

The heathen countries have been explored and described with great minuteness. The facilities of transportation have quickened and extended our commercial relations with them. Then so many heroic men and women have engaged in missionary work during the century drawing to a close, and the story of their sufferings and successes has been so affecting, that the Church has been stimulated as, perhaps, never before, to give practical effect to the great commission of the Saviour.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."

In recording the names of distinguished missionaries a conspicuous place will be given to Alexander M. Mackay, the missionary hero of Uganda. He was a child of the manse, being born in the parsonage of the Free Church, at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire, October 13th, 1849. His father, the Rev. Alexander Mackay, LL.D., was a man of superior ability, who took a warm interest in scientific subjects, and was on terms of intimacy with Hugh Miller, Sir Roderick I. Murchinson, and other eminent men in the world of science. Many a lesson in botany and geology was imparted to his boy as they walked abroad examining the flowers, ferns and rocks.

Young Mackay exhibited an intense eagerness for knowledge. When only three years old he could read the New Testament, at seven years was reading Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Milton's "Paradise Lost," and other difficult works. His education, until he was fourteen years of age, was under the direction of his father; then he was sent to the Grammar School of Aberdeen, and ultimately to Edinburgh University. When a boy he manifested a great liking for all kinds of mechanical work. He would walk miles to watch the move-

ments of a steam-engine, and found pleasure in observing the smith working at his forge, or the shuttles flying at the mill. There was doubtless in this a providential ordering, for in his missionary life all his mechanical knowledge was laid under contribution.

The first deep sorrow of his life came to him after he had been a year at Aberdeen, arising from the death of his mother. His precociousness as a child was to her a pleasure, and also a source of anxiety. Many prayers were offered by her that he might become a valiant soldier of the Lord Jesus. She left him her Bagster's Bible, which she had received from her husband when they were married, with an earnest charge to search the Word of God and to meet her in heaven. It was about this time that he seems to have entered upon the Christian life.

After completing his studies at Edinburgh he went to Berlin, in Germany, where he obtained a position as draughtsman in one of the leading firms. In the establishment were men of all nationalities, many of them infidels. His ability and deportment gained for him promotion, and he used the influence of his position to draw the workmen towards the Christian life.

It was in this city that he decided to consecrate his life to missionary work in a foreign land. Writing to his sister, in August, 1874, he says, "I am not a doctor and therefore cannot go as such; but I am an engineer, and purpose, if the Lord will, to go as an engineering missionary."

The work of missions in Madagascar had been pressed upon his attention. His plan was to combine religion and science, or to associate missionary work with industrial pursuits. As there was novelty in his plan he expected opposition, but had unwavering faith in its ultimate success. He says to his sister, after explaining his plan, "Do not think