

A MISSIONARY ROMANCE.—II.

THE FIRST MISSIONARY EXPEDITION AND ITS CENTURY'S FRUIT.

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America still waits the advent of a poet of the missionary crusade, such as William Cowper was the first to become in English literature, more than a century ago, and Reginald Heber proved himself to be among the Anglicans, and as James Montgomery did, representing the Moravian Brethren. John Greenleaf Whittier has come nearest to filling the sacred niche among the poets of our Western continent in the long career of his beautiful and God-consecrated life, from the appearance of his "Mogg Megone," in 1836, till his death, three years ago. The poem which caused him to be first recognized by purely English critics as "a poet indeed" was "The Panorama," which was published forty years ago. As we read its impassioned and exquisite strains we feel that the writer was prevented from letting his muse burn over the greater subject of the foreign missionary enterprise only by the immediate and overpowering call of the slave for freedom. But we may now apply the pictures and predictions of his panoranic showman to the higher freedom which the missionaries of Christ are everywhere proclaiming to all enslaved by sin :

" And, still beyond, long lines of foam and sand
Tell where Pacific rolls his waves a-land,
From many a wide-lapped port and land-locked bay,
Opening with thunderous pomp the world's highway
To Indian isles of spice and marts of far Cathay.
' Such,' said the showman, as the curtain fell,
' Is the New Canaan of our Israel—
The land of promise to the swarming North,
Which, hive-like, sends its annual surplus forth.' "

For the peoples to whom awakening Christendom first resolved to send the good news of the liberty which is in Christ Jesus were those of the islands of that Pacific Ocean which covers a third of the globe. Thither William Carey determined to go, but God directed him, with Dr. Thomas, to India, for which he had been all unconsciously training himself. The first English missionary society—the Baptist—accordingly gave its early strength to the evangelization of the millions entrusted to the rule of the British East India Company. So it fell to the second of the Reformed missionary societies, now representing the other great army of the Non-conformists of England and Wales, to undertake as its earliest enterprise the sending of the law of God to the islands which had been for seventeen centuries waiting for that law—to the Malay and Papuan savages ; from Tahiti and Samoa to New Guinea. In Captain James Wilson the London Missionary Society had found the providentially prepared leader of the expedition ; but where were the missionaries ?