

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

Joshua Marshman, D. D.

 [FROM THE "NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE."]

DIED, on the 5th December, 1837, at Serampore, in the 71st year of his age, JOSHUA MARSHMAN, D. D., the last survivor of the three distinguished individuals who founded the Missionary Institution in that settlement, which has been fraught with such important results to India and the farthest East. Dr. MARSHMAN was born in the neighbourhood of Westbury Leigh, where he followed the humble occupation of a weaver, and while engaged at the loom he laid the foundation of that learning which ultimately raised him to the highest rank of scholars. He plied the shuttle, with his Greek Testament, Grammars, and Lexicons before him. In June, 1794, he was baptised on a profession of faith, and was shortly afterwards chosen Master of the Charity School attached to the Baptist Chapel in Broadmead, Bristol. After Mr. MARSHMAN'S settle-

ment at Bristol, he felt a strong inclination to devote himself to the Ministry, and availing himself of his contiguity to the Baptist Academy, he spent his time not occupied in the labours of his school, in the pursuit of biblical learning, and speedily formed a considerable acquaintance with the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages.

When Mr. WILLIAM GRANT expressed his desire to become a missionary, Mr. MARSHMAN felt his heart inclined to accompany him, and after serious thought on the subject, he entered on the undertaking with all his mind. He translated from the Latin, transcribed the substance of Arabic grammars, and gave proof of his disinterestedness, by the cheerfulness with which he relinquished all his temporal prospects. He was at this time little more than thirty years of age, but of a constitution which seemed to be well adapted to the warmer climates.

Mr. and Mrs. MARSHMAN, in company with Mr. and Mrs. GRANT, Mr. and Mrs. BRUNSDON, Mr. WILLIAM WARD, and Miss TIDD, embarked on board the Criterion, Capt. WICKS, on the 25th of May, 1799, and after an agreeable voyage, reached Serampore on the 13th of October, in the same year.

Shortly after Mr. MARSHMAN's arrival in India, he and Mrs. MARSHMAN opened a school, at which the children of most of the principal Europeans have been educated. This school obtained the highest character, and such has been the encouragement which it received, that Dr. MARSHMAN and his wife were en-

abled to devote more than £20,000. to the objects of the Baptist mission.

By October, 1800, Mr. MARSHMAN had made such progress in the acquisition of the Bengalee language, that he began to preach to the natives. But the great object which he and his able coadjutors, CAREY and WARD, had in view was the translating and printing of the Holy Scriptures in all the languages of India; and so successful had they been in this important work, that Lord MINTO, the Governor-General of India, at a public disputation of the students of the college of Fort William, held before him, as visitor of the college in September, 1813, expressed himself of Mr. MARSHMAN and his associates in the following elegant and handsome manner:—"I profess a very sincere pleasure in bringing the literary merits of Mr. MARSHMAN and the other reverend members of the Serampore mission to the notice of the public, and in bearing my testimony to the great and extraordinary labours which constancy and energy in their numerous and various occupations have enabled this modest and respectable community to accomplish. I am not less gratified by the opportunity which their literary achievements afford of expressing my regard for the exemplary worth of their lives, and the beneficent principle which distinguishes and presides in the various useful establishments which they have formed, and which are conducted by themselves."

Sometime about the year 1815, Mr. MARSHMAN re-

ceived the degree of D. D. In 1826, Dr. MARSHMAN visited England, and many persons in this town remember with pleasure the simplicity of his manners—the variety and extent of his information—and the piety of his character. In 1827 he, in company with the Rev. CHR. ANDERSON, of Edinburgh, visited Copenhagen, and after some pleasing interviews with the KING OF DENMARK, they obtained from that monarch a charter of incorporation of the college which Dr. MARSHMAN and his brethren had founded at Serampore.

ON Dr. MARSHMAN'S return to India, he resumed his accustomed labours, and, before he breathed his last, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Scriptures translated, in whole or in part, into forty languages or dialects of India, and printed and circulated to a very considerable extent. In speaking of those translations, we cannot forbear to quote the remarkable language of DR. MARSH, the present Bishop of Peterborough, in his history of the translation of the Scriptures—after giving a detail of what was effected by the Serampore Missionaries during the first eleven years of their labours, the Bishop proceeds:—“Such are the exertions of these extraordinary men, the Missionaries of Serampore, who, in the course of eleven years, from the commencement of 1800, to the latest accounts, have contributed so much to the translation and dispersion of the Scriptures in the oriental languages, that the united efforts of no society whatever can be

compared with them. These are the men who, before the Bible Society existed, formed the grand design of translating the Scriptures into all the languages of the East; these are the men who have been the grand instruments in the execution of this stupendous work; these are the men who are best qualified to complete the design so nobly begun, and hitherto so successfully performed; who, in the knowledge of languages which they themselves have acquired; who, in the seminary of Serampore, designed for the education of future translators; who, in their extensive connexions with men of learning throughout the East; who, in the Missionary printing office, so well supplied with types of almost every description; and who, in the extensive supplies afforded by the Baptist Society, augmented by their own noble contributions, are in possession of the means which are required for that important purpose. These are the men who are entitled to the thanks of the British public."

But great as were the attainments, and important as were the labours, of Dr. Marshman, in oriental literature in general, his fame will principally rest on his knowledge of the written language of China. An acquaintance with the Chinese language for the purposes of oral communication, is neither difficult nor rare amongst Europeans connected with that country; but an extensive and correct knowledge of the written language of China was deemed scarcely within the reach of European faculties or industry. Dr. Marsh-

man, however, crossed that *oceanum dissociabilem*, which, for so many ages, had insulated that vast empire from the rest of mankind, and he had the honour of being the first who gave to the largest associated population on the surface of the globe an edition of the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue wherein they were born. This translation appeared about twelve months before that of our late illustrious townsman, Dr. MORRISON. On a review of the labours which had been accomplished by the Serampore brethren for China, well might Lord MINTO exclaim, "Let us entertain, at least, the hope that a perseverance in this or similar attempts may let in at length upon these multitudes the contraband and long-forbidden blessings of human intercourse and social improvement!"

Dr. MARSHMAN was the writer of several able papers published in "*The Friend of India.*" He was also the author of a valuable Chinese Grammar, with a most learned introduction, which Dr. ADAM CLARKE characterized as a production "which contained more of the philosophy of language than any book he had ever read."

Dr. Marshman's health which had been remarkably strong, began to decline during the last twelve months. Towards the close of the year he took a voyage on the Ganges, which he thought relieved him; but feeling that the relief was only temporary, he requested to be conveyed to Serampore, that he might end his days on the spot where so many years he had laboured. He re-

tained his faculties and his cheerfulness to the last, and he finished his course in the full enjoyment of the blessings of that religion which it had been the business of his life to communicate to others. His remains were deposited, the day after his death, near to those of his beloved fellow-labourers, CAREY and WARD,—but his name survives with that of XIMENES, of WALTON, and of MONTANUS, and his memory retains a sanctity worthy of Apostolic times.

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THE END.

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