

## Norfolk Island.

(Read before the Society on October 25th, 1918, by the Rev. B. F. Brazier, Rector of Gatton, Queensland. Formerly Chaplain of Norfolk Island, 1916-1918).

Norfolk Island, a small island in the Pacific, was discovered by Captain Cook, on the 9th October, 1774. He reported it to be fertile and uninhabited. Accounts were sent to England of its tall straight trees, and of the New Zealand flax which grew abundantly. These attracted the attention of the authorities who were engaged in preparing the establishment of a convict settlement on the shores of New South Wales, so that when Captain Philip sailed with the first fleet the following par was included in his instructions :—

“ Norfolk Island, situated in the Lat.           , and long. E. from Greenwich, being represented as a spot which may, hereafter, become useful, you are, as soon as circumstances admits of it, to send a small establishment thither to secure the same for us and prevent it being occupied by the subjects of any other European Power ; and you will cause any remarks or observations which you may obtain in consequence of this instruction to be transmitted to our Principal Secretary of State for Plantation Affairs for our information.”

*La Perouse* had anchored off the Island prior to his arrival at Botany Bay in 1788. This reference, therefore, to “ any other European Power ” is interesting.

On 14th February, 1788, *H.M.S. Supply* sailed from Sydney for the Island, having on board Philip Gidley King, 2nd Lieut. of *H.M.S. Sirius*, for the purpose of settling Norfolk Island ; one petty officer, a surgeon's mate, two marines, two men who could cultivate flax, and nine men and six women convicts. The ship arrived there on 29th February, but they were five days before they could effect a landing. There were very few places where a man could land owing to rocks. At last they found an opening in a reef that ran across a bay, and landed provisions for six months. Lieut. King reported that he did not find a single cleared acre of land. He mentioned that there were multitudes of pine trees which grew to a height of 50 or 60 feet before they shot out branches. The trees were bound

together by a kind of "supple jack." Good, fresh water could also be found. On 26th August, 1788, the party reported that they had cleared ground to build huts and store houses; that a coral reef had been found at the southwestern end of the Island, through which a passage for boats had been made.

The Commandant described the Island as one of the finest in the world. The soil was rich, having a mould five or six feet in depth, in which all grain and garden seeds grew in a luxuriant manner. He said further that it must have been a volcano, the mouth of which would be found upon the top of Mt. Pitt; also that a stream rising in Mt. Pitt was sufficiently strong to turn a mill wheel. The people were in good houses and hoped to be able to cultivate all they wanted after the fourth year. There were no quadrupeds there except rats, and no grass grew.

On October 2nd, 1788, *H.M.S. Golden Grove* sailed from Sydney taking stores. It carried in addition, 1 sergeant, 1 corporal, 5 privates, 21 men and 11 women convicts. The population on the 16th November, in the same year, was 61.

On December 24th, 1789, Lieut. King was proposed by the authorities in New South Wales to the Home Government as Lieut. Governor of Norfolk Island. On 12th February, 1790, a plot was discovered to confine the officers and free people on the Island after the arrival of the *Supply*. The plotters proposed to take possession of the ship, and sail to Tahiti and form a settlement there. Their intentions was frustrated through the information given to the Government by a woman living with one of the sailors of the *Sirius*. When the convicts were examined they confessed their crime. The ringleader was sent to Sydney and tried. After this, all the trees, near the houses, were cut down, and a hurricane destroyed the granary. Some of the trees that were cut down were found to be 180 feet in length. So afraid were the authorities that another rising might take place, that a small redoubt was erected, and two guns and six additional cutlasses were landed.

The first case of transportation for life to the Island was that of a marine for committing a rape on an infant in 1791.

On 6th March, 1790, the population was further increased by the landing of 65 officers and men, 5 women and children from the Civil department; 116 male and 67 female convicts, and 27 children. The total population on 11th April, 1790, was 90 civil, military, and free people, 171 male convicts, 100 female convicts, and 37 children.

In 1791, Philip wrote to the Secretary for the Colonies that from 15th May to end of August, the weekly ration was 3lbs flour, 1½lb. beef, 17oz. pork, but for some time no beef or pork had been issued, as all the cattle and pigs had been killed and eaten. There was much discontent among the marines, owing to the fact that spirits, shoes and blankets, had been issued to New South Wales but none had come to them. He stated also that he proposed to make a landing place at Cascades. That same year a plague of caterpillars visited the Island and destroyed all the corn. Blight killed all that the caterpillars left.

On the 1st March that same year the Lieut. Governor complained of want of shoes and shirts. The situation, he said, was deplorable; there were no beds for the soldiers to sleep on, no cooking utensils, and worst of all, no spirits had been sent since May, 1790. He further stated that 115 acres of land had been cleared; grapes, bananas, castor nut, indigo, orange and lemon trees had been planted. The convicts were given to plundering the gardens of the civilians; that there were on the island five convicts, "every one of whom is as great a villain as ever graced a gibbet." He proposed to send the worst cases to Nepean Island, a rock about three-quarters of a mile away. He had decided to build a hospital for the convicts. Religion and morality were at a low ebb as there was no clergyman on the island, and he asked that one be sent. A general order issued in that year contained amongst other things a statement that any convict who wished to become independent for the necessaries of life should have an additional day in each week allowed to them to work their own land, and that they should for one year supply the market with pork at a price not exceeding sixpence per pound, or the greatest quantity of fowls at a price not exceeding one shilling each for full grown ones and sixpence each for half grown ones. No pine trees were to be cut down, but when any trees were cut down by the Governor's orders they were to be cut into lengths and stacked. That year the population consisted of a Lieutenant, Governor, seven commissioned officers, three drummers, sixty privates, four women and three children, one surgeon, five free people, 227 male and 245 female convicts and 62 children.

In November, 1791, no supplies were sent to Sydney as all were wanted for home consumption. A suggestion was made to put all the land under cultivation. Settlers were to be clothed and victualled for eighteen months, and supplied with grain, tools, pigs and poultry. Complaints were made about the landing place and a pilot

was appointed to look after the landing. A proposition was put forth to establish whaling.

In 1792, Captain King was appointed Lieutenant-Governor. The Governor of New South Wales proposed to place as many people as could properly be accommodated there. On 15th May, that year, Lord Dundas proposed to give 15 acres of land to settlers. On October 4th, the Lieutenant-Governor reported that a criminal court was badly needed, robberies were prevalent, and there was no means of bringing offenders to judgment except Sydney. On the 30th June, 1795, a court of Criminal Judicature was established by Royal Charter which arrived in Sydney, 1796. The court was to consist of a deputy judge-advocate and four naval and military officers. The verdict was to be given by a majority of the votes of the members of the court. In case of the death sentence four out of the five members must concur ; this could only be carried out with the consent of the Lieutenant-Governor of Norfolk Island. If the sentence was suspended it had to be submitted to the Home Secretary in London. If the required majority did not vote for death sentence the case was remitted to London. Major Foreaux was appointed Lieutenant-Governor on the 26th day of June, 1800.

The instructions given to him were as follows :—

First, to cause himself to be proclaimed with all due solemnity. To look after the Commissariat Store, the preservation of live stock, the products of public labour, the manufacture of cloth from flax. He was to cause attention to be paid to the making of flax plant “ into such cloth as can be worn by the convicts ” ; the convict women to prepare it ; a weaver whom he was to take out was to weave it. Three acres of ground were to be sown with flax and three acres with cotton.

He was also to erect fortifications, “ a Town Hall and such other public buildings as you may judge proper.” A church was to be built ; two allotments of ground to be given to the Chaplain and 100 acres were to be marked out for the Chaplain when he arrived.

The instructions proceeded—

“ You are by all proper methods to enforce a due observance of religion and good order among the inhabitants and others under your command, and to take steps for the celebration of public worship as circumstances admit of.”

No boats were to be built above 50 feet long. Every convict who became a free settler was to have 15 acres of land, five more if married and three more for each child. He was to be victualled for eighteen months and provided with tools and grain.

The Reverend C. Maddock was selected to be the first Chaplain and was put on the list of S.P.G. Missionaries, but for some reason or other did not go, so in 1800 was struck off the list. On the 1st November, 1800 the Rev. W. Fulton, who had been sentenced in 1798 to transportation for life for alleged seditious preaching in connection with the rebellion in Ireland, was appointed. He was emancipated in 1801 and sent to Norfolk Island. On the 9th May, 1802, he was appointed Chaplain at £96 per annum, and in December, 1805, he was granted a free pardon. On 1st July, 1798, a Fraternal Society was founded on the Island. The settlers complained of the difficulty of getting swines flesh taken into stores owing to monopolies. They banded themselves together to try to remedy this. A proclamation, however, was issued prohibiting the Society holding meetings, and ultimately it was suppressed.

In 1799 experiments were made to find out the best method of salting pigs to send to Sydney. The Duke of Portland wrote to Governor Hunter to render such assistance that might be necessary, and complained that the Island had not had the assistance it should have had. Experiments must have turned out successfully, for on June 7th, 1803, eighteen thousands five hundred and thirty-five pounds of salt pork were exported. In that same year the wheat turned out well, the maize failed for want of rain, and there was a great drought on the Island.

On the 24th June, 1803, Lord Hobart proposed to remove the convict establishment, proposing to leave such men and women who could farm and cure and salt pork to raise stores for other places. Any convicts who should be sent to the Island were to consider this a mitigation of sentence.

On August 14th, 1804, the medical officer received a supply of vaccine lymph in order that he might vaccinate all the convicts. On March 15th, 1806, King wrote to Camden that in the year 1794 Norfolk Island had afforded great supplies to New South Wales, and had in December, 1805, supplied the new settlements with six months full supplies. He saw further that the Island was capable of feeding six thousand souls. He suggested that whalers call at the Island for refreshment. He commented favorably upon the wheat grown there. He also stated that on December 31st, 1805, there was an ample supply of flour, grain, and salt pork for other settlements which would have been much straitened but for that source.

On December 20th, 1804, spirits were landed on the Island contrary to government instructions. The officer in charge was considered reprehensible as he had allowed

vessels to touch there which had not letters from the Government of New South Wales.

During this time roads had been made, drains cut and other improvements carried out, amongst them being stone houses for the officers and all the pioneering work of a new colony. The island was finally abandoned in the year 1813. Orders had been repeatedly given for its evacuation, although these seem never to have been carried out. Divided opinions existed in the Home Government, and although in 1806 orders were emphatically given for its abandonment, in 1807, we are told that "it is not intended to relinquish an island so fertile and which is so useful in affording supplies to South Sea whalers and occasionally to Port Jackson." The process of removal was, however, gradually carried out, but was not completed until 1813, and the last settlers left there for Tasmania, where the name New Norfolk serves as a reminder of the earlier homes of its first white inhabitants.

On February 28th, 1814, the island was completely evacuated; all sheep, pigs and cattle were killed and salted and sent to Sydney. From 1814 until 1824, it was completely deserted. The Earl of Bathurst proposed that year to send the worst cases of convicts there. The convicts could produce their own food and grow coffee for export. The idea in his mind was that the worst classes of New South Wales convicts could be sent there and thus make it a penitentiary. In 1825 the island was represented as the "ne plus ultra" of convict degradation. Sir Thomas Brisbane wished to place it under martial law; he sent a captain to command there, but proposed a field officer instead. He said, "I cannot see that felons who have forfeited all claims to protection of the law should complain of being in a worse state than our soldiers in a campaign." He wrote on 21st May, 1825, to Earl Bathurst: "Norfolk Island is confined, the access to it difficult; it is not suited to receive many prisoners or frequent transportations: it should be reserved for capital respites and higher classes of offences. Any felon sent there should be excluded from all hope of return."

On August 1st, 1825, Captain Turton, of the 4th Regiment, reported very favorably on its state as to live stock, which was in great abundance, pigs and goats were numerous. The town was in complete ruin, but he hoped to form a temporary gaol and store there. He reported further that on the 6th June troops, convicts and stores were landed on the Island, and that a landing could be effected at all times on one side or the other. In a despatch dated 7th September, 1825, it was proposed to remove all the convicts from

Tasmania to the Island, which was eventually done. In 1826 the place was once more in a flourishing condition. Considerable numbers of convicts with their soldier guards were sent thither. The lands again yielded of their abundance. Huge gaols and barracks were built, bridges and a structure half breakwater, half wharf, were erected and other public works carried out.

This period, however, included the worst days of the Island's story. Many gruesome tales are told of this period, but there is little pleasure in tracing them back to their authentic sources. Many legends have sprung up and many places on this charming isle are reputed to be haunted. Suffice it to relate two. There is a very picturesque spot on the Island known as "Bloody Bridge." It is a stone structure crossing a tiny creek which runs down to the sea. It was built in these times. The Norfolkers say that when this bridge was being built by the convicts the warder in charge was an exceptionally cruel man. One day he so enraged them by his cruelty that they murdered him. Then they slew a sheep, skinned it, and sewed the warder's body in the skin and buried him under the bridge. No Norfolker will cross that bridge after dark because they say the warder's ghost haunts the spot still.

In the cemetery, not far from this spot, at the easternmost end is a mound, and a sad story attaches to this. The Norfolkers say that thirteen convicts were sentenced to death for mutiny. Their graves were dug and the men placed in front of each one. The command to fire was given, the poor wretches were shot and fell backwards into the graves prepared for them, the burial service was read by the Chaplain and the graves were filled in. (These stories were told me by the oldest man on the island, David Buffett, aged 91, who stated that he was told them by the convicts left to look after the Island after its final evacuation in 1856, prior to the coming of the Pitcairners). The buildings in Kingston, the old settlement of convict days, are of stone, substantially built dating from 1826. The road called Quality Row is macadamized and well drained. The buildings consisted of the Commissariat Store (now the Church of England), a barracks with officers' quarters on either side (now used as a Court House and Post Office), another barracks also with officers' quarters on either side (now used as a Methodist Church), civilian officials' quarters now used as a Vicarage, residence for medical officer, Methodist parsonage, private residences, and several in ruins, Government House, formerly the residence of the Commandant, the Roman Catholic Chaplain's house now the dispensary, two gaols, two churches, formerly Church of

England and Roman Catholic, a hospital, all these are in ruins. The treadmill, the quarters of the Royal Engineers, and residences of the warders are still standing.

The whole place was carefully planned and laid out to the best advantage. Around the barracks walls about 12 feet high were erected with a watch tower at each end. These still stand and testify to the solid work put into them. On these watch towers at night guards with loaded muskets were placed, who were told to shoot any unfortunate convict that attempted to escape. Gates were erected across all the roads leading to the interior of the island, and these were locked at sundown. A salt works was erected where was made by evaporation from sea water all the salt required for salting down pork, etc. A lime kiln was built, and it is interesting to note that when any lime is wanted the same kiln is used that was used in the early part of last century. The kiln is about 50 feet deep, sunk into the ground, and is built of solid masonry with flues running at right angles opening into a shaft.

The remains of a beautifully planned and well kept botanical garden can be seen, but also it is now overgrown with weeds, etc. An esplanade can still be traced; here stood a fountain and a sun dial, the latter, alas! now used as paving stone on one of the Norfolk's verandahs. The old waterwheel still stands, although the wheel has long since vanished. The houses were well kept; and from what I can gather from the Pitcairners had beautiful gardens in front. But, notwithstanding all these things, the Island was a hotbed of cruelty, as the leg irons which are dug up from time to time testify. In men's minds Norfolk Island stood for all that was vilest for cruel tortures, brutal methods, debased criminals, and suffering humanity.

In 1844 the control of the island passed from New South Wales to Tasmania. It continued to be used as a convict settlement, but soon afterwards the exposures of prison reformers led to substantial ameliorations and subsequently to suggestions that it should again be abandoned, which were accordingly carried out in May, 1855.

A new population was to begin the task of trying to create a new fame for the island and to place it to the use for which nature in her bounty had intended it—to become the home of a numerous industrious and honorable people.

The newcomers who were to undertake this task were the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island, an isolated spot off the coast of South America, and rarely visited by ships. Their history begins with the Mutiny of the *Bounty*, on the 25th April, 1789.



Bligh's account of the mutiny states that he anchored on 26th October, 1788, in Matavai Bay, Tahiti, in search of bread fruit trees for the West Indies, and remained there six months. When homeward bound, three weeks out from Tahiti, the crew mutinied on April 28th, 1789. A party of officers and crew to the number of 25 deposed Captain Bligh from his position of master, and turned both him and eighteen of the crew adrift in the ship's launch. He sailed 3,600 miles to Timor (Koepang). At Timor he purchased a schooner and sailed for Batavia. From Java he sailed to the Cape of Good Hope and from thence to Portsmouth, which he reached on 14th March, 1790. In November, 1790, he was tried and acquitted by Court Martial for the loss of the *Bounty*.

It has frequently been asserted that the mutiny was due to the harsh measures adopted by Bligh in his command, but probably no more unjust charge has been made.\* It is on record that "though when things went wrong Bligh frequently damned his men, he was never angry with a man the next minute, that he was not fond of flogging, and that some deserved hanging that had only a dozen," and that he was a father to every person on his ship." Christian, it is said, received many special favours from Bligh. He was given the use of Bligh's cabin and liquor, taught navigation and drawing, and asked to dine every third day with him. The actual causes of the mutiny were undoubtedly the attraction of the toil-hardened sailors to a life of indolence and sensuality at Tahiti. Bligh mentioned these as the cause of the mutiny. Edward Lamb, second in command of the *Britannia* (on which ship Christian served when he was 24 years old) says of him: "He was one of the most foolish men I ever knew in regard to the sex." In "The Voyages and Travels of Fletcher Christian, London, H. D. Symonds, 1796," it is stated that Bligh on his arrival at Tahiti ordered the crew to be examined for syphilis as the ladies in this happy island are known not to be the most reserved in granting their favours. The women of Tahiti are not only constitutionally votaries of Venus, but join to the charms of person such a happy cheerfulness of temper and such engaging manners that their allurements are perfectly irresistible.

The account given by the Pitcairners differs from this slightly. Christian's descendants say that Bligh accused

---

\*On the other hand it must be stated that Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, G.C.B., in his introduction to the "World's Classics" edition of Sir John Barrow's *Mutiny of the Bounty*, says: "The mutiny originating as it did, and executed as it was, must be attributed to the character and conduct of William Bligh." (Editor).

him of stealing cocoanuts and this so rankled in his mind that one day, one of the sailors, Quintal by name, seeing how he brooded over the accusation, suggested to him "Why not take the ship?" This suggestion he put from him, but again and again the tempter approached him and at last he yielded to the suggestion, seized the ship and turned Bligh and eighteen men adrift. The remainder, twenty-five in number, sailed to Tahiti, where they agreed to separate. Christian and eight men decided to establish a home where they would be safe from discovery by a King's ship; the rest remained at Tahiti. Christian and his followers (Brown, Mills, McCoy, Quintal, Adams, Young, Williams, and one other whose name I've forgotten) sailed away with twelve Tahitian women and six Tahitian men; a wife for each of the sailors and a wife for three of the men, and the remaining men for slaves. They landed at Pitcairn Island, scuttled the *Bounty* and burnt her and sank the guns. They settled down with the hope of undisturbed peace. There cocoanuts were found to be growing, and bananas, breadfruit and yams which they had brought from Tahiti were planted. Houses were built and the land was cultivated. Christian being the only man of education was made head of this community. At first they lived a wild, lawless sort of life. Religion was unknown, children were born and were not baptized, nor taught about God or holy things. Quarrels soon took place amongst the men, mainly over the women. One of the mutineer's wives met her death by falling over a precipice (I think it was Williams' wife, but I've never been clear about this). Her husband seized one of the Tahitian's wives and an uproar ensued which was only quelled with difficulty. Soon after this McCoy and Quintal discovered how to brew a spirit from the "ti tree," which grew on Pitcairn, and met night after night and indulged in drunken orgies. They hatched a plot to put the whole of the whites to death, seize the island and found a new race. They committed murder, and the whole plot was revealed; a summary trial was held and McCoy and Quintal were put to death. Shortly after this, Christian found the Bible and Prayer Book belonging to the *Bounty*, and spent days and weeks in studying these books. He was amazed at what he found there, and tried to bring religion and its influence to bear upon the mutineers. He became very morose and gloomy, and pondered a great deal over what he had done. He honestly tried to make amends. In 1793 in a native rising he was shot. His descendants on Norfolk Island say that he was not killed, but escaped. He was reported to have been seen in Regent Street, London, after this. Other Pitcairners say he was killed and buried on the

island ; but as old David Buffett said to me, " No one knoweth his sepulchre unto this day."\*

After Christian's death or disappearance, John Adams became Patriarch of this community. He had not much education, but he taught the people as well as he was able from the Bible, the Prayer Book and Carteret's voyages ; from these the younger boys and girls learnt to read and to spell. He decided that religion should be taught according to the use of the Church of England. He baptized all the children and made school attendance compulsory, as also Divine Service on Sundays. He instituted a house to house visitation, and every morning went round and asked such questions as these : " Have these children been bathed ?" " Have you cleaned the house ?" " Have you done your hair ?" etc., etc. (All these facts about John Adams I had from his grand-daughter, Mrs. Fletcher Hobbs). Each man he compelled to work so many hours each day ; no couple could marry without his consent, and then only after banns. One gold ring did duty for each wedding. The soil and the sea provided their food ; the climate was healthy and they remained unknown to the world until 1808. The first British men of war to visit Pitcairn were the *Briton* and *Tagus*, which arrived there September, 1814. The discovery of the mutineers on Pitcairn created a mild sensation in England, and occasionally after their discovery ships and whalers visited the place and left them stores and clothing. Great interest was manifested in England in these people, the offspring of English sailors and mothers who had come from an island noted for the beauty of its women. In the year 1825 or thereabouts, there came to Pitcairn an Englishman, John Buffett by name, a man of fair education, and John Adams, now becoming an old man, saw in him a chance of obtaining a successor. Buffett was installed as schoolmaster and patriarch, and shortly afterwards Adams was laid to his rest, mourned and beloved by all. John Buffett continued the good work begun by John Adams, and carried it out well. One of his sons is still living, David Buffett, whom I have mentioned before, a man with a marvellous memory (from whom I

---

\*Fletcher Christian belonged to the family of Christian of Milton and Ewanrigg in the Isle of Man. He was a near relative of John Christian, who, in 1782, married the heiress of Henry Curwen of Workington, Cumberland, and took the name of Curwen in 1790. He was for many years M.P. for Carlisle, and died in 1829. One of his sons took the name of Curwen-Walker, and became the progenitor of a family well-known in Australia. For stories of Fletcher Christian having been seen in Cumberland and elsewhere in England after the mutiny, see Sir John Barrow's "Mutiny of the Bounty," World's Classics Edition, 1914, at p. 327. Editor).

learnt a good deal of the life on Pitcairn and Norfolk). He told me just before I left in April, 1918, that on Saturday nights everybody got in sufficient food for the next day and cooked it. No fires were lit, no water drawn, in fact, no work of any kind was ever done on Sundays; it was kept as a day of rest and worship.

In 1828 there came to Pitcairn a man destined to play a great part in the history of both Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. His name was George Hunn Nobbs; he had been a midshipman in the British Navy and a Lieutenant in the Chilian Navy. A man of good education, used to discipline, was too good a prize for John Buffett to let slip, and he was appointed schoolmaster and pastor, a position he honorably filled for 56 years.

In 1831 the Government, believing these people would be happier at Tahiti, provided facilities for their removal thither, but a few months sufficed to create a strong desire to return, and before the end of the year they were back at Pitcairn.

An ideal picture was painted of these people so far removed from civilization, simple and pious in their manners, courteous to strangers, not too hard working, but sufficiently energetic to supply their modest wants and mutually helpful in all times of trouble. In 1852 Admiral Moresby left his Chaplain on the Island and took home to England Mr. Nobbs. He was ordained deacon in 1852, by the Bishop of Sierra Leone, and priest by the Bishop of London in 1853. Whilst in England he was made much of, and raised a considerable sum of money, which purchased all he required for the Island and left some £500 for future wants. S.P.C.K. gave him all the Church books, which are still on Norfolk Island. S.P.G. gave him a stipend of £100 per annum, placing him on the list of Colonial Chaplains. (One of Mr. Nobbs' grandsons, Rev. G. R. F. Nobbs, was formerly Rector of Lutwyche). On Mr. Nobbs' return to Pitcairn he found it in a very precarious state. Gales and droughts had ruined their crops and the water had given out. Though deeply attached to Pitcairn the people were forced to seriously consider the prospect of removal, and the British Government was asked to find an island exempt from the probable visitations of famine. Norfolk Island was then about to be vacated, and in 1854 they were informed it would be available for their occupation, although they were not actually removed there until 1856. On the 3rd May, there left Pitcairn on the *Morayshire*, 40 men, 47 women, 54 boys and 53 girls, in all 194, and they landed on Norfolk 8th June, 1856. They were fortunate colonists. They came to a land fruitful and fertile to an unusual degree, where

the climate was balmy and healthy, where the sea rivalled the land in the extent and variety of its resources, and where they simply had to take possession and settle down to a peaceful and regular life. They were housed in the barracks and in the civilian officials' quarters. Large supplies of blankets and sheets were left for their use, an abundant supply of food and all the tools necessary to carry on work. A surveyor accompanied the party and cut up the land into blocks of 50 acres each. Kingston was to remain a Crown reserve for all time. On 21st June, 1856, Norfolk Island was formally separated from Tasmania and created a distinct and separate settlement with the Government of New South Wales for the time being as its Government with power to appoint officers, make laws and grant lands. Much controversy was raised concerning the understanding as to the terms upon which the Pitcairners were to occupy their new lands. They seemed to have acquired the idea that the whole of Norfolk was to be given to them as their exclusive property, but it is beyond doubt that the arrangement was not that Norfolk was to be ceded to them, but only that grants of land would be made to the different families though the decision was expressed that "it was not at present intended to allow any other class of settlers to reside or occupy land on the island."

A simple set of laws were drawn up by Governor Denison under which the islanders lived for many years. This period of their history was not one of progress, for in 1884, when Lord Loftus, the Governor of New South Wales, visited them there were many traces of deterioration both physical and moral. They had departed a long way from the paths of morality and virtue in which, if we can trust the reports of Admiral Moresby and others who visited them, their parents had been trained. The Pitcairn stock, who, when they landed on Norfolk had only eight names amongst them, had married and intermarried to an extent which threatened the destruction of their moral, intellectual, and ultimately their physical fibre.

For a long time the internal affairs of the Norfolkers were regulated by themselves. The actual government was in their hands. A chief magistrate and two councillors were elected annually. The chief magistrate had to be a landed proprietor and over 28 years of age; the councillors at least 25 years. The election was held on Christmas Day. The chaplain presided, and the proceedings opened with prayer. All could vote who had resided six months on the island and could read and write. The chaplain had a casting vote, but he could not be either magistrate or councillor. The duties of the

magistrate and councillors were to see that the laws were duly observed and to punish law breakers. There were no taxes in cash, all the public works being performed by the labour of the male residents of the age of 18 years and upwards. The community enjoyed absolute local autonomy but before any new law or regulation could be enforced the consent of the Governor must be obtained. In 1895 changes were made. The chief magistrate was appointed by the Government of New South Wales, and an Executive Council of six members was constituted, four being appointed by the government and two elected. The Executive Council now consists of twelve members, six appointed by the Governor-General through the Administrator, and six elected. The elections always take place on the 1st August. In 1913 Norfolk Island, by Act of Commonwealth Parliament, was declared a Territory of the Commonwealth, and the Governor-General was appointed Governor of Norfolk Island.

Such is the history of the island in the past; let us now look at present conditions. The population is, roughly speaking, about 700, including Melanesians at S. Barnabas (a training college belonging to the Melanesian Mission). This Mission owns about 1,000 acres and is beautifully kept, giving one the impression of a small English village at first sight.

About 20 of the Pitcairners are still living, the remainder being Norfolkers, a few settlers from the mainland, the staff of the cable station, Government officials, the Mission staff and natives at St. Barnabas.

The island itself is very beautiful. It is said by some to be volcanic in its origin, by others to be the mountain range of a now lost continent. One epithet best describes its particular beauty, and that is park-like. A Norfolk valley in spring time is one of the most entrancing sights I have seen. Then the coffee, the orange and lemon trees are in flower. Interspersed with these you will find loquats, guavas (yellow and red), creepers of all kinds, pine trees (*trancaria excelsa*) peculiar to the island, which rise to a height of from 150 to 300 feet, beautiful palm trees and tree ferns. The Islanders generally speaking are strong and capable when necessity drives or adequate incentive offers, of much endurance and activity. They are some of the finest and most skilful boatmen in the world. Unfortunately through generations of intermarriage of close relations there are signs of decadence, both intellectual and physical. They are like children and need leaders. In manner they are courteous and affable, very kind-hearted and hospitable to strangers.

Their kindheartedness has militated against them; lazy folk, because they are of the community, are always sure of food. A low standard of morality, unfortunately, exists amongst the majority of them. This is a source of great pain to the more thoughtful and educated. It is hoped that under the present system of education that a high standard of morality will be set, and this stigma wiped out. But notwithstanding this they are intensely loyal to England. Practically all the eligible males have enlisted and some twenty of them have made the great sacrifice.

There is a complete absence of serious crime. Total prohibition exists on the island, and thanks to this fact the constable can go his round without revolver, baton or handcuffs.

Most of the people have received some education. There are very few who cannot read or write. In the old days the rules regarding education were strict; the children had to attend school from the age of 6 to 14. A child could not be absent for two days without a certificate from the Chaplain. The fine for non-attendance was 6d. per day. Under the present law school attendance is compulsory. The school is in charge of men and women trained in New South Wales. The head teacher is appointed for three years, the assistants for two years. The curriculum is similar to that in vogue in New South Wales. Religious instruction is given weekly by the Chaplain and other ministers. The islanders generally are a pleasure loving people. Work is placed aside readily when a chance offers of a picnic or other form of amusement, and they gladly put off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day. This fact is noticeable even to themselves, and is much lamented by the wiser men. They are good horsemen and accustomed to the saddle from childhood.

As might be expected, they are extremely conservative. The methods of their forefathers are to them the only right and proper rule of life "The custom of the island" is a phrase frequently heard in opposition to any improvements or suggestions put forth for their improvement. They are passionately fond of music, and have established a choral society which has produced such works as Stainer's "Crucifixion," "The Daughter of Jairus," Gaul's "Ruth," and even Handel's "Messiah." On January 1st, 1917, an amateur operatic company under the direction of Mr. Passmore (the then schoolmaster) produced Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado" very creditably. Music of a difficult character is well rendered by All Saints Church Choir. Anthems are regularly sung, and the Communion service is chorally rendered in a manner which would do credit to a city choir.

It is when trouble comes, in times of sickness, or when death takes the bread-winner or deprives young children of a mother's care that the Norfolkers are seen at their best. Everything possible to be done to alleviate suffering or distress is willingly and gladly undertaken as a duty. Food, clothing and shelter are provided by relatives or strangers who compete with one another in their efforts to be of service.

Funerals are conducted free of charge. The men turn out and make the coffin and dig the graves. The body is always taken to church and carried from there to the cemetery in procession, the surpliced choir and clergy leading the way.

To strangers as to each other, the islanders are exceedingly kind and hospitable. Any visitor who calls at their homes at any hour is sure of a welcome. Tea, cakes and fruit are provided, and at departure fruit, vegetables, in fact anything the house possesses, is willingly given.

It is surprising the number of relatives you possess on Norfolk. Nearly every one is related to each other, and the stranger who is wise recognises this fact, and calls them uncles and aunts, like the islanders, which pleases them immensely. Every passer-by on the road exchanges friendly greetings with the stranger, in fact one is reminded of the courtesy of English village life by many of the customs one comes in contact with in Norfolk.

The people all speak good English in an easy, deliberate tone, but among themselves they employ a jargon which they call "Norfolk." Bishop Montgomery, who visited the island in 1892, wrote of this as follows:—"A few remarks on the language of the Norfolk Islanders will create interest, and I am anxious to record the derivations of some extraordinary words which are now well known, but which the next generation will use without knowing how they were coined. First there are in common use some definitely Tahitian words which present no difficulty, but sound strangely. 'Wa-a-wa-ha,' is one of these, meaning disgusting. The derivation of 'sullun' and 'ullun,' the people and all the people, though in Milanesia I have met the word 'sul,' the people. If a person is saying farewell, you would not say 'I am very sorry,' but 'I mussa buss for sorrow for you.' A crying person is 'myosullun,' and if something were dropping to pieces you would say 'wa-oo-loo.' But the words which I specially wish to fix as curiosities are of another sort. For instance, it is now a common phrase amongst this community to say 'I shall big Jack,' I shall cry. This phrase is derived from Mr. John Evans, who is a stout man addicted to tears. Another phrase is a 'Correy Sullun,' meaning a busy-body. A Mr. Correy,



a visitor here, was reputed to be a busy-body, and he has in consequence enriched this curious language with a new adjective. Still more strange is it when such epithets are added to the names of four footed animals. 'That is a Breman cow,' you may hear a man say. Now poor Mr. Breman was a casual visitor and remarkably thin . . . and 'Breman' now stands for thin and will do so for ever till some thinner person attracts their notice. From the action of the same law a 'Snell Sullun' is a niggardly man."

Personally I am rather sorry now I did not make a study of this quaint language and keep a record of all the expressions in use ; it would be a most interesting study to trace them to their source. In this language you do not say "let's go for a swim," but "go nawe" ; how do you do is "what-a-way you" ; my sweetheart is "ma fish" ; "you s'a done" have you finished ? You're mad becomes "you s'a maad," and very good is "sem-is-ways."

The occupations of the people are mostly connected with the supply of food ; they are farmers or fishermen or both. Some cultivate the land well, others carelessly. They have no idea of scientific farming. One or two settlers go in for extensive cultivation, but facilities for shipping crops away when grown are few. Kumeras, yams, potatoes, guavas, passion fruit, mandarins, oranges, lemons, strawberries, and a few apples are generally raised. Maize and a little wheat are grown also. Pigs and poultry flourish. The island is famed for the size and quality of its turkeys. Fish abounds and is easily caught either from the rocks or the boats. Rock cod, schnapper and trumpeter, of a size which would astonish fishermen in Australia, help to supply their wants. Vegetables of all kinds are easily grown, but kumeras, yams and bananas (fried, boiled or roast) form their principal foods. At the present time (1918), a fish business has been established ; the fish are filleted and smoked and sent to Sydney for sale. Lemons grow practically wild all over the island. In 1917, a lemon peel industry was established ; the lemons are squeezed and the juice put into casks and sent away to New South Wales to be made into lemon squash. The skins are prepared and candied and sent away to the mainland for sale.

The men are wood cutters and sawyers, most of the timber being cut by hand in a sawpit. Though now a steam saw mill established, in 1917, supplies all the timber required, so that probably very little more will be cut by hand.

When a new house is to be built, the men plan it and build it and also lay out the garden if the lady of the house has a taste for flowers. Some of the gardens are nicely laid out, and flowers of all kinds grow luxuriantly.

The houses are mostly built of pine, except in Kingston, where they are built of stone. They vary in size, but mostly contain four rooms and a kitchen. Most contain either a piano or organ and generally a sewing machine; these, together with a horse and buggy, seem to satisfy the wants of the average man.

The people of Pitcairn, as I said, were brought up on the Bible and Prayer-book. The devout religious observances of their life were much commented on by visitors. Amongst the older people family worship is the rule, and although the attendance at church and Sunday school is fairly constant, the Norfolkers have departed considerably from the ways of their forefathers. The Church of England is dedicated to All Saints, and I used to hold services there daily at 10 a.m. The services on Sundays were at 7.30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. The church building was formerly, as I said, the Commissariat Store of convict days, and is held on lease from the government, a rental of £1 per annum being payable on demand, but as far as I could learn this has never been asked for.

The Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists also have places of worship here.

The island is equipped with roads which, taking them on the whole, are well designed in accordance with the contour of the land. They are maintained under a system of public works which requires each male from 21 years to 55 to work fifteen days per annum on the roads or pay £3 in lieu of labour to the Government. The method is as follows: At a meeting of the Executive Council, the President mentions the work to be carried out. The Secretary is then instructed to make out a list of men who are to carry out the work, stating the place where each one is to work and the work he is to do, *e.g.*, "Clean out culvert, Kingston," so many names. The President reports to the Council what men were absent and a bill for so many days work at 4/- per diem is sent, which sum must be paid or proceedings may be taken in the small debts court for its recovery.

The health of the residents on the Island is on the whole satisfactory. A Government Medical Officer resides there and is paid partly by salary and partly by fees. The islanders of Pitcairn descent are treated by him for a fee of 15/- per year, which must be paid to the Collector of Customs on 1st January each year. Drugs are supplied free of charge.

No hospital is available for the public. There is a proposal to provide one and also a trained nurse to look after the sick.

A branch of the Commonwealth Savings Bank has been opened, and a money order office has been established, thus providing a means of exchange between Norfolk Island and other parts of the world.

The climate is exceptionally mild, the range being between 56 degrees and 82 degrees Fahr., the mean temperature being 68 degrees. The average rainfall is 43 inches. Notwithstanding its proximity to the tropics and its island situation the air is not unusually humid, except in November, December, and January, when heavy mists occur. The winter is the rainy season, though showers occur throughout the year. Droughts have been common in the past and no doubt will be experienced in the future. The prevailing winds are from the east and frequently blow with considerable violence ; but taken on the whole the climate is remarkably genial, and before the war attracted a great number of visitors. It was fast becoming known as a health resort, and was spoken of as the Madeira of the Pacific.

There are no hotels and no newspapers on the island. The cable station supplies news of the outside world. This is posted up every day in three or four places. There are no telephones, trams, trains, paved streets or motor cars. There was when I left one bicycle on the island. There are no shops with garish window displays, only four or five stores masquerading as private houses, in fact none of the outward signs of the civilization of our great cities.

The island offers no excitement. Tennis, golf, cricket, croquet, may be had under very fair conditions ; dances and concerts fill an occasional evening. The chief charm lies in the ever varying scapes of sea and land, and the courtesy and hospitality of this quaint and interesting folk.

To ride or drive through leafy tracks or through that glorious avenue of pines that graces the main road, or past the Bishop's Oak, and at every turn see new vistas of the sapphire sea, with its stainless foam churning at the base of tall tree topped cliffs, to walk past the fast decaying ruins of the old prisons, to speculate and meditate upon the miseries and sufferings of the men who carried those stones there, are amongst the real delights to be found on Norfolk Island.

What is to be the future of the island, we cannot even conjecture. What to do with the islanders is a problem to be faced. If inter-marriage continues without the influx of new blood, the deterioration now noticeable will continue and increase as the years roll on. The race will become physically, morally and intellectually effete and will eventually become extinct.