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William Carey

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Nothing in the origin or early life of William Carey gave promise of the career which in the order of providence he was destined to pursue. He was born at Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, England, August 17, 1761. His grandfather was master of the village school. His father, Edmund Carey, was apprenticed to a weaver, and followed that trade till William, his eldest son, was six years of age, when he was nominated to the charge of the same school. William received a good English education, and his inquisitive and diligent habits led him to make excellent use of his opportunities. He early displayed a taste for the study of geography and history, for the reading of voyages and travels, for drawing, and the observation of nature. He gathered specimens of plants and flowers, birds and insects, with which his apartment was stored, and had a decided partiality for the study of the physical sciences. Romances had their attraction, and he indulged his taste for them to some extent, but he "hated novels and plays." Yet, although perseveringly studious, his active temperament made him eager in the exercise of boyish sports and recreations, and he is recorded to have been a general favourite with those of his own age. His manners were not prepossessing, but his qualities were such as could not fail to excite the attention of observing men. One person used to say "he was sure, if he lived to be ever so old, he would always be a learner, and in pursuit of something further." A gentleman of Leicester remarked, after he was settled in the ministry, that "never a youth promised fairer to make a great man, had he not turned cushion-thumper." But he who endowed him with the gifts that thus seemed to fit him for worldly distinction, led him by a way that worldly observation could not discern, and reserved him for an enterprise, the idea of which had scarcely dawned on the vision of the most far-sighted of his contemporaries.

The moral promise of his youth was less auspicious than his intellectual. His parents were attached to the established church, and he was made familiar with the Scriptures, but was ignorant of evangelical religion, and from his first knowledge of its professors entertained a settled contempt for them. He was intimate with vicious associates, and became addicted to habits of falsehood and profaneness. That from such a condition he should have attached himself to one of the humblest classes of dissenters, become a laborious preacher among them, and ultimately be a pioneer in a work which now commands in a large measure the energies of evangelical

Christendom, and the respect of less sympathizing observers, was as improbable, according to any common estimate, as it was in accordance with the ordinary methods of Divine wisdom.

A scorbutic disorder in his face and hands, which was aggravated by exposure to the heat of the sun, unfitted him for employments in the open air, while the circumstances of the family forbade any aspirations after pursuits adapted to the activity of his mind, and at the age of sixteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Hackleton. One of his associates, the son of a dissenter, frequently engaged him in religious disputes. This person becoming seriously attentive to personal religion, became also more importunate in his appeals to young Carey, and occasionally lent him a religious book. He thus gradually gained a knowledge and relish of evangelical doctrines, and became uneasy in view of his own spiritual condition. He resolved to reform his habits, became constant in his attendance at the parish church, and frequented a small dissenting meeting on Sunday evenings, with the idea that by this combination of means, he would secure the favour of Heaven. How distant he was from clear conceptions of the nature of true piety, appears from an incident he relates that occurred at this time. He had taken, among the customary Christmas gifts that the workmen collected, a bad shilling, and attempted to transfer the loss to his master, having money of his to account for. Dreading detection, he prayed for success in the cheat, vowing that if he got safely through it, he would thenceforth give over all his evil practices! He was mercifully detected and exposed, and thus spared from that hardening of his moral susceptibilities which would naturally have followed from success, while it revealed more sensibly the evil of his own heart, and led him to seek more earnestly the renewal of his nature.

A whimsical fancy (for in itself it scarcely deserved a better name) was the means of breaking him off from a lifeless, formal ministry, to one more spiritual. Listening to a discourse on the duty of implicitly following Christ, his attention was arrested by the emphatic repetition of the text, "Let us therefore go out unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." The idea suggested itself to his mind that the Church of England was the "camp" in which all men were sheltered from the reproach of the cross, and this crude impression led him at once to renounce his ancestral and proudly cherished faith, and to attach himself to the little congregation of dissenters in the village. By reading and reflection he formed for himself a religious creed, the substance of which he ever afterwards regarded as sound and scriptural. The clerk of a neighbouring parish, who had imbibed some mystical opinions, sent a message to him, desiring a conference on religious subjects. They met, and had a warm discussion for six hours. His antagonist addressed him with a warmth and tenderness to which

he had been unaccustomed, clearly convicting him of unchristian conduct, and controverting, though unsuccessfully, his doctrines. He found himself unable to admit his friend's opinions or to defend his own. But he became profoundly sensible of his own moral defilement and helplessness, and was soon led to place his entire trust in a crucified Saviour, and to repose his faith in the word of God as the sole standard of truth.

The little company of dissenters at Hackleton having organized themselves into a church, Carey united with them, and there being a considerable awakening, their meetings were more fully attended than usual. At these meetings he was occasionally requested to speak, which he did much to the satisfaction of the people. Subsequently being at the meeting of the association at Olney,—he had not a penny in his pocket, and fasted all day,—he fell in with some friends residing at Earl's Barton. By the advice of Rev. Mr. Chater, they came to Hackleton a fortnight after, and asked him to preach to them. He accepted this invitation, as he said, because he had not the courage to refuse, and visited them twice with such encouragement that he continued to preach there at stated intervals, for three years and a half. [Note: In the account which Dr. Carey gave of his early years, from which this sketch is compiled, there is a remarkable absence of dates, which his biographer has not supplied—perhaps from inability to do so.] A similar invitation from friends at Paulerspury, his native place, was accepted with the more pleasure, as it gave him an opportunity to visit his parents. His friends were by no means pleased with his desertion of the established church, but their natural partiality was gratified by the acceptableness of his youthful ministrations, and in consideration of it, they tolerated his eccentricity. He had the happiness, not long after, to see other members of the family partakers, through grace, of the promise of eternal life which he cherished and preached.

During all this time, while established in the elementary principles of the gospel, his mind was in a considerable degree unsettled on some points of Christian doctrine. His doubts were resolved by the perusal of Hall's [Rev. Robert Hall, senior] "Help to Zion's Travellers." Some of his friends told him it was poison: but he remarked that "it was so sweet he drank greedily to the bottom of the cup," and he never regretted that he did so. His attention being called to the subject by a sermon, he adopted the views of the Baptists, and received the ordinance of baptism at the hands of Dr. Ryland. Rev. Mr. Sutcliff, afterwards a warm cooperator in the missionary enterprise, remonstrated with him on the irregularity of his preaching. By his advice he offered himself to the church at Olney, and was soon after formally set apart to the work of the ministry. He arrived at this

consummation not without sore trials. He had married at the age of twenty, his wife was of a feeble constitution, his business furnished him an inadequate support, which was not sensibly mended by any compensation he received for his preaching. Ordinary men would have fainted with discouragement, but he entered on the ministry not for reward, except he might win souls for his hire, and the same motives that led him into the work, sustained him unfalteringly in its prosecution.

He now settled at Moulton, a step which did not much improve his outward circumstances. He attempted to sustain himself by a school, which failed, and he was driven to labour at his trade, a fact that afterwards pointed the famous jest of Sydney Smith about "consecrated coblers." But on the whole, the period of his residence there was among the most important of his life. By an exact economy of time he made rapid progress in knowledge. It was here that he began the acquisition of languages, exhibiting that master talent which was destined to be the ground of his lasting fame, and what he valued more, his enduring usefulness. It is related that a friend having given him a volume in Dutch, he forthwith procured a grammar, and learned that language. His mind was quickened by intercourse with men whose names are now the exclusive property of no religious sect, especially with Fuller and Pearce. Here, above all, was kindled in his bosom the missionary spirit, which he cherished and communicated to others, till their hearts glowed in sympathy with his own.

While teaching his pupils geography, his thoughts were turned to the moral condition of the world, and once fixed there, could not be diverted. On the wall of his workshop was suspended a large chart, in which were inscribed notes on the population and religion of various nations, and with this he occupied his thoughts while earning his scanty subsistence. Here he meditated the great theme, not with mere sentimental pity or the fervour of romantic enthusiasm, but with a calm and duteous sense of responsibility to God, and in a spirit of fidelity to the great commission of his Redeemer, in pursuance of which, though at first with an imperfect sense of its comprehensive magnitude, he had begun to proclaim the gospel. No voice from without cheered his lonely studies; the Divine Spirit visited him alone, prompted his aspirations and gave energy to his infant purpose.

By persevering effort he succeeded in engaging a few persons in his plans. As early as 1784, at a meeting at Nottingham, it was resolved to set apart the first Monday evening of each month as a season of united prayer for the conversion of the world, an appointment now of nearly universal observance. It was about this time, at a meeting of ministers at Northampton, that he broached the question of "the duty of

Christians to spread the gospel among heathen nations." Mr. Ryland, Sen., received the suggestion with surprise, and called him an enthusiast. His zeal was not to be damped, however, but he was content to "bide his time." He composed a pamphlet on the subject, which, at a later period, when his plans had ripened into a regular missionary organization, was given to the world at the request of his associates.

In 1789, the straits to which he was reduced led him to think of a removal to a more desirable residence, when he was called to settle at Leicester. There his circumstances were somewhat meliorated, he found ampler opportunities for acquiring knowledge, and his sphere of usefulness was enlarged. Yet he still found it necessary to teach a school for his support. No pressure of occupation, however, could divert his mind from the theme he had so long cherished. In the spring of 1791, at a meeting at Clipston, Northamptonshire, Mr. Fuller and Mr. Sutcliff preached on the subject, and Mr. Carey then urged the formation of a society. Regarding the proposal as premature, they requested him to publish the pamphlet which they knew he had in manuscript. He did so, and a year afterwards, at Nottingham, preached his memorable discourse from Isa. 54:2,3, drawing from the text these exhortations that have long been the motto of Christian enterprise, —"Expect great things from God: attempt great things for God." The meeting caught the spirit of the discourse; it was resolved to organize a society, and in October, at Kettering, a plan was matured, a committee appointed and a subscription commenced. The sum subscribed was thirteen pounds, two shillings and sixpence,—an humble beginning that made a fine mark for scoffing wits. At this meeting Mr. Carey promptly offered himself, and was accepted as a missionary to India. His determination was announced to his father with that modest composure which uniformly characterized him. "To be devoted, like a sacrifice, to holy uses," he says, "is the great business of a Christian.—I consider myself as devoted to the service of God alone, and now I am to realize my professions. I am to go to Bengal, in the East Indies, as a missionary to the Hindoos. I hope, dear father, you may be enabled to surrender me up to the Lord for the most arduous, honourable and important work that ever any of the sons of men were called to engage in." But his calmness was not the result of insensibility, for he adds, "I have many sacrifices to make; I must part with a beloved family and a number of most affectionate friends. Never did I see such sorrow manifested as reigned through our place of worship last Lord's day. But I have set my hand to the plough." The fruit of his long and lonely struggles now began to spring up in his sight It was but a handful of corn, but he knew the fulness of the Divine promise, and was assured that it would one day "shake like Lebanon."

The obstacles to the enterprise on which these faithful brethren had entered were numerous and perplexing. The attempt was new, they had no clear precedents to guide them, and they must strike out their own path. Their means were scanty. The church at Birmingham, through the ardent zeal of their pastor, Samuel Pearce, nobly responded to the voice that summoned them to "attempt great things," and raised the subscription for the committee to nearly one hundred pounds, and others lent their aid. Carey was resolved to go forward, in the trust that the churches would furnish all needful aid, but there was much in the state of the Baptist denomination to shake a weaker faith than animated him. A form of theology that might be termed a caricature of Calvinism, paralyzed all zealous effort for the salvation of men. Fuller had exerted his great powers to demonstrate that the gospel is "worthy of all acceptation," but the duty of all men to receive it was still but partially admitted, and it was hardly to be expected that persons who stumbled at this truth would devote themselves to the task of preaching the gospel to the heathen, while practically denying the efficacy of preaching at home. By others the superior claims of home evangelization were arrayed, as they are occasionally now, against foreign missions. Moreover the movers in the work, though now viewed as among the great lights of their age, were obscure men, and their plans were received with distrust. Only one Baptist minister in the metropolis sanctioned the movement, and though treated with great personal respect by Dr. Stennett and the venerable Abraham Booth, Carey when in London received his chief encouragement from Rev. John Newton, whose warm sympathies could not be restrained within the exclusive limits of the established church, of which his piety made him a distinguished ornament. Even if these impediments were overcome, it was doubtful whether the missionaries would be permitted to enter Bengal. The jealousy with which the East India Company viewed such a movement, though not fully displayed till a later period, was well understood. More painful than all else, he met obstacles in his own household. Mrs. Carey would not consent to his design, and refused to accompany him; and though her resolution was overruled, her society, in the absence of sympathy, was no help to her devoted husband. Wearily did he bear this heaviest of calamities before he discovered, many years afterwards, its true source in her evident insanity, and found in this overwhelming sorrow a relief from the more poignant anguish which her unexplained conduct towards him had caused.

But Carey walked by faith, not by sight, and if he ever entertained a momentary doubt of success, it was resolutely silenced. He tendered his resignation of the charge in which he had been so useful and beloved, which was accepted with regret but without murmuring by his

affectionate people. The self-sacrificing spirit with which they gave up their pastor, and contributed to the cause to which he devoted his life's energies, had its reward. Few churches in the kingdom were more prosperous than that in Leicester under his successors, among whom the name of Robert Hall is illustrious. He took leave of his friends, and urged his preparations for the voyage with all his characteristic force and methodical perseverance. As if with a triumphant assurance of success he said to Mr. Ward, a pious and intelligent youth, a printer by trade, "We shall want you in a few years to print the Bible; you must come after us." The words were never forgotten, and Mr. Ward a few years after, had the honour of fulfilling more amply this prophetic suggestion.

The selection of a companion to share his labours was among the first cares of the committee. One was providentially at hand. Mr. John Thomas, a gentleman educated to the medical profession, who had practised for some years in London, visited Bengal in 1780 as a surgeon on board the Oxford, East Indiaman. On his arrival he sought to devise some plan for the spread of the gospel there, but was unsuccessful, and on returning to England united with a Baptist church in London. He now began to preach occasionally. On a second visit to India, in 1786, he became acquainted with a few pious persons with whom he met for prayer, and afterwards preached to them on Sunday evenings. One of these requested him to remain in the country, and preach to the natives. He shrank at first from the proposal, for he had never intended to engage personally in the work; he disliked the climate, dreaded a protracted separation from his family, and doubted whether he could with propriety leave his ship. The subject, however, could not be driven from his thoughts, and after much prayer he made the effort. His labours were blessed to the hopeful conversion of two Europeans, and he was much encouraged by the seriousness of two or three natives, one of whom, a man of more than common capacity and attainments, assisted him in translating the Gospel of Matthew and other portions of the New Testament. These tokens of the Divine favour led Mr. Thomas to visit England for the purpose of enlisting coadjutors and securing pecuniary aid. The committee believed that his providential call to India, his acquaintance with British residents there, his knowledge of the country and the language, and his evident missionary zeal, eminently fitted him to be associated in their first enterprise, and accordingly he was appointed. The decision was no doubt for the best on the whole, but Mr. Thomas' improvident habits had already involved him in debts that embarrassed the beginnings of the enterprise, and afterwards brought the mission into serious straits, while a degree of fickleness and eccentricity severely tried Carey's patience, till, as in the case of his wife, the manifest proofs of mental derangement taught him a fresh lesson of forbearance and charitable

judgment.

Their preparations having been completed, Mr. and Mrs. Carey and their son Felix, with Mr. Thomas and his family, embarked in the Earl of Oxford, for Calcutta,—when their plans were frustrated by the refusal of the captain to sail with them; that officer having been warned by an anonymous letter that he would be proceeded against for taking a passenger whose errand was not disclosed to the East India Company, and who had no license from them to visit Bengal. Besides the disappointment caused by this decision, a large part of their passage money was lost. [Of £350 paid, Mr. Carey received back only £150, and no account is given in their narrative of the refunding of the balance.] In this emergency Mr. Thomas, whose elasticity of spirits and fertility of resource astonished all parties, succeeded in procuring a passage in a Danish East Indiaman advertised to sail in four days. He hurried to Northampton, the committee raised the necessary sum to pay their passage, their baggage was conveyed in an open boat to Portsmouth, and within the appointed time they were all safe on board. They bade farewell to England on the 13th of June, 1793, and after a pleasant voyage arrived at Calcutta on the 11th of November following.

Carey now found himself in the land to which he had so long looked forward, with scanty means, with no clearly defined plan of operations, and without any of that Christian sympathy which was so needful to sustain his spirit and give a genial force to his active powers. The European residents of Bengal were not more aliens from their native country than from the spirit of a Christian people. Emancipated from the restraints of home, they cast off all restraint of principle. Most of them were professed infidels. The natives were accustomed to say that the English differed from any people they had ever known, for while all other nations had some object of worship, the English had no religion at all. Of course they had no faith in missions, and no love for the objects which missions aimed to effect. On every side swarmed a vast native population,—that of Bengal alone exceeding fifty millions, and peopling the whole peninsula nearly one hundred and fifty millions,—though at that time British rule toward the northward stopped far short of the Himmalayas and the Indus. This immense multitude was composed of numerous tribes and nations, speaking not less than twenty-five languages, with almost an infinity of sub-divisions, each having its local or hereditary dialect. With the exceptions of Mohammedans, Parsees, nominal Christians and smaller sects, most of them of foreign descent, the greater portion of the people were professors of some of the numerous forms of belief which together constitute Hindooism—a name that describes not so much a definite religious system as a local concourse of impure, debasing and

cruel superstitions, intermingled partly by affinities derived from their common pantheistic origin, and partly by the accidents of conquest. The peninsula having been several times overrun by powerful invaders and rent by civil war, all the vices generated by centuries of violence and oppression were added to those of the prevailing forms of religion. In spite of its cruel and degrading character, Hindooism holds the mind of its votary by a more powerful grasp than any other known form of paganism, strengthened as it is by the influence of remote antiquity, and so intertwined with the institutions of society, that almost every voluntary act from the cradle to the grave is a part of its ritual.

As if this were not enough, British authority lent a partial sanction to these fearful superstitions. The East India Company was swayed by men whose ends were chiefly mercenary, and who dreaded lest any appearance of hostility to heathenism should imperil their gains and the dominion by which these were made secure. Accordingly the government ostentatiously patronized idolatry, with its impure and cruel rites, took pleasure in annoying those who sought to diffuse Christianity, and more than once dared to prohibit directly the instruction of its subjects in the will and worship of God. The missionaries, moreover, had but limited means of support, and uncertainty rested on the prospect of aid from home. Under these circumstances Mr. Carey resolved to engage in the cultivation of the soil, and thus at once provide for his own support and place himself in a situation admitting of free intercourse with the people. Before he could accomplish his design he was reduced to great destitution by the improvidence of his colleague, to whom as the most familiar with the country the direction of their pecuniary affairs was entrusted. Mr. Thomas indeed seemed to have no consistent plan. At one time he showed a disposition to abandon the work, and resume medical practice at Calcutta, while Mr. Carey, resolute in his determination to execute his sacred commission, was casting about for some refuge in which to shelter himself from want.

In this emergency he received notice that George Udney, Esq., of Malda, was setting up two Indigo factories in the district of Dinagepore, and an invitation to himself and his colleague to assume the charge of them, with salaries of two hundred rupees per month and a commission on the indigo manufactured. This sum was sufficient to provide for their support. At the same time it promised to place them in a position to exert an influence over a large number of people, more, probably, than they would find access to in any other manner, and thus to afford the means of laying a durable foundation for their future operations. For these reasons the offer was accepted, and they removed to their respective locations, Mr. Carey at Udnabatty, and Mr. Thomas at Moypaldiggy, sixteen miles apart, in June 1794. Their friends at

home learned these facts with surprise and not a little dissatisfaction. However advantageous to the cause it might be that the mission was established on an independent basis, and that they were thus at liberty to expend their contributions wholly in the support of others, the engagement of their missionaries in secular occupations was regarded as improper, and calculated to divert them from their appropriate work. And though the devotion of Mr. Carey to his appointed service was such as to render the apprehension needless in his particular case, there can be no doubt that, as a general rule, the hazard is too great to be run except an imperative necessity demands it. In the present instance, however, the reasons that led to such a course were weighty; and the necessity of some such employment to give the missionaries a secure footing in the country, while the East India Company should continue hostile to their main errand, left no alternative.

A man of less industry and method than Carey, even with his devotion, would have found such employment scarcely consistent with missionary labours. The cares of building, preparing the works and making the necessary arrangements for the manufacture, absorbed much time, and must have been a continual burden to his mind. But from the first his eye was on his spiritual calling, and his journal attests how anxiously he watched over his thoughts and affections, jealous lest a spirit of worldliness should chill his ardour and slacken his efforts for the salvation of men. He preached regularly to the English inhabitants in the vicinity, and addressed the natives through his monshee or interpreter, Ram Boshoo. This was one of the three persons of whom Mr. Thomas had entertained hope that they were sincere converts. He had unhappily fallen into idolatry through the power of persecution, which he had not firmness to endure, but he manifested his attachment to the missionaries, and immediately on their arrival became Mr. Carey's assistant, by whom he was employed to assist in translating the Scriptures. The study of the language was zealously pursued from the first, and in August, Mr. Carey wrote, —"The language is very copious and I think beautiful. I begin to converse in it a little; but my third son, about five years old, speaks it fluently."

In the autumn he was brought low by sickness, during which he was bereaved of his son just mentioned. This circumstance brought out most vividly the spirit of caste, an institution which must be regarded as one of the subtlest contrivances the Evil-one has ever devised to enslave a people in sin. By this system the whole nation is divided into hereditary ranks, each caste being interdicted from intermarriage and from equal intercourse with any other. At the same time to lose caste, which is done by violating any of the conventional religious rules of the order, or by eating with foreigners or other out-castes, is to subject

the offender to the most deplorable degradation, to forfeit his rights of property, [Note: It is a singular fact, that until 1833, the courts of the East India Company rigidly enforced this intolerant rule throughout their dominions. It was then abolished in Bengal, but continued in force in the other presidencies till 1850. Thus British power was exerted to enforce the persecuting Hindoo and Mohammedan laws, and no native could embrace Christianity without literally incurring the "loss of all things for Christ."] to separate him for ever from the society of his nearest friends. Swartz and some other missionaries regarded caste as a purely civil distinction, and did not require its relinquishment by their converts, but there can be no question, in view of long experience and observation, that it is an essential part of the religious system of Brahminism, and totally hostile to the spirit of equality that belongs to Christianity. It is now generally discarded by the existing missions in India. The present was the first striking incident which revealed to Mr. Carey the inherent baseness and inhumanity of the system. It was next to impossible to find any person to dig a grave or aid in burying his son. But he was sustained under these sorrows, and on his recovery, exerted himself with new energy in his labour of love.

In the following year he spoke of addressing "large congregations of natives," some of whom appeared deeply interested in his message. He urged forward the work of translation; and in June he records that the Pentateuch and New Testament were nearly completed. They were revised and ready for the press in about two years. The mental derangement of his wife was now permitted to deepen his cup of sorrows, though for reasons already suggested it could hardly have added bitterness to the draught. He shortly commenced the study of the Sanscrit, one of the most difficult of languages, although as the original stock from which most of the oriental tongues are derived, essential to success in his great undertaking,—the translation of the Scriptures into those numerous languages. In 1797 he was cheered by the hope that three natives had become subjects of grace, and though his expectations of them were not fully realized, the impulses of his faith were strengthened. The arrival of an associate from England, Rev. John Fountain, was a great encouragement, giving him Christian society, and that sympathy without which the most engaging tasks lose something of their power to enlist a man's entire faculties. A school for native children was opened. The jealousy of parents led to such frequent changes of the pupils that it accomplished less than had been hoped, but it was not easy to discourage his persevering benevolence.

On the arrival of Mr. Fountain the government made a demonstration of its jealousy by requiring all Europeans not in their service to report themselves and their occupation. To avoid the chance of an order for

Mr. Fountain's expatriation, he was appointed an assistant of Mr. Carey in the indigo works, and so reported. Immediate collision with the authorities was thus avoided, and the brethren proceeded with their labours. In 1798, the Pentateuch, New Testament and eighty-five Psalms having been translated, measures were taken to procure and set up a printing press. This enterprise was brought to a stand in the next year by two events that jointly threatened the mission with extinction. Mr. Udney met with such losses in business as to make the suspension of his factories necessary, thus removing from the missionaries the shield which that occupation had afforded them. About the same time four missionaries, Messrs. Marshman, Ward, Brunsden, and Grant arrived in Calcutta, and were ordered by the Government to leave the country. They had come in an American vessel, from the certainty that the Directors of the East India Company in London would refuse them a permit to settle in Bengal, and trusting that having once reached their destination, Providence would open a way for them to remain.

Upon the failure of Mr. Udney's works, Messrs. Carey and Fountain were relieved from immediate pecuniary embarrassment, by a generous advance from W. Cunninghame, Esq., a gentleman then filling a judicial station at Dinagepore, who had been benefited by their preaching, and with great delicacy offered his assistance on first hearing of their necessities. Mr. Carey at once contracted for the purchase of an indigo factory at Kidderpore, in the vicinity, and was making preparations for a removal thither, when he was called to sacrifice his whole investment, and transfer the mission to another field.

On the arrival of the new missionaries at Calcutta, they learned that they would not be tolerated in the country. About fourteen miles above Calcutta, there was a small Danish settlement, to which they repaired for a temporary retreat. The governor had enjoyed the instructions of Swartz, and gave them the assurance of his protection. They afterwards learned that their repulse from Calcutta arose from a paragraph in a newspaper, in which they were described as popish missionaries, but from the subsequent conduct of the British authorities, it was manifest that their settlement would have been resisted and their enterprise harassed at all events. As Serampore was happily under a friendly jurisdiction, while from the dense population it commanded and its nearness to Calcutta it afforded excellent facilities for their labours, it was decided that the mission should be fixed there. This involved a sacrifice of the entire property Mr. Carey had purchased at Kidderpore, and a relinquishment of his work in that field with its first buds of promise, but their duty appeared plain, the removal was made, and in January, 1800, the mission was established at Serampore.

The six years which Mr. Carey had spent in India had not been unproductive. True, he had accomplished but little, even apparently, in turning the natives from idolatry; and the hopes entertained of two or three persons whom he had instructed were sadly disappointed. But he had gained facility in the use of the Bengali language, and translated an important part of the Scriptures; had mastered the elements of the Sanscrit, in which he soon became an accomplished scholar; and had that practical acquaintance with the native character which, in connexion with these important acquisitions, prepared him for energetic and judicious labour. He gained a juster view of the obstacles in his path. The strong bands by which the Hindoo faith was riveted on the native mind had been imperfectly apprehended by him. In truth, a protracted experience has been required to show clearly to the Christian world the full strength with which oriental superstitions grasp their subjects, and in India idolatry is so interwoven with all the social relations of the people, that though convinced of its falsity, they will not be easily persuaded to make themselves outcasts on earth, even to secure the bliss of heaven. Nor have we any reason to wonder, if such multitudes shrink from taking up the cross, in lands where the cross is outwardly honoured, that men should refuse the burden where it must consign them to worldly infamy. To proclaim the truth in such circumstances called for a large measure of that faith which relies exclusively, as Mr. Carey expressed it, on "the promise, power and faithfulness of God."

Mr. Grant was not permitted to enter this field. He died at Calcutta a few days after his arrival, and not long after Mr. Fountain, whose faithful labours promised abundant usefulness, was likewise called away from his station at Dinagepore, a severe blow to the mission. But the protection they received at Serampore gave every encouragement to enter hopefully and energetically on their appointed work. The translation had been urged on with such success that before his removal Mr. Carey was able to announce that the whole Bible, except 2d Kings and 2d Chronicles, was completed. The press was worked with vigour, the four Gospels and several tracts were printed within nine months, and portions of them put in circulation. He began to preach regularly five or six discourses a week to the natives, and a Sunday service in English was established for the benefit of the European population, who needed it scarcely less than the natives themselves. Serampore was a retreat not more convenient for the missionaries than for persons who had less reputable reasons for escaping the British jurisdiction, and the state of society was anything but desirable. A free school was opened for native children, and soon had fifty scholars. A boarding school in English was also established. "Often," said Mr. Carey, "the name of Christ alone is sufficient to make a dozen of our hearers file off at once; and sometimes to produce

the most vile, blasphemous, insulting and malicious opposition from those that hear us. We, however, rather look upon this as a token for good, for till very lately no one ever opposed; they were too fast asleep." The conversion of Mr. Carey's sons, Felix and William, gave him fresh encouragement, and this was soon followed by the gathering of their first convert from heathenism.

On the 27th of November, 1800, Mr. Carey mentioned visiting a man named Krishnu, who had dislocated his shoulder, who came to the missionaries a few days after, accompanied by Yokul, a friend who had been much impressed with the truths of the gospel. Both soon declared themselves believers, together with Krishnu's wife and sister-in-law. The two men broke caste December 22d, by eating with the missionaries, and on that evening, together with the women and Felix Carey, were received by the church for baptism. On the 29th Mr. Carey "had the happiness to desecrate the Ganges by baptizing the first Hindoo," Krishnu, and also his son Felix, some circumstances having delayed the profession of the other candidates. The joy of the mission was great, the excitement among the natives intense. Krishnu's daughter was seriously impressed. Unfortunately she had been married when a child, as is usual in India, to a lad at Calcutta, and as she was now reluctant to consummate the alliance with a heathen, the people made a tumultuous assault on the house, and dragged Krishnu with his wife and daughter to prison. The governor immediately released them, with the assurance that the contract should not be enforced against the girl's inclinations. Two or three months after, however, the husband came, and forcibly abducted her to Calcutta. Efforts were made in that city to procure redress, but the authorities declared that while she should have the free exercise of her religion, a Christian profession could not invalidate the marriage bond. The decision, however just and unavoidable, was not less trying to the faith of her unhappy parents.

The joyful excitement caused by these first triumphs over heathenism is supposed to have hastened the development of that mental disorder to which Mr. Thomas was constitutionally liable, and he was committed to an hospital. His eccentricities of behavior, while their true cause was hardly suspected, had severely tried his associates, who yet admired his zeal and versatile capacity, and regarded him as a valuable auxiliary. [He was shortly restored to society, but his constitution was enfeebled, and he died a few months after.]

Mr. Carey wrote to Dr. Ryland, June 15th, 1801, a pleasing notice of the success of the mission up to that time, with a description of the first converts, that must have been received by the brethren at home as a most precious and satisfying result of their patient efforts. "God has given us some from among the heathen," he says, "and some from

among Europeans and others. We have baptized, since the last day of December, five Hindoos, the last of whom, a man whose name is Gokul, was baptized June 7th. We hope for another or two. These give us much pleasure. Yet we need great prudence, for they are but a larger sort of children, compared with Europeans; we are obliged to encourage, to strengthen, to counteract, to advise, to disapprove, to teach; and yet to do all so as to retain their warm affections.

"The manner in which our Hindoo friends recommend the gospel to others is very pleasing. They speak of the love of Christ in suffering and dying, and this appears to be all in all with them. Their conversation with others is somewhat like the following. A man says, 'Well, Krishnu, you have left off all the customs of your ancestors—what is the reason?' Krishnu says, 'Only have patience, and I will inform you. I am a great sinner; I tried the Hindoo worship, but got no good: after a while I heard of Christ, that he was incarnate, laboured much, and at last laid down his life for sinners. I thought, What love is this! And here I made my resting place. Now say if anything like this love was ever shown by any of your gods?—You know that they only sought their own ease, and had no love for any one!' This is the simple way in which they confront others, and none can answer except by railing, which they bear patiently, and glory in."

In this letter he also communicated, with that modesty which was his invariable characteristic, the fact that he had been appointed teacher of Bengali and Sanscrit, in the college of Fort William. The college was founded by Marquis Wellesley, then Governor-general of India, for the instruction of the junior civil servants of the East India Company. Certain oaths and subscriptions being required of professors with which he could not comply, he was ineligible to that office, and bore the humbler title of teacher. The disabling statutes were subsequently removed, and Mr. Carey was made professor of Oriental languages. He felt great distrust of his ability satisfactorily to discharge his new duties, but at the recommendation of his colleagues, and with the belief that it would not interfere with the efficient prosecution of his missionary work, he accepted the appointment. It became necessary for him to prepare his own apparatus of instruction, Bengali and Sanscrit grammars, vocabularies and elementary books. Having no academic experience, he was obliged to strike out his own path; and it may be readily imagined that all his habitual diligence and strictness of method were required to perform these tasks, and yet save the first and most sacred pursuit of his life from entire neglect. This he accomplished. The progress of the mission is shown in a letter under date of November, 1801. "Hitherto the Lord has helped me. I have lived to see the Bible translated into Bengali, and the whole New Testament printed. The first volume of the old Testament will also

soon appear. I have lived to see two of my sons converted, and one of them join the church of Christ. I have lived to baptize five native Hindoos, and to see a sixth baptized; and to see them walk worthy of their vocation for twelve months since they first made a profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I have lived to see the temporal concerns of the mission in a state far beyond my expectation, so that we have now two good houses contiguous to each other, with two thousand pounds; a flourishing school, the favour of both the Danish and English governments, and, in short, the mission almost in a state of ability to maintain itself. Having seen all this, I sometimes am almost ready to say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" Nearly two years later, (September, 1803,) he wrote "The Lord still smiles upon us. I some time ago baptized three natives and my son William. Our number of baptized natives is now twenty-five, and the whole number of church members thirty-nine. I was greatly pleased with a small excursion which I made, some little time ago, in Jessore. I hope there is the foundation of a work in those parts. We have now begun to print the second edition of the New Testament, and are about to publish some of our little pamphlets in the Hindoostani language. Dear Pearce's address to the Lascars is put into that language. We have also some thoughts of the Mahrattas,"

The necessary absorption of his faculties in the work of translation, was now such that he became jealous lest his mind might be secularized by a "bias towards seeking out words, phrases and idioms of speech." This, however, he adds, "is an absolutely necessary work, and cannot be done without much repeated and close attention, and frequent revision. I therefore comfort myself with the thought that I am in the work of the Lord." So manifest was it that his fitness for the work and his favourable position alike called him to undertake greater things in this department of labour, that we soon find him widening his field of exertion. Within five months he reports himself as engaged in the translation of the Scriptures into the Hindoostani, Persian, Mahratta and Ookul languages, and intending to undertake more. At the same time the mission was extended by establishing subordinate stations in the interior. Besides his philological labours, he regularly preached twice in the week, once in Bengali and once in English. His correspondence with friends in England was naturally less frequent, but he occasionally noted facts of cheering interest. In August, 1804, he mentioned that eight persons had been baptized during the year, and that three or four were expecting shortly to profess Christ. A year later he remarked that several "appeared in Calcutta and its neighbourhood to be inquiring in earnest what they must do to be saved;" that Krishnu had his hands full in going to visit and converse with them, and that in one village seven persons were awakened by receiving small

pamphlets. The year 1805 was in fact the most prosperous the mission had seen, twenty-seven natives having been baptized.

To his other duties was now added the execution of a series of translations from the Sanscrit, for the Asiatic Society. His Sanscrit Grammar, a work of immense labour, appeared in 1806, and in that year was commenced the enterprise with which Mr. Carey's fame is most completely identified,—the translation of the Scriptures into all the languages of the East. Adventurous as such an undertaking might seem, it was begun and carried forward with all the sobriety which characterized his plans. Learned natives, assembled from the different countries and provinces, each translated the Bible into his own tongue, from some version already prepared in a language with which he was acquainted, Mr. Carey revising the versions as they proceeded. Translations thus prepared, must have been of course imperfect, but he had the evidence that they were intelligible, and could be made the vehicles of divine truth into regions where the living missionary was not likely soon to go, and where a still longer time must elapse before more accurate versions could be produced.

The hostility of the East India government, which had now for some time appeared to slumber, was displayed in an order forbidding public preaching in the Lal Bazaar, Calcutta, where a chapel had been recently opened, the sending of "emissaries" from Serampore into the British territories, and the distribution of tracts. Two missionaries, Messrs. Chater and Robinson, who had just arrived from England, were at first ordered to return, and it was not without some difficulty that they got leave to proceed to Serampore. These proceedings caused alarm, but the purport of them was softened down on remonstrance with the council, and things went on much as usual. The next year, however, similar orders were put forth, based on the pretence that a mutiny and massacre by native troops at Vellore was stimulated by alarm at the operations of the mission. There was no truth in this, and the rigour of the government was again relaxed. But the tale was wafted to England, and a warm controversy was commenced there, in which the Directors of the East India Company declared open hostility to all missionary enterprises in India. A war of pamphlets followed, and the leading reviews took sides in the contest. The Edinburgh, by the pen of Rev. Sydney Smith, the "dazzling fence" of whose wit has blinded many to the rancour with which he ever treated evangelical piety and its professors, whether in or out of the establishment, lent its full strength to crush the mission. The London Quarterly Review, in an article from the pen of Mr. Southey, though treating Dr. Carey and his associates with that sort of mingled pity and aversion which might be expected from one professing his political and religious opinions, vindicated the duty of propagating the Christian faith among the

heathen, and rendered a cordial tribute to the zeal and success of the Serampore brethren. Rev. Claudius Buchanan, who had been for some years chaplain of the East India Company, and warmly interested in the spread of the gospel, by some timely and forcible publications did eminent service to the cause of truth. The Company were compelled to retreat from their unchristian position, and (to anticipate the final result) on the renewal of their charter in 1813, a provision was inserted for the toleration of Christian missions, by which all further vexatious interference with their operations was prevented.

Mrs. Carey, who had been for twelve years in a state of mental derangement, was removed by death January 8, 1808. Dr. Carey, a few months afterwards, married Miss Rumohr, a German lady, of a noble family in Schleswig, for some years resident in Calcutta, one of those Europeans whose conversion was among the first results that cheered the missionaries in the beginning of their enterprise. Under date of January 18, he wrote,—"I have lately made a comparison between the state of India when I first landed here, and its present state as it respects the progress of the gospel; which I shall send you. When I arrived I knew of no person in Bengal who cared about the gospel, except Mr. Brown, Mr. Udney, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Brown, an indigo planter, besides brother Thomas and myself. There might be more, and probably were, though unknown to me. There are now in India thirty-two ministers of the gospel." In August of this year, just as he had "put the finishing touch to the Bengali Scriptures," he was brought to the borders of the grave by a fever, but was mercifully raised up to continue his labours. Little occurred to diversify them; in his correspondence he occasionally notes the successes of the mission. In 1810 he mentions an interview with twenty serious inquirers, and remarks that "the Lord is doing great things for Calcutta." Early in 1812 he states that Krishnu and another native preacher were zealously and usefully employed in and about Calcutta, and that inquirers were "constantly coming forward." In addition to his other publications, he engaged in preparing grammars of the Telinga, Orissa, and other languages, and a Bengali dictionary.

These employments were suddenly arrested by a great disaster, the destruction of the printing office by fire on the 12th of March, 1812. All its contents were destroyed; the presses being in an adjoining building were spared. Manuscripts of great value, fonts of type in thirteen languages, and a large quantity of paper were the principal items of the loss. The news of the calamity was received in England and America with a general expression of sympathy, and large contributions were raised in consequence. The Mission was not to be disheartened. The matrices of the original type were not lost, and with the type-metal melted down in the fire they commenced vigorously

replacing the several fonts, so that within a twelvemonth everything was once more in successful operation. "We have been enabled," says Dr. Carey, March 25, 1813, "within one year from a very desolating calamity, to carry on our printing to a greater extent than before it took place." In the same letter, after enumerating his various philological labours, in addition to all his pastoral and collegiate duties, he remarks, —"I can scarcely call an hour in a week my own. I, however, rejoice in my work and delight in it. It is clearing the way and providing materials for those who succeed us to work upon. I have much for which to bless the Lord. I trust all my children know the Lord in truth. I have every family and domestic blessing I can wish, and many more than I could have expected. The work of the Lord prospers. The church at Calcutta is now become very large, and still increases." In August, 1814, he gives a list of twenty-six languages into which the Scriptures were translating, yet, with that self-distrust which sometimes degenerated (in Dr. Ryland's words) into "wild humility," he complains of a want of fervency in his work, and of "that energy which makes every duty a pleasure."

In 1817 began a misunderstanding with the Baptist Missionary Society respecting the mission property at Serampore, which interrupted their harmonious cooperation, and after ten years of controversy resulted in the separation of the mission from the parent society. These events, however, did not impair the regard of Dr. Carey for those of his early friends who survived after the lapse of years, or interrupt his cordial sympathy and cooperation with the missionaries who laboured under the Society's direction.

Having much at heart the improvement of agriculture in India, he issued in 1820 a circular on that subject, which resulted in the formation of an agricultural society. In May of the following year he was afflicted by the loss of his second wife. "My loss," he said, "is irreparable. If there ever was a true Christian in this world, she was one. We had frequently conversed upon the separation which death would make, and both desired that if it were the will of God she might be first removed, and so it was." [Dr. Carey married a third time, but his biographer does not seem to have thought the transaction or the name of his partner worth mentioning.]

About this time the king of Denmark sent to Messrs. Carey, Marshman and Ward a letter, expressing his approbation of their labours, accompanied by a gold medal for each; and a fortnight after an order arrived to convey to the mission a large house and grounds belonging to his majesty. In 1823, Dr. Carey was elected a fellow of the Linnæan Society, a member of the Geological Society, and corresponding member of the Horticultural Society, of London. Towards the close of

the year, having been to Calcutta to preach, as he was stepping from the boat on his return, his foot slipped, and he fell heavily to the ground, causing a violent contusion of the hip-joint. Ten days after, a violent fever attacked him, by which he was confined for several weeks. He was unable to resume his ordinary duties till the beginning of January, when he applied himself to his labours with unwonted assiduity, working extra hours daily to recover lost time. His Bengali dictionary was published in 1825. But his constitution had received a shock from which it never recovered. Fevers and other disorders attacked him with increased frequency, and he began to narrow the circle of his employments, concentrating his strength on a few of the translations, and especially revising with great care his Bengali version of the Scriptures, the work with which his labours in this department commenced, and with which they closed. The revised edition was published in 1830.

He was now in the seventieth year of his age, and increasing infirmities warned him that he must prepare to depart. He looked forward to the change that awaited him, with the same cheerful but humble serenity which had characterized him during his whole life. He expressed a profound consciousness of his own unworthiness, with an unshaken trust in the Divine mercy, through the intercession of the Saviour, and a fervent desire for entire sanctification. "I trust," he said, "I am ready to die through the grace of my Lord Jesus, and I look forward to the full enjoyment of the society of holy men and angels, and the full vision of God for evermore." "It is from the same source," he said in another communication, "that I expect the fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises respecting the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, the abolition also of war, slavery and oppression. It is on this ground that I pray for and expect the peace of Jerusalem; not merely the cessation of hostilities between Christians of different sects and connections, but that genuine love which the gospel requires, and which the gospel is so well calculated to produce." In this state of mind, with increasing weakness of body, he continued till the 9th of June, 1834, when he "fell asleep." In his will he requested that he might be buried by the side of his second wife, and that on the stone which commemorates her should be cut "the following inscription, and nothing more:"

"WILLIAM CAREY, BORN AUGUST 17, 1761; DIED —.
"'A WRETCHED, POOR AND HELPLESS WORM,
ON THY KIND ARMS I FALL.'"

Forty years had elapsed since Mr. Carey arrived in India. He found a populous empire of idolaters, of whom a few individuals only had heard the gospel, a European community regardless of every form of piety, and disposed to regard the promulgation of Christianity with

scarcely less hostility than the most besotted heathen, and a government whose policy was in a considerable degree directed in the same spirit. He left England at a time when great apathy prevailed among evangelical Christians on the subject of missions, while undisguised enmity was manifested among the influential classes of society. Destitute of that pervading sympathy which from all Protestant Christendom now cheers and sustains the missionary, harassed by the Indian government, tried by domestic calamities, and by apprehensions with respect to his means of support, he yet went forward, strong in the consciousness that he was in the path of duty, animated by a warm desire to impart the knowledge of salvation to the perishing, and firmly assured by his faith in the Divine promises, that his labours would not be lost. He lived to see the political obstacles to the enterprise overcome, evangelical Christians in both hemispheres aroused to the work of preaching the word of life to all nations and the first-fruits of the Gospel springing up and maturing under his eye. At Serampore, Calcutta and several stations in the interior of Bengal, the truth was preached with success, and was carried far into the heart of Hindostan, while other denominations, both of England and America, entered the field to cooperate in the same beneficent work. If the fervent hopes with which he commenced his labours were in some degree chastened by his experience of its difficulties, his sober expectations, founded on immutable promises, were richly confirmed by the solid and steady process which was visibly crumbling the fabric of heathenism, and framing from the disintegrated fragments lively stones for the erection of a spiritual temple to the glory of God. He was himself permitted to bear a distinguished part in the enterprise. The publication of the entire Scriptures in several of the most widely spoken tongues of India, and the translation of important portions into forty different languages and dialects of the east, form a monument that any of his contemporaries, in an age crowded with extraordinary men and events, might have reason to envy.

All this was achieved,—by the grace of God,—without anything of what is commonly denominated genius, unless he may be said to have had a genius for patient labour. "I can do one thing," he said; "I can plod." Resolute, unwearied, well-ordered industry, directed by unselfish aims, made him a successful preacher, a useful pastor, a thorough philologist, a devoted missionary. The same force, under the control of a worldly ambition, might have borne him to a higher place in the view of his contemporaries, and perhaps of a later age, but could not have enabled him to say on his death-bed, as he is recorded to have said, "I have not a single desire unsatisfied."—Yet, while we recognise in his humble appreciation of his own gifts a substantial truth, and one full of encouragement to those who unite a desire of usefulness to a distrust of their ability to achieve it, it must be said (with devout

gratitude to Him who gave such a man to the church and to the world) that he possessed a mind of more than ordinary power. With unfailing energy of purpose, he had robustness of intellect to endure sustained exertion. An active curiosity, nice powers of observation, a retentive memory and a large share of good sense, are excellent helps in *plodding*, and these he possessed in an eminent degree. He preferred the solid to the brilliant, and aspired to be useful rather than distinguished.

To these qualities were added in rich measure the graces of the Spirit. Naturally self-willed, opinionated and inclined to "seek great things for himself," from the hour when he took up his cross he earnestly cultivated that meekness, purity, benevolence, and perpetual aspiration after holiness, which have the special benediction of his Lord and Master; and while in this spirit he "attempted great things for God," his lowliness of mind effectually repressed that vain elation which could permit him to slacken his endeavours at any point, through the self-satisfaction of partial success. His soul was absorbed in the contemplation of his Redeemer's glory, his strongest desire was to aid in its consummation, and all other things were rejected as but trifles of the hour. Loud as was the clamour of political strife, terrible as seemed the shaking of the nations, during all the early part of his career, he seems to have scarcely bestowed a thought upon the whole. One may read his published correspondence throughout without detecting a consciousness of the existence of Napoleon, so entirely was his soul preoccupied. He was commissioned by one "stronger than the strong man armed," to make conquests for an everlasting kingdom, and felt that he had no leisure to observe the times and the seasons. The love of Christ which animated his soul, and constrained him to live for such holy ends, was directed towards all who were partakers of the same grace. Assurance of hope and faith made him uniformly cheerful, under discouragements that all his natural buoyancy of feeling would have been too weak to encounter. It was because he was labouring not for himself nor in his own strength, that he never fainted. For the like reason he rejected all craft and subtlety. Simplicity and purity of purpose made him simple and frank in his demeanour. Concealment was foreign to his nature, because the spirit of selfishness was so far exorcised that he cherished no plans which required artifice. He had a single aim—the glory of God through the salvation of men—to this he devoted his life, and he was faithful unto death.