

A Canadian Hero.*

THE hero is Gerge Leslie Mackay, for twenty-three years a missionary from Canada to Formosa. His grandfather fought at Waterloo. His father and mother emigrated from the Highlands of Scotland in 1870 and settled in Zorra, where they fought with forest and swamp as bravely as grandfather had fought in the cockpit of Europe. George, the youngest of six children, born in 1844, has fought all his life, as bravely as his sires, against foes more deadly than they had to face, and he is as full of fight and as ready for it as ever. Thousands of us have heard him, when he was home on furlough; and the electric current which springs from every flaming soul kept us hanging on his lips, as long as he chose to speak. Now, we have the record of his marvellous life-work; and I would advise every young Canadian, who was ever tempted to ask whether life is worth living or whether there are any heights still unscaled, to read it at once, and then to read it over and over again, until its lesson sinks down into his heart. The lesson is not that he should become a foreign missionary. Mackay himself repudiates that. "It is not for me," he says, "it is not for any foreign missionary to look loftily on the ministry at home, or think of them as less loyal, unselfish and true." "Not our field, but our faithfulness matters." Neither is it that he should become a clergyman. Nothing is more remarkable in Mackay's history than this, that though a man of intense nature and all-absorbing passion for saving men from sin, by bringing them to the Cross of Christ, he is always ready to recognize the claims of law, of government of custom, of industry, of commerce, of science, in a word, of every department of life and thought. He calls nothing common and unclean which God has cleansed. He refuses to recognize the mediæval distinction between sacred and secular, or the modern "chasm between the missionaries and the other foreigners in the cities and port towns of China and India," and, we may add, of every other civilized non-Christian country. "There may be such a chasm in some places," he says, "but, if so, it has probably been dug by both parties." Captains and other officers of men-of-war, representatives of the great foreign business firms, Consuls, Commissioners of Customs, hospital and other physicians and scientific travellers were his personal friends; and on the eve of his departure for Canada in 1893, the entire resident and transient foreign community of Tamsui presented him with an address, engrossed on silk, testifying to "the great and noble work" he had done, and accompanied with a magnificent telescope. "The good feeling between natives and foreigners," they declare, "is due to you." Again: "You have been a standing symbol and example to us of faith in the Unseen." And, therefore, "individually, and as a community, we wish to express our appreciation and our gratitude." No; the lesson which this record teaches is that faith is all that is needed to make any man a hero. But then faith means, not assent to formulas, but union to the living God. Seek that first, and he that seeks finds, and then all things shall be added unto you.

The book is—with perhaps one exception—admirably edited, and the editing must have been a most difficult task. Caesar could describe his campaigns as well as conduct them, but few great generals have had Caesar's literary gifts. The knowledge of this has made me entertain a suspicious feeling when I come across eloquent letters from, or touching autobiographies of, missionaries. In India there is a classification of "the letter writing and the working missionaries," which is considered to indicate an actual division with approximate accuracy. Now, Mackay was never worth much as a letter-writing missionary. He would state a fact, when he had anything to state which he considered the Church should know, but instead of gushing over it he would just give an emphatic Hallelujah or a snort, according as the one or the other was required, and then shut down on the subject. But being a man of true genius, he possesses an infinite capacity of taking pains. He masters every detail of whatever he believes it his duty to do, and—far from thinking that all should be plain sailing when the greatest work on earth is undertaken—he never dreams of being discouraged by flood or fire or filth or fury. That is all in the day's work, and

the length of the working day is never regulated for him by bell or clock. Having to study languages, print books, build churches, schools, and a college, in a climate, too, which soon exposes bad work, and without architect, overseer, or foreman to assist, he was obliged to be accurate to a degree on pain of ignominious failure. Hence he kept records and journals in which he jotted down his doings and sufferings and other experiences, and incidentally etched pictures which are as clearly defined as if nitric acid had been used instead of ink. All this "mass of literary material, notes, observations, extracts from diaries, and reports, studies in science, fragments of description, sketches of character," he put into the hands of the Rev. J. A. McDonald, of St. Thomas, and wisely laid upon him the responsibility of organizing it into form and life. Not that Mackay then washed his hands of the work. That is not his way. His holiday would be hard work for most men. "Every scrap of material," says the editor, "was read and studied under the author's eye, annotations were made at his dictation, and the plan of classification and arrangement received his cordial approval. As the work progressed, and the gaps in the story became apparent, additional matter was obtained, and nearly all of the manuscript in its final form was revised by him." The result is the most truthful and fascinating story of missionary enterprise that I have ever read. One exception I alluded to, and that is the interjecting of a great deal of information concerning the geology and natural history of Formosa into the story of Mackay's life. Of course it is all true, and perhaps Mackay may have a poor opinion of people who do not find it interesting reading, when he had to learn it with such incredible pains. But what interests us is not Formosa but Mackay, or Formosa only in its relation to him; and in future editions, much of chapters five to nine might be thrown into an appendix, where those who feel so inclined may study it at leisure. At present we rather resent its intrusion, as it keeps us from the man; yet we are unwilling to skip it wholly, not knowing how much may be necessary to the right understanding of the succeeding chapters.

I had marked a number of passages to quote, but quotations would not do justice to author or editor unless entire chapters, such as "How Bang-kah was Taken," or "Native Workers for Native Women," were taken bodily from the book. We get extraordinarily vivid pictures of Chinese life; of their highly developed yet bizarre civilization; of their cohesiveness and conservatism, sanctified in their case by ancestral worship as in India by the system of caste. Fancy Mackay showing, to the infuriated head men of the city of Bang-kah, as his credentials, a Bible in one hand and a forceps for extracting teeth in the other hand! What other country in the world could that apply to save China! But, by far the most vivid picture that we get is that which is unconsciously drawn of "the black-bearded barbarian" himself; a combination of highland enthusiasm and contempt of death, with a positively statesmanlike estimate of the difficulties in the way, as well as a true gentleman's regard for the courtesies of life and the feelings of other people, save where other people stand in the way of the Lord's work. God bless and continue prosper the hero of Zorra!

G. M. GRANT.

Vikings of To-day.*

THIS handsome volume, with its neat binding and its numerous illustrations, will attract many readers.

It is a thrilling story of noble work nobly done, a record of medical and missionary labours performed amidst difficulties and dangers that would daunt any ordinary man. Dr. Grenfell is no ordinary doctor; a young enthusiast, a trained athlete, a splendid sailor, with a full master's certificate from the English Board of Trade; he combines in himself two characters rarely met with, skilled as a physician, an enthusiastic devotion to his profession and the most ardent missionary zeal, a never-flagging enthusiasm in the sacred cause of the Master to whose service he has devoted all his youthful energy and rare talents.

In the head of the Deep Sea Mission to Labrador we have no flighty, ignorant enthusiast, but a man of trained intellect, of exceptional skill as a surgeon, who has devoted himself for the past three years to the arduous work of min-

* "From Far Formosa: The Island, its People and Missions." By George Leslie Mackay, D.D. Edited by Rev. J. A. Macdonald. New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.

* "Vikings of To-day: or Life and Medical Work Amongst the Fishermen of Labrador." By Wilfred T. Grenfell, M.R.C.S.E.