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"AUSTRALIA FOR CHRIST."

**The Real Australian**

**Organ of the Bush Church Aid** Society for **Australia and Tasmania.**

No. 44

DECEMBER 20, 1931.

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THE BUSH CHURCH AID SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA.

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A LETTER FROM THE ORGANIZING MISSIONER.

B.C.A. Headquarters,

Sydney, December, 1931. My dear Friends,

The end of the year must be an occasion of reflection. The past, with its deeds and misdeeds, comes up before us ; the future, with its possibilities, calls for attention. To us of the B.C.A. the season, especi­ally this of 1931, has special significance.

We are completing twelve years of ser­vice for the Church in Australia. "What God hath wrought" is all we can say. He has mightily helped our workers and maintained the work. To Him alone be the glory !

The year now coming to its end has been the most difficult in the whole period. De­pression has seriously affected our friends, especially those in New South Wales, where it has been felt most, and where our strong­hold of support has been. It is cheering to know that our Victorian helpers have splendidly helped this year.

I like to set our affairs before our B.C.A. friends. We need £500 by December 31st, to keep us free from all deficit. In all our work we have never sought to cultivate a debt ; we have regarded such as God-dis­honouring. There have been times when we knew not how needs would be met. Often our feet have come down and touched the cold waters of the River of Difficulty before the cleavage was made and we were enabled

to pass through as on dry ground. God de­lights to do the unexpected, that we might learn that He is a God of Deliverances. He is unchangeably the same. But He wants us to be the ministers and stewards of His mys­teries and of His grace.

Thus I commend to all our readers the special opportunity which is being afforded you now of sharing in a deliverance. In Victoria, B.C.A. friends are being invited by letter to mark the season with a definite gift. Christmas Day should see the climax of this movement, which God so richly blessed last year.

In New South Wales and South Australia I am asking "Real Australian" readers to use the perforated attachment to be found on our closing page. Please tear it off and pass it around on Christmas Day at the table of your rejoicing. Many ,who never hear of pur B.C.A. work will be present in homes on that day where this paper goes. They surely will be glad to help.

Send the amount to our Headquarters Office in Sydney, or to the Victorian office, according to the State of your residence. Our prayer is—NO DEBT !

May Christmas and New Year abound with all happiness and joy to you all. I am, yours sincerely,

S. J. KIRKBY, Organising Missioner.

EDITORIAL.

We commend the articles in this issue to our readers, especially that dealing with the work of the B.C.A. 'plane under Rev. L. Daniels, of Wilcannia. For nine years Mr. Daniels has carried on the ministry in that distant area—a record period, we believe. The work of the aeroplane, which commenced about four years ago, has entailed great strain upon him. He has manfully carried on in spite of drought and depression. We com­mend him especially to the interest and prayers of the churchpeople of Sydney. In his article Mr. Daniels discloses a need— that of another tyre for the undercarriage of the 'plane. One was given to us last month by a generous friend at Vaucluse. It would be fine if someone gave the other. A dona­tion of *£4* will do it. Thank you ! Write to the Organising Missioner.

The article on "Gate-opening'' will appeal to all. Mr. Hallahan has just finished twelve months' ministry in the most difficult area of the diocese of St. Arnaud. A year of cloud and sunshine it has been. We rejoice to know that his ministry has been accom­panied with spiritual awakening. It is this for which the B.C.A. stands.

PERSONAL.

Sister L. Huxtable.—The end of this year  
will see the completion of service under  
B.C.A. by Sister Huxtable. As Matron of  
our Hospital work at Ceduna in the Far  
West Mission, South Australia, she has  
splendidly maintained the high reputation  
which the institution has always enjoyed.  
Her cheerful Christian witness has been in  
consonance with her professional skill. We  
shall miss her. Our best wishes go out to  
her, specially in view of her pending mar­  
riage. God's blessing be upon her.  
**♦!♦ *+§\** • ♦£♦ ■**

Sister D. Todd,' who has been on the staJ at Ceduna, has been promoted to the pos tion of Matron. Her experience during thu past twelve months has well fitted her for the responsible post.

***\*§\* \*§>* ♦£♦**

Sister F. Dowling, of Summer Hill, has volunteered to serve at Ceduna ; thus we shaF be happily staffed again. Sister Dowling welcomed cordially into our ranks, and *yfcr* pray that she finds happy service in this B.C.A. sphere.

**♦!♦ ♦£♦ ♦£♦**

Sister Agnes Lundie.—In that difficult out' post of ours at Cann River, Croajinjolong, Sister Agnes has served for years. She has now returned to Sydney. The good wishes and thanks of the Society are tendered her for all her valued nursing work and self-sacrificing service.

**♦£♦ *<§+* ♦?♦**

Sister Sowter, recently of the Prince Alfred and other hospitals, has been appointed to the Croajingalong Mission. With her fine record of service and experience in her profession, the interests of the B.C.Af will be well maintained. We are happy to have her at this responsible post and in the Society.

VICTORIAN NOTES.

Christmas Cheer.—We were wondering how far we could translate those magic words into fact this year, but we must again thank Vic­torians for the splendid spirit shown in send­ing in toys, clothing, and money to make the joy of this season to many a bright reality. The earnest letters received, the co-operation of younger folk, and the sacri­fice of many desiring to share in this min­istry have brought us no small joy, and we would take this opportunity of thanking you one and all as we think upon you severally. Forth have gone the various cases, and it only remains for sympathisers to follow in thought the receiving and *giving* out of these gifts

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and the pleasure resulting, to have **a** fitting conclusion to this their expression of good'

will.

«£♦ ♦?♦ ♦?♦

**Gardening Notes.**—Some of you read the hints in the daily papers, and after fighting the pests you have the assurance of Thomas Brown, the Manx poet, that "A garden is **a** lovesome thing, God wot," and you want this God-given beauty to be shared with others. Why not have a garden party for the B.C.A. ? Will clergy please bring this before any who will help us in this way ? Mrs. Price, of Heidelberg, recently invited a number of guests to view her garden and to purchase the things secured by her and her committee. The day was rainy, but much good work was done on the verandah, and the Society benefited to the extent of *£25.* Our thanks to these good ladies, and to all who came along to buy.

♦£♦ ♦£♦ ♦§♦

**Our Thanks.**—Messrs Swallow £•? Ariell must be thanked for sending a fine supply of biscuits for the children, and we received from an anonymous friend a gift of "Aspros11 for use in our hospital and nursing work. The Premier granted us free cartage over the railways for our Christmas goods to the Mallee and to Croajingalong. Once again we have received the splendid help of the Adelaide Steamship Go. and Messrs. Mcll-vraith, McEacharn in getting our goods to the Far West Mission of South Australia. To all these helpers and to those who helped in the packing do we tender sincere thanks.

**Advent-Christmas Message.**—Many of you have received a letter from the office with our greetings for the season, and a short survey of the year as it has affected us. We have much to thank God for, but we feel that the appeal you have received will be fol-lowed up as far as you are able to help. Last year, in response to this special appeal, £90 resulted : we have asked for £100 to be sent in during this month. Please read the inspiring message from Archdeacon Kirkby. If you have been missed in this appeal, will you please send your Advent-Christmas offer­ing to this office ?

May a full measure of peace and godly prosperity be yours at this time and in the New Year. Greetings from the Victorian Committee to all who labour with us in the furtherance of the Gospel.

V. S. W. MITCHELL, Victorian Deputation Secretary.

**THE AEROPLANE OUT-BACK.**

**Retrospect.**

Four years ago this month (November), Moth VH-UGM. left the De Havilland fac­tory at Stag Lane, London, to set out on her pioneer ministry in Far Western New South Wales—the first 'plane to be used exclusively in the services of the Church, and at the present day the only 'plane "in action," apart from Keith Langford-Smith's notable effort in North Australia. No baptism of cham­pagne started the-"Far West" on her course, nor did any other ceremony, but unobtru­sively (as far as the press would allow) she settled down to her work west of the Darling River. Her career has not been uneventful, as many of you know. Once she suffered from a damaged pinion, and on another occa-

sion her legs became feeble and gave way. (She had strayed too far from her happy hunting grounds !) But, nothing daunted, she still cleaves her way through the dust-storms on her mission of service. Two hun­dred and fifty miles this way, one hundred and twenty that, one hundred miles here and eighty-five there—-services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, visits : to and fro she busies across the vast plains in the service of the scattered church-folk of the Far West sheep country. She is by no means worn out yet, though some of her clothing is getting a little shabby. The soles of her shoes are rather worn, so somebody provided a new shoe the other day. I am hoping someone else will send the other one to match shortly, just for the sake of appearances.

\* \* \* ♦

Though we can arrange a programme of visits to alternate with the regular services and work in Wilcannia, we are never sure that our plans will hold.

On **a** certain evening in Menindie an old man drove his quaint motor-caravan down the street to his home. Typical man of the bush, he was returning from still one more of his hawking trips to the farthest borders of the district. How many times in the last forty years he had so reached home, none can tell. He spent the next day pottering about on his motor and setting things in order. The last remaining child of his family had been married by the "Flying Parson" on the Saturday previous. He sat down to tea with his wife, and together they talked of the past. "On Monday,11 said he, "I must be off again,11 and he went to bed early.

On that same evening the flying parson also went to bed early, well in the grip of influenza. Somewhere about midnight a con­fused *buzzing* noise penetrated his restless sleep. He woke with a start, at last he knew what it was—the telephone-was ringing violently. Somebody answered it. "Men­indie speaking11 ... old Mr. Travis has died suddenly. Could Mr. Daniels use every effort to fly to Menindie to-morrow ? The family especially desires him. The funeral will take place at two o'clock.11

At 12.30 next day, willing hands aided the pilot to fuel the Moth. She took off in a gusty southerly. The journey, which usually takes an hour, took almost two. The funeral had to be delayed to *give* time for the journey from 'drome to township, and for a hasty brush-up and lunch.

A number of cars and all the people were assembled outside the home of the old man, whose caravan motor, all ready for a journey which would never be undertaken, stood under the shade of a tree nearby. Every­body seemed dazed and quiet. He was known to all, and all wished to follow him on this last journey which he had not planned and had not intended to take so soon. So simple in all his ways, and so quiet in his going and coming, the quiet of this last going left all hearts sad, for the welcome on "the other side11 was lost almost in a grief so sudden. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.11

It was a weary journey back for the pilot, but at last the outlines of Wilcannia came in sight, then the 'drome and the wind indi­cator. He circled over the river and the hos­pital and glided down into the southerly, still blowing strong. Turning, he housed the

Moth and went home to bed. He was still in the grip of influenza.

\* \* \* \*

Here we raise our Ebenezer : "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.11 The course has not been easy ; the skies have not been always blue ; sometimes ominous clouds have crept over the horizon ; there has not always been a following wind ; many a doubtful land­ing was encountered ; danger and his sinister partner have sometimes been riding at the wing-tips. Many a difficulty has had to be faced and overcome. Yet, through it all, there has been that assurance of the Divine Hand upholding and guiding through all. We have been conscious of, and thankful for, the prayers of those B.C.A. friends who have not only been in sympathy, but have understood some of the difficulties and dan­gers of this adventure. With them we raise our Te Deum.

The time has come for the pilot to hand over the controls to a younger man. The work ultimately takes its toll of physical strength and power of endurance. Youth is essential. **What young Australian of ability, faith, and character will answer the call of service and adventure for God's** Kingdom **in the Far** West ?

**WHAT ABOUT OUR CHRISTMAS TREE FUND?**

All thanks to our many friends who have made is possible for us to brighten up the Christmas season of many little people out­back. Already innumerable cases of goods of every description have been sent out. Even now the work is not yet finished. Both in Sydney and in Melbourne we have had a band of workers who have given close atten­tion to the needs which have been placed before us, and have willingly worked so that none be overlooked. It would be impossible to mention all who thus have helped ; but to them our deepest thanks are tendered. We rejoice to have such fellow-workers. May their Christmas be a happy one, too !

Will our readers who have not yet given to our Christmas Tree Fund remember that it is not too late so to do. We have incurred charges for freight, etc. The smallest dona­tions will be gratefully received. Send to our offices and acknowledgmenet will be made.

In next issue we may be able to tell an interesting story of this side of our work.

**HAVE YOU** A BIBLE ?

The article about our "Mail-bag Sunday" School11 which appeared in our last issue, appears to have aroused considerable interest. For this we are glad indeed. An important need has been placed before us by the Superintendent. Bibles, Prayer Books, and even some story-books would be of tremen­dous help at this time. Particularly we ask for the Bibles for our out-back scholars. In some cases parents are glad to make a pur­chase of the required books ; in others, they are not able. To meet such cases the B.C.A. is anxious. We do not ask for Bibles with expensive bindings—something serviceable is required. How cheered we should be if some friend sent us a parcel of **new** Bibles ! We say THANK YOU now.

We add that second-hand Bibles and Prayer Books will be welcome. Send them along, please.

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**THE NOBLE ARMY OF GATE-OPENERS**

**Work in the B.C.A. Mission at Werrimul.**

To succeed in the task of regular pastoral visitation to the eight hundred scattered families in this huge ''parish," one has to be furnished with much in the way of informa­tion that is not included in the curricula of our theological colleges. Most necessary among these requirements is the art ot map' plotting and reading ; for this district of eighty miles by forty, lying south of the River Murray in the Far North'West corner of Victoria, has been subdivided into areas of approximately one square mile each for the purpose of settling wheat'growers.

Fortunately for me. my predecessor had faithfully and accurately recorded the results of his labours, so that my visits to the homes of the settlers have, in the main, been paid at the time intended, and not as it were by accident.

When the homestead block has been reached, there still remain two problems to be solved : Firstly, the location of the entrance to the block, and, secondly, the mystery of how to open the gate. Unless a keen look' out is kept, the "gate" is apt to be passed by as a part of the fence, consisting as it does of just a panel of wires attached by various devices to the fence'post. It seems to me that each individual owner has a particular way of fastening this panel, and much precious time is spent in unravelling strands of wire, barbed and plain, in the effort to obtain an entrance to the block.

**Blessed are the Ramp-makers.**

In the station'country north of the wheat' growing area, the "gates" present an easier task to the motorist. They are of the "ramp11 pattern, being so constructed that **a** car can pass through the open panel, yet there is not enough foot'room for sheep to make their way along. Even so, there is need for careful driving to make this en' trance.

**The Spiritual Simile.** This problem of the gates being always with us, our thoughts travel on similar lines ; and the pastoral work of the ministry itself presents itself as the work of an expert "gate opener.11 How to find the entrance and the secret of its unloosing, so that the gracious Presence of the Lord Jesus may abide in the hearts and homes of these struggling, scattered, and sorely disappointed children of his.

Here are some of the "barbs11 to be un' ravelled. The lot of a hard'working, God' fearing man, who with his wife and two young children, listened to the attractive picture painted by an Australia House representative in England, and, with their all, settled here five years ago on the advice of the Closer Settlement Board (Victoria) :

1927—100 acres cleared and planted and no crop resulted. Drought.

1928—220 acres sown ; crop, 140 bags

1929—220 acres sown ; no crop.

1930—275 acres sown ; crop, 825 bags

at 5/' a bag (about half the actual

cost of growing).

This year, 1931, although the season has

been fair, the crops are, generally speaking,

on the meagre side, and on present world

prices, will not be sufficient to do more than

pay the interest charges. Meantime the

family grows up, and the sise of the larder grows down, at a corresponding rate. For some years past these settlers have been liv­ing on a sustenance allowance from the Gov ernment. This allowanee has been gradually reduced until now this good friend of mine has a few shillings monthly to feed, clothe, and educate his family. Every settler here is being "settled11 by the same set of adverse circumstances, and only those whose faith is real can withstand the gruelling test.

Our Responsibility.

Yet in this apparently unbroken fence of forbidding "barbed wire" there is a break, if only the vision be keen enough to perceive it. Even if life does present an appearance similar to that of an endless length of "barbed wire fencing11—barb after barb of bitter dis' appointment, ruined hopes, apparently futile labour, and twisted problems—it is the same life into which our Saviour descended, and through which He passed, bearing with toil, poverty, privation, and disappointment, and for our sakes accepting them in meekness and faith ; "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross,11 and Who now in all our afflictions is Himself afflicted.

Will the readers of the "Real Australia11 who have found Jesus to be the Way, con' tinue in prayer for their representatives, that they may be given grace to be real "gate' openers,11 pointing to Him alone Who can say, and does say : "Behold, I have set before you an open door.11 And in answer to those prayers may the threshold be crossed into a larger and fuller life of sympathetic service for their fellow'Hien by many who now are groping blindly for the reason of these barbs of affliction.

R.H.

POSTS AND RAILS.

HAVE YOU shared with us in our Christmas

effort? We need £500. HAVE YOU paid your subscription (if due)

to "The Real Australian ?—1/6 per

annum posted. HAVE YOU a Bark Hut Missionary Box ?

We will gladly supply without charge. HAVE YOU joined our B.C.A. **Birthday**

**Band**—the Kookaburra Club ? One shih

ling entrance and one shilling a year is

the fee.

**♦!♦ $ ♦§♦**

Thanks are tendered to "Anonymous,  
Ipswich, Queensland,11 for the gift of *£l* for  
our Christmas Tree Fund ; also to another  
giver of 10A, whose envelope bore the fob  
lowing : "Bush Church Aid Christmas Tree.11♦$» $ ♦§♦

A gracious **gift** from Greystanes Sunday School. The Rector, in forwarding £1, in' timated that the scholars had given up their prises so that our work might thus be helped. A fine example !

**♦§♦ ♦$♦ ♦$♦**

Special gifts have come to us from many friends, and pur thanks are due to them.

**Girls' Bible Class, East Ryde,** per Mrs. Aveling—sheets for hospital work.

**Miss Chaffey, of East Ryde,** for a splen' did parcel of beautifully worked children's garments—the handicraft of her pupils. A most valuable gift this.

**Ladies' Guild at St. Anne's, Ryde.** Fob lowing on an "Afternoon11 addressed by Sister Winifred Potiphar, a handsome parcel of chil'

dren's clothing was sent in. Many thanks to our friends there.

\* \* \*

We remember with gratitude the friends who in various parishes have maec big ciiorts to help our work during the last quarter.

Girls5 Guild, Cronulla, under the leadership of Miss Rutledge Newton—a splendid Gro­cery Evening.

Women's Guild, St. John'3, **Beecroft**—an '"Afternoon,11 when donations and groceries for our hospitals, etc., were given.

£>t.' **Alban's, Leura,** arranged by Mrs. W. Newmarch, an "Afternoon1' (groceries and donations), and an "Evening11 with moving pictures of B.C.A. work by the Organising Missioner.

**Mrs. Bates, Balmoral**—Grocery Afternoon, with introduction of our work to many new friends.

Once again all thanks to **Mrs. Wading, of Gladesville,** and to **friends in that parish.,** for gracious and generous help. Mrs. Wat' ling's effort and the result thereof are indi­cations of what can be done by personal ser-vices and persuasion. It means so much to the B.C.A.

# \* \* \*

Of necessity, and in keeping with its pur-pose, "The Real Australian11 must devo itself to the interests of "Home Missions,11 as distinct from "Foreign Missions.11 As a met' ter of fact the distinction is unreal. In the mind of our Lord and in His plan of world redemption all mission **work is one,** and has no relation to geographical or ethnographical considerations. The command still holds "Go ye into all the world,11 and Australia after all, is only part thereof.

The foregoing we write by way of urging our readers to secure a copy of that fascin­ating book, "Mary Slessor, **the** White **Queen,"** by W. P. Livingstone, and pub­lished by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. Mary Slessor stood for the Word of God and Witness of Jesus in the midst of a savage tribe in West Africa. A Scotch shoemaker's daughter with mighty few opportunities for doing great things, yet by the Spirit of God she was called and prepared, and at the age of twenty-eight years she went forth as a missionary to an almost unknown country. The story of her great work, of her wisdom, tenderness of heart, and seal is told in the volume. She virtually became a "Queen,11 ruling and directing people, not with a rod of iron, but by a ministry of Christ-like love. The book must be read. Price, with paper cover, is marked at **one shilling.**

For all we know there may be some further charges imposed by the Federal Government, which is acting as though the acquisition of

Anyhow, the worth twice *its*

1/4.

knowledge were dangerous, book, even then, would be marked value.

Later news : Selling price,

Please do not drop your subscription to  
"The Real Australian11—there is no substi­  
tute for it. You lose if you do not read it.  
Send along your eighteenpence if it is clue.  
\*§\* \*f\* ♦£♦

Call and see our Christmas calendars. We still have a fine selection, and moderately priced. They make excellent gifts for the coming season. All profits go to our work. Remember our address : B.C.A. *Office,* St.

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Andrew's Cathedral, George Street, Sydney.

Have you a "Bark Hut" Missionary Box in your home ? You may not be able to become a member of the Society (12A a year is the subscription), but you can become a valued helper. A neat little missionary box will be sent to you without charge from either the Sydney or Melbourne office. There is one condition attached to the reception of the box : that you use it to hold your self-denials for our work out'back.

♦£♦ ♦£♦ ♦$♦

All thanks to Mrs. J. Howard Gill of Kirn' billi, for interesting so many kind friends in our special Christmas effort. For years past we have benefited by her kindly effort. Our thanks also must be tendered the givers, whom we gratefully name : Mrs, Spencer, Mrs, H. A. Smith, Mrs. G. Phillips, Mrs. Boyd, Lady Gordon, Miss McMurrick, Mrs. Darcy-Irvine, Miss A. Peterson, Mrs. Easter' brook, Mrs. J. Howard Gill, Miss Anderson, Miss Kippax.

THE KOOKABURRA **CLUB.**

Our Birthday Band.

My dear Kookaburras,

In my last letter to you I reminded you all about sending your donation to the Old Kookaburra when your birthday cards arrived. Sach a lot of Kookaburras have done so, and Tuite a lot have remembered that they forgot to send their donations last year and have sent those as well.

The Old Kookaburra is very pleased with all the Kookaburras. Now none of you will forget again, will you ?

We have several new Kookaburras, and to them we send a very hearty greeting, and we hope they will all be very happy in our birth' day band.

Christmas is nearly here now, and all the Kookaburras who go to school will soon be having holidays, and I suppose quite a nuiii' b.er will be flying away to other gum'trees to spend their vacations there ; others will be staying at home, and flying down to the beaches and to the Zoo., and will be having picnics and all sorts of wonderful things like that. So wherever you spend your holi' days I hope you will all have the very hap' piest time, and will go back to school nice brown Kookaburras.

This year is almost over. It is such a tired old year ; I think it will be glad to die and go to join all the other years who have died too.

1932 will begin, and will hold all sorts of things for everyone. He will come in through the eastern window, carrying the bread of joy and the chalice of pain, and to everyone will he go, breaking the bread of happiness so that all may eat and handing the chalice of sorrow so that all must drink. We must all partake of the happiness and drink of the pain before the year is over. The sacrament of sorrow I have heard the chalice named ; but I call the bread of joy and the chalice of grief the sacrament of life.

A very, very happy Christmas to you all,

and the very brightest of New Years from

all the Kookaburras to all the Kookaburras,

and from the Old Kookaburra to you all.

Yours,

THE OLD KOOKABURRA.

**A PLEASANT LAND WITH A PLEASANT** NAME.

Another Victorian Mission.

In geometrical terms, Croajingalong is not a point—it is a space. In geographical terms it is the eastern'Hiost area of the State of Vic' toria, and bounded by the border of the State of New South Wales. In ecclesiastical terms it is part .of the Diocese of Gippsland, a mis' sion district handed over for working to the B.C.A., which has staffed it with Padre, Deaconess, and not the least, a Nursing Sis' ter. In siz,e, it may be smaller than the aver' age Bush Church Aid area, but in character it is entirely different from all the others. It is not made up of spreading plains and open country given to wheat or wool: it is a country •of valleys and rivers, of mighty timber and jungle scrub, of rich creek'side flats, and of almost hidden little settlements. No railway has spun its slender steel threads across the pattern of Croajingalong. Access to it is by road—the famous Prince's Highway, to be exact. Yet that road respects the natural characteristics of the area : it follows the contours and\_ leaves close'standing on both sides the majestic gum'trees which tower up to 300 feet in height.

A Gold Rush.

*'Of* ~->-<?nt date is has acquired some fame. In one ot the ranges, and at a spot not easy to reach, a rich strike of gold has been dis­covered. For the first time, perhaps, in his' tory, our city newspapers have been giving mention to Combienbar (a delightfully musical name with accent on the second and fourth syllable) as the scene of considerable excite' ment. It is the nearest settlement to the newlydiscovered "rush.11 And in these im.' pecunious days, when stone yields ounces to the ton it is no wonder that everybody wants to be there. Our hope is that the "strike11 will lead on to big things. Living there will involve some hardship, at least when the winter comes on. Tracks are rough, the mountain ridges are stony and steep. The writer knows ; since he "carried his swag11 through it on a journey of service and wit' ness some eleven years ago. It may be that in some later issue we shall have a story to tell of the fortunes of this recent gold dis­covery and all that has followed it.

**Contrasts.**

Let us write rather of the work of the Church there and of a recent visit to croa' jingolong. To reach it either from Sydney or from Melbourne, the traveller passes through what might justly be called "garden country.11 Perhaps because the route from Sydney keeps very close to the sea for two or three hun' dred miles, the journey is thus the more in' teresting. It provides some of the finest panoramic views in Australia. A journey to Croajingalong in the January of 1929 stands in contrast with that made recently. Then it was a season of devastating bush'fires, when stock and even human lives were lost, when homes and fences were destroyed. Once in the area of danger, it was not easy to get out ; burning trees crashed on mountainside and on road, bridges and culverts were re' duced to ashes. At night the sight was fear' ful : every tree was a pillar of fire, and the wind carried trails of flame and blasts of heat, and a baleful glow shone around. Inferno seemed to surround one.

But now, in 1931, what a contrast ! The land has recovered. The blackened tree-trunks are smothered in rich green foliage as though Nature would hide old scars. Every creek runs with a clear stream, and the road is fringed with fresh springing grass of living green. So we enter Cann River, which is the central settlement of Croajinga' long.

**The** Threefold Ministry **of the B.C.A.**

Here, in outstanding position, is St. John's Church of England, that beautiful little place of prayer and worship, standing as a definite witness for our Lord. And what an inter' esting meeting we had there ! The Mission Van Sisters had worked their way down, and so there were general welcomes and greetings all round. The B.C.A. seemed to make up quite the majority of the population. There were Sister Kathleen and Miss Reece of the Van, Sister Bazett, Croajingalong Bush Dea' coness, Sister Sowter (A.T.N.A.), the B.C.A. Nurse just installed, the B.C.A. Padre, and the Organising Missioner. The little season of intercession and praise held in the church was refreshing indeed. Even in far'off places we may join "with angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven11 in a true "mag' nificat11 to God's Holy Name.

Then followed a variety of duties. The Nursing Sister was introduced to her "Home,11 a neat little house built by local residents and eminently suited for the work. A peep into the "dispensary,11 of spacious dimension, gave adequate idea of the impor' tance of this ministry. No doctor or chemist is within easy reach—the nearest is sixty miles distant. So we have shelves of drugs and lotions, powders and pills, most of them with queer names, but all of them, if used aright, calculated to cure "the ills to which flesh is heir.11 Sister Sowter will be engaged in great things, a ministry of the Good Sam' aritan, not confined to Cann River only, but touching every settlement in that big area of Croajingalong. It means travel and toil. Our friends will keep her in their prayers.

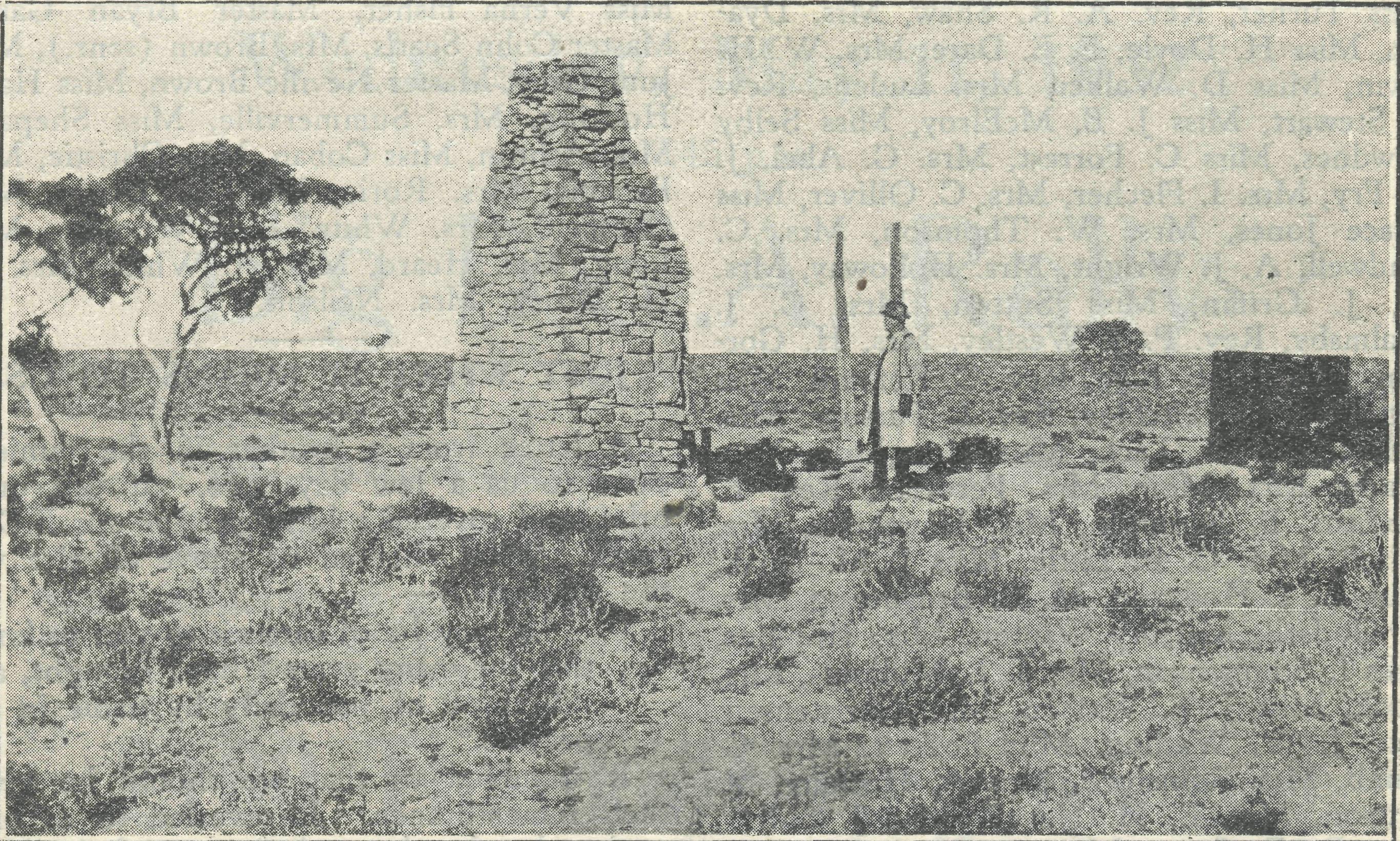
The ministry of the Word and Sacraments falls upon our missioner, assisted by Sister Basett. Services are held every Sunday aj; Cann River by one or the other. Then there are nine other "centres11 scattered about the mountains and valleys. In none of these is there a church, so halls and homes are re quisitioned. Then there are schools, with their opportunities for religious instruction. Who can measure the importance of this latter service for the children ? Padre and Deaconess have each their own means of travel : the latter prefers a horse, with a "bike11 as a "stand'by,11 the former uses a motor'cycle. There was no time for the visitor to go to outlying settlements, the ad' ministration of the mission claimed his atten' tion.

**Some Calls by the Wbyside.**

Nevertheless the Van Sisters managed to give him a little demonstration of their work. There was one afternoon of travel in the Van, when, among other things, a call was paid to old friends who lived "up the River11 —Mr. and Mrs. Sam Smith. The Organ' izing Missioner remembers their frequent hos' pitalities to him, but none exceed in gener' osity the first that they showed him as a stranger, eleven years ago ; he was given bed, breakfast, and a blessing. Rather footsore and weary after days of tramping, "waltzing

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THE REAL AUSTRALIAN:



**Relics of Homestead, Pidinga, Rock Hole, Nullarbor.**

Matilda" as it is sometimes called, he tarried by their cottage, and was given an unrc served welcome. A fragrant memory that will always be ! But it was good to see them again, although time and sickness have laid heavy hands on them. They are both well into the "eighties." Sam's has been an extra' ordinary career ; he served in the Maori War and won his medal therein ; he followed a seafarer's life, and then with his wife served as a lighthouse'keeper on some of the lonely parts of our coast. Now they rest in quiet' ness in the valley of the Cann. We talked of thinks past and present, and said "good' bye11 with a little prayer. May God give them light at eventide !

Further up the valley track we go, our Dodge van splendidly maintaining its reputa' tation for reliability. Where is the writer who once stated that our bush had no beauty ? He must have been blind ; certainly he had never visited Groajingalong. The mind retains a riot of impressions : bowered roads, a rippling stream, giant trees, white cloud'Hiasses of ti'trees bloom, the cool, deep green of the native blackwood, the exquisite fragrance of wattle> blossom, and ever and anon the musical tinkle of the bell'bird.

Another call we make, again on friends of old time. A tobacco plantation is here. Isn't this an indication of the varied wealth of the country ? Agricultural scientists tell us that there are three areas in the whole Com' monwealth of outstanding merit for the pro' duction of the "weed"—this spot, Kowat by name, is one of them.

**"Hot-spots" and "Blow-outs."**

Still the Mission Van pushes on, and comes at last into the open country of New South Wales. All things seem to go on as a holi' day (as stayat'homes imagine it to be), when suddenly there is a report, and an ominous bumping on the part of the van. We pull up at once to discover a "blowout," and right on the track where there is not so much as the shade of a two'wire fence. Sisters1 Mission Van work here presents itself from quite another angle. To put on a work' ing "pinny," to crawl under the back axle, to fit the lifting'}ack, to struggle with an obstin' ate tyre-rim, to take turns with an air'pump, and to smile all the way through—well, even this is part of the ministry of our sisters. We leave them shortly afterwards, still trav elling from district to district, from home to home. A great work is theirs, and God has *blessed* it. Pray for it and pray for it again ■\*rf$ »ci£aiTi-!

SJ.K.

**THE GREATEST PLAIN IN ATJSTRAUA.**

(Continuation of article on the Nullarbor Plains.)

Courageous souls have before this sought to turn the Plain into **a** pastoral proposition. At one point near the eastern extremity is a well-known water supply known as the Pidinga Bock hole. It consists of smooth, sloping masses of granite, broken here and there by deep fissures. The occasional rains are caught by the rock-face, and the fissures hold them. Emboldened by this fact, **a** set­tler determined to make Pidinga the site

for a homestead. A house he erected, necessary gear was set up, sheep were located there, and abounding hope pre­vailed. To-day what is there? Against the sky-line, stark and bare, stands **a** weathered stone chimney. Near at hand and half-embedded' in the sandy soil lies rusting implements. Hope has been abandoned. Endeavour has failed. The Nullarbor still remains uninhabited.

**The Birds that Dwell There.**

Animal and bird life may be seen on the Plain. The absence of trees particu­larly affects the bird life. There is not so much of it. Even the great eagle with its wonderful wing-spread, to be seen ranging in high heaven and' occasionally swooping down, must of necessity nest away from the Plain. Their nests are

to be found in the low trees on the border­land or even in the cliffs on the coast of the Bight. The wild turkey is still exis­tent, and though a "protected*"* bird, it suffers somewhat at the hands of "a man with a gun.*''* Owing to its ground-nesting habit, it also becomes a prey to the fox. A fine bird this, insectivorous, and thus helpful in destroying various pests.

Other smaller birds seen on the Plain are generally migrants passing through to feeding and nesting grounds probably on other continents.

**Its Animal Inhabitants.**

Animals appear to be few. The writer has never seen a kangaroo on the Nullar­bor. They are there for all that. Dingoes have been spotted towards the south. The howl of a fox has been heard at night. The wombat is frequently seen, and its habits of excavating large and extensive burrows causes real danger to the traveller. It appears to prefer **a** motor-car track for the site of its under­ground engineering. Woe betide the un­wary motorist! "With a violent bump his car-wheel will break through the thin crust of earth, and he may gaze ruefully on a broken axle or broken springs, re­membering the while that the nearest

garage may be 300 miles or more away. Otherwise the wombat is **a** harmless mar­supial, something like a small pig in size and appearance, with pronounced claws, and covered with **a** coarse fur. **They** favour a root and' herb diet, but fail as an appetising item on the dinner table. Wombat ham is as tasty as a dish of boiled wood!

**One of Its Mysteries.** The whole story cannot be told in these pages. Furthermore, the Nullarbor Plain must be visited to be understood and ap­preciated. There are features of abound­ing interest involving insoluble problems. For instance, what explanation can be given of the presence of *li* sky-stones'' or australites found on the sandy surface? They are jet black, ranging in size from a pea to **a** plum, as hard as a diamond,

and either button or pear-shaped. Are they visitants from another planet? These *"* sky-stones*"* may be cut or polished. The writer has seen a mag­nificent necklace of these polished stones set in gold.

But we close with one recommendation. If possible, spend a night on the Nullar­bor. It is an experience, weird, impres­sive, and unforgettable. The night air, even in sumrrier; "is" crisp " arid 'cool. a calming stillness broods over all. The velvet canopy of heaven hangs low; the stars wax large and brilliant. Earth's sound's are unheard, and cares are for­gotten. There is no sense of loneliness or fear. The spirit within is quickened, and God Himself seems to draw nigh. And the traveller, like unto that Hebrew exile of old, awakes to a profound experi­ence and exclaims : "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!"

S. J. K.

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**JUST WHAT IT MEANS TO US.**

A letter from a brother in the ministry

came to us a few days ago. It was quite

%rief, and covered a little gift for our B.C.A.

work. What cheered us above all else was

the sentence :—

**"It may be of interest to you to know that for many years I have thought, and still think of you daily by name in my prayers."** It humbled us that we should be given such remembrance. It revealed to us once again what has been the secret of the bless­ing which has. followed the work of the B.C.A. from its inception : that there have been men and women who have borne the real burden of our work in their interces' sions, who seem ever to remember those solemn words : "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. *xii.,* 23). **Prayer is not the least that people can do for us : it is really the greatest.** Keep, then, the B.C.A. and its workers ever before you in your prayers unto God.

**Pray for**—

The Missions of the B.C.A. in various parts of Australia, especially remembering the workers who indeed belong to the household of faith. **Pray for—**

The **Aeroplane Mission,** that the Missioner be kept in his difficult and daring work.

**Pray for**—

The extension of this work through the in' troduction of a second 'plane, that the Council may be rightly guided in its loca' tion and staffing.

**Pray for**—

**B.C.A. Hospital work** in the Far Country, where patients must be received in spite of their inability to make any return for ser' vice. Pray that God's good cheer be with the Sisters and their helpers. Remember the nursing work at Croajingalong and its difficulties.

**Pray for—**

The **B.C.A. Children's Hostels** at Wilcan-nia and Mungindi, that the work be in' creased of God, and that we persevere knowing that such ministry to little ones cannot be in vain in the Lord.

**Pray for—**

The **Sisters' Mission Van** in its itinerations in unlikely and out'of'the'way places ; also for the **Sunday School by Post** with its Gospel message for little children.

**Pray for**—

All Students, Deaconesses, and Nurses in training and preparing for B.C.A. work *in* the Bush, that they may be equipped with power, wisdom, and seal, and become "able ministers of the New Covenant." Also re' member the Council, Committees, Women's Auxiliary, and workers on the Home Base Staff ; and pray for a spirit of thankful giving to be upon all B.C.A. friends.

**Forget not to give thanks**—

For kindly givers who have helped us with

their self'denials. For friends, known and unknown, who

have rallied at our call to keep our min'

istries going. For cheering reports from fields that God's

Word is still with power. For offers of service for the filling of pend'

ing vacancies in our work.

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**To all in New South Wales and South Australia who would like to join in our CHRISTMAS EFFORT** :

(Please tear off at perfor ation and hand round at your Christmas table gathering.)

**The Bush Church Aid Society** stands for the best things of Christ's religion out-back. Its **Mission Hospitals, Children's Homes, Mission Van work,** and its great **Aeroplane Ministry** in the far country, as well as other activities1, stand to save the soul of our Australia.

Will you, as you enjoy the happy festivity of the Christian year, make a donation to this work ? Let all present join with a gift, hand to the head of the table, and the amount can be sent to our *Office,* **B.C.A.** Headquarters, St. Andrew's Cathedral, George Street, Sydney.

Here's a quaint yet appealing word for Christmas Day : "Eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions unto him; for whom nothing is prepared" (Neh. viii., 10).

May God *give* you a merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

S. J. KIRKBY,  
(Stamps or postal notes are acceptable.) Organising Missioner.