

ROBERT MOFFATT.

Some time in the year 1814 a placard, posted in public places in the town of Warrington, England, announced a meeting of the London Missionary Society. The meeting was held in due season, and probably forgotten by many who listened at the time with interest to the statements which were made, and to the appeals for help. But it was followed by a success of which those who addressed the meeting could not dream, and which was due to no eloquence of theirs. A youth from a neighboring town, a gardener by profession, came into Warrington a day or two after the meeting, and his eyes fell upon the now seemingly useless placard. Others saw it too, but it had no message for them. To the young eye, which now rested upon it, it proved the voice of God to his soul. It set him thinking upon the motives and objects of life and the noblest ends of human effort. The impression deepened day by day, until he reached the decision to obey the call which penetrated every fibre of his soul, and which bade him go to the distant heathen bearing the riches of Christ's redemption to the perishing.

That young man was Robert Moffatt, a mere boy of eighteen at the time. But he had been blessed with pious training. Perhaps the first question of the old Catechism which he had learned in his childhood in his Scottish home rang out in strong tones from his memory as he pondered after seeing the placard upon "the chief end of man." Born in Ormeston, near Haddington, Scotland, in 1795, he was reared in the Secession Church. He went to England to follow the occupation of gardener in his early youth. He had promised his pious mother that he would read his Bible every day. Doubtless her prayers followed the absent boy, and their influence will be known only in eternity. Having made the momentous decision of his life, he lost no time in obtaining the consent of his parents, and thereupon offered himself to the London Missionary Society, which promptly accepted him. After a period spent in preparatory study he was ordained in October 1816, in Surrey Chapel, London, and sailed on the last day of the month for the Cape of Good Hope, his designation being Great Namaqua Land.

Arriving at the Cape his first difficulty was conquered after a prolonged struggle in obtaining the consent of the British Governor for his advance into the interior. So savage were the tribes in the

back country that it was considered a more throwing away of his life for a missionary to make any attempt to work among them. Moffatt persevered, and set out at once for the Orange river, where his first labors were blessed, though not without patient waiting, to the conversion of the notorious, bloodthirsty, cruel chief known as Africaner. The story of the wonderful change wrought in this man and his people is familiar to every one. From this tribe Dr. Moffatt went to the Bechuanas, where he laboured for many years with no apparent results. But he knew nothing of discouragements.

Such earnest souls carry a powerful auxiliary to success in their own hopeful spirits. There came a time of change. Light began to dawn upon the seven years of apparently fruitless labour. A church and school-house were built and signs of civilization rapidly appeared. He went now among other tribes, everywhere with results. The translation of the New Testament, and afterwards of the Old, was part of his Herculean work. In the midst of it his health broke down, but he worked on without pause, and accomplished the wonderful feat of translating the Scriptures into the Sechuana language, dialects of which are spoken all over South Africa to the equator.

From the year 1843 his history mingles itself very much with that of Dr. Livingstone, who married his daughter. Livingstone was in the out door field while Dr. Moffatt was at work at home upon his translations. We believe he is the only individual who, unaided, has translated the entire Bible into another tongue. The chief mission work in South Africa is of Moffatt's planting; to it he gave nearly fifty years of labour, returning but once to England for rest and recuperation until the year 1870, when at the age of seventy-five he put off the harness and went back to England to await the summons "come up higher." His death, occurred on the tenth of the last month, at his home in London. No more faithful servant of the Master has ever rested from his labors. He has gone to behold great clusters of jewels won by him from the darkness of heathenism to sparkle in the Redeemer's crown forevermore.—*Phil. Press.*

A single sin, however apparently trifling, however hidden in some obscure corner of our consciousness,—a sin we do not intend to renounce—is enough to render real prayer impracticable.