

very serious difficulties in the way of its acceptance—indeed, some of his critics say, has entirely overthrown the theory. The scientific dogma—for science has its dogmas as well as theology—of a luminiferous ether, whose mechanical properties, says Tyndall, “are rather those of a *solid* than of an *air*,” and which pervades even the densest glass or diamond, has always seemed to us more an ingenious hypothesis than a scientific demonstration; as also the molecular theory with its polarities and vibrations of atoms. The author’s discussion is exceedingly ingenious, and has attracted much attention in the scientific world. It is yet so popular in character as to be quite intelligible and interesting to unscientific readers. His great object, he says, has been “to throw, if possible, some new light from a philosophical and scientific standpoint upon the problem of man’s conscious and substantial existence beyond the present life.” In this, we judge, he has been eminently successful. Indeed, one of his critics declares that this book “is the ablest and most timely production since the appearance of Bishop Butler’s Analogy, in 1796.”

*Heroes of Christian History*: A series of popular Biographies by eminent English and American authors. 12mo vols., bound in cloth. Price 75 cents. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son; Toronto: William Briggs.

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The great popularity of the series of “English Men of Letters” has apparently led to the projection of this series of biographies of “Heroes of Christian History.” The idea is a very happy one, and is being very successfully carried out. History has been described as philosophy teaching by example. If for “philosophy” we substitute “religion,” this description applies especially to Christian

biography; and certainly it is much easier to learn by the living example of the great and good and gifted of our race than by mere didactic discourse.

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Henry Martyn, the pioneer Indian Missionary, is a fitting subject for the initial volume. Only thirty-one years of age when he died, he has left his impress not only on our Great Indian Empire but on the entire history of our Christian Missions.

In 1805 he sailed for India. The remaining seven years of his life were devoted to indefatigable preaching, travel and the translation of the Scriptures into the native languages. On his way to England to seek restoration to health, he died at Tokat, in Asia Minor, in 1812. But his short life has been a perpetual inspiration to Missionary zeal from that day to the present time.

Wilberforce is a subject of perennial interest on account of his heroic and successful efforts for the emancipation of the slave, and for his intensely practical religious character. The latter we may attribute, in part at least, to the Methodist influences by which he was surrounded in the impressive formative period of his youth. He is a notable example of noble persistency of purpose. For forty-five years he urged his philanthropic scheme of negro emancipation, and only just before his death did he witness the consummation of his hopes and toil. The spectacle of a man of great wealth and lofty social position devoting himself to the succour of the lowly and oppressed, and exemplifying the humble Christian virtues, was one that the world need-