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Port Lincoln, December 27th, 1840

Beloved and honored brethren!

May the grace and blessing of our highly praised triune God be with you.

If the letter we sent shortly after the arrival of the Meyer and Klose brothers has arrived safely, then you already know my current whereabouts. On **September 10th** of this year, I left Adelaide and after an eight-day stormy voyage in the cutter "Alice", I arrived here on the **17th** of the same month. You know of the great fame this place enjoys as a beautiful port, but that's all that distinguishes it or could recommend it to the colonists. The land is crisscrossed by low mountain ranges, the highest peaks of which are hardly more than 1,500 feet; the most prominent types of stone are granite and limestone, and in smaller quantities there are sandstone, an iron-containing stone, and quartz. These mountains are almost without exception covered with dense grass and Casuarina (Sheoak), a small, ugly, shadeless tree, which Brother Teichelmann aptly called the "Sheoak tree".

In the narrow gorges and at the outlets of the streams of those mountains, there seems to be good land, but a much larger portion of the flat land is rocky, barren, or covered with low shrubs. There is no running water here in summer. Usually, the heavy rainfall in winter has deeply eroded the beds of the streams and dug out deep ponds here and there, which sometimes have springs at their bottoms and hold water throughout the summer. Moreover, one can find many isolated springs, but both among these and the aforementioned ponds, many are more or less salty (brackish). Large and small game can be found here in unexpected quantities, such as kangaroos, emus, * (which only the natives eat), opossums, wombats, and a large number of small finch species, which live in burrows.

The species of birds here are less diverse than in Adelaide, notably we lack the large white cockatoo and many species of small parrots, probably because the rubber trees do not grow here, from whose flowers and fruits they derive their food. Furthermore, snakes and lizards, edible roots, and the so-called native fig, a fatty plant that grows densely by the stream with a reddish, firm fruit the size of a gooseberry, are very common here. From this relative abundance of food, it can be inferred with certainty that the indigenous people must be frequent here, and if one is to believe the rumors of those who have visited Coffin Bay, they are indeed more numerous than in

Adelaide.

The European settlement has existed for just over a year, not in the actual Port Lincoln, but in Boston Bay, opposite Boston Island, as this location was considered a better port than the previous one. During its short existence, this small colony has already had its heyday, and is now not far from its complete decline. The cause of this is the enormous and, for a German, unbelievable speculation frenzy that prevails in this and the neighboring colonies. Small capitalists bought the land to take it out of the hands of the administrator of the South Australian Company, who had gone to inspect the site.

Then they started bringing workers here, up to a number of 300 souls, not to cultivate the land, but to build houses for future immigrants. However, these immigrants only came in very small numbers, and the natural consequence was that those speculators soon went bankrupt and the workers were forced to return to Adelaide. The few people who are still here now, except for the sheep and cattle owners, ensure that they too will soon have to leave Port Lincoln with great losses. --

Upon my arrival here, I was warmly welcomed by the settlers, having been favorably recommended by the governor. However, I found the attitude towards the natives to be very unfavorable, with the exception of a few. I hoped that this dislike would improve over time and with closer acquaintance with the natives, but the tragic event that occurred soon afterwards dashed my hopes and justified, at least apparently, the long-standing mistrust of the colonists.

On **October 6th** of this year, Franz Hawson, a 12-year-old boy who was left alone at his father's station, was speared by two natives about two hours outside the city. Both spears penetrated his chest and pierced his lungs, so he would have died soon if his attempt to pull them out had succeeded. But this was impossible even for the doctor, because the spears were equipped with a barb or hook. The boy had to endure twelve long, lonely hours before his fate was known, and five painful days before he gave up his spirit. He bore his sufferings with great steadfastness, but it was difficult for him to suppress the natural feeling of revenge and to forgive his murderers, although he admitted that he should do so. The natives were pursued by the magistrate and the police the following day, and they managed to find their trail and their camp two days later, but the rocky and bushy terrain of the land gave them the opportunity to escape.

On October 8th, when the pursuing police were still out, a number of nine native men came to the settlement, unarmed, without suspicion, and on our part without suspicion, because they did not correspond to any of the descriptions given by the unfortunate boy of the party of his murderers. Nevertheless, it was intended to lead them to the still living boy the following morning to see if he would also declare them innocent. They were therefore guarded from a distance during the night, and the next morning, when they were about to leave, perhaps because they had aroused suspicion, they were put in prison by the police, with much violence and with several

of them being injured.

No sooner had they been arrested than Dr. Harvey, who was ordered to take them to Hawson's house, arrived, and, moved by the unexpectedness of this procedure and the complaints and lamentations of the natives, he released them himself. This was making matters worse, albeit with good intentions, for the poor natives could not possibly know why they were being treated so harshly, and it was therefore rightly feared that fear and anger would provoke a deep sense of revenge in them, which we had no chance of appeasing. I regretted this entire incident all the more, as these were the first indigenous people I had encountered, and it seemed to me a very ominous beginning. Several investigations into the conduct of the police and Dr. Harvey were carried out, but nothing happened except that the governor issued a proclamation stating that anyone who infringed on the lives of the natives, except in cases of unavoidable self-defense and property protection, would be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Almost an entire month passed since the above-mentioned encounter before I was able to catch sight of the natives, despite my alternately visiting the stations in the interior and otherwise making efforts to come into contact with them.

On **November 7th** of this year, we noticed a fire at the tip of Boston Bay, and accompanied by my brave Gottfried, I set off on foot early in the morning, entrusting ourselves to God's protection, for I must admit that the general fear of the natives had not left me unscathed. The place is about 12 miles from here, and as it was very hot, we had a very arduous journey. When we were still about a mile away from them, they noticed us, called out to each other, and responded to our waves. At the same time, two of them came running towards us, and since we couldn't see from behind the bushes whether they were armed, we were quite worried. However, their intention was simply to indicate to us that we shouldn't come any closer. When we stopped and waved to them to come to us, within a short time, 10 - 12 men and boys surrounded us, to whom we distributed our bread and of whom five accompanied us to the city. They stayed with me for two days, then returned, and one of them brought eight guests to the city two days later. With these, Dr. Harvey and I went in a boat to Boston Island, where we spent two days, so that I had enough time to convince myself of the supposed kinship between their language and the Adelaide language.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to report that the basic vocabulary of the dialect spoken here is the same as in Adelaide. Of course, I've only collected 400 - 500 words so far, but some names for external objects are different. However, the verbs and adverbs are, at least in their root form, the same, with very few exceptions. The natives continue to come to Port Lincoln for one or two days from time to time, and recently they also named the murderers of young Hawson and accompanied the police to Coffin Bay; a proof that they wish to live in friendship with us.

But they never bring their wives and children, and never allow anyone to visit their huts if they encounter them in the bush, but always come to meet them and tell them to leave or take a different path. This seems to prove that they don't have much faith in the chastity of the missionaries. And considering that wife-stealing is common among them, just like the crab fishermen on Kangaroo Island, who were found in possession of many stolen native women when the colony was established, it's likely that they have also visited this part of the Australian coast: so it's not surprising that they are so suspicious.

As far as I've had the opportunity to observe the local natives, they seem to be little different in their character and appearance from those in Adelaide. Circumcision, tattooing, polygamy, the Kuri dance, and other customs are all the same. Only two differences have struck me, namely the spears with hooks, and a mutilation of their bodies, which I would not describe out of concern for offending their sensibilities, if I didn't believe you might want to know about it for its sheer strangeness.

It's the same as a cut in the male penis from the tip to its half-length, and so deep that it exposes the urinary canal, or in other words, the cylinder is split in half, on the lower side. Dr. Harvey believes that this operation alters the functions of that organ so much that it reduces the natural reproduction of the natives, but I believe that experience contradicts him. This practice seems to be carried out only in mature adolescence, but I have not been able to find out the reason and purpose of it, and I can't even guess it. I hope you won't find anything indecent in this description. If that's the case, I would ask those whose sensibilities have been shaped by almost daily sight and frequent conversations with others not to take offense at it.

What kind of future awaits the indigenous people of this area and me in my relationship with them as a missionary is impossible to predict. What is certain is that their situation will be different from that in Adelaide. There, they gather in a city with a growing population, where they are offered daily bread for small services or out of compassion. Here, the number of indigenous people is decreasing daily, and the few who are here barely have any bread left, so they will not gather in Port Lincoln, at least for now. Therefore, this might be the best and only way to attempt a plan that I have always considered the best, namely, to establish an agricultural and livestock station for them. I am not unaware that this undertaking would require a lot of money and people, and thus it is difficult, but it is precisely for the most difficult things that one should always prepare first and most thoroughly. --

I would also like to mention a favorable circumstance, which is of no small importance, namely that two or three owners of farm stations in the interior are well-disposed towards the natives, who, out of principle or sense of duty, will seek to maintain a friendly relationship with them. These gentlemen are Quakers, a society that has always been known for its friendship with the indigenous people in the colonies.

My way of life in this remote corner of the world is extremely lonely and simple. In my colony, where everyone pursues their interests with all their strength and in many different ways as if it were their home, it's becoming increasingly difficult to find true, genuine friends. Moreover, no one knows each other from the past, so it's not easy to trust each other completely. Furthermore, as in all small, isolated places, disputes and gossip are not uncommon here. Therefore, the best thing is for everyone to walk their own solitary path, and it's good for them if they exercise enough vigilance and self-denial to succeed in doing so. But such a way of life is not pleasant, at least not to my needs. Nevertheless, the Lord and the circumstances guided by Him have led me into this situation, and what He bestows on His children is certainly beneficial and blessed for them. I hope He harbors thoughts of peace towards the unenlightened indigenous people of this region and has granted His unworthy servant a time of joy. However, this requires a lot of patience and true humility to expect it. Therefore, persistent and earnest prayer is most necessary, and I hope you, dear and esteemed brothers, will not neglect to do the same!

Your humble and most devoted fellow brother.

C. W. Schürmann

To the committee.

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Missionary Society

in Dresden

N. S. To illustrate the suspicion with which the settlers view the natives, I would like to mention the following sad incident that happened here quite recently.

A mother had left her children alone at home while she visited a neighbor. When she returned, she found the children gone, and the youngest, seventeen months old, was missing entirely. She asked the older one and her sister, but they were the only ones who could tell her anything. - - - - - Because people are standing close to the seaside with a... - - - - - living by the river, it was naturally the most logical thing to assume, that - - - - - had fallen and was drowned. So they started searching for him. - - - - - whether traces of the child who had an accident could be found. - - - - -

And since this was unsuccessful, the next area was searched, but also without the desired result. Now, it was thought that there was nothing else to suspect but that the natives had stolen the child. To make this suspicion plausible, a few fairy tales were quickly invented, claiming that the blacks in Adelaide often stole children and kept them for several months with them, and other untruths. It's true that the natives would gladly let white children suffer, but they, especially the men, would be extremely reluctant to take on the trouble of carrying around a 17-month-old child that doesn't belong to them. Nevertheless, everyone believes that the child is in the natives' possession, and a report of the incident has been sent to Adelaide.

C. W. Schürman

I kindly ask you to deliver the letters addressed to my brother and the Hanover Mission Society, and with - - - - - Please send a copy of the dictionary, if Brother Teichelmann sends you a sufficient number of them, so that you can spare one.

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Port Lincoln

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