

# Memoirs

OF 10849/1012

# D A R I E N

Giving a short Description of that Countrey,  
with an Account of the Attempts of the

Company of *SCOTLAND*;

To Settle a *COLONIE* in that Place;

With a Relation of some of the many Tragical  
Disasters, which did attend that Design.

With some practical Reflections upon the  
whole.

Written mostly in the Year 1700. while the Author was in the  
*American* Regions.

*Quaque ipse Miserrima vidi,  
-----Hec olim meminisse Juvabit.*

Leut. 8. 2, 15, 16. Thou shalt Remember all the way, which the Lord  
thy GOD led thee through that great and Terrible wilderness to humble  
thee and to prove thee, and to do thee good at thy latter End.

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G L A S G O W  
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that in passing along, we were washen with the Waves of the Sea, it is a very hard and rocky shoar all this Way; and the various Windings and Bendings of the Coast made our Way much longer, sometimes we had steep Rocks to pass over, which we must climb with Hands and Feet, we were all sorely fatigued with this Journey, especially Mr *Shields*, was like to faint and sit up, he became so feeble and spent, so that we were much troubled about him, and the more because our Provisions and Cordials were all spent, but passing softly along, at length we came up to a welcome Spring of fresh Water, springing out of the Rocks, close by the Sea Side, this Well was to us, even as that Well was to *Hagar* in the Wilderness, when her Child was faint and like to die, that justly we may call it by the Name of *Beer-la-hai-Roi*, the Well of him that liveth and did see us, by this Well we rested a while, and Mr *Shields* having drunk of it, he was refreshed and strenghtned, and with the Help of the Lord, we were enabled to proceed on in our Journey, till we came up to our Bay opposit to our Ships, and this Evening we got all safely aboard our several Ships, *Ebenezer*. *The LORD leading the Blind by a Way they knew not, preserving our going out, and our coming in, and as our Day was, so making our Strength to be.*

About this Time we had much sickness and Mortality among our Men, which, as it continued among us, in some Measure since our Arrival, was now become epidemical and raging, whereby many even of our Officers and chief Men were taken away, which was a sore Discouragement to us.

On the second of *February* the Ministers sent to this Colony agreed to write a Letter Home to *Scotland* to the *Moderator* of the Commission of the *Generall Assembly*, giving the *Church* and our *Friends*; some Account of

our Affairs hitherto, the Copy whereof follows

*From the Woods of Caledonia Febr. 2. 1700.*

*Reverend Sir*

*This being the first sure Occasion that ever was offered to us, since our Departure from Scotland, and which may probably be the last that may occur from this Place, for writing to you concerning our Affairs: We thought our selves bound in Duty, and obliged by our Instructions, to embrace the Opportunity of giving you some Account of our sad and very afflicted State: If universally prevailing Wickedness in a Society, and very heavy Punishments, proclaiming divine Anger contending with us, together with all Manner of encreasing Hardships and imminent Dangers from surrounding Enemies, in a proper, vast and howling Wilderness, can make a Condition sad and afflicted.*

The Source and Fountain Cause of all our Mileries, we brought from our own Countrey with us, arising from the inconsiderate Choice that was made there of the worst of Men to go along with us, that ever were sent to command or serve in a Colony: Which in the judgment of GOD, our Land hath spued out as its Scum, and no spot of GOD's Earth can entertain or receive, but as a Burden to it. The sending and intrusting such Multitudes of Men of such perverse and pernicious Principles and scandalous Practices, that have no Regard to the commonest Measures of Religion or Reason, Honesty or Honour ( which is the sad but just Character of the greatest Part of those that have been sent to settle this Colony ) hath been the Cause of the Unsettlement thereof first and last: And threatens the final and fatal Ruin thereof, to the irreparable Loss, and indelible Shame and Reproach of the Nation. Such was the Company we were thrust in among during the

*Voyage*

Voiage, which will readily be judged might make it not a little tedious and uneasy to us : Especially when after all the Essays and Endeavours we could use, in the discharge of Ministerial Duties to them, as we had access in our weak and difficult circumstances, after publick and private reproving their swearing, cursing, drunkenness, and pleading and contending with them, crying and roaring every day among them, about these things procuring laws to be made by their own consent against them, having publick exercise every day, and preaching every Sabbath, so long as our Health permitted. Yet we could not prevail to get their wickedness restrained, nor the growth of it stopped. For these things it pleased the Holy and Just God to punish and smite us very sore with a contagious sickness, which also we brought from *Scotland* with us, that raged during the whole voiage, so that few escaped the infection thereof, whereby many were cut off, to the number of about 160 in all : And among the rest some of God's Jewels and excellent Ones, and in particular our dear Brother Mr. *Alexander Dalgleish*, who approved himself even to the Consciences of the most debauched, as a faithful Servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet in the midst of all this wrath the Lord remembered Mercy toward us in supporting us under all these pressures, sparing some of us from sickness, and restoring others of us from the gates of Death, favouring us with a fair and easie wind and good weather all the way, & bringing us in safety to our Port at which we arrived *November 30*. But there we looked for Peace and no good came, and for a time of healing, and behold new Troubles : In some respect not unlike *David's* troubles, when he found *Ziqlag* burnt and his Friends all gone, and the People speaking of stoning him : So we found our Colony deserted, their houses and Batteries burnt, the ground they had cleared

all grown up again, and no Accommodation or Comfort left, but what is to be sought in a wilderness, attended with all the Sorrows, Vexations, Perplexities and Confusions, that may be supposed to accompany so confounding and surprizing a disappointment of all our expectations, that had swelled before to too great bigness.

We do not think it so proper for us, to trouble you with Narrations ( which you may have otherways better ) of our Governours and Officers Resolutions to re-settle, of the Measures taken for advancing that Design, and of the Difficulties and discouragements that occurred and do still increase in the prosecution of it. We conceive you will rather expect from us, an Account of the Concerns of the Gospel, and of our Ministry in that Work : which we are sorry that we are not in case to make so satisfactory as were to be desired, being intricated in so many Difficulties, to us insuperable. The Truth is, as every Body was brought to his wits end, so when we sought a Retirement in the Woods, which to this day is all the Accommodation we have for our Meeting to pray and conferr together about our Case and Duty, we knew not what to do, and began to doubt if we were called in our present circumstances, and were by our Commission and Instructions obliged to stay any longer with this people, who at first were not concerned in Calling us, and now did not invite us to stay. We began to reason with our selves, that upon such a Substantial alteration of the case of our Mission, the several Congregations that still are in relation to some of us, as our charge, and the reverend *Commission* that sent us, might expect our Return, The Colony and Church of *New-Edinburgh* to which we were sent in Mission, were now gone, and not to be found, and the latter never had a being in *Rerum Natura*, and a great part of our Instructions, through untoward Emergents, essentially

tially altering the Case, were now become impracticable: As that of dividing the inhabitants of the Colony into Districts or Parishes, that each of us might have a particular charge, which now cannot suit our circumstances: It being determin'd to keep only 500 of sea and land men, whose local residence is circumscribed, within the limits of one little Fort: That of holding Parochial Sessions and Diets of *Presbytery* distinct, which supposeth the former division.

That of labouring among the Natives for their instruction and conversion, which to us is impossible, having neither the language nor any interpreter, that can speak either *Spanish* or *Indian*: And the last, that so many of us should stay in this Countrey, as might keep up the Face of a *Presbytery*, untill new Supplies should be sent: Which is now impracticable, when though all of us should stay, we can hardly make the face of of a *Presbytery*.

These Difficulties were very discouraging, yet on the other hand considering the necessitie of this people to have the Gospel preached to them, which is so much the greater, that they are not sensible of it: And that we know not, what our People or the Reverend Judicatories that sent us, will expect of us upon such changes, nor whether they are informed of the Change, but rather might challenge us upon our return, and silence us with such a *Querie* as we could not answer: What have ye done with those few sheep in the Wilderness, that there is still a Colony in the place, which is the primary Object of our charge, and that though some of our instructions are rendred impracticable, yet others are still practicable: And the design of all of them is, that we should fulfill our Mission, in labouring in the work of the Gospel, to the Edification of the Colony, and the good of all it may reach. We therefore judge our selves called by Divine Providence, and obliged by our Commission, and by the  
Laws

Laws of brotherly Society for our mutual comfort and strengthening, to stay together with this people for some Time, untill we shall see what is like to become of the Colony, and use some weak endeavours if possible to settle something like a Church here. Having thus resolved we advised the Conncell, and presented the *Commissioners* Letter to them, which they received civilly enough, at the same time we shewed to them our Commission and puplick Instructions, as likewise a Copy of what was recommended by the *Commission at Edinburgh* to the Honourable Court of Directors, that that Court might write to the Government here concerning Submission to our Ministry, and their concurrence with us in suppressing Immorality and Prophannels &c. And desired to know if the Court of Directors had written to the Government here about such matters: They declared there was no such thing signified to them by any Letters. This neglect of that Honourable Court is very prejudicial to us: For if they had pleased to have Recommended these things, it would have quickned our Councillors to more Zeal, than all our Arguments can perswade them to. It was sometime after this before we could find Conveniency ( the clearing of the ground and building of Hutts for the men taking up much time ) to set apart with the advice and concurrence of the Government, a day for solemn Thanksgiving to God for our Preservation, and for imploring his blessing and conduct in our ensuing work, unto which considering the present humbling dispensations of Providence, and the uncertainty of opportunitys afterwards, we judged it expedient, to adjoin solemn Humiliation for our former and present abounding Abominations, and acknowledging the Justice of God in present judgments: So making the work of that Day Tripartite, Thanksgiving Humiliation and Prayer, which

was

was performed on *January 3d last*. But it was grievous to us, that so few give their Countenance and Presence at that work, and so very many, both Officers, Sea-men and planters absented themselves, as they do every Sabbath, some from a principle of careles sloath and indifference, others of *Malignancy* or *wicked Perverseness*: By which you may perceive how little Access we have to edifie this people: Which is yet the less, that a great Number of them, near on third, at least, are wild *Higlanders*, that cannot speak nor understand *Scotch*, which are Barbarians to us and we to them. Yet we do and shall through Grace endeavour to be faithful and diligent in preaching the Word to them that will hear it, which is all that hitherto we could perform of Ministerial duties to them, while they are kept to bussie at Work. This Work we carry on as *Colleagues* in a Collegiat Relation to the whole People, agreeing to divide our Labours so, as two of us Preach ashoar, and one aboard the *Rising-Sun* every *Lords day*, *Alternis Vicibus*. It hath been and yet continues a great inconveniency to us, that we are forced to lodge aboard the several ships we came in, having no Hatts built for us yet ashoar: And so we cannot always when we would, either meet together, or go ashoar for visiting the sick, which are now very numerous above 130. This Sickness for sometime abated, but it is now returned in its former Rage, which in some is the seasoning, in others occasioned by their eating some poisonous fruits and an unwholesome water, which they find in the Woods, and more geneally by their sore working, and small allowance of our old salt and bad Provision, which is pinching and straitning to all of us: But the holy Cause that we are most concerned to acknowledge, is the Anger of God plaguing us for our sins, and threatening to cause our Carcasses fall in the Wilderness, wherein many are fallen already, buried since our Arrival.

We



We have mentioned already Disadvantages for doing any thing among the *Indians*: Yet our Curiosity carried us to travel two or three Days among them. We find them a poor naked People, living as we use to say from hand to mouth, being very idle and lazy and not industrious, peaceable and friendly to those that use them kindly, but very revengeful and covetous. We cannot discover either what Worship they have, save that we hear their *Priests* consult the Devill about their Enemies or Ships coming to their Coasts, or such like Events, or that ever they heard any thing of the Christian Religion from *Spanish Priests* or others: In two of their houses we went about publick Exercise of worship, which they did not disturb, but sat with grave silence all the time. They knew not at first our distinction of the Lords Day from other days, and so came with their fruits and trade to sell, but now some of them have learned that we keep such a Day, and several of them come to our Sermons to see our Fashion, and carry themselves very decently. There might be some hope of doing some good among them, if we had any that had their Language, and if our People's Practice did not stumble them: But alas we have reason to fear, we shall do them more hurt than good, for the first of our Language they learn is Cursing and Swearing, and they have frequently complained of our Peoples going out, and stealing and robbing from them: So that in little time we shall make our selves and our Religion both odious to them.

Thus we have given given some hints of our Affairs and Doings hitherto, some things Recommended to us in our Instructions we have delayed upon the account of the Circumstances of the Colony: It being determined so soon as the Wind will permit, to send off to *Jamaica* with the hired ships, all that are now pressing to be gone, and to retain none but 400 Land-men and a 100  
Sea

Sea-men, to save Provisions which are much exhausted: Then to wait two or three *Moneths* for Supplies of Provisions from *Scotland*, which if they come, the Colony may be in a fair way of *Setling*, and if so, through grace we purpose to wrestle out our Year with them: If these Supplies come not in Time, this Colony will again dislodge, and then we must make the best of our Way homeward. Upon these Considerations, having delivered a great many of the Commissions Printed Letters at Sea upon the Voyage, and some more of them since we came to this Place ( which many did not much regard but cast them behind their back ) we delayed distributing what remains of them, untill we see who shall go away and who shall stay. And upon the same Prospect having advised with some of the Counsellors, whom we could conveniently and confidently consult in these matters ( for some of them we did not judge fit to be communed with upon such heads ) We have delayed the constituting our selves a *Presbytry*, untill the Colony be better constituted: As likewise the associating to our selves and letting a part *Ruling Elders*, which will be very hard to find here duely or tolerably qualified. But if matters succeed, we intend to essay these things in due time. It will be a great Pity if as we fear, this Design of so great Importance to the Nation, shall again miscarry and come to nothing, through the Mismannagements and delays of Supplying us with Provisions: The Land is pleasant and a very fruitful Soil, and might yeild a very rich Trade, if we had means to subdue the Ground, and skill to improve it. But if Supplies be denyed or delyed, it must needs be lost in a very short time.

There come hitherto no People to Trade with us, from any *European* Colony, and therefore we expect but very rarely occasions to acquaint you with the State of our Affairs: And for this Reason, having by our Commission a

Liberty

erty to return, when our Year is fulfilled, and being obliged by our instructions to give timely notice of our Resolutions in that matter: We must now give you advertisement, and intreat you to intimate it to the Reverend *Commission*, that none of us are determined to tittle here, but all of us are resolved, if the Lord will, to come home, without a design of returning hither again. If the place be deserted, we shall endeavour to give you an Account of it personally, with all possible expedition: If the Colony remain, we shall use all endeavours, to leave some young men behind us, in a Capacity to preach to them: And ere we leave the place to bring this Infant Settlement to such a Posture, that it shall be more encouraging to any that shall be afterwards sent by the Church of *Scotland* to assist in this work, then hitherto it hath been. We add no more, but begging your Sympathy and prayers, and that the Reverend *Commission* may interpose with the Honourable Court of Directors to excite them, to accelerate their sending us Provisions, that we and this great Concern in our hands, may not perish in this Wilderness: And that when these shall be sent or any sure occasion be offered, we may be refreshed & Instructed with a Letter from that Reverend Judicatory We crave leave to subscribe our Selve

REVEREND SIR

*Your Afflicted Brethren and Servants  
in the Work of the Gospel*

ALEXANDER SHEILDS  
FRANCIS BORLAND  
ARCHIBALD STOBO

This above written Letter was drawn up and penned by the Reverend Mr *Alexander Shields*.

The

those 15 Persons, that were alhoar before this fatal stroak came on, the names of these 15 preserved, as I learned from Lieutenant *Grahame*, who was on of them, were *James Byars* a Countellor mentioned above, *Cap. Urquhart*, *Mr. Stobo* and his Wife Lieutenant *Grahame* forementioned *David Kenneay* Leuit. *Durham*, Ensign *John Murray*, Ensign *Robert Colqhoun* *William Bready*, *John Spence*, *James aick*, *Alex. Hendrie* *John Miker* a boy, & *Jam. Pickens*. These were all that were saved from this overthrow, of them that were lost, some of their dead Bodies were driven ashoar, with some pieces of the wrack but nothing considerable, Thus the great and costly ship the *Rising-Sun* came to such a sudden and tragical end, and did here sett in such a dark and dismal a cloud. This 1st blow being one of the forest and most tremendous of all the sad stroaks, which have befallen this design and Compay concerned therein hitherto. *Quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis.*

Sometime after this dreadful overthrow, I had a Letter from *Mr Stobo* in *Carolina*, giving an account of his wonderful preservation, and the circumstances of this company that here perished to the effect following . . . I doubt not but ye have heard how narrowly I escaped the Judgment that came upon the *Rising-Sun*, I and my wife, were scarce well gone from her, when wrath seized upon her, we were the last that came from her, and after our departure the storm came so sudden, that none could find the Way to her it was of the Lords Remarkable Mercy that we were not consumed in the stroak with the rest. They were such a rude Company, that I believe *Sodom* never declared such impudence in sinning as they, any observant eye might see, that they were running the Way they went, hell and judgment was to be seen upon them and in them before the time. You saw them bad, but

but I saw them worse, their Cup was full, they could hold no more, they were ripe, they must be cut down with the sickle of his Wrath. - - - Here I lost my Books and all, and have only my life for a prey, with my Skin as it were in my Teeth.

It is observable that before this dreadful Destruction befell this ship and Company, it pleased the Holy, Alwise and Gracious GOD, to remove from them all their Ministers, who had successively sailed in this ship, and preached to this Company. First Mr *Shields* was separated from their Company at *Jamaica*, and taken away by Death there at *Port-Royal* as is above related, afterwards Mr *Borland* was directed by the wise and well ordering Providence of the Lord, to leave this ship and Company, while they were lying at *Jamaica*, and to steer his Courte another Way, first he took passage for *Port-Royal* in *Jamaica*, then he took Passage for *Boston* in *New-England*, and lastly he took passage for *London* and from thence. *Per varios Calus per tot Discrimina*, he got safely home by Land to his own again, The Lord leading, Preserving, Healing strengthening and upholding all the way. Then last of all Mr *Stobo* was remarkably and wonderfully taken from them, as a Brand out of the fire, but a little before their final overthrow: Thus when once *Lot* was got out of *Sodom* into *Zoar*, then without any longer delay, the Lord rained destruction from Heaven upon those Cities of Iniquity, *Gen. 19 23 24.*

The Providence of God was very gracious to Mr *Stobo* and his wife, here at *Charles Town* in *Carolina*, in that when they were here brought alhoar poor strangers, and had lost all their Furniture, it pleased the Lord who cares for his poor strangers every where to incline the hearts of some discreet and kind christian people here, to best friend Mr *Stobo* and supply his wants

yea

yea to call him to be their Minister, and give him a comfortable Maintenance, for they were at present in much Want and need of such a Minister, and so this remarkable Providence, in casting Mr *Stobo* here at this time and in such a manner, was both a wonderful mercy to Mr *Stobo*, and a seasonable and unexpected Mercy to this kind people in *Carolina*, and here I suppose Mr *Stobo* continues to this day, if he be yet alive.

While we were in *Caledonia*, I remember one of the Ministers preached a Sermon aboard this ship the *Rising-Sun* upon that Text *Numbers 32. 23. Behold you have sined against the Lord, and be sure your sins shall find you out,* And behold here, how God made good his word of Threatning, which this poor Company would not believe nor regard, for now their sins found them out with a witness.

It is a great Truth, that the Judgments of God are often very remarkable, as in the kind and manner of them, so also sometimes in the very place of them: The Lord gives men occasion to observe sometimes their Sin in their Punishment, even in the very place of it as the Lord dealt with *Israel* of old in the wilderness, *Numb. 14. 2. 28. 29.* In the wilderness they had grievously sined and provoked God, well says God, in this Wilderness your Carcases shall fall: Some good People in *Scotland* that had formerly known Capt. *Gibson* forementioned, and his Conversation, having understood his coming to such a sudden and awful End at *Carolina*, from thence took occasion to remember and reflect upon, his former cruel and inhumane Carriage, toward those poor Prisoners, whom he transported to the same *Carolina* in the Year 1684. And to observe how that here, in the very same place, it pleased the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth. to call him in so terrible a manner to his Account. And though the judgment