

great idea which dominated his existence. Hudson Taylor has put it well, "Go in glad obedience; in fullest confidence, without anxiety, to do a definite work." Such is the high type, such the practice of those hero-missionaries, whom I have noticed. (See our August number.) * * *

Let me look at the subject from another point of view. How much do we read, in missionary letters and reports, of their families, birth of children, death of children, illness of wife, and domestic cares, while the reader is anxious to know how the gospel warfare goes on, what progress has been made. Only imagine the public dispatch of a general or governor in which such details were even alluded to! In private letters to friends such things might be noticed, but not in the documents placed before the committee. Nothing strikes a committeeman more than the preponderate proportion of the correspondence which is occupied with notices of the wives and children of missionaries, as if the committee were a board of guardians of the poor. How often a missionary comes home in full health and vigor, leaving for a time, or forever, a field of work for which he is suited, and in which, after some years of pupillage, he has learned to be useful, because his wife is ill! Would the general commanding an expedition, or the governor of a province, have done so? How often the Indian official, or soldier, has to ship off a sick wife and cannot accompany her! We have not far to look to find out what St. Paul would have said, and what our Lord did say (Mark x: 29). Even in the life of John Williams we find mention of the illness of his wife brought much too prominently forward: he was always anticipating the necessity of an early return to England for her sake: but he clung on for eighteen years, and she arrived home in excellent health, and outlived him some years. It is against this exaggeration of human affections that the servant of Christ should struggle valiantly and prayerfully. * * *

There are giants amidst the body of missionaries, for whom nothing is too good, for they would in secular professions have risen to distinction and wealth, but to a very large proportion this would not have happened. The praise of the good, self-denying, consecrated missionary is in the heart of all who care for such things, and many, unknown to him personally, talk lovingly of him when he is absent, and sadly when he is dead; but the great missionary is thinking always of his own infirmity, of how much he has left undone, and how much he could have done better, and rejoicing that it is given to him to spend and be spent. There is in modern times a far wider spread of missionary spirit than in past years, but it is not so deep; it has become a fashion, not a revelation, in a man's mind.

We find no idle calls on the part of the heroic missionary society, or the survivors and relatives of hero-missionaries, for vengeance on the murderers of the slain; this is one of the features of the gradual degeneracy of the age and the overweening self-assertion of a certain section of the British middle classes. It is well to have a giant's strength, but it is not well to use it as a bully. Nothing would have been easier than to have swept the islands of Erromanga and Nikapu from sea to sea clean of all their inhabitants to revenge the deaths of Williams and Pattison; but the missionary societies protested against the very idea of retaliation, nor would the British responsible authorities have tolerated it. The relations of the deceased did not gather excited meetings in British towns, and pass resolutions, as in later cases, to petition the Government to send expeditions of rescue or intimidation. Such weakness of faith, such want of sound judgment, such incomprehensible mis-

¹ We do not indorse all the strictures and criticisms of the writer in this paper, and think he is at times unduly severe and sweeping. Still, what he writes on missionary subjects—and few write more—deserves careful reading and candid consideration. Missions and missionaries have not a warmer friend than he.—Eds.