

"To believe, to suffer, and to love was the primitive state," *i.e.*, of the early Christians. This he made the purpose of his life. At the Cape of Good Hope he went ashore. A furious war was raging between the English and Dutch for the possession of that point. Amid the horrors of the battle-field, bending over the fallen forms of English, Dutch, or Hottentot braves, he had his baptismal experience of a kind of duty such as the elegant and thronged churches of England never gave him.

Arriving in Calcutta he was felled by fever, and his weakened body became a source of discouragement overcome only by his deathless devotion. The horrid rites of widow burning and devil worship were then practiced. He said he "shivered as standing in the neighborhood of hell." English friends urged his remaining at Calcutta, where he would meet with countrymen and could preach as much as he wished without danger, receiving a salary as army chaplain. But Martyn determined to go to the heathen beyond, to whom others would not go.

For weeks he pushed his way in a little boat up the Ganges, during the day translating Scripture into Bengalee by the aid of his boatmen, at night talking of Christ to the natives on the shore. Passing into new provinces he found new dialects to be mastered. His rare scholarly habit and genius came to his help. At Dinapore we find this in his diary of a day: "Morning in Sanscrit; afternoon, Bahar dialect; continued late at night writing on Parables in Bengalee. The wickedness and cruelty of wasting a moment when so many nations are waiting till I do my work." He finds that he has use for Arabic, too, in dealing with Mohammedans, and therefore masters that tongue. Then the Persian language is studied. The man seems to have been a mingling of Max Müller and Livingstone.

Through the glaring sun he traversed the sandy plains of the Ganges hundreds of miles to Cawnpore, fainting, fevered, with a terrible disease developing in his chest. He preached steadily to the soldiers in the barracks, and at times the poor natives would gather by the thousand in front of his door to receive his alms and hear his addresses. A strange fascination went out from his person to all who came in contact with him. A fellow English Christian, speaking of Martyn's ill health, said: "If I could make you live longer, I would give up any child I have, and myself into the bargain."

Physical nature could not endure the strain of that intense spirit, and Martyn's condition necessitated his return to England. But he was not quite satisfied with the correctness of his Persian translation of the New Testament, and therefore proposed to put in an intermediate journey to Persia to perfect it. Pale, emaciated, too weak to speak except in a low voice, he seemed to live only by force of soul. They beheld him "standing on the verge of another world, and ready to take his flight," rather than about to endure another earthly journey.