

"The Bishop held his Visitation, which was attended by all the colonial chaplains and Church missionaries in the island, the latter of whom were assembled at Cotta for their annual meeting..... I think there are few sights more impressive than that of a bishop addressing his clergy from the altar; and on this occasion it was rendered peculiarly interesting by there being two regularly ordained native priests among the number, Mr. de Sarum and Christian David, both Colonial Chaplains."

The catholicity of Bishop Heber has been proved by his biographer to great advantage long before the time of his arrival in Ceylon. Yet apparently nowhere is it expressed more forcibly than in the written answer he gave to the address read him at Cotta asking his advice on the propriety of engaging with missionaries of other Reformed Churches of Europe and America in solemn conference. Such conferences were at the time being regularly held at Jaffna and Cotta.

"I have to express my thankfulness to God" said the Bishop, "for the brotherly and tolerant spirit which I have noticed among those who, with greater or lesser differences of opinion and discrepancies of doctrine ..yet hold, as I am persuaded, the same faith in the Cross....and the same Rock of Salvation." Referring to the conferences, he added, "I am happy that I do not think it necessary to advise their cessation....."

These ideals of character, backed by energy and a high intellect, picture the man who produced the missionary hymn which has given rise to so much discussion and change.—Writing to the Archdeacon on the 27th of September 1825, the Bishop says: "I have passed a very interesting month in Ceylon, but never in my life, to the best of my recollection so laborious a one." He even travelled up to Kandy and it must be counted interesting to know that he held a confirmation service in the church—which at that time was held in the audience-hall of the late Kandyan Kings.* His wife writes in this connection, under the place and date: "Kandy, Sunday 18th September."

"His Lordship delivered an address, much altered from the one I had heard from him before, and excellently adapted to local circumstances. The power of seizing on such topics of interest is one among the many beauties of his rich and powerful mind. After we returned home, before breakfast, I was mentioning to him how forcibly it had struck me, during the service, that in that hall, where a few years ago the most savage tyrant received his miserable subjects—and even the English embassy was compelled to be almost prostrate before him—a Christian bishop was now administering the solemn ordinances of our religion. He leaned his head on his hand and burst into tears. How wonderful is the providence of God in the economy of His Church! *Never was any people entrusted with such power of doing good as England now is, nor is it possible in the nature of things that this power can long endure*; her dominion, like that of other nations that have preceded her, must pass away. What a fearful responsibility on the government and its ministers, on the nation and all its children,

and (above all) on our Church and its rulers! Such was our conversation in the palace of the Emperor of Kandy on this memorable morning."

The reader who has let his eyes drift across these pages will have caught many glimpses contemporary and topical which might very well be associated with the words in the hymn. In a letter to his mother we find a characteristic entry by the Bishop of the "pleasing prospect" unfolded on his visit.

"... All which we have seen is extremely beautiful, with great variety of mountain, rock and valley, covered from the hill-tops down to the sea with unchanging verdure, and, though so much nearer the Line, enjoying a cooler and more agreeable temperature than either Bombay or Calcutta. Here I have been more than ever reminded of the prints and descriptions in Cook's Voyages. The whole coast of the island is marked by the same features, a high white surf dashing against coral rocks, which, by the way, though they sound very romantically, differ little in appearance from sandstone; a thick grove of coco-trees, plantains, and bread-fruit thrusting their roots into the very shingles of the beach, and hanging their boughs over the spray; low thatched cottages scattered among the trees, and narrow canoes, each cut out of the trunk of a single tree, with an outrigger to keep it steady, and a sail exactly like that used in Otaheite."

Whatever it be which inspired the poet to write the verse since expurgated, in the manner he did; it was not impressions gathered on his visit to Ceylon although they well might. In an early paragraph of this article it was mentioned that the hymn in question was written in 1819, six years before the author placed foot on these shores.

Few writings can be classified as more thoroughly "period". The words have mellowed in changing times, and mellowing suits them.

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(Corrections.)

1. On page 94, Section I, delete item 1, and alter items 2 and 3 to read 1 and 2 respectively.
2. On page 95, Section VI, line 2, substitute "August 1918" for "November 1916."
3. On page 96, Section X, line 4, substitute "Pearline" for "Caroline."

D. V. A.