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Reginald Heber.

THE MISSIONARY HYMN.

(Friendly Greetings.)

But which is the missionary hymn? You will most likely guess; and perhaps may like to know a little of its early history.

It was a Whitsuntide long ago, even in the year 1819. The lilacs were in full bloom and the young foliage was green and fresh round the old town of Wrexham.

Just within Wales, and almost under the shadow of its dark mountains, it seemed a fitting place to raise a missionary standard, for was it not a Welsh singer (Williams by name) who had sung about 'the gloomy hills

Hodnet its young clergyman, a relative of his own, Reginald Heber, to be present on the occasion.

'Now, then,' said the vicar, 'what shall we sing to-morrow? Cannot you write something for us?'

The young man considered. He was a poet as well as a minister, had already won reputation at Oxford by his prize poem on 'Palestine,' and now he obeyed the call. He retired into a corner of the room and two verses were ere long written. 'Now, then,' cried the eager vicar, 'let us hear.' And Heber modestly recited the first part of 'From Greenland's icy mountains.'

His hearer was delighted. But the poet's brain was full, and even after he had writ-

And for that heathen land, after three years of unwearied Christian labor, Reginald Heber laid down his life.

We do not forget that he was not actually the first who wrote a missionary hymn. But 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,' by Dr. Watts; was rather a paraphrase of Psalm 72, than an original production, nor was the one by the Welsh poet of which we have already spoken, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkness,' so calculated to catch the popular ear.

'From Greenland's Icy Mountains,' familiar to us from our childhood, we may well call 'The Missionary Hymn,' and sure we are that it will hold on its way in the future—

'Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign!

M. K. M.

I Wish He Had Died for me.

When in Prussia I visited the Dusseldorf Gallery, and my attention was called to a painting which has touched many hearts. Let me tell you about it.

First, come with me and look at two paintings—one of a wild gypsy girl and the other of the Lord Jesus—who gave himself for us. The gypsy girl lived the wild life of her tribe, and had been called in by Sternberg, a German painter, that he might paint her pretty face. She had never been in an art studio before, and she did not fail to notice on the other side of the room an unfinished painting of the crucifixion of our Lord. One day she asked, 'Master, who is that?'

'That is Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary,' replied the painter, carelessly.

'But was he a bad man, that they treated him so cruelly?'

'Oh, no! He was the best man that ever lived.'

'Tell me more about him'; and so he did, though unwilling to do so.

Day after day as this gypsy girl came into the studio to have her picture painted her face was fixed upon this painting of Christ. As the last sitting was over, and she was about to leave the room, she whispered: 'Master, how can you help loving him, who, you say, has died for you? If anyone had loved me like that, oh, I would like to die for him.' And then with a sad heart she went back to her people.

And the painter! He was struck as with an arrow. God's spirit sent the words home to his heart. He fell on his knees, and, covering his face with his hands, confessed before God's blessed Son how for twenty-seven years he had neglected him and sinned against him, and, looking for pardon to that cross of Jesus, gave his life to him. His heart was filled with a new joy, and then he became a worker for Christ. He put aside the half-finished picture, in which he had thought only of depicting the sufferings of Christ, and began a fresh one, with his heart full of love toward the Saviour who had died for him. He felt that the Lord helped him as never before.

When the painting was finished it was placed in the gallery at Dusseldorf. Crowds



REGINALD HEBER.

of darkness,' which were waiting for the true Light to shine upon them?

In the ancient town of Wrexham, with its beautiful church, well-known to all tourists, in Wales, a missionary sermon on this Whitsunday was to be preached. It was an unusual thing. We can fancy the astonishment of the people at the announcement. For the interest of the Church at that time in the salvation of the heathen was at a very low ebb, and as to a missionary hymn, neither Wrexham Church nor any other had reached beyond the realms which were then universally sung.

But better times were coming, and here at Wrexham was a happy beginning. All arrangements had been made by the vicar, who was himself to preach, and he had invited over from the neighboring village of

ten the two following verses he would fain have gone on, had not the vicar insisted that the hymn was complete, and that more would spoil it.

So the hymn, 'From Greenland's icy mountains,' just as we know it, was sung next day, after the missionary sermon, for the first time, in Wrexham Church. God was calling Heber to India, though as yet he did not know it, and we cannot doubt that the Holy Spirit put the lovely words into his servant's heart first, as the foreshadowing of his own future, and then to prove the stirring up of missionary interests throughout the English-speaking world. Nay, more, for when Heber, as bishop of Calcutta, reached, in 1823, the far-off 'coral strand,' he found his hymn translated into some of the Indian languages!