



Julian Tenison Woods: A Life – Chapters 27th to 35th Written by Mary MacKillop, edited by Carmel Jones rsj

There was great joy among the Sisters in Brisbane when, on 5th January [1872] their dear Father Founder arrived; yet they were saddened by his worn and haggard appearance....The following day, he began a retreat for the Sisters, which occupied five days....¹

The Holy See commissioned two prelates to enquire into the controversies that had arisen [in Adelaide....It now became necessary for Father Woods to return to Adelaide and he left Sydney on the 8th of June ... after an absence of eleven months...²

There is no need to tell of the pleasure [Father Woods'] coming [to Adelaide] brought to those who had so long watched and prayed for his safe arrival; but it was intermingled with sorrow. Those who were appointed to arrange matters considered it advisable in the interests of peace and unity that he should not remain permanently.... Therefore, after visiting different places to see and say farewell to the Sisters, he prepared to depart from Adelaide, never more to behold it...³

And now began his real mission life...⁴

Most of this year was [1873] spent as was the last one – missions, lectures and retreats occupying the main portion of it...⁵

He again advised Sister Mary to go to Rome... The letter written in March did not reach Sister Mary in time. She had written eight letters to Father Woods... Father Woods was at Maryborough when the news of her departure reached him; he was much disappointed, as he had made up his mind to see her before she left...⁶

The Bishop of Hobart invited Father Woods to continue the missions which Father Hinteroecker had commenced, and which his lamented death had interrupted. The invitation was gladly accepted and Father Woods sailed for Hobart.⁷

Nineteen years had elapsed since he went to Hobart with Dr Wilson....⁸ Giving missions in Launceston, Deloraine, Westbury, Longford and many other places entailed plenty of travelling among the crags and glens of the beautiful island ... and the invigorating climate had a beneficial effect on his health ... In his spare moments, as usual, he made notes and wrote scientific papers...It was a long time since he had published any scientific writings; they were continued now as long as he lived, but they never interfered with religious duties...⁹

This year he commenced a Community of Sisters, who were not to teach, but to employ themselves in needlework. He called them the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He sent several candidates from Tasmania to unite with others whom he had already arranged in Sydney and the whole band proceeded to Brisbane...¹⁰

¹ Chapter 27th, p.180

² Chapter 27th, pp. 186-187

³ Chapter 28th, p. 188

⁴ Chapter 28th, p. 191

⁵ Chapter 28th, p. 198

⁶ Chapter 28th, p. 199

⁷ Chapter 28th, p. 201

⁸ Chapter 30th, p. 202

⁹ Chapter 30th, p. 203

¹⁰ Chapter 30th, p. 204



At the end of 1874, Sister Mary returned, bringing a revised Rule for the acceptance of the Sisters...¹¹

A meeting of the Sisters, known as the General Chapter, was appointed to be held on the 19th March, 1875. To this, Father Woods was invited but [he] was obliged to decline the invitation because a creditor, whose demands he was unable to meet, declared that he should be arrested as soon as he set foot in Adelaide ... Later on, he met Sister Mary in Penola, and afterwards in other places, but the majority of the Sisters he never saw again.

Being unable to attend the Chapter, he sent a letter in which he regretted the change made with regard to Poverty; but at the same time expressing his perfect submission to the decision of Rome, and his wish that all should prove their fidelity to the Holy See by obeying it...¹²

After leaving Tasmania, we find him labouring in Bathurst, Maitland or Brisbane. ..In Sydney, he was occupied in scientific work, and did much writing; but in the other dioceses he gave missions when required...¹³

This year he published about thirty scientific papers, many of them illustrated by his own industrious hand, and made many geological notes. His opinion had now great weight in such matters; and his correspondence was very large.¹⁴

[In 1880] the Rev J.E.T. Woods was President of the Linnean Society, and delivered the Presidential address on 28th of January...¹⁵

Sir F.A. Weld had been transferred from Tasmania to the Governorship of the Straits Settlement. His Excellency had been an admirer of the scientific priest from his first acquaintance with him. He now invited his reverend friend to visit the colony for the purpose of exploring Malacca, and furnishing the Government with reliable information on its geology and mineral resources.¹⁶

[Father Woods' travels took him to Krakatoa, Java, Singapore, Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, the Phillipines, Hong Kong, China and Japan]

He arrived at Port Darwin on 23rd of June, 1886... Mr Parsons, the Government Resident, engaged his services to visit and report upon the mineral districts of the Northern Territory...¹⁷

But the explorer's health, which was much impaired by the hardships of his travels in the East, was now almost hopelessly ruined....¹⁸

At the meeting of the Royal Society on 14th of December, it was unanimously resolved that the Clarke medal be awarded to the Rev J.E.T. Woods...¹⁹

His work was nearly over now. Partial paralysis of the hands and legs had been slowly creeping onward; yet, with his old perseverance the sufferer still continued at intervals to pursue his scientific labours....²⁰

¹¹ Chapter 30th, p. 205

¹² Chapter 30th, p. 205

¹³ Chapter 31st, p. 208

¹⁴ Chapter 31st, p. 210

¹⁵ Chapter 32nd, p. 212

¹⁶ Chapter 33rd, p. 218

¹⁷ Chapter 34th, p. 228

¹⁸ Chapter 34th, p. 230

¹⁹ Chapter 34th, p. 231

²⁰ Chapter 35th, p. 234



Every week, Father Woods was visited by Father Ambrosoli, Chaplain of St Vincent's Hospital...Other priests gave many a friendly call, the Sisters visited him, but by degrees the sufferer was unable to see anyone except his immediate attendants ... On the 6th of September, the doctor pronounced the case hopeless... On Rosary Sunday, 6th of October, he received the Last Sacraments. Early next morning, the long looked for call had come...²¹

In many a little convent that day, the Sisters of St Joseph, scattered over Australia, united with their Sydney Sisters in supplication for their Father Founder, though feeling that one who had suffered so long and so patiently scarcely needed prayers...²²

After some time, his fellow scientists and admirers had a beautiful monument erected over his remains... There, on the hillside, overlooking the Pacific which washes far below the rocky cemetery, and murmurs a perpetual requiem in its own soul-stirring music, the mortal remains of Father J.E. Tenison Woods await the resurrection. May he rest in peace. Amen.²³

²¹ Chapter 35th, p. 235

²² Chapter 35th, p. 236

²³ Chapter 35th, pp. 237, 238