

**A MISSIONARY  
LIFE:  
STEPHEN GRELLET**

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A Missionary Life: Stephen Grellet by Frances Anne Budge

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**FRANCES ANNE BUDGE**

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BY

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## PART I.

**" Keep but the model safe,  
New men shall rise to study it."**

## A MISSIONARY LIFE.

STEPHEN GRELLET.

"I saw the emptiness and arrogance of Cain's reply to the Almighty, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'"—STEPHEN GRELLET.

A Missionary ! Home or Foreign ? Both. The world was his parish, any part of it to which God bade him go.

In the summer of 1798, the city of Philadelphia wore a strange and solemn air. The streets so lately crowded were almost deserted. The awful plague of yellow fever raged. Many had fled for their lives, leaving their sick to the care of hired nurses. The bodies of the dead were carried to the grave with no convoy but that of hearse and driver. The Meetings of Friends were almost the only places of public worship kept unclosed. A member of that Society, a young Frenchman, who had been in Philadelphia for more than three years, whilst away on a religious mission, had heard of the panic there, and with his soul burdened on behalf of its inhabitants, resolved to return. Heedless of the entreaties of his friends, he might have seemed, for he could not tell them how sure had been his call thither.

One day when sitting alone, with his "mind retired before the Lord," he had been suddenly seized with violent pain, his mind meanwhile continuing perfectly calm in the presence of his God, whose word to him seemed to be:—"This is the manner in which those who are seized with the yellow fever are affected. Thou must return to the city, and attend on the sick, and thus also shall the disease take hold of thee." "My spirit," Stephen Grellet says, "bowed in prostration before the Lord, and said, 'Thy will be done.' Then I felt again free from pain."

Arrived in Philadelphia, he went to the house which he had made his home, but finding it shut up he had to obtain the key before he could take up his lonely quarters there. Pressing invitations from his friends were refused, because of his conviction that the fever would attack himself. He now spent his time in visiting the dying, and in helping to bury the dead. Some sufferers joyfully departed to be with Christ, others threw their arms around him, as if to keep hold of life, crying out, "I cannot die; I am not fit to die."

One night as he lay down in his solitary home, his "spirit being gathered in the Lord's presence," he was seized with pain as when in New Jersey, and to his heart came the words, "This is what I told thee thou must prepare for." Meanwhile his soul was so swallowed up in the love of God that he was perfectly contented with His will. Ere it became impossible he unlocked the house door, and in the morning a friend who had shared his labours came, and soon



fetched doctor and nurse. So low did the fever bring him that a coffin was ordered, and in the daily list of deaths "A French Quaker" was set down.

He writes, "Whilst I had turned myself on my side to breathe my last, my spirit feeling already as encircled by the angelic host in the heavenly presence, a secret but powerful language was proclaimed in this wise: 'Thou shalt not die, but live; thy work is not yet done.' Then the corners of the earth, overseas and lands, were opened to me where I should have to labour in the service of the Gospel of Christ. O what amazement I was filled with! . . . sorrow took hold of me at the words, for it seemed as if I had already a foothold in the heavenly places. I wept sore, but as it was the Divine will I bowed in reverence before Him. . . . I saw and felt what cannot be written."

Not long afterwards at a meeting for worship, at which Stephen Grellet was present, a minister mentioned him by name, and said that the Lord had raised him up to be His messenger to the isles and nations afar off, to the east and west, the north and south. This confirmed to Stephen Grellet the word of the Lord hidden in his heart.

Etienne de Grellet du Mabellier (Stephen Grellet) was born in France, in the city of Limoges, on November 2nd, 1773. His father, Gabriel de Grellet, ranked high amongst the nobility of that district, and resided during little Etienne's childhood on the patrimonial estate of Du Mabellier. He was a Roman Catholic, and the early education of his children was conducted by tutors who lived in the house.

One day, when Etienne was about five or six years old, a long Latin lesson was inconsiderately set him, which seemed quite beyond his powers. Perhaps almost despairing of learning it, and with childhood's overwhelming sense of helplessness when in solitary trouble, as his eye rested on the beauties of the landscape beneath the window of his chamber, he remembered Who was the Creator of them all. Then came the thought, "Cannot the same God give the memory also?" Kneeling at the foot of his bed he put up an earnest prayer, which received an immediate answer, and from that hour he was able to learn more easily.

Although he had received but little religious teaching, he could say the Lord's Prayer. "O, how was my heart contrited," he exclaims, "whilst uttering the words, 'Our Father Who art in heaven!'" Even in old age he looked back with grateful emotion on hallowed and happy hours, when he sought out quiet places in his home, where on his knees, with falling tears, he poured out his childish heart in prayer. But there was no heaven-guided, earthly hand outstretched to help the little pilgrim to tread the upward way. "I had none to instruct me, none to whom I thought of unfolding my heart; and soon these holy thoughts and feelings passed away." Yet when at an early age he received confirmation according to the rites of the Romish Church, his sorrow was great at finding that he had still an unchanged heart and strong propensities to evil. "I learned," he says, "that neither priests nor bishops could do the work for me."

Later, when at the college of the Oratorians at Lyons,

in the midst of his vigorous application to study, he was again "favoured with the Lord's gracious visitation" to his soul. A "*religious opening*" he had at this time deeply fixed itself in his mind, and helped to bear up his spirit in many future trials. "I thought I saw a large company of persons, or rather purified spirits, on one of those floating vessels which they have at Lyons, on the Rhone, occupied by washerwomen. They were washing linen. I wondered to see what beating and pounding there was upon it, but how beautifully white it came out of their hands. I was told I could not enter God's kingdom until I underwent such an operation,—that unless I was thus washed and made white I could have no part in the dear Son of God. For weeks I was absorbed in the consideration of the subject, the washing of regeneration. I had never heard of such things before, and I greatly wondered, that having been baptized with water, and having also received what they call the sacrament of confirmation, I should have to pass through such a purification. For I had never read or heard anyone speak of such a baptism." He left college with a sense of nearness to the Lord, but yielding himself to frivolous pleasures, his religious convictions were soon lost. Neither did he find the happiness he sought.

When the storm of the great Revolution burst over the land, Etienne, then about the age of eighteen, with some of his brothers, joined the Royalist Army, and many narrow escapes were encountered in Germany. He writes, "I shudder when I remember the state of insensibility I was in. I was not the least moved