

WILLIAM CAREY'S CENTENNIAL.

Baptists the world over are celebrating the centennial anniversary of William Carey, the famous missionary to India who died in 1834 after having for forty years pursued his labors in that country. Of him it has been said that he did more for the peoples of India than did all other influences which have been brought to bear upon its vast population by the western powers. The name of Carey is held in highest esteem throughout the whole of Christendom. His career affords a salient example of the sort of faith and courage that surmounts all difficulties and wins out against seemingly overwhelming odds. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no more inspiring record of personal endurance and self-denial to be found anywhere in the annals of humanitarian service. It was by his own stintless endeavors and invincible fortitude that William Carey attained for himself a position of great eminence and usefulness, one that will ever cause his honored name to be associated with the history of Christian missions in India, the chosen field of his ministerial activities.

William Carey was born in Paulersbury, Northamptonshire, in 1761. His education was of the scantiest. From childhood he knew poverty in the severest regimen of the "bad old times." At fourteen, he was apprenticed to the shoemaking trade. Afterwards he became journeyman to a Mr. Old at Kidderminster. In this cobbler's shop he found a small collection of books. He devoured their contents. The bent of his youthful mind was towards botany and travels. He would have become famous had not he found his chief metier in another direction. But his love of this subject stayed with him throughout his lifetime. Captain Cook's Voyages was a volume that had a tremendous effect upon his imagination. Carey joined the Baptists and for some years was a local preacher. At nineteen, the question came up concerning his ordination to the ministry. He took charge of a congregation at Barton and afterwards at Moulton, his stipend at the latter place being £17 per year. Subsequently he officiated at a Baptist church in Leicester. At no time did he receive a stipend sufficient to release him from the cobbler's stall. For some years he did duty as shoemaker, schoolmaster and preacher combined. Twenty dollars a week, even ten dollars, would have seemed to William Carey a liberal emolument. Says Mr. Morris: "Every fortnight Carey might be seen walking ten miles into Northampton with his wallet full of shoes and then returning home with a fresh supply of leather."

Tradition has it that he affixed to the wall of his cobbler's shop a self-made map of the world. The spaces of heathendom were black-blocked. Carey never ceased to urge upon his ministerial brethren the claims of missionary enterprise. His great opportunity came when at Nottingham, in 1792, the Baptist Association met in May, with Carey as select preacher. He took for his text, "Enlarge the place of thy tent and stretch forth thy habitations." Then it was he gave the motto which has ever since been a signal for Christian missions: "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." The subscription raised at that meeting was slightly in excess of sixty-five dollars. The Baptist church at Birmingham raised \$280 in aid of the fund and some others followed suit with lesser amounts. Carey volunteered to embark for India, but Mrs. Carey refused to undertake the voyage. The East India Company placed a ban upon any other vessels save their own and passengers were obliged to get licences from the India House ere they could embark. The passage money was put up to £600. Obtaining of a licence seemed hopeless, but in June, 1793, Carey with his whole family was on his way to London; he had overcome their scruples. The party embarked in the *Cron Princessa Maria* and landed at Calcutta in November of that year.

Affairs all went wrong. Funds gave out. Provisions were exhausted. The whole party would have starved had it not been for the generosity of some Hindu pundits who offered them shelter. Later on, a Mr. Undy offered Carey the management of an indigo factory. He gladly took the position, which placed him upon "easy street." He gave notice to the Mission Society that he could support himself and family and that all subscriptions they might send would go solely towards the mission work itself. He translated the New Testament into Bengalese. At Serampore he established a church, a school, and bought the materials for and set up a printing press for the publication of the Scriptures and philological works. These included grammars and dictionaries in the Mahratta, Sanscrit, Punjabi, Telinga, Bengalese and Bhotanta dialects. Twenty-four different translations of the Scriptures were all edited by Dr. Carey, who kept at work as ardently as ever to the very last, and in some of his latest letters to England requested his friends to send him a supply of implements, scythes, sickles, ploughs, flower seeds, garden plants, etc., that he might carry something of English horticulture into the land of his adoption. "My own country," Carey called India in his affectionate manner. And no man ever did more to strengthen the ties of friendship between the Hindu peoples and the British Empire than the humble Kettering cobbler whose career and character shine out to this day, and for all future generations, a mark of heroic and gentlemanly service and a signal of inextinguishable light.