

## CHAPTER VI.

Aboriginal Friends' Association—Mission to Lake Alexandrina—Rev. Mr. Binney's remarks—Extract from Mr. Foster—The Bishop of Adelaide's visit to the Native Institution—Report of the Committee of the Legislature—Evidence of the Bishop—The Chief Protector—The Right Rev. Dr. Hale's Mission—The Poonindee Mission—The Queensland Mission—The Maloga and Warangesda Missions—The Government appointments—The Church of England Board of Missions—The Queen's Instructions—The assistance rendered to the Aborigines by the Government.

IN 1859, the Aboriginal Friends' Association of Adelaide determined to establish an institution for the instruction and evangelization of the lake tribes, and having engaged the Rev. G. Taplin as their missionary, he selected a peninsula formed by Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert, and the Coorong, a spot isolated and separated from European settlements by 15 miles of water. This was a favourite resort of the natives.

Mr. Taplin encamped amongst the natives for some time while his house was building, and observed there was a mixture of two tribes. The one tribe was tall, with small features and straight hair; while the other had coarse features, clumsy limbs, and curly hair. The former proved more intelligent than the other. One of the natives having killed another in a fray, a shepherd's opinion was that he ought to be hanged, although the death was occasioned by the law of revenge, and the man considered that the heathenish practice should be put down, and they be made Christians. "Surely," said he, "it is our duty to make Christians of them. I say hang them."

Mr. Taplin commenced divine worship amongst them. They believed in a God called Nurundere, who was a deified blackfellow of gigantic vices. The natives however attended while the missionary went through the "Peep o' Day," and "Line upon Line," and such productions as met their capacity.

They had not mixed with Europeans, and when the clock struck, they were alarmed and ran away.

At first Mr. Taplin visited their camp and talked to them, and then provided employment for them at fencing, and found a market for their fish, but the old men at first opposed these measures, jealous lest they should lose their influence. The Government granted supplies of flour and stores, while, to check infanticide, tea and sugar were given to the mother, until the infant was twelve months old.

The first death that occurred, the corpse was placed upright in the hut, filling the air with pestilence, while the women were smeared with filth and ashes, and set up a wailing, and the old men basted the corpse with bunches of feathers, dipped in grease.

On parties from a distance visiting the place, loud wailing took place, the women throwing themselves on the ground, crying out, "Your friend is gone; he will speak to you no more."

They were told the dead would rise again. They started, were troubled, and cried "No."

On the Sabbath, they crowded to attend worship, and paid much attention. One of them asked, "How do we know that the Bible is God's book? Whitefellow tell us plenty of lies."

The first indication of any religious impression was, a woman dying sent for the missionary to read to her "out of the very good book." This was the first glimmering of light.

The missionary, in his attendance on the sick and dying, saw all stages of darkness of mind, from horror to some cases of calm Christian composure, while the prayers were listened to with solemnity and thanks. On his telling one that she must die, the response of another old woman was, "Well, let us eat plenty of flour; let us eat, drink, for to-morrow we may die." Quite an epicurean trait of reasoning.

One young man, who first embraced the Gospel, declared he would not grease himself or paint himself with red ochre, and that he would eat with the women. This gave great offence, and they threatened