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FIRST PROTESTANT MISSIONARY IN CHINA.

'Christian Missions,' by T. W. M. Marshall.

(Continued)

From this time forth, then, the pages of Mr. Morrison's journal abound with ardent allusions to "my beloved Mary," which alternate with texts of Scripture, and other more or less congruous topics. If his wife, for they were speedily married, has a headache, he records, in a volume which it was his intention to print, that "it pleased the Lord," to support her in some unexpected way; and if he has one himself, she—not the first, but the second wife—presently writes, that he did not "murmur," but that "his entire acquiescence in the arrangements of Divine Providence sustained his mind." (Memoirs, vol. I, p. 294.) Such were their mutual reflections on this familiar malady. But his journal has many entries of the same class. "It would be all easy," he exclaims at one moment, "if Mary were well!" but the next, rebuking the transient weakness, he adds, "Patience, O my soul!" His soul, of which he candidly reveals the secrets, seems to have been in constant need of these admonitions. On one occasion he says: "My mind is in a serious frame, a little depressed, a little melancholy; but still holding fast." On another day the entry is, "I have to-day been pretty comfortable," but on the next there was a change for the worse in his fitful and intermittent piety, and he was only "tolerably comfortable." A little later the season of gloom recurs, and he is weighed down with an accumulated load of guilt. "But as all these passages, and many more like them, were destined to travel sixteen thousand miles, and to be published in England, he presently throws off this incubus of guilt, assumes a more cheerful tone, and rejoices, in characteristic language, to be once more under the "benignant government of Jehovah."

There is no better test of a man's character than his habitual language. Mr. Morrison's was, to say the least, peculiar. If he writes to one of the directors of the missionary society which employed him, and alludes, as he always does on such occasions, to some religious topic, he suddenly exclaims,—"Pardon, dear sir, my breaking off to vent the workings of my mind at this moment," (Memoirs, p. 166.) Perhaps a man really overcome by religious emotion would have been more careful to hide than to print it. Sometimes he is more natural; and then he says crudely, "But for the cause I serve, I would gladly exchange my present situation for any in England or Scotland

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of fifty pounds a year." (p. 310.)—a sentiment which, if not apostolic, was at all events perfectly genuine. But we are now sufficiently acquainted with Mr. Morrison's character, and may proceed to review his actions.

We next find him settled at Canton. "In the close of the year 1818," says Mr. Ellis, "he received an appointment in the Honorable Company's factory, which he has held to the present time (1834), with credit to himself and satisfaction to the Company, and without neglecting the great object of his mission." When we learn, as we shall do presently, how the "great object" advanced, we shall have no difficulty in believing that it suffered very little from his conflicting avocations in the factory; especially as his colleague, Mr. Milne, tells us, in his Retrospect of the Mission, "all that the missionaries to China could frequently do"—he means the Protestant missionaries—"was to address an individual or two, with fear and trembling, in an inner apartment, with the doors securely locked."

It seems they still adopted the same excessive precautions at Canton which Morrison had employed at Macao; and while the Catholic missionaries and their converts were accepting martyrdom in every part of the empire, these heralds of another religion were cautiously hiding themselves in what a vehement preacher of their own sect calls, with honest contempt, "a skulking and precarious sojourn in obscurity and disguise." Mr. Ellis, however, and precarious sojourn in obscurity and disguise." (China and the Chinese Mission, by Rev. James Hamilton, p. 20)

Mr. Ellis, however, though he relates all these incidents, is of opinion that, "to persevere under such circumstances,"—as a great many merchants and clerks at Canton were doing at the same moment,—"required no common strength of principle, no faint and wavering love to Christ and love to souls, and no more transient impulse of desire for their salvation." Whatever else we may think of this sentiment, we cannot at least deny that Mr. Ellis is in all respects a suitable biographer of Mr. Morrison.

It appears that Morrison's salary at the factory was five hundred pounds a year, "which was, after a few years, increased to one thousand pounds." (History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Heathen, by Rev. W. Brown, M.D., vol. II, p. 252.) It was on his promotion to this income which he, no doubt, faithfully earned, that his widow makes the following remark: "Thus did the Supreme Disposer of all events attest the fidelity of His servant, and make plain his way before him." We may venture, however, to doubt whether the acquisition of a liberal income is always a conclusive proof of acceptance with the "Supreme Disposer." "Blessed is he who hath a thousand a year," though it expresses a popular conviction, is hardly an accurate version of the First Beatitude.

But Mr. Morrison, already a "missionary" and a factory clerk, had other sources of income. He was also a private tutor, and makes mention of "a Dutch youth, my fifth pupil." (Memoirs, vol. I, p. 293.) It was perhaps fortunate that "the millions of the East" never lifted the latch of his door, for he could hardly have had much time at their disposal. He found leisure, however, to pursue his study of Chinese, and as he had begun with

a Harmony of the Gospels composed by the Jesuits, so he continued to the end to profit by the labors of Catholics. "I cannot refrain from inserting," he says, "that I have now the assistance of Chinese Christians of the Romish Church." Elsewhere his journal records, "I read part of the Exposition of the Ten Commandments by the Catholics." His immediate teacher was Abel Yun, "a Roman Catholic Chinese from Peking," and a convert of the Jesuits, who had "taught him the Latin language, which he speaks fluently." At another time the entry is, "Received from a Chinese Roman Catholic a present of three small volumes; his younger brother, an intelligent boy, sold me a book of Meditations." (Missionary Transactions of the London Missionary Society, vol. III., p. 328.)

(to be continued)

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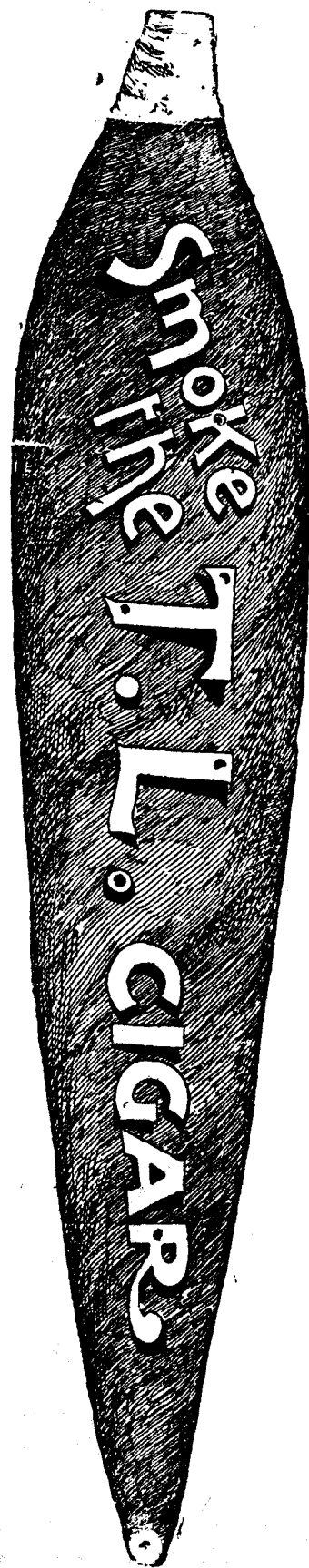
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