

Viceroy, with a fleet of six splendid ships and invested with every honour that could be conferred upon him. A special cabin was by royal orders appropriated to the missionary, but he preferred to sleep on the deck, with a coil of ropes for his pillow, and to live on the coarse mess of the common sailors, that he might win some of them to Christ.

At the age of thirty-six, in May, 1542, he arrived at Goa. He found there a nominal Christian community with upwards of a hundred churches, who, under the name of the "Syro-Christians" of Malabar, traced their origin back to the Apostle St. Thomas. But the ungodly lives of these nominal Christians seemed to Xavier infinitely worse than heathen idolatry. Before attempting to convert the heathen, he must try to reform those who were a disgrace to the name they bore. For five months he addressed himself to them, preaching, teaching the young, and visiting the sick. His zeal and piety won their admiration and accomplished a manifest improvement in the community. But he yearned to commence the work to which he had devoted his life—to rescue the perishing heathen. He was sent by the Government, no doubt for political and commercial reasons, to exercise his influence upon the pearl-fishers of the Comorin coast. He began by translating the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Ave Maria into the vernacular, then, with bell in hand, he went through the towns and villages and by the temples and bazaars, gathering around him large congregations. Children were especially attracted by his kind words and gentle looks. Though he never mastered any of the languages of the people among whom he laboured, he found his way to their hearts by the loving touch of sympathy. "He could smooth the hard pillow, and make the fevered bed, and soak the sleeve of his surplice in water, and squeeze out a few drops to baptize the dying." A very imperfect missionary work Xavier's was, it must be confessed, but all along he claimed to be only a pioneer, preparing the way for more competent instructors; and it is admitted that, by whatever means he worked, many of his converts shewed signs of genuine conversion, endured persecution and affliction with Christian resignation, and died in the faith of the Gospel. After residing a short time among the fishermen of Cape Comorin he proceed-

ed to Travancore, where he is said to have baptized 10,000 heathen in a single month. Xavier did not claim to work on the lines of baptismal regeneration, indeed he seems to have made too light of the sacred symbol, and was so thoroughly disheartened by the apparent impossibility of making real converts he left that part of the country in despair. He spent some time in Ceylon, where he found 20,000 Syro-Christians and baptized 40,000 natives. Then he went to Malacca and the Chinese Archipelago, where he spent two years and a half preaching as best he could through interpreters and relieving the destitute that came in his way. The letters which he wrote to his friends in Europe at this time shewed how deeply he was grieved by the scenes which he witnessed. But he never lost faith in his mission. Failure at any given point only roused him to renewed efforts in another quarter. When he could do no more in Malacca his attention was turned to Japan through one of his converts, an exile from that country named Anger. Taking him with him, he reached Japan in 1549. At first he met with little encouragement. It did not accord with the genius of the Japanese to pay much attention to one who came to them in the garb of a mendicant. Xavier, however, on seeing the difficulty, proved himself equal to the occasion. Having obtained permission from the Emperor to preach, he arrayed himself in a rich suit, and, attended by an imposing escort, commenced a new crusade, the result being that in a short time he baptized 3000 in Miaco, the capital of the empire. Leaving others to carry on the work which he had begun, he returned to Goa and settled down for a short time as superintendent of the Jesuit missions in India. But he could not rest long. He became possessed with a desire to make known the Gospel to the teeming millions of China. He set out on a voyage of exploration to the Chinese seas. But the project ended disastrously. After vainly attempting to gain footing on the mainland, he was prostrated by fever, and died on the island of Sancian on the 2nd of December, 1552, just ten years after his arrival in India. His body was taken to Goa and buried with great honours. He was only forty-six years old, but his hair was white with constant toil and suffering. His last words were: "In te, Domine, speravi; non confunda, in eternum."