

A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY

We often hear of the self-sacrifice and hardships of a missionary life, and people in Europe, who are approached for funds for the support of missions in Ceylon, hear of them still more (states an exchange). But how much of real renunciation is there in the name? The other day, there died in Jaffna a priest of the name of Jacques Batayron, at the ripe age of eighty. He was a distinguished man of letters, for after his ordination, he had been for thirteen years Classical Professor at an important college in Lyons, the second city of France. But a time came when he felt a vocation for a more perfect life, and he joined the Order of the Oblates, coming out to Ceylon in 1875. For forty-two years he spent himself and his singularly eminent talents obscurely but beneficently, in little known villages in the north, amidst the most destitute surroundings. He lived the life of the humble souls about him, eating their food—let us realise what that meant for a highly accomplished and cultured Frenchman,—sharing their privations, busy with their cares and labors, grieved by their sorrows and happy in their happiness. And during these forty-two years, he never had a holiday in his own native land, never knew what rest and refreshment meant, never needed holiday resorts to recoup a frame broken by arid toil and the burning sun of the northern province. By his vow, he was never master of a quarter rupee, he gathered no property, disposed of no personal belongings. Vowed to a life of poverty, his was a destitute life in very deed. He had none of the comforts of family

life, no home, no one to share his anxieties, to lighten his burdens, to breathe sympathy in his disappointments,—none save his religious superiors. In thus tracing the bare outline of his career, we are describing a life that is by no means singular. We have missionaries in Ceylon who have been in the island more than forty-two years, with never a break, never a visit to their native land, never a coin of their own, never the prospect of rest for the weary body and mind, never the slenderest hope of earthly comfort. It is a life of incredible self-abnegation, sustained only by the faith which lights the heart within. Such men call themselves missionaries. It is well for us to remember that they earn the name, and give it a meaning.

When men do anything for God, the very least thing, they never know where it will end, nor what moment of work it will do for Him (says Father Faber). Love's secret, therefore, is to be always doing things for God and not to mind because they are very little ones.

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