of rice a day per man, and one rupee for forty days, or one pice a-day, less than a penny, to provide salt and firing to cook their rice. It will hardly be believed, that it was among their eager employments to collect the white ants, which pestered them in the prison, and fry them, to procure a spoonful or two of their buttery substance. A state of raging

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hunger was never appeased by an allowance scarcely able to maintain life; and the rice so full of stones, that he could not chew but must swallow it; and often (he said) he was afraid to trust his own fingers in his mouth, lest he should be tempted to bite them. Their rice was brought in a large bowl, containing the portion of a given number; but that none might take more than his share, they provided themselves with a small piece of wood, rudely formed into a spoon, which no one was suffered to use but in his turn; and such was the keenness of hunger, and his eagerness to obtain the food, that his jaws often snapped the spoon by an involuntary motion, as though forced together by a spring.

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The athletic Highlanders were among the first victims. The flux and dropsy daily diminished their numbers. Often the dead corpse was unchained from his arm in the morning, that another living sufferer might take his place, and fall by the same diseases. How his constitution could endure such sufferings is astonishing. Yet he had recovered from the flux, which he carried into the priFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 14r10_05-05-000-0014ContentsIndexAbout

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son, and for a year maintained a state of health beyond his fellows. At last, worn down with misery, cold, hunger and nakedness, he was attacked with the usual symptoms of the disorder which had carried off so many others. His body was enormously distended, his thighs as big as his waist was before, and his face exceedingly bloated. Death seemed to have seized him for his prey; but his heart was still insensible as the nether millstone. God was not in all his thoughts, and his conscience cauterized, as if made stupid by his sufferings, he was dying as the beast which perisheth. No humiliation, no prayer, no series of sin, no recourse to a pardoning God, no care about an eternal world; he lay occupied only with the desire of life and hope of recovery. How he survived such accumulated misery, exhausted with famine and disease, the unwholesome vapours of a prison thickening around him, and the iron entering into his flesh, is next to a miracle ; but the days of man are numbered,-and all the days of his appointed time he must wait till his change come.

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Reduced now to the extremity of weakness, his chains too strait to be endured, and threatening mortification, he seemed to touch the moment of his dissolution, and was released from them to lie down and die. The soldier to whom he had been last chained, had served him with great affection, whilst others who had been linked together often quarrelled, and rendered mad by their sufferings, blasphemed and aggravated each other's miseries. Seeing him thus to appearance near his end, and thinking it might alleviate his pain, Sam intreated he might spend for oil, the daily allowance of money paid them, (about three farthings,) and anoint his legs; but the Captain objected, that he should have nothing to buy firing and salt to cook the next day's provisions. Sum shook his head, and said, "Master, before that I fear you will be dead and never want it." But who can tell what a day may bring forth? He had exchanged his allowance of rice that day for a small species of gram, called ratche pier, which he eagerly devoured, and being very thirsty, he drank the liquor in which it

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was boiled, and this produced such an amazing effect, that in the course of a few hours, his legs, and thighs, and body, from being ready to burst, were reduced to a skeleton; and though greatly weakened, he was completely relieved; and afterwards recommended the trial, with success, to many of his fellow prisoners. Remedies are always near, when God designs they should be so, and always efficacious when Omnipotence applies them! His irons were now replaced by others less heavy: and being mere skin and bones, they would slip over his knees, and leave his legs at liberty.

The ravages of death had now thinned their ranks, and few remained the living monuments of Hyder Ally's cruelty and malignity: nor would these probably have conflicted with their miseries many more months or days; but the victories of Sir Eyre Coota happily humbled this tyant, and compelled him reluctantly to submit, as one of the conditions of peace, to the release of all the British captives. With these glad tidings, after they had spent twenty-two months on

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the verge of the grave, Mr. Law, son of the Bishop of Carlisle, arrived at Seringapatam, and to him the prison doors flew open: but what a scene presented itself! emaciated, naked, covered with ulcers, more than half starved, only thirty-two remained out of one hundred and fifty-three brave men, to tell the dismal tale of the sufferings of their prison house.

Their humane and compassionate deliverer immediately provided them with clothes, dressing for their wounds, and food for their hunger; but now their mercies threatened to be more fatal to them even than their miseries. The ravenousness of their appetite could not be restrained; and though cautioned and warned against any excess, they devoured the meat provided with such keen avidity, that their stomachs, long unaccustomed to animal food, were incapable of digestion. Captain Wilson was one of the number who could not bridle his cravings. A large piece of beef was assigned to him, the greater part of which he devoured with a voracious appetite, and the other part he placed under

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his pillow, with an intention to eat it the first moment he should wake; but the sad effects immediately followed. He was seized that night with a violent fever, became delirious, and for a fortnight his life was despaired of. In his prison, under sufferings more than human nature seemed capable of enduring, he had struggled through, and for the most part enjoyed a state of health and strength; but now, in the moment of liberty, joy, and abundance, he received a stroke more severe than any he had before undergone. How little can we determine of the good or evil before us under the sun? He was a more wretched being, surrounded by kind friends and every humane attention, than he had been when destitute, famished, covered with sores, and lying naked on the floor of a dungeon. But he who is the Lord of life and glory had determined he should not thus perish. When all human help had failed, the great physician who has the balm to heal the desperate, rebuked the fever, restored his understanding, and raised him up once more from the dust of death; the eternal Source of mercy would

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not cut him off in the impenitence and hardness of his heart; he had grace in store for him and work prepared when the set time should come; and such work as was the farthest from every idea he had yet entertained. He was for this, continued the living to praise him; but at that time, mercies had no more effect than miseries. His heart was yet hardened, and he knew not the hand that healed him. The day of salvation was not yet arrived, nor the period of his chastisement closed. He returned to life and health with all the same corrupt propensities, the same unrenewed heart, the same forgetfulness of God, and contempt of his word and commandments. No sufferings, not those of hell itself, can produce a salutary change, unless the Spirit of love and power converts the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and melts the obdurate into godly sorrow, working repentance unto salvation never to be repented of.

The Captain often mentioned a remarkable instance of ingratitude, which used, while he was in India, to sting him to the heart A • 2 Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 17r10_05-05-000-0017ContentsIndexAbout

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gentleman of very large property fell overboard in Bengal river, under such circumstances as that he must inevitably have been drowned, had not Mr. Wilson, then a very young man, plunged into the stream and rescued him from the jaws of death. Although he must have known that Mr. Wilson had saved his life at the imminent risk of his own, not only from the almost unparalleled rapidity of the current, but from the number of sharks and alligators in the river; and though there were various methods by which he could have essentially served this young man for his prompt and generous conduct, yet he never expressed his gratitude by any one act of generosity towards his deliverer. Captain Wilson knew well how to moralize on this base ingratitude, as being a crime not only against him, but against society, as it tended by its influence to check the benevolent heroism by which life is often saved. Yet he never, till after he knew and felt the power of the Gospel, reflected on the vile ingratitude of his own heart, towards Him who had so often and so remarkably delivered

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him by his kind providence, when on the brink of death.

Being now restored, and capable of accompanying his countrymen, he descended the Gauts, and proceeded on to Madras. Lord Macartney had forwarded a supply of clothes to meet them; but there not being a sufficiency for all, some had one thing and some another; to Captain Wilson's share a very large military hat fell, which, with a banian and pantaloons, with many a breach in them, made his meagre figure very much resemble a maniac. Impatient to revisit his friends, he walked on from the last halting place, and the centries hardly would let him pass. He hastened to a friend whose name was Ellis, and inquired of the servants for their master and mistress. The footmen stared at him, and said they were not at home, and were shutting the door against him, when he pressed in, rushed by them, and threw himself down on a sofa. The servants were Mahometans, who hold the insane in much reverence, and such they supposed him: and without any violence used to remove him, Captain Wil

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son was permitted quietly to repose himself; and being tired, he fell into a most profound sleep, in which state his friends on their return found him, and hardly recognised him, he was so altered. They left him thus sound asleep till the evening, when the lustres were lighted, and several friends assembled, curious to hear the story of his miserable captivity. When he awoke and saw the glare of light and the persons around him, he could scarce recover his recollection, and for a moment seemed as if he had dropped into some enchanted abode. The welcome and kind treatment of his friends who supplied all his wants, soon restored him to his former life and spirits, and he began to think of new service, as he had yet obtained but a scanty provision, which his long captivity had not much increased, though he received the arrears of his pay. He accordingly shipped hunself as first mate of the Intelligence, Captain Pennington, for Bencoolen and Batavia. In his passage they were surrounded with water spouts, one of which was very near, and they fired to disperse it. The

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roaring was tremendous, and presently a tor-

rent poured on the ship, which brought down with it many fish and sea weeds, yet the water was perfectly fresh; a phenomenon singularly curious. During this voyage, the white ants and cockroaches, with other insects, multiplied in

the most prodigious manner, so that it was resolved to run the ship down from Bencoolen to Puley Bay, and lay her completely under water to get rid of the vermin. After a fortnight, they pumped her dry, and the quantity destroyed of these creatures, with centipedes, three or four inches long, was incredible. Bencoolen was a most unhealthy place, but Puley Bay, is the region of the shadow of death; from thence none escape without the putrid fever. Perhaps the wetness of the ship added not a little to the cause of mortality. Before they left the bay every man of the crew who was a European, except Wilson, died. The Captain came down well on Christmas-day and only dined on board, and returned the same night; the very next day he sickened and died. A

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recruit of black men was sent from Bencoolen to navigate the vessel. The day they sailed out of the harbor, Captain Wilson who had hitherto resisted the unhealthness of the climate, and then commanded the vessel, was attacked with a fever. One Swede yet remained. He had always accounted for the death of his companions, and imputed it to their imprudence. He had confidence he should escape. He was then at the helm going out of the harbor. The Captain, who though ill, kept the deck, observed the ship very badly steered, and called out. The Swede quitted the helm and sat down on the hen-coops. The Captain himself ran to the wheel to rectify the course, storming at the man who left the helm. He made no reply; but how great was his surprise when on going up to him he found him a corpse. The ship, however, visited Batavia, and arrived in Bengal; and though his health continued to suffer, the Captain made a very profitable voyage.

During a year and a half he had repeated and dangerous relapses, and more than once

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approached the gates of death. He continued, however, to improve his fortune, and became himself a sharer in the vessel, as well as commander.

It is worthy of remark how much the most important circumstances of Captain Wilson's life turned upon apparently trivial occurrences. The last events attending his mercantile engagements were such as show the control of Providence over us and our affairs by a hand which we cannot see. The Captain was lying at anchor in port, with his vessel freighted, and ready for sea, but where he and many others had been for some time wind-bound. Being on shove, spending the evening with a number of the merchants and captains of the vossels in the harbor, he met with something which greatly displeased him; he silently withdrew from the company, and instead of sleeping on shore as others did, and as he intended to have done, he called a boat, and went to his ship designing to sleep on board; but soon after he was there, about midnight, the wind shifted nearly to the opposite point of the Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 20r10_05-05-000-0020ContentsIndexAbout

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compass. He immediately weighed anchor and sailed out of the harbor, and had the advantage of a fair wind and sufficient time to get down the river and get a good offing. Before the other ships could get out of the river, the wind resumed its position and forced them back to their former anchorage, and though directly foul to those in port, was tolerably fair for Wilson. When he reached the port to which he was destined, the markets were much in want of the articles with which his ship was freighted, and there being no merchant to share the market with him, he obtained his own price for the griater part of his goods. For the same reason, the articles with which he freighted his vessel back, were cheap. With them he returned to the port from whence he first sailed after a month's absence, and found the vessels wind-bound as before. Here also he obtained a ready and advantageous sale for his goods. By the double advantages of this favourable voyage, with what he had gained before, he obtained a sufficient sum to induce him to retire from busit.ess, and

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from the toils and dangers of the sea; he resolved therefore to return to England, sit down content with what he had, and endeavour to recover his health, and enjoy himself.

With this view, he embarked as passenger in the same ship in which Mr. Thomas, one of the Baptist missionaries, was returning from Bengal to England. With him he had frequent disputes about religion; and being as infidel in principle, as careless in conduct, he could not but grieve this minister, who observed one day to the chief mate, that he should have much more hope of converting the Lascars to Christianity, than Captain Wilson; so deeply mysterious are the ways of Providence. The things impossible to man, are possible with God; but the time was not yet.

Being safe arrived at Portsmouth, he looked around him for an agreeable abode, and having soon discovered such a one at Horndean, in Hampshire, he purchased it, and determined to sit down contented with the very moderate fortune which he had brought from

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India, and amuse himself with gardening and the sports of the country. Being unmarried, he considered of a proper person to have the conduct of his house and family. He had a sensible and agreeable niece, whom he particularly desired to take this care upon her; she was a truly religious woman, and when pressed by him to come and live with him, she informed him of her sentiments, and her wish to attend the worship of God at the congregation of Portsea, to which she belonged. He very carelessly observed that to him this would be no objection; he should not disturb her about her religion; and provided she did not trouble him with it, he should leave her to herself.

About two years he continued to live at Horndean, in the same careless unconcern about eternal things; decent in his conduct, and perfectly sober; amused with his garden, the sports, and company around him; but an utter stranger to the principles of the Gospel, and unacquainted with the power of them.

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From his conversion to Christianity, to his becoming the Captain of the Missionary ship Duff.

THE methods of Providence are inscrutable, but while they are directed by wisdom, they are characterized by benevolence. It was a merciful event for Captain Wilson, that the mind of his niece had been enlightened and imbued with the spirit of truth, previous to his return from India. This was to her a situation of many comforts, but as Horndean was ten miles from the place of worship she used to attend, and where she had received her first serious unpressions, she felt it a great disadvantage to be deprived of the public ordinances of God's house; and this made her appear to him as though not happy. He was also associated with the fashionable persons in the neighbourhood, whose conversation and habits were not congenial to her state of mind: he perceived this, and though he never made it

Names:

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the source of uneasiness to her, yet it rather marred his pleasures, and excited his surprise, that what he then considered as infocent amusements and guieties, could afford her no pleasure. Her predilections, love of religious books, anxiety for divine worship, and evident solicitude for his spiritual welfare, had a preparatory influence on his mind; he pitied her weakness, as he considered it, but admired her integrity; he perceived that she had her felicities, though they were not from his paradise.

The operations of Providence are often most interesting in their minutest parts, though not most observable. We see the hand of Deity in a thunder-storm—but are unmindful of his influence in the dew of the morning. But what is true of the naturalist, is equally true of the judicious moralist and divine; the parts least noticed by the common eye, are those which most excite his investigation and astonishment. The most momentous events of our lives often originate from those we consider the most trivial and accidental. This sentiment is represented

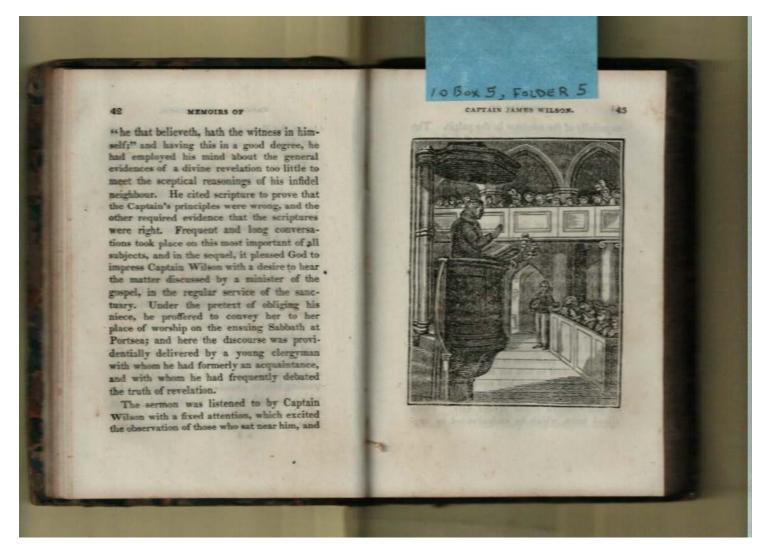
CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

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to us, by Providence counting the hairs of our head, and directing the falling of the sparrow to the earth.

Captain Sims, a gentleman who had for some years retired from the active duties of his profession, upon a respectable competency, resided near to Captain Wilson. The habits of good neighbourhood soon brought them into a friendly acquaintance. Captain Sims had for many years, for he was then in an advanced period of life, professed a zealous attachment to the principles of vital re-" ligion, and regularly attended divine worship on the Sabbath, at Orange-street Chapel, Portsea. He had frequently introduced the subject of religion to his friend Captain Wilson; but he was better acquainted with the interior of religion, than qualified to defend its out-works. Captain Wilson proudly defied the artillery of his heavy denunciations against unbelievers, and smiled at his entreating him to abandon the standard under which he had so long fought, and to join affinity and allegiance with him. Captain Sims had realized the truth of that scripture, D 2

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especially of the minister in the pulpit. The sentiments produced a conflict of feelings in his breast. His memory, reason, conscience, imagination, and passions, were all in agitation. His prejudices for and against the doctrines of the gospel, his hopes and fears, his love and hatred, his pleasures and disgusts, raised a storm in his soul, resembling the concussion of the elements in a hurricane; for while his heart rose in hatred against the sovercignty of God, the events of his whole life appeared before him as incontrovertible evidences of its truth.

The impassioned strains in which the concluding part of the sermon was addressed to the anditory, representing the infinite compassion of the Saviour, his long suffering with sinners, the various and persevering methods he used to bring them to repentance, and his inexpressible readiness to receive and pardon all that applied to him for mercy, drew tears from those eyes which had never wept during the long and almost unparalleled sufferings he had endured under Hyder Ally. These silest tears, which he endeavoured to sup-

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press, and which he was afraid to wipe off, lest he should excite observation, drew tears of benevolent joy from the eyes of his friend that sat opposite him, who heard the sermon more for the Captain than himself, and spent a great part of the time in turning its principles into earnest supplications for his spiritual welfare.

When returning home with Miss Wilson in the evening, the Captain related the sermon be had heard in the morning, and the impressions it had made upon his mind. He appeared very serious, and said, "if what I have heard to-day be true, I am a lost man." This language drew tears of joy from his affectionate niece, who immediately began to present the bright side of Christianity to his mind, assuring him that he would soon find more pleasure from believing it, than ever he had found from the world. He now became very pensive and thoughtful; the Bible and the writings of good men were his constant companions.

His friend, Captain Sims, soon perceived that he was under very deep concern about Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 25r10_05-05-000-0025ContentsIndexAbout

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the salvation of his soul, yet he said but little to him; for the Captain wishing to know every thing at once, like youths who enter upon the study of a new science, asked such a variety of diversified and unconnected questions, that it was very difficult satisfactorily to answer them. The truth of revelation believed but partially, and with many painful suspicions, was now but a secondary object, his great concern being absorbed in the inquiry, How shall I be saved? Never did a labourer wish for the night of rest, more than he longed for the return of the sabbath. The next Lord's-day morning, he was one of the first in the place of worship. The prayer astonished him; the adorations, confession, petitions, pleadings, and thanksgiving, every part appeared to be composed for him, and seemed to open the sluices of his soul, that he might pour out his grief, fear, desire, and gratitude into the bosom of the Father of spirits.

The next subject in course exhibited to his view a delineation of the image of the Son of God; the cause, progress, evidences,

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and advantages of conformity to God, were explained and enforced. From this discourse he perceived, that he was far from bearing a resemblance to Jesus Christ, that it is the work of the Spirit of God to produce such a resemblance, that there can be no scriptural assurance that we shall be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light but by our bearing this resemblance, and that our happiness is only in proportion to the degree of our conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. This sermon deepened former impressions. Sin appeared exceeding sinful. His judgment perceived the fitness, and his conscience felt the force of truth. The next. sabbath morning, the minister described the way in which a resemblance to Christ was begun, progressively effected, and finally perfected: and the sermon on justification opened to his mind the method of a sinner's acceptance with God. He perceived that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, that faith is the means by which a soul is interested in his justifying righteousness, and that the promise of the acceptance of

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a penitent sinner, through Christ, is the ground or warrant of faith.

This discourse, under Providence, was the principal means of removing, in a good degree, the load of guilt which had for some weeks pressed on his spirits, and dispelling the gloomy apprehensions which tormented his mind about a future state.' He now entered into the pleasures of religion. Before, he was driven by fear; now he was drawn by love. The horrors of the night were turned into the joy of the morning. He now thought he understood what it was to be translated from darkness into marvellous light; from the power of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, which is not in meats or drinks, in things external, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Old things were passed away, and all things became new.

His countenance, which before had indicated the anxious thoughtfulness and desponding apprehensions of his grief-worn spirit, now brightened with cheerfulness, while a radiance of ardent love and gratitude

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seemed to sparkle in his eyes. His conversation was no longer forced, broken, and distressing. He spoke freely, and in every company; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." He wondered that his friend the Captain, was not more exalied with confidence, and elevated with joy, and began to reprove his former reprover for his lukewarmness.

Soon after Captain Wilson's mind was relieved from distress, by the knowledge and application of the gospel, he called upon his minister. This was the first interview they had with each other after a former conversation on the subject of Deism. He began by telling his friend that he had resolved for some weeks to visit him, but at length the happy state of his mind constrained him to call. He then related the progress of his views from the time of the conversation, and said, "I have no language to express the happiness I now feel; and the gratitude I owe to God, I hope will be expressed in the life I have yet to live, by my zeal in the service of God bearing some good pro-

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portion to that I have manifested in the service of Satan. But, my dear sir, I shall never reward you for the good I have received; were I to give you all I possess in the world, it would be but a poor compensation for the benefit I have derived from your conversation and ministry."

The pleasure felt by his friend was such as none but the christian, who realizes in some degree the value of an immortal soul, can feel.

The Captain soon manifested to the circle of his gay acquaintances, the change of his principles by a change in kis habits. He vainly imagined that he might keep their company with a view to their religious improvement, without going all the accustomed lengths of gaiety. He consulted his minister on the propriety of his design to maintain an intimacy with his worldly connexions, with a view to their benefit.—His minister perceiving it was not easy to reason him out of the belief of the probability of attaining his object, remarked, "I strongly suspect, if you do not withdraw from their parties,

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they will withdraw from you." He soon experienced the truth of this observation. For a time, however, he accepted their invitations, and received their visits, but endeavouring to carry his purpose into execution; he conversed with one on the truth of the Bible, and the necessity of constantly reading it, asking the individual some questions which tended to bring its truths home to his conscience; to another, he spoke of the sin and folly of swearing and taking the Lord's name in vain; to a third, of the importance of the sabbath, and the necessity of keeping it holy. To others, he ventured occasionally to mention the subjects of death, judgment, and a future state, and to make allusions and applications as though he thought it their duty to think on these subjects. For a few evenings he retired, hoping from their silence that he had made some useful impressions, and that his object would be obtained, but afterwards he found they had rallied their forces and combined their energies. One ridicaled his serious countenance, as though he was surely very ill

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and was about to die; another on his being mealy-mouthed, and of using language only fit for a place of worship; another took the Lord's name in vain, and then apologized. The Captain found the flood of raillery which he had often poured on others, now returning on himself. He frequently tried to stem the torrent by argument; at other times he aimed to go with it by joining in the laugh till it had spent itself, but all to no effect. They were resolved either to rout him out of his strange notions, or to rout him from their society; but as they could not accomplish the former, their parties were at length formed unknown to the Captain, but as he heard of them through the medium of his servants. He thus learnt that it was not possible to serve two masters-that there is no communion between light and darkness, and that a faithful and lively Christian is constrained to come out from among the world and to be separate. They have as great a dislike to his company as he has to their's. He now understood the meaning of that scripture, "Marvel not if the world

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hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you; if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Captain Wilson being a man of leisure, and having no pleasure in the sports of the field, his time was principally occupied in reading. His minister was sometimes at his house for several days, pursuing his own studies on one part of the day, and directing those of his friend on the other. He read with avidity most of the principal works on the evidences of Christianity, until he had obtained such a firm persuasion of the truth of revelation, as to be able to say afterwards to his friend, in a letter from Rio de Janeiro-"The Bible is no canningly devised fable; though I may have my doubts at times of my personal interest in the glorious work of redemption, yet not all the men in the world, nor Satan with all his principalities and powers, can, or ever will, I trust, persuade me that it is not the word of the Most High; neither could any thing so completely have 22

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weaned me from the things of the world as this precious volume has done, since I have been enabled to believe it to be the word of God.

The Captain found that though one class of society shunned his acquaintance, another as eagerly sought it; for in nothing do real Christians more resemble the spirits in heaven, than in the joy they feel when a sinner repents and testifies his love to the Redeemer. Many rejoiced to hear him tell what God had done for his soul, and cheerfully aided his mind in its searches after evangelical and experimental truth. But the Captain, like most young Christians who have had little previous acquaintance with the religious world, fixed his standard of the Christian character higher than facts or the scriptures will justify. He had not then learnt the truth of that adage of our old divines, . The best of men are but men at the best' He expected to find in almost every one professing to be a Christian, a degree of religious knowledge, of spiritual affections, amiableness of temper, disin

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terested benevolence, and glowing zeal for the honor of God, as much beyond what he experienced, as their standing in the Christian church exceeded his in duration. For a Christian to be sleepy under a sermon, every sentence of which appeared to him almost like a new revelation from heaven, seemed totally unaccountable. That such persons should converse on any other subject than religion, except what was necessary to the economy of life, was to him a fearful indication that they were destitute of it; or that believers who agreed as to the spirit and constituent principles of Christianity, should so differ about modes of worship or their sectarian interests, as to produce an uncharitable or a bickering spirit and conversation, appeared to him a religious solecism. He often, therefore, returned from the company of some religious persons disappointed and grieved, scarcely able to exercise that charity which hopeth all things, and believeth all things; not properly considering that while he was waiting for their conversation, they, from what they had heard of him, and

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from diffidence in themselves, were waiting for his. Thus, while he improperly attributed their silence to want of zeal and spiritualmindedness, they as improperly attributed his silence to Indian hauteur; which shows how cautious Christians should be in putting unfavorable constructions on the conduct of each other.

For some months after Captain Wilson understood the knowledge of salvation through Christ, he believed what he read in the word of God without hesitation. Feeling that the gospel was just suited to his case, and not doubting but that God was sincere in his gracious invitations, and firmly believing his faithfulness to his promises, he cordially received the remedy that infinite love had provided, and resting his soul on the oath and promises of God, he enjoyed the comforts of the gospel in a high degree. He experimentally knew that the kingdom of God was in righteousness, peace, and joy. He was able to call God his Father, and he walked all day in the light of his countenance. Old things were passed away and all things were

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become new. Those who were most intimate with him, often found it a presage of heaven to be in his company. The "first love" of some was brought to their remembrance and rekindled into a flame; others were deeply humbled and excited to close investigation of their own state, fearing by a comparison of themselves with him, that they had never felt the saving power of religion on their soul.

That believers of considerable standing in the church should question their interest in the blessings of the gospel, and be sometimes in darkness and despondency, were facts to him hardly credible, and perfectly unaccountable. Time, however, the corrector of our early mistakes, taught him that he had known but little of the plague of his own heart, or of Satan's devices. Before two years had passed, former ideas recurred without their novelty, and consequently without the strength of first impressions, while on the other hand, old ideas returned, and old propensities revived, and struggled for ascendancy. The mind began to reflect on itself, Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 31r10_05-05-000-0031ContentsIndexAbout

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and to trace its own operations in search of evidences of his being a partaker of the grace of God which bringeth salvation-now a variety of deficiencies were discovered, and the power of indwelling sin was grievously felt. He began to question whether his knowledge were not merely scientific, the effect of human, instead of divine teaching; whether his pleasures of religion were not the excitements of mere human passions, instead of the exercise of gracious affections; whether his confidence in the promises were not presumption, and his zeal for God the mere love of novelty and of self-applause. Not having yet learnt, while the eye of selfexamination is investigating the state of the soul, to keep the eye of faith steadily directed to first principles, the infinite love of the Father, the efficacious atonement of the Saviour, and the promised agency of the Holy Ghost, his soul was involved in sore distress. While he was looking into the abyss of his own heart and into " the horrible pit" into which sin had plunged him, he forgot the rock on which he was standing. He now fell into

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the practice of most young Christians; he reasoned on the feelings, when he should have lived by faith; the one he might have done, but he should not have left the other undone, This, however, is a lesson not easily learnt; and when learnt, it is not easily practised.

After a few months more, his mind was recovered from its perplexities; he had clearer views of the warrant of faith, and better understood the nature of Christian experience. Though he perceived that the sanctification of the Spirit, forms the evidence of our meetness for heaven, and is as essentially necessary to salvation, as an interest in the justifying righteousness of Christ, yet that the atonement of the Redeemer, and the promises of God, constitute the foundation of our hope of acceptance with him. On this basis he was enabled to build the superstructure of faith, hope, and practice; and when the evidences of grace became weak and indistinct, he had recourse to these first principles to revive and strengthen them.

Early in the year 1796, he was admitted a member of the church of Christ, in Orange Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 32r10_05-05-000-0032ContentsIndexAbout

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street, Portsea, with great pleasure to the minister and to the people. His residence being ten miles from the place of worship, prevented his frequently associating with the pious, aged, and established members of the church. This was a considerable disadvantage to him, for as "iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend." Habits of activity and benevolence are seldom formed from merely reading; they generally arise from example and association. It is much to be lamented that many Christians have resided in country villages, surrounded with the poor and the ignorant, perishing for lack of knowledge, without using any means to instruct and save them, while those who live at a distance from such scenes, frequently converse on the most necessary and suitable objects of benevolence, and devise the means of sending the Gospel into the unenlightened villages around them. The Captain had not been sufficiently long in the church to have learnt the principles, and to form the habits of an active and extensive Christian zeal. He had, previous to

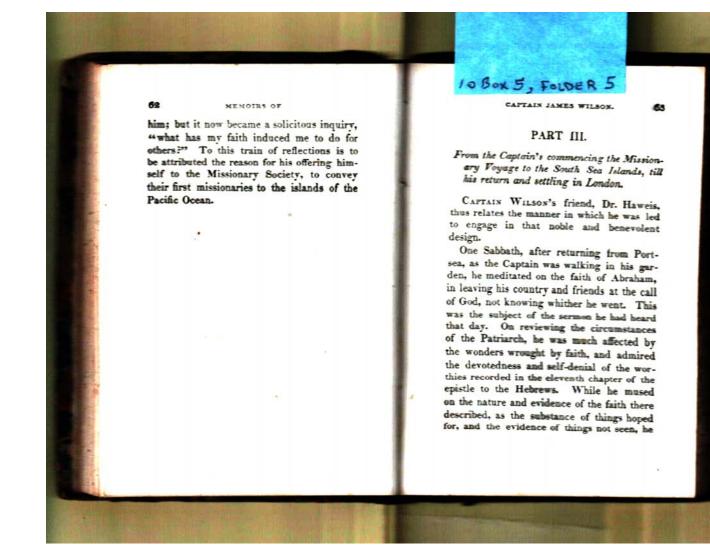
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his conversion, given proofs of considerable generosity to some of his relations, and which he increased after he had experienced the power of divine grace. But he had not been particularly excited to the exercise of liberality for the cause of God, till his minister, preaching regularly on a Sabbath morning through the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, showed that faith not only induces the negative parts of a Christian's conduct in his abstaining from that which is arrows, but that it excites and impels to the active and benevolent virtues of the Christian life.

This course of subjects excited in the Captain's mind a considerable degree of painful anxiety respecting his state as a Christian. He now fully perceived that the design of God in imparting divine grace to the heart, was not only to save the individual, but to make him the means of saving others. "Ye are the salt of the earth" and " the light of the world" began to vibrate in his conscience, as though spoken from heaven by the lips of the Saviour. He had reason to hope that his faith had done something for Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 33r1005-05-000-0033ContentsIndexAbout



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began to question himself on the reality of his own, and felt a rising fear in his mind, lest be should have deceived himself by placing doctrinal opinions in the stead of divine convictions of the truth. He asked himself, if called in Providence to suffer or to serve like these, whether he could as readily give up all for Christ and go forth at the divine bidding.

The impressions made by these reflections fixed deeply on his heart for several weeks, and his mind underwent many harassing fears and desponding feelings on this subject: till one day after receiving the Evangelical Magazine, the first subject which caught his eye and attention, was the account of a design to form a Missionary Society in London, and if possible to convey the gospel to the islands of the Pacific Ocean. The thought immediately forcibly struck his mind, "If you are wanted to command the expedition, have you faith to sacrifice all the comforts around you, and freely devoting yourself to the service, could you embark once more on the deep, not to increase your substance, but

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to seek the souls redeemed by the blood of the Lamb?" He felt that moment he could do it with pleasure; he perceived his faith was equal to the sacrifice; he read the chapter over with delight, and was sure he could, if called, give himself up to God.

He had enjoyed some happy hours in these meditations. They were the frequent subjects of his thoughts, when one day a series of new ideas rose up in his mind, to which he had been hitherto a stranger, and which abundantly testify the activity of Satan, in endeavouring to hinder the good work of God. He had hardly during all the years of service on the sea ever known what fear was: he had been unaffected by the storms which he had encountered, and never thought of the perils of the deep; but now the dangers and difficulties to which such an enterprise must expose him, rose up to his view, and he began to reason on the folly of quitting his present comfortable abode for a life so very different; and determined to try to banish the idea from his mind. It followed him, however, in spite F 2



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of all his efforts. Fearing to trust his own judgment, he resolved to communicate his thoughts to some of his serious and most judicious friends, state to them the feelings of his mind, and have their advice on the subject.

The general voice, on the view of his circamstances, rather discouraged his entertaining any further thoughts of the matter. Though they highly approved of the mission, and honoured his zeal in desiring to promote so glorious a cause, some of them did not see his call clear to quit his present station, and persuaded nim to weigh the subject well in his own mind before he determined. His mind, however, rested not at ease. He was conscious he ought not to move but on some evident call of necessity-that he must see the path of duty clear before he quitted the comfortable settlement he enjoyed, and though his heart was greatly drawn out in prayer for the glorious object of the mission, he resolved to wait awhile the leadings of Providence, without entirely renouncing his purposes of service, if required.

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A general meeting of the HampshireAssociation of ministers being held at Salisbury, among other objects, to consider the subject of forming a Missionary Society, to decide on the intended mission, and to promote its accomplishment, he determined to accompany his minister thither, and hear what should be advanced on the occasion. There also he mentioned to some of the brethren the impression which rested on his mind; but they rather in general damped than encouraged his sensations on the subject; and though they zealously favoured the missionary attempt, they hardly thought his services would be necessary, as it was to them improbable that a ship would be employed solely for that purpose.

He had now, probably, dropped all further thoughts of the matter, if the first general Missionary Meeting had not called up his pastor, with many others, to town, in order to consult what steps were proper to be pursued at the commencement of so great an undertaking. The Captain resolved to be of the party, to see and hear for himself what was Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 36r10_05-05-000-0036ContentsIndexAbout

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the object intended, and the means proposed for carrying the mission into effect.

Previous to his going to London, feeling his mind in a painful state of perplexity and incapacity to decide what was right, he informed his minister, that he had made up his mind to leave the case with him; he should have all the responsibility of his offering his service, or of declining it. His friend was naturally unwilling easily to give up such a respectable and useful member of his church, and to sacrifice the pleasure of his society, yet felt sufficient zeal for the cause not im properly to influence his mind on such a subject. He, however, declined accepting such a responsibility, but declared himself willing to consult with him most conscientiously what was right, when the plan of the society should be more fully developed.

Captain Wilson listened with serious attention to the discourse delivered to the body of the society; "wherein I," says Dr. Haweis, "expressed my confidence, that however difficult the work might appear, God would provide instruments for the execution of his 10 Box 5, FOLDER 5

own purposes; that the means would never be wanting if we zealously set our shoulders to the yoke, and considered the glory of the object and the urgency of the call. He attended next day at Spa Fields Chapel, and



heard the first discourse, since published, enforcing our daty, describing the objects, and suggesting the steps necessary for the execution. These met his full approbation, and contributed to decide his mind on the subject. He desired his friend to call upon me and appoint an interview. His minister described the man and his conversation, situation, circumstances in life, his ability and Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 37r10_05-05-000-0037ContentsIndexAbout

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zeal. "My very heart," says this venerable minister, "leaped with joy at the proposal, and I was filled with hope, that God, in different places, was raising up men unknown to each other, for the accomplishment of his own purposes toward the heathen. I begged to see him without delay, and we met next morning, when, after some conference concerning the mission, with great modesty and diffidence, but with a decided purpose, he intimated, that if the society could not find a better conductor, which he wished and hoped they might, the service should not be impeded for lack of nautical skill; and that he was ready, without other reward than the satisfaction resulting from the service, to de vote himself to the work, with whatever in convenience to himself it might be attended. He gave me an account of the dealings of God with him, and expressed a sense of the obligation he was under to our Lord to dedicate himself to his service, as he said he should never forgive himself if he held back when his help was wanted. It was now agreed between him and his minister that he

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should write a letter, addressed to the chairman of the next meeting, in the name of the Captain, offering his services to the society, should they be needed, to carry its designs into effect. The letter was accordingly written, and two of the directors were appointed as a committee to converse with Captain Wilson on the subject. They were equally charmed with his modesty, ability, zeal, and devotedness of heart to the work, and concurred in opinion, that nothing could tend more powerfully to the accomplishment of our designs, than having such a man to command the vessel that should convey the missionaries to the place of their destination. The offer was therefore embraced by the director with delight, and contributed in a very special manner to animate our confidence, that God would provide all other necessary means, and quicken us to execute the work without delay."

"I may speak with confidence," says the Doctor, in his memoir presented to the society at its last meeting, "where my brethren are all so unanimous in opinion, that a man more Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 38r10_05-05-000-0038ContentsIndexAbout

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highly qualified for this work could not be hoped for, if we had the choice of the whole land. In all his manners a gentleman—a mien that is commanding—an age yet in the prime of vigour with the maturity of experience—and with all, an amiability of diffidence of offering himself, that seemed only conquerable by the calls of the mission and the deep impressions resting on his own heart. I confess I have been so struck with the circumstance, and many other particulars I could mention, that I know not where to close.

"The Captain being presented to the directors, confirmed the report which had been made; and though he hoped we might yet find an abler commander, and in that case he might be excused, and his heart be at rest, yet he pledged himself, if we could not, to do his best for the mission; and that at whatever time he should be called into the service, he would come up and prepare for the voyage. At the end of the week, when the society broke up, he returned to his house in the country, leaving the deepest impression upon every man who conversed with him, that

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never did a person appear more eminently qualified for the discharge of this service than the man so providentially prepared for us.

"Some months elapsed in the preparatory steps, in seeking out, and examining missionaries, providing funds, and weighing the properest means of carrying the proposed mission into effect. After long and ample discussion, it was resolved that the attempt should be made in a ship belonging to the society, sufficient to carry thirty missionaries, and that Captain James Wilson be requested to undertake the command. This resolution was accordingly communicated to him, and though he had met with many causes to damp his zeal, and deter him from the service, he continued fixed in his purpose, and his correspondence breathed a spirit so truly noble. that it was impossible not to congratulate each other on such an acquisition.

"The mission being now in great forwardness, and a second general meeting in May, 1796, having confirmed all our former resolutions, the Captain was desired to come up, which

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he did, and took an active part in the preparations.—Not less than seven or eight times did he go up and down, though more than sixty miles from town, at his own expense; sought out, and purchased a proper vessel, forwarded every thing in his department, engaged the mariners, and settled all his own affairs for so long an absence. He sold his house at Horndean, fixed his niece in London, and prepared to embark with the missionaries in a long and perilous navigation. "Through the whole of his eventful story,

"Through the whole of his eventful story, we discover a beautiful and admirable developement of the leadings of Divine Providence. Who would have looked for a commander of a Christian mission, in an impious and infidel sailor, chained in a prison at Seringapatam? Who would have expected to find the man who returned from India, contradicting and blaspheming the faithful leader in the missionary cause, within five years afterwards on the quarter deck, in the midst of prayer and praise, carrying the everlasting Gospel to the Isles of the Pacific Ocean? Who that reads the history of his

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eventful life, can hesitate to confirm the exclamation of the Moor-man, "This is God's man!"-About this time he wrote to his friend at Portsea, describing the state of his mind.

London, June 28, 1796.

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"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"According to my promise, I write to inform you of a ship having been purchased yesterday afternoon. I this morning took possession. She is the first rate vessel of her burden in the river; but when I tell you she cost five thousand pounds, you will think she ought to be a good one. Such is the high value of ships at present, that I think she is worth what we gave for her. She is river built, two years old, copper bottomed and fastened, and a complete vessel for our purpose. I cannot help observing that it will require all the well-wishers of the cause to exert themselves to the utmost-but why should I talk thus? Has He not power to command the gold, that commanded such a rebellious wretch as I was, to be willing in the day of his power"

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"Praise be to God for all his mercies. Were it not for the many precious promises, I know not what I should do, for it is really hard parting from all those we fondly love, and entering into a sea of trouble and perplexity. I look back on my past life with pain; to my future pilgrimage I look with fear and trembling; but to that state where we shall all meet, and every tear be wiped from our eyes, I look with a pleasing hope, that I shall be one of that happy number. This cheers my drooping spirits and causes me to press onward for the prize, forgetting the past and the present, and looking only to the future for real happiness. "Had I thought I should have been held

"Had I thought I should have been held up to public view, as I have been by some of my friends, I should most certainly never have offered myself; but now there is no retreating.

"I therefore trust that the Lord will strengthen me for the work, and enable me to accomplish it to his praise and glory. Ah! my worthy and dear friend, you say what I now experience: "New engagements and

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new circumstances will cause new trials." I am persuaded that even at this early stage of the business, I have seen more of the human heart, than I should have known for years in the calm retreat of a country life; but knowledge is of little use if it does not influence the heart. If I do not deceive myself, I think I feel more humble, and find Jesus more precious than ever, and a throne of grace the greatest consolation I can enjoy.

"I am your affectionate brother in Christ, "J. WILSON.

London, July 27, 1796.

"I have just time to tell you, I received your kind and affectionate letter; it came at a very suitable time. I had just returned from the India House, where I met with the severest ridicule; but blessed be God, I bore it with patience, and I trust this is some proof, that he will bear me up through every trial and difficulty.

"I find my mind, though severely pained, yet quite resigned to the will of my gracious o 2 Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 41r10_05-05-000-0041ContentsIndexAbout

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God and Father, and can look up to him for a supply of grace and strength in the trying hour of parting. You are mistaken, my dear friend, respecting my inward conflicts; I have never been more assaulted by the great adversary, since I professed to believe the truth as it is in Jesus, than I have recently; but blessed be his name, he has kept me; though I have been constrained to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." My inward and outward trials keep me very low, but I trust the Lord will enable me to carry his people to the furthermost parts of the globe. Should he bless me thus far, I trust I shall then be able to resign my all into his hands; for the only thing I wish now to live for, is, to promote his glory .- Your affectionate letter I shall peruse when I am many leagues from you, and will follow your kind advice.

"I hope the Lord will be with you of a truth. I shall be on my knees at half-past six on the morning you allude to, for the purpose of praying for you and my church, through whose instrumentality I have re-

10 Box 5, FOLDER 5 CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

ceived such unspeakable blessings .- 1 am,

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ever, ever, your affectionate friend, "J. Wilson,"

The ship purchased for the voyage, was called the Duff. In her were embarked, four ordained ministers, a surgeon, and twenty-five other missionaries or settlers, being pious persons, having for the most part been engaged in business or mercantile employments, highly necessary to impart the principles and habits of civilization to the South sea islanders, together with six women, wives of some of the missionaries, and three children.

The ship was manned by three principal officers, besides a gammer, carpenter, steward, and sail-maker, fifteen other sailors and the Captain, most of whom made a profession of being under the influence of Christian principles. They sailed from the river Thames, August 10th, 1796, having for their flag, hoisted at the mizen-top-gallantmast-head, three doves argent on a purple field, bearing olive branches in their bills. The ship was navigated to Spithead, by Mr. Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 42r10_05-05-000-0042ContentsIndexAbout

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William Wilson, the chief mate, where the Captain joined her and took the command. Here they were detained, waiting for wind or convoy for some weeks. Several of the Directors, from London, visited the ship, and crowds of pious people from the neighbouring towns, who left a variety of presents either for the missionaries or for the natives. Such was the fervor of the Captain's religious zeal, like most persons under first impressions and in new religious engagements, that he declared himself astonished, after what he had heard in London, that none of the prominent ministers should offer to go as missionaries. He was equally surprised that any, who were not absolutely bound by circumstances, and had felt the power of truth, and knew the state of the heathen world, could quietly remain in England, while millions abroad were perishing for lack of knowledge. His minister did not wish to damp his zeal, but urged a variety of considerations to regulate it. At the request of the Captain, he wrote in a book various cautions, counsels, and admonitions,

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under different heads. These he often read, and as he afterwards expressed, found them of unspeakable advantage to him. His friend was aware, that though he had been extensively acquainted with the world in general, he had known but little comparatively of the religious world. Perceiving that his standard of the Christian character was fixed very high, and his hopes corresponded with it, he endeavoured to moderate his expectations, and prepare him for disappointments.

The Captain had an arduous task to perform. He had duties to discharge which required great diversity of talent, and even opposite qualifications. Among the sailors, he had to maintain authority and command, and yet conduct himself towards them as a brother in Christ. Among the missionaries, he had to preside in their meetings of debates and arrangements, and at once to step from the command on the quarter-deck into the missionary cabin; and there, forgetting that he was Captain, to preside as a brother. Such a situation required great firmness and Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 43r10_05-05-000-0043ContentsIndexAbout

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decision of character, and yet much real kindness and pliability of temper.

The convoy being at length ready, and the wind steadily fair, the ship, in company with more than fifty others, sailed from Portsmouth, on the 23d of September, waited by propitious winds, and under the auspices of the effectual fervent prayers of many thousands of Christians. The ship on her passage touched at St. Jago, and arrived on the 12th of November, in the harbor of Rio de Janeiro, from whence the Captain addressed the following letter, giving an account of himself and the voyage to his friend at Portsea.

Rio de Janeiro, Nov. 15, 1796. "My Dear and Rev. Friend,

"Were you near the directors, I would refer you to their letter for information; but as that is not the case, I will give you all I can. We sailed from you on Friday the 25d of September, and on the following Sunday we lay to off Falmouth; and on the 30th a fresh wind springing up from the north-east, I thought it a favourable opportu-

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nity of parting with the convoy, by which we had been considerably detained. In six days afterwards, we passed the island of Maderia, and on the 14th of October, cast anchor in Porto Praya bay, in the island of St. Jago. After getting our water-casks filled, and obtaining other refreshments, we sailed the next day, so that you will see there was no time lost. At this place, and the two following days, we experienced the hottest weather, and then the thermometer was only 77 degrees: and when immediately under the sun, which was in latitude 16° south, it was 72-30. Thus you see how exceedingly kind our God has been to us. From the time we sailed, till our arrival here, the vessel has had little more motion than on the day you and our friends came on board in the sloop. On the 29th, we crossed the Equator in longitude 30° west. Hereabout we had a few squalls. These being what the missionaries were not accustomed to, the first one alarmed them very much. They were at prayers below, at eight in the evening, when the vessel laying down sudFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 44r10_05-05-000-0044ContentsIndexAbout

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denly, some fell to leeward; one in particular got up the fore hatchway, but before he knew where he was, he tumbled head foremost down the main without hurting himself. These things, to old sailors, cause a great deal of mirth when attended with no injury.

"We arrived here on Saturday the 12th instant. After waiting on the Governor, J could not go on shore again, owing to the ceremony of visiting the ship, which was not over till late last night. A fleet bound to Lisbon being on the point of sailing. I thought it best to stay on board to write to you and the Directors, lest I should lose this opportunity. I mean, if possible, to sail from this place by Saturday next, as I wish to get to the field of action. I trust the great Head of the church will conduct us safely through, and give me wisdom to conduct this interesting undertaking. We must be infidels indeed, after experiencing the past loving kindness of the Most High, not to trust him for the future.

"Myself, officers, missionaries, and ship's

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company, are all in perfect health, blossed be his name, who said, 'When thou goest through the waters I will be with thee;' this promise, with many others, we have fully realized. I have had five of the missionaries at my table every day, besides giving all on board one, and sometimes two fresh meals a week, beside other refreshments suited to the climate. Some of the missionaries tell me they have not tasted salt meat yet. Their conduct has really been very pleasing. I have no doubt but the Lord will do good by them to the poor Indians. I am persuaded should one soul be called to the knowledge of the glorious Gospel of our blessed God and Saviour, it will more than recompense me for all the dangers, watching, anxieties, and various privations that I have had or may have to endure in this long voyage: I feel my mind prepared to act as circumstances offer; I am persuaded that God has called me to this work, and that he will carry me through it. I know, my dear friend, in my own strength I can do nothing right; but as the apostle says, I can do all -

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things through Christ who strengtheneth me." The Bible is no cunningly devised fable: though I may have my doubts at times of my personal interest in the glorious work of redemption, yet not all the men in the world, nor Satan with all his principalities and powers, can, or ever will, I trust, be able to persuade me that it is not the word of the Most High. Nothing in this life could so completely have weaned me from the things and maxims of this world, as this precious volume has done since I have been enabled to believe it to be the word of God. I have not had yet a single wish for any of my temporal blessings left behind, and the only fear I have had, has been that the Lord would not prosper the work in my hands. I have been often afraid lest I should not please the Society; but now, though conscious of always offending, I can go and plead with my great Employer my own ignorance and insufficiency, and earnestly intreat for more wisdom and strength, according to his promises. This, my dear friend, is part of my experience since I left you: I trust I have an

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interest in your prayers, and in those of the church. Give my Christian love and affectionate regards to them all. My continual prayer to God for them is, that they may live in brotherly love, and that they may stir up each other to act more and more like king's sons and daughters, and not to choke the good seed with over anxious cares for the things of this world. This will pain their consciences and fret their souls till they are as lean as Pharaoh's cattle. I trust, my dear friend, as the Lord has placed you over his vineyard, you will be careful to destroy those injurious weeds. I know you cannot do this of yourself; but what you have to do, is to use the means, to cry aloud and spare not, and leave consequences with your Master.

"I would have written to my friend Mr. Eastman, but I think as I have written you every particular, and am very much engaged, he will excuse it: give my Christian love to him and to all his family—let me hear from you at Canton in China. Give my love to all my Christian friends in your neighbourFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 46r1005-05-000-0046ContentsIndexAbout

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hood. The Lord bless you, guide you, prosper and preserve you, is the fervent and sincere prayer of

"Your affectionate brother in Christ, "J. Wilson."

Nothing further was heard of the Duff, till May the 11th, 1798. On Friday morning, the last day of the fourth general meeting of the Society, when it was favoured with the use of the elegant and spacious church of Spital Fields; "In the time of service a note was sent to the church," say the Directors, in their Report, " That the Duff was on the list received that instant at Lloyd's, of ships safely arrived at Canton in China, before the end of December." this Dr. Haweis announced from the pulpit, as soon as the prayers were ended, that the whole congregation might partake of the joy which began to be communicated from individual to individual, and that all might unite in praise to God on the occasion; the emotions excited by this pleasing and unexpected information can be more easily conceived than expressed.

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The next day the following letter was received from Captain Wilson, from China, which is inserted, because it gives an epitome of the voyage in the laconic and unvarnished language of the Captain. This letter was circulated as speedily as possible among the members of the Society in town and country.

TO JOSEPH HARDCASTLE, ESQ.

Canton, December 16, 1797. "DEXE SIE,-I wrote to you last from Rio Janeiro, dated the 15th of November, which I hope you received, informing the Society how kind our heavenly Father had been in wafting us so far in perfect health and safety; we can now further say from experience, that he has never left us from that time to this. At present I can only give you the outlines of our voyage, which no doubt you will be all glad to hear.

"After receiving a plentiful supply of every thing needful, which I was able to pay for, having cash of my own, we left that port on the 19th. From that time to the 3d of December, nothing material happened,

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only the weather getting gradually colder. But the Lord showed us we were going the wrong way, by sending a severe gale from the south. We could now see that to beat round Cape Horn would be folly to attempt. After shipping several heavy seas, by which we lost some of our live stock, we hore up to go by the Cape of Good Hope. This was a great trial, being in latitude SO, and longitude 50 west, and having now a line to run of 262 degrees in longitude, besides latitude. However, we had soon reason to rejoice; for by the 24th of January, 1797, we were in longitude 155 east. Had we laid to another night, ere we bore away, we must have lost all our stock; instead of which, the missionaries had fresh meat twice a-week all the way, besides dining with me as before re-lated; and though we had repeated gales we never had occasion to batten down our hatches once: add to this the inestimable blessing of the public ordinances of our God, and the missionaries every means of improvement. Thus were we carried along in a most pleasing manner. On the 30th of

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January we rounded New Zealand, and on the 4th of March made Otaheite; but from various winds, we did not anchor in Matavia till the 6th, where we were received in the most friendly manner.

"Here mark the dealings of Providence: a large house which the natives had built for Captain Bligh, was just finished; the whole island in perfect peace (Pomarre and his son Otoo being absolute sovereigns of this island and of Eimeo,) thus our business was expedited; for instead of many chiefs as we expected, we had only to make our errand known to Pomarre. This we were fully able to do, our God having kept two Europeans for the purpose, the other having gone to Europe; one of them, whose name is Peter, had left the Dædalus; the other, named Andrew, was cast away in the Matilda, and had been five years on the island-both could talk the language fluently. Our reasons for coming were no sooner made known to Pomarre, than he said we should not only have the house, which is a hundred feet by forty, but that all Matavia should be given to the

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English, which was accordingly done in the most formal manner.

"After having thus succeeded far beyond our expectation, it is now necessary that I should acquaint you that some time before we made the land, the missionaries had divided in the following manner. Eighteen for Otaheite, besides women and children; ten for the Friendly Islands, and two for the Marquesas. This being the case, we had no time to spare. As soon, therefore, as I saw them in their commodious house, we sailed for Eimeo, with a view to get the ship ready, but more particularly to see how the natives would behave during the absence of the ship. After five days we returned-found them all well, the natives having treated them with the utmost kindness. Having no time to spare, we made all sail to the Friendly Islands. This was on the twenty-sixth of March. On the first of April we made Palmerston Islands, and on the ninth, Tongataboo. The next day we anchored about the place Captain Cook lay, according to his bearings. The anchor was no sooner gone

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than the ship was surrounded with canoes. A number of chiefs came on board, who informed us that two Europeans were on the island, and to our great joy they soon made fbeir appearance; but of all the men we ever saw, these were certainly the most wickedlooking fellows, and they soon gave us proof they were as bad as they appeared to be. One of them was an Irishman, named John Kennelly; the other, Benjamin Ambler, of London. They told us a strange story respecting their coming to these islands; but this was a matter of little consequence to us, firmly believing that the Lord had sent them as our interpreters; for though we had provided, as we thought, sufficient instruments for the purpose, by bringing Peter and two Otaheiteans with us, we should have been much at a loss, the language differing so much, that they could not understand one word in ten: but these two men, Ambler and Kennelly, who had been only thirteen months on the island, speak the language well. After some time our business was partly told them. They readily agreed to

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give all the assistance in their power. After giving them and the chiefs presents, they all went on shore, apparently highly satisfied. Very early the next morning we were surrounded with a prodigious number of single canoes, besides ten or twelve large double ones. From the peaceable manner they left us the night before, we had not the least sus-picion, until the two Europeans came and told us they intended to take the ship. This you may easily conceive alarmed us very much. We got the people to their quarters as privately as possible. After getting thus ready we scaled two of our guns; on this the large canoes began to sheer off, and a number of single ones followed. Whether their intention was really to attack us, we know not -but it was very alarming to see so many canoes and people round the vessel, presenting their clubs and spears for sale, which might in a moment be turned against us.

"Our fears in a great measure being done away, Ambler pointed out four chiefs, which he said, were the only ones we need care for. Tibo Mamoe, the present king, was then at CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

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the point of death, and his son Tugahowe, the least of the four, would certainly succeed his father, (which afterwards proved to be so;) he would therefore recommend the missionaries being placed under his care. After talking with them on the subject they readily agreed to go. I told them they could not expect to keep their chests, and if they were the least afraid, I would take them back to Otaheite. Their answer was, that property was only a secondary object with them, that they would go in an humble dependence on that God who had brought them safe over the mighty ocean, and had enabled them to leave their country and their friends. After a most solemn season in prayer, six of them went with the chief and Ambler, but not before they promised they should want for nothing. The other chiefs wanted each to have one; but we thought it best for the present they should all be together, promising to a that when the ship returned, if they then mose to separate, each should have some of them: this satisfied them all. Having received various presents, they all went on shore before dark,

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and all the cances left us. The next morning we weighed and ran further out, that we might have plenty of room in case of an attack. About noon, two of the missionaries returned with the pleasing intelligence that the natives did not attempt to steal, but treated them with the greatest respect. We then loaded the cances with the remainder of their things, and with such stores as they thought they should want.

"We now got under weigh to endeavour to find a channel to the westward of the spot where Captain Cook got aground. After some time a very good one was found, which we sailed through. This we conceived to be a valuable acquisition, as we should now, in case of being attacked, be able to sail out of the harbor either to the east or west. Being now without the reefs, we intended to spend two or three days to see how the natives would behave to our people; but the Lord saw fit to send us a smart gale from the north-west, so that at day-light we found ourselves in a critical situation, not being able to weather the reefs on either tack; but

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to our comfort we just fetched the channel which we had discovered only the day before, and thus we narrowly escaped shipwreck. Before we cleared the harbour, we were nearly cast away a second time. What cause have we to praise our God for thus preserving us in such imminent danger. Having now cleared the harbour, April the 16th, we made the best of our way towards the Marquesas, with the only two missionaries on board, Messrs. Harris and Crook. The fair wind lasted six days, and was succeeded by hard gales from the eastward, so that on the 6th day of May, we were only in 206 degrees of longitude and 39 degrees of south latitude.

"On the 23d of May we discovered two islands, on which we endeavoured to land; but the natives, from their bostile disposition, prevented us. We named one the Crescent, from its shape; the other after Sir Charles Middleton; they lay in latitude 23° 12° south, and in longitude 220° 15' east. The next day we discovered another, which we named after Admiral Gambier, latitude 21°

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\$6', longitude 225° 40' east, and on May the 29th, discovered another, which we called after our friend Mr. Searle; latitude 18° 18' south, longitude 224° 12' east. On the 4th of June made the island Christiana, and the next day anchored in Resolution Bay, after a long disagreeable passage of fifty days. Our rigging being now in a bad state, it was necessary to get it on deck. I shall only remark, that on getting the fore shrouds down we found two of them gone, so that had we been on the starboard tack instead of the larboard, during the gales we had in this passage, we must have been dismasted. O what cause of gratitude for all His kindness to us!-We no sooner arrived than we were visited by many of the natives, and amongst them the chief, whom, after a few visits, we gave to understand that the two missionaries were to stay with him. On hearing this he could not contain himself, but jumped about the cabin for joy. He said they should have a house, and that they should never want while he had to give. The young lad Crook, went immediately with the chief; but Harris

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staid on board to get the things ready, as he said: however, I am sorry to say in this place, that though he was the first that proposed coming to these islands, and was the cause of two others not coming, he seemed now to have lost his missionary spirit, which was visible to every one. After a little time he went on shore, but with such a gloomy countenance, that the natives soon took a dislike to him. The youth, on the contrary, was cheerful and obliging, so that the whole village was remarkably fond of him. In consequence of this I was under the necessity of carrying Harris back to Otaheite. I would have brought Crook away likewise, but he begged to be left, which was agreed to, and I have no doubt but he will prove a blessing to those poor good-natured heathens.

"Having now refitted our rigging, and supplied Crook with every thing needful, we took an affectionate leave of each other, and sailed for Otaheite on the 27th of June. In our way we took a view of Trevenen's and Sir Henry Martin's islands, and arrived in Matavia the 6th of July, when I found them Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 52r10_05-05-000-0052ContentsIndexAbout

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all well. I began dividing their property, which I found a very disagreeable task: this took up all the time I was here; but I got through it apparently much to their satisfaction.

"Having now completed our business, we took leave of our dear friends and the kind natives, the 4th of August, and touched at Huahine, which was in a dreadful state, owing to their wars. From this we made Palmerston island, and planted bread-fruit, plantains, and ava-trees; and on the 18th of August, anchored off Tongataboo, nearly in our old birth. We were soon visited by our dear people, who informed us they were all well, except one, and how the Lord had preserved them from the machinations of their countrymen, who had done all in their power to make the poor heathen destroy them; and that some of them had separated, (under different chiefs,) with a view to counteract their villainous plots. During my stay, Messrs. Buchanan and Galton went to live with another chief, which I trust will be the means not only of gaining their affec-

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tions, but will likewise facilitate the knowledge of the language, which is of the greatest importance. After doing every thing in our power with the chiefs, and dividing the articles, we parted, with many tears on both sides. I brought away Mr. Nobbs, by their advice, as he had not his health from the time he landed. Our intention was now to touch at the Fegee Islands, and if possible to have some intercourse with the natives.

"On the 7th of September, we left Tongataboo, and on the 9th, in the evening, made the Fegees; but after six days toil, trying to find anchorage, we were under the necessity of quitting them without finding any, or having any intercourse with the natives; yet not before we struck on a coral rock, but got off without receiving any damage. I believe no islands in the world are so hemmed in by dangerous reefs. We got into the middle of them, and we have reason to be thankful we got out in the manner we did. In steering to the westward, we made the island of Ruttuma, and had a 1 2 Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 53r10_05-05-000-0053ContentsIndexAbout

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little intercourse with the natives, who seem to be of the same race with the Friendly Islanders; they talk the same language, and their canoes are of the same construction. From thence we intended making the best of our way to the Pelews; but from variable winds and calms we did not reach them till the 7th of November, and then, from the stormy appearance of the weather, we did not think it prudent to stay; after a little intercourse with the natives, therefore, we proceeded on our way to this port, with a view to send you intelligence, if possible, by the first ship. We found on our arrival at Macao, which was the 21st of November, that we could not proceed to Wampoo, without an authority from the Hoppo, because we had no cargo. Finding a ship had been detained a month, I went to Canton, by which means we got permission the fourteenth day we an-chored at Wampoo. There are three of the last ships ready for sea, but I prefer sending you this by a Danish ship. There are four direct ships arrived. My nephew received

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a few lines from you and Mr. Fenn, but I have not yet received any; three of the packets are not yet up, and I could not think of losing this opportunity.

"This brief retation, I hope will be satisfactory to all our dear friends; but you must make great allowance for the writer. I shall conclude with only observing, that as our work has been great, having been eleven months, out of fourteen, at sea, the wear of the sails, &c. has been in proportion. We never split a sail, nor carried away a mast. The seamen and officers are in the ship, all well, except one seaman, who ran from the ship. I can give you no idea when we shall leave this place. To me it is the worst part of my voyage, having to associate with the professed enemies of my Lord, and frequently I am the butt of the whole company.

"May the Lord increase your zeal, and present you with such instruments as he will own and bless. This is, and ever will be the sincere prayer, of,

"Dear Sir, your affectionate servant, "J. Wilson." Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 54r1005-05-000-0054ContentsIndexAbout

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Before the Captain left the islands, he received general and many individual testimonies of the affection and gratitude of the missionaries. Those at Tongataboo, being the last island he visited, wrote to him, on his leaving the South seas, the following kind and grateful letter:-

" Tongataboo, Sept. 5, 1797. " DEAR SIR,

"As the period is just at hand when we are to bid a long farewell to each other, perhaps never more to meet on this side eternity, we should consider ourselves as inexcusable if we did not address a few lines to you, expressive of the grateful sense we entertain of the many and kind offices you have rendered us. We recollect with pleasure, the time when we first heard of your intention to forego every thing that might render your native country dear to you, in order to conduct us to the place of our destination; and with pleasure we acknowledge that we have often, when addressing the throne of grace, found ourselves delightfully

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and powerfully constrained to adore and bless our heavenly Father on your account, whom we have considered, and do still consider a truly valuable gift of Providence to the Missionary Society.

"The many instances in which we have found you a faithful and friendly adviser; . your kind endeavours to render our long voyage as agreeable as possible, and the attention you have paid to our interests, before and since your return to this place, call upon us to express to you our most lively gratitude. May the Lord return into your own bosom an hundred-fold for every expression of your kindness towards us. Dear Sir, we trust you will not look upon this as fulsome adulation; no, far he it from us to commit. such a crime; believe us, these are the real sentiments of our minds, and could you look into our hearts, you would see more than we can express.

"The most important part of your voyage is now finished, and you are about to return to your native land. May that God who has been with you, and delivered you out of so Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 55r10_05-05-000-0055ContentsIndexAbout

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many dangers, still be with you; may you experience his supporting, comforting, and reviving presence continually; and may he enable you to rejoice in the comfortable assurance that your name is written in heaven. In return for your kindness and prayers for us, we will not be unmindful of you in our addresses to the Father of mercies. Our social meetings, our private retirements, shall witness the sincerity of our desires for your welfare, both temporal and spiritual; and we can not but acknowledge the pleasure we feel from the consideration that we have not a wish for your welfare, but you can return with equal warmth of affection. May the Lord bless you to the end of a useful life, and cause you to experience an increasing meetness for his heavenly kingdom, till the blissful moment arrive when every earthly object shall disappear, and the shining glories of the future world shall open to your enlightened and enlarged soul in such a manner, as would in this frail state quite overwhelm it.

"Adieu, dear Sir, till we meet in those

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happy mansions where we shall no more say farewell—till then, believe us to be your sincere well-wishers, and thankful and obliged servants in the gospel of Christ.

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"D. BOWELL, Secretary." "To Capitain Welcon, on board the Ship Def."

Though the Captain met with considerable ridicule in China on account of his religion, yet his business was facilitated beyond precedent. He expected to be detained there at least three months; but Mr. Hall, the head supercargo, informed the Captain, that as the ship was reported to be in excellent order, and fit to receive a cargo, if he could be ready in five or six days to receive his lading, he would dispatch him. By the kindness of the other supercargo also, the difficulties usually thrown in the way by the Chinese were easily surmounted. The ship was dispatched in a shorter time than had ever been known before; for though these . gentlemen smiled at the Captain's religious zeal, they could not but admire his benevolent philanthropy, and therefore readily exFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 56r10_05-05-000-0056ContentsIndexAbout

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pedited his business. The ship was ready just in time to sail with the first ships that were leaving China. The singularity of the manners of the officers and ship's company while at Canton, excited attention. All immorality being utterly discountenanced, not an oath sworn, and an unusual devotion maintained, induced those in the ships whose company they had joined, to give the Duff a new name: they called her • The Ten Commandments."

The ship left China, the 3d of December, 1797, and arrived after a safe and pleasant passage, at the Cape of Good Hope, on the 17th of March, 1798. Here the ships of war impressed some sailors from the other ships, but none from the Duff. They sailed from the Cape on the 1st of April; touched at St. Helena on the 15th; on the 24th of June put into Cork for convoy, and under the protection of the Ethalion, Captain Countess, the Duff arrived safe, and all well, in the river Thames on the 11th of July. In a few days the cargo of teas was discharged in as perfect a state as when received at China.

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"Thus," says the Captain to his minister in a letter off Dover, "has our God wafted us from place to place in a most wonderful manner, having sailed nearly fifty thousand miles since we left you, in little more than one year and nine months. I may say with Naomi, 'I went out full, but the Lord has brought me home again empty.' Yet not without being able to say, I think with sincerity, The prosperity of Zoon lies near my heart.' Experience had taught the Captain his deficiencies, and the necessity of an habitual dependance on divine grace.

The return of the Duff, and the brief but interesting account of the voyage published by the directors, excited an unusual degree of attention, and of gratitude to God among the friends of the Missionary Society; while the admiration of the conduct of the Captain was the subject of almost universal conversation. The fervour of pleasurable feeling glowed in every boson, and darted from individual to individual like an electric sbock. The directors, in their special report on

this occasion, observe, "The safe return of

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the Duff, the health which prevailed on board during the whole voyage, the welcome reception and safe settlement of the missionaries at the places of their destination, and the remarkable interpositions of Divine Providence from beginning to end of this remarkable enterprise, were such evident answers to the numerous prayers which had been offered up to God on behalf of the mission, as loudly demanded the most public acknowledgment of gratitude and praise."

"The directors, therefore, of the Missionary Society, having acquainted the friends of the institution, as soon as they possibly could, with the leading circumstances of the voyage, requested that a day of public thanksgiving might be observed on the 6th of August, being the first Monday in the month, when the prayer-meetings of the Society are usually held throughout the kingdom; that all whose hearts have been interested in the work might have an opportunity of uniting at the same time, in the same pleasing and reasonable service; they appointed Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, to whose

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church Captain Wilson belonged, to preach on the occasion at Surry chapel in the morning, and Dr. Haweis, as being one of the oldest ministers in the direction, and who first proposed the mission' to the Pacific ocean, to preach at Zion chapel in the evening. These extensive places were soon filled with serious and respectable auditors. The whole services were conducted with the utmost solemnity, the presence of God was happily experienced by preachers and hearers; and never perhaps was gratitude more warmly expressed on any public occasion."

After Captain Wilson's return from the South seas, he resided in London for some time; his niece, as before, having the superintendence of his domestic concerns. The effects of a sedentary life, after a long seavoyage, soon manifested themselves in a very serious bilious attack, which indicated a morbid affection of the liver, and in his own opinion threatened his life. In this state of body he possessed great pleasure and comfort of mind. He felt that he had lived to accomplish an important object, and he was

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therefore not unwilling to die; but He who had fixed the bounds of his habitation, added nearly twenty years more to his life.

The same unerring Providence which had guided him by a right way through the whole journey of life, now led him to a city of habitation, and he became united by marriage to a respectable family on Denmark Hill. Immediately on his return from India, he manifested a benevolent concern to advance the interest of several relatives, the descendants of two of his brothers; and it was his aim after his return from the missionary voyage to promote the same object. One of these had obtained a respectable wine trade in London, and afterwards entered into extensive mercantile engagements. The Captain out of kindness to his relative, advanced several thousand pounds in aid of his capital. This sum being in jeopardy from the state of the times, to save them and to rescue his friend and relative from the gulph which he perceived opening beneath him, he advanced some thousands more. Besides these loans to his relative, he likewise made some of nearly or

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quite sixteen thousand pounds to another individual in part connected with his relative, and as he conceived principally for his benefit. He continued to make advances in order to save the former sums, till in consequence of the failures of the British merchants in the shipments to South America, his relative failed for a vast sum of money, and the other person was incapable of meeting the Captain's demands upon him; so that all the advantages of some years fatigue in the Indies, besides what he received with Mrs. Wilson, and what was left him by Mr. Holbert, his fatherin-law, a sum in the whole little short of thirty thousand pounds, were all swallowed up by the adventurous engagements of one he, from friendship, most earnestly wished to serve.

Though, through the kindness of a munificent Providence, he still possessed an ample fortune for his children, in the right of Mrs. Wilson, he had nothing at his own disposal that he thought would admit of leaving to any of his friends the least testimony of former

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friendship, however endearing, or of long standing.

Few lives have more clearly taught us the uncertainty of human possessions, and that we are under the control of an invisible hand, than that of Captain Wilson. A life subject to such a vast number of changes must necessarily have excited as numerous and various feelings; these had produced in the Captain's mind a deep and lively sense of the divine government. He admitted that all he possessed was by the gift of a munificent Providence, and that the same hand which had given, or rather lent it to him, had a right to take it again. If, however, there was in the character of this excellent man a marked shade, it was perhaps a want of a sufficient sense of his obligations to his God and Redeemer, to use a proportion of his property for his honour. God often chastises faults in his own people, which he suffers to pass without correction in the men of the world. Christians are partakers of more exalted principles, have higher privileges, a more glorious

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destination, have greater obligations, and are therefore under a different discipline from unregenerate men. The cause of truth and the salvation of the souls of men, is, under God, dependant upon the principles and actions of his own people. What he gives them is not for themselves only; they are to be the lights of the world and the salt of the earth; they are to lay by, according as God has prospered them, for the promotion of his cause.

"He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, and he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."

It was remarked by many, after the Captain had made so noble a sacrifice of his time and property in the missionary voyage, when it was understood that he had married a truly pious lady, the only child of a gentleman of very ample fortune—⁴⁴ See how God rewards his faithful servants even in this life." But he who gave him this addition to his fortune, thought fit to wean his heart from it; and this was, perhaps, one reason why he was suffered to sustain so great a loss by the advenFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 60r10_05-05-000-0060ContentsIndexAbout

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turous conduct of others. In either view the providence is instructive and improving. We see how easily God can return to his people a hundred fold in this life, for what they do for his cause; and on the other side we see that if his people do not make a scriptural and benevolent use of what he gives, how easy it is for God to take it again. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord."

This event, in a spiritual sense, proved highly beneficial to the Captain. It gave him deeper discoveries of his own heart, and of the minute fulfilment of the word by the providence of God. In the October and May previous to his death, these events were the subject of very useful conversation between the Captain and his friend: he observed, "In how many ways God has taught me my dependance upon him! he saw this was the most effectual way to humble my spirit, to wean me from the world, and to bring me nearer to himself; and I trust he has done it." The writer never left his company at the period mentioned, but he felt, in a lively degree,

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that as iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend. The profitable reflections he made upon his own life and experience, showed how closely he had watched his own spirit, and the advantages he had derived from the word of God.

His family afflictions and frequent personal indispositions produced retired and domestic habits. In this retirement he not only read, but studied the Scriptures; the word of God was his companion. Part of the day was devoted to reading the Scriptures, and committing certain portions to memory, and another part to a repetition of them as he walked or rode to town, or employed himself in his garden. By this means he obtained a great richness in experimental religion. His conversation with his intimate friends was highly instructive and animating. Indeed, his religious feelings were kept so much alive by this profitable train of meditation and much prayer, that he felt considerable reluctance to company, as he was often disappointed in not meeting with a corresponding disposition in others to converse on spiritual subjects. His

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mind was spiritual, resigned, and full of confidence of his personal interest in the blessings of the gospel. He wondered at the sovereign grace which had been manifested to him, and exalted in the glorious prospect before him.

His last illness was painful and protracted, but he bore it with great patience and fortitade, and his death was not only peaceful, but triumphant. His pastor, the Rer. George Clayton, preached his funeral sermon to a very respectable and crowded auditory. In this discourse, he gave an affectionate testimony to the character of his deceased friend and deacon of the church, and also an interesting account of the last closing period of a life, which, for diversity of circumstances, affecting incidents, and happy termination, has but few equals.—The substance of this account is here inserted >—

"Such blessed be God!" says Mr. Clayton, "is the consolation we enjoy in regard to our departed friend and brother. I must confess I feel some degree of embarrassment in speaking of him upon this occasion, because he enjoined me in his last moments to say nothing 10 Box 5, FOLDER 5

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which should tend to bring him into notice. Yet this injunction, which was quite in unison with the retiring modesty of his character, had an exceptive clause relating to the glory of God and the edification of the church. It is not possible, however, to separate these points from personal allusions, when a narrative is to be given, designed to illustrate the efficacy of Christian principles, in scenes of sickness and in the hour of death. Whatever it may be necessary to say of the individual, is not intended to exalt the dead, or to administer to the unprofitable curiosity of the living; but is advanced with a view to glorify the truth and grace of our Divine Master whose we are and whom we serve. It happens that our departed friend was very extensively known in the religious world, more particularly from the circumstance of his accepting the command of the ship Duff, a vessel fitted out at a considerable cost by the Directors of the Missionary Society. On this account, some details of the concluding scenes of his Christian course may very naturally be expected. I shall not attempt to eater miFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 62r10_05-05-000-0062ContentsIndexAbout

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nutely into the particulars of his early life, though his history was indeed an eventful one, because it is my aim to present him to your observation, only as he was occupied in the province of religion. Suffice it then to observe that, on his return from the voyage, in which he proved himself worthy of the trust reposed in him, his circle of connections and friends was greatly widened. Among other families of worth and affluence to whose acquaintance he was introduced, was that of the late Richard Holbert, Esq. of Denmark Hill, Camberwell, whose amiable and pious daughter he married, in the year 1799, and found in her to his latest day a most tender and affectionate wife. Having entered upon a domestic settlement which fixed him in our immediate neighbourhood, he became an occasional communicant at the table of the Lord in this place, till in the year 1805, he received a regular and honourable dismission from the Christian Society at Portsea, under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. Griffin: and we can bear a thankful testimony to the manner in which our departed brother fulfilled the da-

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ties devolving on him. We are witnesses of his steady attachment to the house of God, his punctual attendance on the ordinances of divine worship, and his humble unassuming deportment amongst us. About ten months ago, his health visibly suffered by the incroachments of an internal distemper. No very alarming symptoms, however, at first appeared; but as weeks and months revolved, it was impossible not to observe the change which augmented disease had made in his frame and appearance. So long since as the close of the year 1813, his aspect was such as to excite the regret and apprehension of all his friends, and he even then entertained some thoughts that his sickness would be unto death. Under this impression, he made the following observation-"I would as soon die noto as at any time, if it were not on account of these ties (alluding to his endeared wife and his little children,) but the Lord is allsufficient; I can trust them in the hands of that God who has been my God." The first sabbath in January 1814, was the last in which he was present at the sacrament of

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the Lord's supper and the last but one in which he appeared as a worshipper in the sanctuary of God. He used to express much regret at this unavoidable detention from our public assemblies, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" and in the language of Hezekiah, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?" a commendable feeling this in the chamber of sickness, and very unlike the temper of some professing Christians, who pant more ardently for a return to the places of busy traffic and mercantile concourse, and are sooner seen there on recovery, than for the courts of Jehovah—the palaces of Zion.

It pleased God to exempt our departed brother from acute pain, of which he had only two severe paroxysms during his long protracted illness. This alleviating circumstance enabled him to employ his leisure hours in those thoughts and exercises of mind, which were suited to the dispensation under which he was placed, and to the prospects which were opening before him in unparalleled grandeur and awful solemnity. He

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had been generally accustomed to repeat those tines of Dr. Haweis at the end of every day.

"One day more is past And the nearer my last, To the close of my life and my labours I haster My strength as my day Renewed—I stay On Jesus my hope, and still hold on my way."

and was wont to add with peculiar emphasis and delight-

"And when, my work done, My full course I have run, And my pilgrimage finished under the sun, To hear'n I shall soar, Where the night is no more. And awake to thy praise, these ever t' adore."

Habituated thus familiarly to converse with death, he was not in the least degree dismayed by its nearer approaches. To his medical friend, and to those who occasionally visited him, he would talk with as much calinness of his departure from the world, as of any transaction to which he had been accustomed while in it. On one occasion he quoted these

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lines with evident pleasure, as applicable to his own case.

" Safe lodg'd my fruits, at even tide I rest; My work near done, I lean on Jesus' breast: Wait, without fear, death's winter drawing nigh, Preparing for my mansion in the sky."

His was a strong unwavering faith, which swallowed up every fear, and enabled him to look at death not only without dread but with joy and triumph. The exercise of this holy principle moreover was not restricted to the concerns of his soul, which he had committed into the hands of the Redeemer, but extended also to those of his family. He was the subject of warm affections, and as a kind husband and a fond father, his little ones were closely entwined about his heart; yet through a reliance on the divine Providence he was enabled to divest himself of all the tender anxieties of a relative life, and to cast them on his God and Saviour. The struggle was painful, but faith was completely victorious. He would pray earnestly for his dear children, and express a strong desire that they

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might be trained up in scriptural sentiments and thus brought to the knowledge of Christ —but it was evident that he had no disquieting care concerning them, and no prevailing wish to continue with them. The cords of earthly attachment were all loosened, and the willing spirit waited, without perturbation, the signal for its flight.

Exemplary patience was a distinguishing feature in the character of this dying believer. Though made to possess months of vanity, and though many wearisome nights were appointed unto him, not a murmuring word was heard to escape his lips. He justified the Sovereign Disposer of events in his dealings towards him, and was rather inclined to enlarge on the subject of kis mercies than his afflictions. Charity also, to his fellow-creatures, was manifestly apparent in his last hours. He declared his forgiveness of those who had injured him, and testified his good will towards them by offering up prayers on their behalt. In this state of readiness for the hour of his departure, he seemed considerably disappointed when the morning

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light returned and beheld him still in this vale of tears, and especially when the revolving sabbath witnessed those conflicts on earth which he longed to exchange for the rest and the triumph of heaven. Surveying the wastes of disease in his emaciated frame, he exclaimed, "What a different body will this be in the morning of the resurrection, if I am found in Christ! I hope I shall be enabled to wait with patience till my change come. I am not afraid to trust my all in the hands of the despised Nazarene!" To a relation who said, "I hope you will get better," he replied, "my hope is beyond Jordan!" At one time he repeated these lines as applicable to his own case—

> " Triumphant now from sin and death, From law and curse secure; Peaceful I yield my parting breath, And know my beaven is sure !"

On the return of his pastor from an excursion in the country, of whom he had already taken a solemn, affectionate, and as it was judged, a last farewell, he expressed great

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surprise that we had met again in the body. "I had hoped," said he "to obtain my release ere this, but the messenger still delays. I desire to say, the will of the Lord be done-but I request you will pray for a speedy dismission." His nights, which for the most part were sleepless, he passed in prayer, and in the recollection of those passages of scripture which were familiar to his mind. And it is here especially worthy of observation that he derived the utmost solace. and refreshment from the many portions of sacred writ which he had committed to memory in the last years of his life. The account he gave of this matter, was as follows: "When I arrived at the age of forty-six, beginning to feel the failure of sight, I was struck with the idea, that I might perhaps become wholly unable to read the sacred volume; under this impression I set myself to learn by heart whole chapters, and even books, which I rehearsed in my solitude, whether at home or abroad, in set portions every day. So that in the course of a week I had repeated all I had learned, and by this means reFrances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 66r10_05-05-000-0066ContentsIndexAbout

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tained what I had previously acquired, and continued adding something to the store! "I cannot describe," said he, "the pleasure and advantage I have derived from this practice, especially since I have been laid on this sick bed: I am now incapable of reading much, but I have found a rich fund of consolation in recurring to those parts of the scriptures which I have treasured up in my memory " The word of Christ dwelt in him richly, and as he delighted much in the law of the Lord, so he meditated therein day and night. From a personal experience of the benefit accruing from such a familiar acquaintance with the Bible, he enjoined it upon his dear children, and recommended to his young friends in general, to copy his example in this respect, only to begin much earlier than he did. After expressing his kind wishes for a young gentleman for whom he entertained a great esteem, he sent this message to him by a mutual friend, who was about to visit him in a remote part of the country, "Charge him to store his memory with the scriptures, to begin immediately, for now is the time to set

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about it. Had I begun at his age, I should now have been able to recite that blessed book from beginning to end." It is believed this message from the lips of a dying Christian had its full weight, and has led to the adoption of the salutary practice it intended to recommend. Our departed brother could repeat, perfectly, a great part of the Psalms of David; many chapters of the prophecies, and of the gospels, and several entire epistles of the New Testament. In one of those nights which he passed without sleep, he informed an old friend who kept watch at his bed-side, that he had repeated the Epistle to the Hebrews, from the first to the eleventh chapter inclusive; and he believed, without the omission of a single verse.

To one of his children, the sablath before his departure, he said, with a firm tone, "My dear child, I thought I should not have seen you again; I expected this would have been the first sablath I should have spent in eternity; but God's time is best." On one of his friends inquiring if he were comfortable, he replied, "Yes, and if I had but my tongue," Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 67r10_05-05-000-0067ContentsIndexAbout

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(his mouth being in such a state as to render speaking exquisitely painful,) "I would let you all know how happy I am; I am looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God my Saviour." At one season he observed, "Here I am, waiting for my change-what a mercy!" To his medical attendant, who, aware of his unconquerable aversion to medicine, had, with much kindness, administered as little as the case would admit, he said, "I cannot take any more; let me go as easily as you can;" and then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, added, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for I trust mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Not long before his dismission, he used the following verses, with a reference to his own circumstances

My fluttering pulse, and falt'ring breath, Announce the near approach of death; How can I meet, dear Saviour, say, The last dark, dismal, cloudiest day.

* Look to my cross, the sovereign cure, For all the ills thou can'st endure; 10 Box 5, FOLDER 5

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Whence dart the beams of endless day, And clouds and darkness fice away."

He was blessed with the continuance of his intellectual faculties till within two or three hours of his dissolution, when the powers of nature being completely exhausted, the unfettered spirit was allowed to take its joyful flight to that blissful region, where the inhabitant saith not; "I am sick," the people that dwell therein having been forgiven their iniquities. Contemplating his undisturbed and tranquil exit, we may truly and emphatically say, "the end of that man is peace."

Thus terminated the life of Captain Wilson, on Friday, August 12, 1814, at the age of fifty four, leaving a widow, a son, and four daughters, to lament their loss. Since his death, Mrs. Wilson has been bereaved of her second daughter about eleven years of age, who gave pleasing testimony that she was graciously fitted to meet the blessed spirit of her father in the realms of eternal light and folicity.

felicity. It will, doubtless, be gratifying to our readers to be informed of the prosperous Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 68r1005-05-000-0068ContentsIndexAbout

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result of the attempt to spread the knowledge of Christ among the islands of the South Pacific. We subjoin the following extracts.

The Rev. Mr. Marsden, in a letter dated March 6th, 1816, stated that not less than seven hundred natives were attending the school of the missionaries at Eimeo. A Sydney gazette also mentions the sudden increase of the school from 50 or 60, which had usually attended, to that number; and adds: "Independent of those taught at the school, many others have learned to read under the tutorage of their own countrymen, whose books they borrow occasionally, and thence accrues a new source for the extension of knowledge. Idolatry has received an universal shock, and totters from its foundation throughout all the islands. Some of the opposing chiefs, with the priests and their followers, endeavour to prop the rotten fabric, but their efforts conspicuously tend to the acceleration of its fall."

The same gentleman, in a letter dated June 7, 1816, says, "All accounts agree that

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a most wonderful change has been produced in all the Society islands; and the spread of the Gospel seems to be almost universal. I think we have never read, since the Apostles' days, of the Gospel spreading in so wonderful a manner as it has done lately in these islands. Pomare is become a great man and a pious Christian; and shows the work of grace to be real, from the whole of his conduct. I understand he is now a sovereign once more. His enemies made an attack upon him and his people on the sabbath day, when they imagined they would not defend themselves; but Pomare felt it his duty to fight on the sabbath, in defence of himself and subjects. In this battle he obtained a complete victory, and took many prisoners, whose lives he spared, contrary to their custom, which has had the most happy effect upon the minds of his enemies, as it has convinced them that the new religion is a mer-ciful religion. Many have joined him from the effects of his clemency."

Idolatry is totally abolished in Otaheite and Eimeo, and is fast giving way in other

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islands. The school flourishes, and many who have learned to read, have dispersed themselves among the islands, and have taught others. Many hundreds can read well; at least 3,000 have books among them; and hundreds of the natives can repeat their Catechism word for word.

The following are extracts from the letters of the missionaries. After detailing some serious feuds in the islands, they add:--

"These things had a happy effect upon the minds of the idolaters. They unanimously declared, that they would trust their gods no longer; that they had deceived them, and sought their ruin; that henceforward they would cast them away entirely, and embrace this new religion, which is so distinguished by its mildness, goodness, and forbearance.

"In the evening after the battle, the professors of Christianity assembled together, to worship and praise Jehovah for the happy turn which their affairs had taken. In this they were joined by many who had, till then, been the zealous worshippers of the idols.

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After this, Pomarre was by universal consent restored to his former government of Tahejti and its dependencies; since which he has constituted chiefs in the several districts, some of whom had for a long time made a public profession of Christianity, and had for many months attended the means of instruction with us at Eimeo.

"In consequence of these events, idolatry was entirely abolished both at Taheiti and Eimeo; and we have the great, but formerly unexpected, satisfaction of being able to say that Tahiti and Eimeo, together with the small islands of Tapuamanu and Teturoa, are now altogether, in profession, Christian islands. The gods are destroyed, the morais demolished, human sacrifices and infant murder, we hope, for ever abolished; and the people every where calling upon us to come and teach them.

"The sabbath day is also every where strictly observed, and places for the worship of the true God have been erected, and are now erecting, in every district; and where there is no preaching, the people have prayer Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 70r10_05-05-000-0070ContentsIndexAbout

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principal chief, has also publicly renounced idolatry, and embraced Christianity. His example has been followed by most of the other chiefs, and a large majority of the people throughout the four Society islands; name ely, Huahine, Raiatea, Taha, and Borabora. Two chiefs of Borabora, named Tefaaora and Mai, have distinguished themselves by their zeal in destroying the gods, and erecting a house for the worship of the true God. The chiefs of these islands have sent letters and repeated messages to us, earnestly entreating us to send some of our number to them, to teach them also: and Mai sent us a letter to remind us that Jesus Christ and his apostles did not confine their instructions to one place or country.

"The school, notwithstanding former discouragements, has prospered exceedingly, and continues to prosper; though at present many hundreds of the scholars are scattered through the neighbouring islands, some of whom are teaching others in the different islands and districts where they reside; and thus, through their means, some knowledge

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of reading and writing has spread far and wide. There are at least \$000 people who have some books, and can make use of them. Many hundreds can read well; and there are among them about 400 copies of the Old Testament History; and 400 of the New, which is an abridgment of the four Evangelists, and parts of the Acts of the Apostles. -Many chapters of Luke's gospel, in manuscript, are also in circulation; and 1000 copies of our Taheitian Catechism, which several hundreds have learnt, and can repeat perfectly. The spelling-books which were printed in London, of which we had, we suppose, about 700, having been expended long ago, we had lately, 2000 copies of a lesser spelling-book printed in the colony: these we have received and distributed; and there is an earnest call from all the islands for more books, the desire to learn to read and write being universal. We want a new edition of the above mentioned books, and are now preparing the Gospel of Luke for the press. We intended to send the catechism and small spelling-book to the colony,

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and get 2000 or 3000 printed; but having heard that a printing press is sent out for us, we thought it best to wait awhile, notwithstanding the urgent call of the natives, as we wish to prevent expense as much as possible.

"We enclose a letter from Pomarre, concerning his family gods, which have been delivered to us, that we might either destroy them, or, if we think proper, send them to you. We have chosen the latter, and send them by this conveyance, nailed up in a case, directed to Mr. Hardcastle. These are the king's family gods, and are a good specimen of the whole. The great national ones, which were of the same kind, only much larger, have been some time ago entirely destroyed."

The following is an extract of a letter from Pomarre, king of Taheiti, to the missionaries.

FRIENDS, — May you be saved by Jehovah and Jesus Christ our Saviour! This is my speech to you, my friends. I wish you to send those idols to Britain for the Missionary Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 72r10_05-05-000-0072ContentsIndexAbout

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Society, that they may know the likeness of the gods that Taheiti worshipped. Those were my own idols, belonging to our family from the time of Taaroamanahune even to Vairaatoa: and when he died he left them with me. And now, having been made acquainted with the true God, with Jehovah, He is my God; and when this body of mine shall be dissolved in death, may the Three-One save me! And this is my shelter, my close hiding-place, even from the anger of Jehovah. When he looks upon me, I will hide me at the feet of Jesus Christ the Saviour, that I may escape. I feel pleasure and satisfaction in mind; I rejoice, I praise Jehovah that he hath made known his word unto me. I should have gone to destruction if Jehovah had not interposed. Many have died and are gone to destruction, kings and common people: they died without knowing any thing of the true God; and now when it came to the small remainder of the people, Jehovah hath been pleased to make known his word, and we are made acquainted with his good word, made acquainted with the

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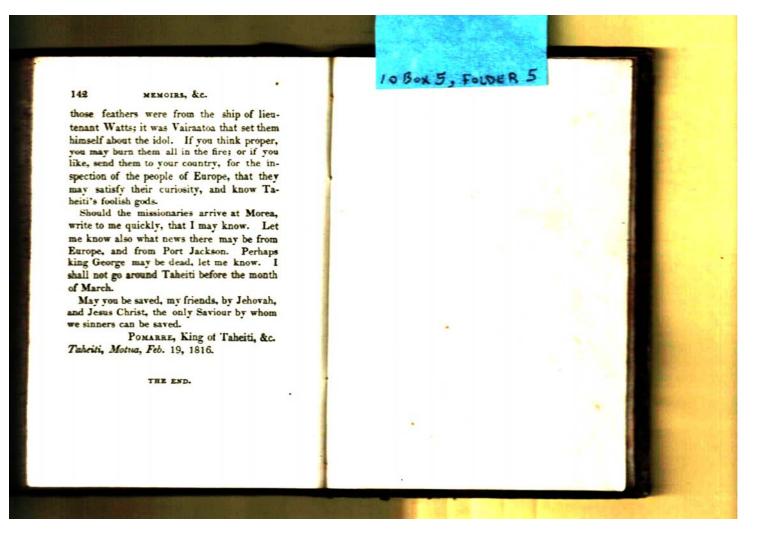
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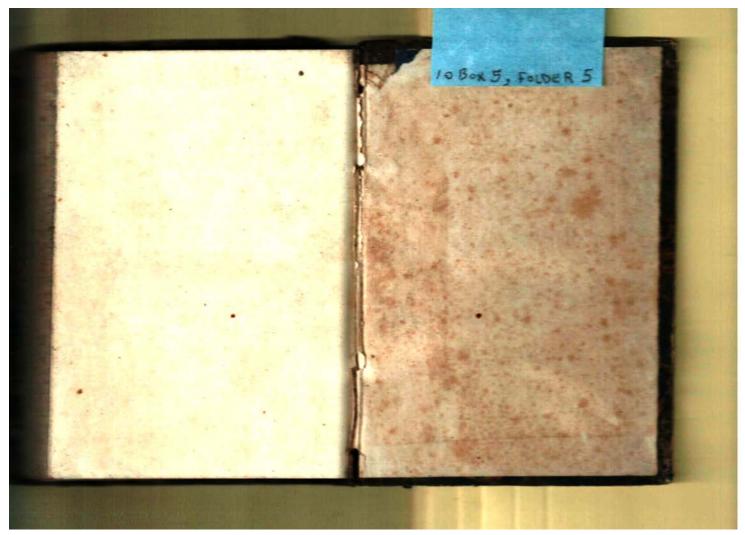
deception of the false gods, with all that is evil and false. The true God Jehovah, it was he that made us acquainted with these things.—It was you that taught us; but the words, the knowledge, were from Jehovah. It is because of this that I rejoice, and I pray to Jehovah that he may increase my abhurrence of every evil way. The Three-One, He it is that can make the lowe of sin to cease; we cannot effect that; man cannot effect it; it is the work of God to cause evil things to be cast off, and the lowe of them to cease.

I am going a journey around Taheiti, to acquaint the Ratiras with the word of God, and to cause them to be vigilant about good things. The word of God does grow in Taheiti, and the Ratiras are diligent about setting up houses for worships they are also diligent in seeking instruction, and now it is well with Taheiti.

That principal idol, that has the red feathers of the Otun, is Temeharo-that is his name-look you: you may know it by the red feathers; that was Vairaaton's own god, and Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. BImage 73r10_05-05-000-0073ContentsIndexAbout

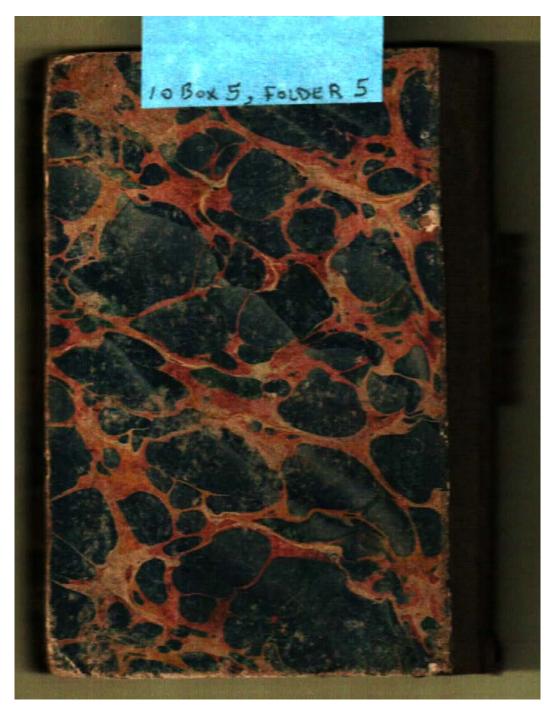


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