

The Serampore Mission.

IN "The Life and Correspondence of John Foster," by J. E. Ryland, Letter 185, dated Stapleton, March 24th, 1836, written to Mr. Stokes, of Worcester, Foster is quite jubilant in anticipation of their visit to Mr. Easthope of the "Morning Chronicle." He had been informed, presumably by Mr. Easthope, "that he might be as quiet and retired as he pleased, and have country air"; but he writes:—"My object was not to be retired at all, and to take in as little as I could help of country air. What I should be after, would be in the thick of the town every day—in perfect contrast to the seclusion and rural scene and air at Stapleton. . . . The British Museum will be a very chief object with me." This is a fitting introduction to this letter in which he records some of his impressions of London.

His allusions to Serampore place on record some important facts, and indicate his great interest in the Baptist Foreign Missionary enterprise.

J. C. FOSTER.

Hampstead, June 17—'36.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Stokes says he shall easily find a conveyance for a line in acknowledgement of your friendly letter and the £1. for Serampore: I was truly gratified by both. Every thing from you, or that I now and then hear of you, comes associated with a train of most pleasing recollections of our fine social adventure—of a time which is rapidly retiring into the past. Fresh and vivid as the recollection is of scenes and incidents, and the pervading social interest, a portion

of time has since elapsed enough for several events of domestic importance in your family. I wish the addition to that family may be an augmentation, both for the present and eventually, of the happiness of my two kind and worthy friends at the head of it,—to both of whom I shall never cease to feel myself under a very great obligation. I shall be reminded of it every time I recall the many and diversified gratifications of the romantic adventure.

We have been here, (Mr. & Mrs. Stokes and I) about seven weeks, I think; indeed so long that for myself I am beginning to be quite ashamed;—indulged with luxurious hospitality;—commodiously conveyed into the city and back; and going about, for the forty days in succession, to all the variety of spectacles with which the great city abounds, especially at this season of the year. All this is vastly entertaining; it is however, the surface [underlined]; there is an interior world in a place like this, not accessible to the visitant;—those scenes where human nature is divested of its exterior shows, and is at work in the full activity of all its propensities, passions, vices, and conflicting interests. Much quiet, and much busy, goodness, no doubt there is, in the un-public [underlined] life of so vast a community; but it is frightful to imagine what an enormity of evil, of all manner of kinds, there must be within the circuit which encloses a million and a half of beings all infected with inherent depravity, and liable to an endless variety of grievance and misery.—What a stupendous change if ever the time do [underlined] come when through all its habitations it shall be the abode of the Christian virtues!

Within a very few days, now, we are absolutely to be off, slink back into our accustomed retreat, and wonder what we can [underlined] have been about here for so unconscionable a length of time.

Our excellent host, Mr. Easthope from his position

in the Morning Chronicle Office, and his ample and various political acquaintance, is able to give, respecting public men, and their private characters and practices, a great quantity of such information as does not circulate through the country; in the open channels of intelligence;—and a very preponderating portion of that information is a disclosure of the baseness of human nature,—especially in those sections of it to which we are sometimes taught (or at least once [underlined] were taught) to look up with respect—respect for high station, rank, office, &ct. An utter destitution of moral principle is what he charges on almost the whole herd of the finer sort of human creatures.

I am pleased with the token of your good wishes for Serampore. There can hardly be conceived a worthier cause for the assistance which you, or any Christian philanthropist, may have the ability and disposition to confer. They are working zealously and indefatigably on a constantly widening field, but with constantly straitened resources. They sustained great injury from the dreadful crash of the great banking houses, where they had a little reserve, and a little privilege for missionary means, and a little property of individuals (for instance of Dr. Carey's widow, and Dr. Marshman's grandchildren).

There seems reason to hope, from the slowly abating prejudice raised by malice and envy against them, and from the moderate success of Mr. Gibbs's continual exertions, that something approaching to a sufficiency of support will be obtained. Nothing is more remarkable in the contrast between them and the Society that made such eager exertions to destroy them, than how much more they do, in real quantity of operation, on the strength of any given quantity of money. [nineteen words underlined]. The inquiry is here and there starting—What does the Society do [underlined] with all those annual thousands—what is

it that the "religious public" has for its contributed money?

I greatly regret what appears to be a total and final frustration of our pleasing anticipation respecting Mr. Walters; for I have heard no hope any where expressed of such a recovery of his health as would capacitate him for public service. I was surprised, rather, at the information, in a letter from one of my girls, that he was lately in Bristol;—but for what purpose was not apparently known.

I trust you are destined to long-protracted health and usefulness, and your estimable companion to be a fellowhelper in the duties, cares, and best improvement of life. With friendly and grateful regards to her, and every good wish for the young people, I remain, my dear Sir,

very sincerely yours J. FOSTER.

[Endorsed] Revd. S. Blackmore, Kington. Favoured by Mr. Walter Hall.