

The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

That Land.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

There is a land where beauty will not fade,
Nor sorrow dim the eye;
Where true hearts will not shrink nor be dismayed,
And love will never die.
Tell me—I fain would go,
For I am burdened with a heavy woe;
The beautiful have left me all alone;
The true, the tender from my path have gone;
And I am weak and fainting with despair;
Where is it? Tell me, where?

Friend thou must trust in Him who trod before
The desolate paths of life;
Must bear in meekness, as he meekly bore,
Sorrow, and toil, and strife.
Think how the son of God
These thorny paths hath trod;
Think how he longed to go.
Yet tarried out for thee th' appointed woe;
Think of his loneliness in places dim,
When no man comforted nor cared for him;
Think how he prayed, unaided and alone,
In that dread agony, "Thy will be done;"
Friend, do not thou despair,
Christ, in his heaven of heavens, will hear thy prayer.

Strive, Wait, and Pray.

STRIVE; yet I do not promise
The prize you dream of to-day,
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,
And melt in your hand away;
But another and holier treasure,
You would now perchance disdain,
Will come when your toil is over,
And pay you for all your pain.

Wait; yet I do not tell you
The hour you long for now,
Will not come with its radiance vanished
And a shadow upon its brow;
Yet far through the misty future,
With a crown of starry light,
An hour of joy you know not
Is winging her silent flight.

Pray; though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears;
An answer, not that you long for,
But diviner, will come one day;
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive, and wait, and pray.

Missionary.

For the Christian Messenger.

History of the Baptist Mission in Rangoon.

It is somewhat difficult for those who live in this civilized, this Christian land to form a correct idea of the duties or discouragements of the Missionary. We view the scene of his labours from a great distance and a thousand circumstances contribute to paint those scenes with glowing colours.

We place the missionary in a land "where every prospect pleases." Our imagination pictures him seated beneath the refreshing shade of some huge teak or banyan tree, surrounded by the native heathen, sick of their false religion, and anxious to know of a better, now his eyes are raised with gratitude to heaven, as he hears from the lips of the once superstitious idolator, the prayer offered in the name of the crucified Saviour, and now we see him with solemn joy, leading one after another of these children of ignorance and sin, down into the baptismal stream. We think of these converts, as ever after a source of comfort, a reward for all his toils. But our imagination selects only the bright and beautiful, and presents to us a delightful, but on the

whole a false view of the labours to be performed in this field. We think not of the labourer toiling under a burning sun, exposed to the various annoyances, which despotism knows so well how to invent. We think not of pagans, devotedly attached to their own superstitions, nor of the opposition which the carnal heart makes to a holy religion. We think not of inquirers whose apparent earnestness gives promise of brighter things to come, but who soon prove it was but the gratification of an idle curiosity they sought. We think not of the "almost christians" driven back to superstition by the threats of the tyrannical priests and governors. Nor do we think of the anguish which must wring the heart of the faithful servant of Christ, as he sees the hopeful, zealous, disciple, losing his first love, conforming to the idolatrous customs of his fellow-countrymen, and finally apostatizing. These are the dark shades in the scene. The imagination does not love to dwell on them, yet these must be taken into consideration before we can form a correct idea of the situation of the missionary, especially in viewing the Burman mission. Unless we do so, we can form no estimate of the labour which has been performed, or the success which has attended that labour.

As we view the mission field, we will notice not only the bright side of the picture, but its shadows. Thus will we obtain correct views. Thus will the various objects presented to our notice, be not only more in accordance with truth and nature, but they will also be more beautiful. The devotion of the missionary will be seen more distinctly, it will fill the mind with higher sentiments of admiration when it stands in contrast with the discouragements under which he constantly labours. His success will be measured not alone by the number of those in whose conversion he has been instrumental, but also by the opposition his labour has received from those "who love darkness rather than light," by the measure of ignorance, superstition, and vice, from which the converts have been delivered.

That we may obtain some such view as this, we will direct our attention to the first missionary station established in Burmah, a station which has been made classic in missionary history, by the courage, the piety, the labours, the trials, and the comparative success of those who sought it as a field of labour.

We will endeavour to call up this scene, so full of sacred associations, we will contemplate the character of its inhabitants, and their views of religion.

We will suppose that we have left far behind us a northern sky, and a christian land. We have inhaled the breezes which blow laden with perfume from the spicy groves of Ceylon. We approach the shores of Burmah. We enter the broad but shallow stream which forms one, of the many mouths of the Irrawaddy. After ascending a few miles we find before us a new and strange scene.

We are in a climate far different from our own. The sun seems arrayed in more dazzling splendour. The sky above us is of a deeper clearer blue, while not a cloud is seen to interpose between us, and the excessive light and heat. Before us is a vast plain scarcely raised above the level of the river, while in the distance we notice hills rising one above another, not with the outlines merging in the sky, but owing to the purity of the atmosphere here, clearly and sharply defined. Vegetation presents new shapes and forms. It puts forth more vigour, exhibiting pines darker and richer than any which we have seen in our own land. Here the tall bamboo waves, and the fields of rice appear. Here are trees

on which you see displayed fruits, which fill the eye and palate with desire, and there huge giants of the forest, whose enormous boughs, covered with rich dark green, promise a refreshing shelter from the burning sun.

We are in a foreign land, but the eye in wandering over the works of nature, has left unobserved the works and the homes of man. Immediately before us is a town. The houses seem like low huts built of cane, and covered with thatch. They all present a very mean appearance. But in their midst and around we notice edifices, the like of which our eyes have never seen before, presenting a striking contrast with the huts of cane and thatch. They rise before us lofty, massive structures of strange and tasteless forms. They cannot be fortresses nor palaces. The mouldering form of some proclaim that they have witnessed the lapse of ages, while others bright with gold, gleaming in the sun-light tell that the artizan who laid on the gilding, may yet be among the living. However this may be, they form striking features in the scene before us.

We will land from our vessel and view more closely this town which contains such a strange mixture of barbaric greatness and barbaric meanness.

We find the town to be thickly peopled. Its inhabitants are in stature smaller than the average of our own countrymen. Their complexion is the same as that of our Indians. Their features, the long eye, the broad flat nose and the thick lips show that they are a different race from ourselves. The women seem to be on a perfect equality with the men, more so than we had thought was permitted in any land not Christian. We watch them in their dealings with each other. This view, superficial as it may be, enables us to decide, that these people are in some measure civilized, that they are shrewd and intelligent.

As we pass along the street we see some poor wretch in the stocks, with his head downwards, and find that he was placed here to satisfy the malice of some enemy, who could by his superior wealth purchase this infliction, to satisfy his revenge, from the governor of the place. We now learn that we are no longer in a land of liberty. We are where despotism reigns, and where justice is bartered for gold.

The language which these people speak is altogether different from anything that we have heard before. They seem to sing while they speak, and in conversation their speech constantly varies, not only in sound, but in the pitch of voice, from which we perceive how very difficult the language must be for a foreigner to acquire.

We continue our walk, with our curiosity still ungratified concerning those huge structures which attracted our attention at first, and every where meet the eye. Some are but heaps covered with grass, having long gone to ruin. Some are rapidly advancing to decay, while no steps are taken to preserve them. Some are glittering with gold, showing the most lavish expense. We find they are solid masses of brick; but for what object were they reared? A short distance out of the town we observe one of them situated on a hill which has been terraced, and walled, until it looks like a part of the edifice. We ascend this hill by steps until we come to the summit, which is a plain, including about two acres.

We look at the scene before us, and are astonished at the waste of wealth, the strange deformed taste exhibited. A large portion of this space is taken up with light and graceful structures, which seem designed for the accommodation of visitors. We observe deformities in the shape of huge lions. Here is a long range of statutes of

clay or marble, of every size, some bright with gilding, some old and broken. Rising above all these to a vast height is a solid edifice, similar to those which we have noticed before, but much larger, much more splendid. From every portion of this structure, small bells are suspended, some of brass, some of silver, which moved by the breeze, make a constant sound, mournful yet pleasant. A number of persons are present, some bowing before one of the images, and repeating a form of words, telling their beads as they proceed. Some are placing papers of rice, or other grain, in one of the large jars which are here for the purpose. Some are sweeping off the dust from the open area.

What can all this mean? The explanation is at once suggested. These people are worshippers. These images are their gods. Their religion must be very old as these ruins testify. These people must be fond of their religion, else men evidently so poor would not have erected at so vast an expense so many of these structures. This must be a very miserable religion which demands of its votaries such meaningless sacrifices.

Had we viewed such a scene as that which we have presented, the conclusion to which we have arrived would be true.

This town is Rangoon, the chief port in Burmah. These people are one of the most intelligent in Asia. These buildings to which we have directed your attention are pagodas, offerings made to their god, Gaudama. Their religion is very ancient, very absurd, very expensive, yet very much loved by its devotees.

We have endeavoured to represent this country as it was when Judson first visited it in 1813, to teach these ignorant people of an eternal God, a pure morality, a state of happiness beyond the grave, and the way of obtaining that eternal happiness. The work before him was no easy one. He was to excite in the minds of these Burmans some interest in another religion. He was to persuade them to surrender the religion of their fathers, a religion very ancient, and much loved, and to embrace the Christian religion. He was to teach a people who had no idea of the word holiness, what that word meant. He was to teach those who could not conceive of an eternal being, that the true God was living and eternal, those who had no idea of a happy existence beyond the grave, that there were mansions on high in which the lovers of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ dwell forever, free from sorrow and sin, enjoying the bliss of the love and knowledge of the Father of Spirits. Nor was this all. The Burman character presents peculiar obstacles to the efforts of the missionary. Their religion for ages had fostered that pride which it is the aim of Christianity to destroy. The comparative superiority of Buddhism over the other superstitions of Asia, had contributed to this. It taught them that in a previous state of existence they must have been of a very high order of creatures, else they would now have been numbered with the brutes. This excited pride. Their religion taught them that offerings to Gaudama, attention to the priests, kindness even to friends, were so much merit which went to purchase forgiveness of sin. This theology also tended to excite pride. Nor had it been at all diminished by some late events in their history. Providence had raised up some men of great courage and ability. The boundaries of the Empire had extended beyond their ancient limits, to Mimpore, Yunnan, Assam, Arracan and the Tenasserim.

Again, in the Burmese the intellectual element exceeds the emotional. They love