

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Burmah.

Henthada, Sept. 4, 1860.

My dear Messenger,

The present, as compared with earlier periods in the history of Missions shows signs, I think, of a true appreciation of the real object of Missions to the Heathen, and more Christian feeling in the prosecution of the great enterprise. There can be no doubt that, at one time, the column devoted to missionary intelligence in various periodicals was scarcely regarded as readable unless the accounts contained a good sprinkling of "exciting scenes," "affecting incidents," &c. &c. Paul tells us that his great cause of rejoicing was that "Christ is preached." But many, at the present day even do not seem quite to agree with Paul in this matter. Unless "large accessions" are reported, the fact that Christ has been preached over wide districts, where his name was before unknown, and the wondrous story of the Cross told to multitudes for the first time, affords them but small satisfaction. These remarks are prefatory to an account I am about to give of a month's preaching tour among my villages—and have been suggested by the fear that there may be some such readers among your subscribers. As I review this month's labors I find the general effect upon my own mind to be a firmer resolve than ever before to spend and be spent for the Burmese. And yet none have been gathered in. What then? Christ has been preached! I have been enabled with a fullness and efficiency I never knew before, to show to crowds of hearers, patient attentive hearers the deceitfulness and desperate weakness of their own hearts—that they stood before God "blind and naked and miserable," without excuse; and must come to that Saviour who gave himself for them. But let me enter somewhat more into detail respecting my work during the past month. I left home on the 6th ult. The river and creeks being swollen to an unusual extent, large tracts of country were under water, and hence I was enabled to visit with my boat almost any village within a circuit of perhaps 50 miles. Passing over the same route, I had taken in the dry season on my way to the Association (mentioned in a former letter)—but now covered with water to the depth of from 5 to 20 feet, the first place I stopped at was the large village of San-u-ay. It was almost submerged. The water had risen above the eaves of the houses, and in most cases the people had retreated to a sort of cock-loft they had rigged up within 4 or 5 feet of the roof. In such squirrel-nest sort of places they ate, cooked, and slept! Emerging, when requiring a change, from a hole in the wall and paddling off in their little boat to fish or chat with their neighbours, &c. This state of things would probably strike a Nova Scotia missionary as not very favorable to preaching! Here, on the contrary, however, it is very much so, where there must necessarily be so much ennui. The arrival of a "white teacher" is hailed as a very pleasant novelty. Passing from house to house in my boat several days were spent in preaching, and giving tracts to such as seemed sincerely anxious to read them. Passing by without mention many other villages similarly situated, and in which the same mode of operation was pursued—my reception at Ma-ha-boung demands some notice. Here nearly three days were spent. At first, with the exception of a few persons with whom I had previously become acquainted elsewhere, there seemed no inclination to listen. Oppressed by the deadness of the people, on Sunday evening after dinner I walked through the village in hopes of gaining a congregation. On passing a large house on whose verandah a number of middle-aged men were sitting, I overheard them exchanging sneering remarks about the "white books, and the Eternal God." The whole bearing of these men was forbidding, and yet I felt compelled to walk up to the house and address them. With a rudeness, not often met with among Burmans, they did not even ask me to sit down—but let me stand in the road and talk. Thus I stood talking and answering every imaginary kind of questions, until a crowd having gathered, and night closing in, they at last asked me to sit down and continue to tell them of this new religion. I found a most refreshing seat on an old cart wheel and taking a long breath renewed my discourse. The house was now quite full of listeners, and a crowd for whom there was no room in the house stood outside and listened, hurling at me every now and then, a hard question just to make me feel that I was not

preaching to a congregation in America. Hour after hour passed away and still no one seemed inclined to leave. Having said all that was necessary, besides answering a host of questions that were very unnecessary, and my voice beginning to manifest very evident signs of retiring for the night, I told the people I would kneel down and worship God, and I hoped they would keep quite still and attentive. They seemed quite pleased with the opportunity of witnessing an act of worship to a God whom they could not see! And while I sought the Divine blessing upon the word spoken, the utmost attention, the deepest silence, was observed. I then sang the doxology and went back to my boat, thankful in my heart that so good an opportunity had been afforded me for declaring my message. And thus, in every place, sooner or later, I succeeded in securing large numbers of hearers—and many of them asked and received books. At one small village I found a man who had, for some time, been intellectually convinced that Buddhism was a myth, and Christianity alone true. He had carefully read several tracts received from one of the native preachers, and wished me to supply him with such as he had not yet seen. I showed him the fearful peril in which he placed his soul by pretending, from the fear of man, to conform to the practices of Buddhism, which he felt to be foolish, and knew to be false. I have hopes that he may yet be led to Christ, though he still has the fear of man more than the fear of God before his eyes.

Shuay loung is a pretty large town situated on a small branch of the Irrawadi. My last visit here, was several years ago when I was a wretched stammerer in the language. Hence it was a great pleasure to be able now to make known to them more thoroughly the way of life. Found several here who have read our books, and have acquired a pretty intelligent idea of what is required of them in order to become Christians. *Taing-daw*, the Assistant supported by the St. John Brussels St. Juv. Mis. Society—is stationed here. He is still a young man about 35 years of age, and in every respect an excellent assistant. Would that we had scores of such! This is one of our most important stations. I spent three days here in constant intercourse with the learned men of the place. The man mentioned in letter published June 6th, 1860, *Ka-long-byan-saya*, has so far as mere intellectual belief is concerned, shaken himself completely free from the degrading man-worship of Buddhism. But his eyes have yet to be opened to see the hatefulness of sin and his own lost condition on account of it. The fear of man which bringeth a snare keeps him from a fearless profession before others of his belief in the living God and his need of salvation. Hence while there are others in the same town much his inferiors in mind and knowledge of whom we have much hope, it is to be feared that *Ka-long-byan-saya* will be left to perish in his pride of intellect and fear of man. I have much more to write—of many other places visited, but short pieces secure more readers.

Faithfully yours,

ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

For the Christian Messenger.

What shall I do with them?

Reader, I wonder if you was ever in such a dilemma as I find myself in just now? Here I am in the midst of a great pile of old letters, which in the morning I emptied from a great bag, and here they are on the floor mixed up in most glorious confusion, presenting the appearance of a "dead letter office" on a small scale. Now then, I must act in the double capacity of "Post Master General," and head clerk with no "Assistant." Since the morning, I have been busily engaged in looking them over, with a view to the utter destruction of the most of them in the flames. But as one after the other is opened, I cannot help giving each a hasty perusal, and as my eye rests upon the signatures at the bottom of each letter, something whispers to my mind, "Please don't destroy this letter!" and then I lay it on one side with the thought, "Well, I will keep this one!" until after spending the whole day in this kind of work, the pile is nearly as large as when I commenced in the early morning. Now then, What shall I do with them?

I have moved them about from time to time, and from place to place, and very often during these passing years, they have been greatly in my way. I have wished again and again they were destroyed, and several times have been upon the point of making a bonfire of them,—but before doing this, have felt almost irresistibly inclined to open a few of them once more ere I should part with them forever—and thus

beginning, I could not seem to have strength to leave the reading, until many, very many of them were re-read, the result of which would lead me to think, "Well, I'll not destroy them to-day, but as I get leisure I will look them all carefully over again, and those possessing value I will keep, while the balance shall go into the flames." And so it has been, how many times I cannot tell, until to day I am just as undecided as ever, and ere they are put into the fire, I wish to read them once more.

Some of them are considerably more than a quarter of a century old. Many of them were indited by minds that have passed on to the other and higher life, and were written by fingers which long since have turned into dust. O how can I burn these letters? They are the silent though expressive momentoes of the past, and they call up before my mind the scenes of other days as though they were only as yesterday. True, the paper on which these letters are written looks yellow and faded, but the pictures which they paint are so full of apparent freshness and life, that while looking upon them, I seem to become young again, and to forget that the grey hairs are fast multiplying upon my face and head.

Indeed, these old letters almost seem to breathe and to possess the wondrous power of rendering themselves vocal to my ears, and they all but speak these beseeching words, "O do not destroy us yet."

Again I ask, "What am I to do with them?" Well, really, I cannot consent to burn them to-day. I must therefore again do them up in packages,—tie them up again in the same old bag, and wait for "a convenient season." I know that I have said these same words scores of times before, and hence they are not yet burnt. But after a little longer waiting I may get more courage, and then I'll do the deed. I would like to keep them, but they are so much in my way. And beside, my wife sometimes complains, and asks, "Husband, what in the world do you keep those old letters for? They are useless, and in house-cleaning time they are much in my way."

And then the self-same answer has been given the good woman for at least the past fifteen years.

"Why wife, I am only waiting for time, and then I'll do it." But some how, I never get the necessary time.

"Oh! she replies, 'the same old answer yet. Can't get time.' Why you might do it in twenty minutes, or even less. Let me ask one of the boys to do it, then your own time will not be taxed for the work."

"No, no, wife, I wish to look them over again, before this is done."

"Yes, yes, my husband, and if you do this before they shed their light by fire, then they'll never be destroyed in your day."

Perhaps not! but still I must insist before they are burnt, that I must read them over once more. "Here son, hold the bag while I put the letters back again. It is now too late to get through with the examination this evening, and hence I'll wait to finish some other time."

Ah! it is hard to destroy those old letters. Does the reader understand WHY?

For the Christian Messenger.

From Windsor, N. S. to Port Hood, C. B.

LETTER FROM REV. DAVID FREEMAN.

Dear Editor,—I arrived at this place last evening (Friday), and was glad to receive a truly welcome reception from Bro. Tremain and his family. The road from Truro hither may be thus described:—A huge rasp one hundred and fifty miles long and a rod and a half wide. Truly with such footing "the legs of a horse" would not be much security from danger. And yet some good may result from such travelling. It will demand a new immigration of wheelwrights to repair damages, and thus promote manufactures. It may also be a spiritual benefit by trying the patience of travellers, and thus making this virtue a perfect work. The snow, however, is setting in, and I expect from this stage of my journey that the sleighing apparatus brought with me, will come into requisition.

Some agreeable episodes, however, have occurred on the way. The ride on the cars from Windsor to Truro, but for the five hours' delay at the Junction, was far from disagreeable. The traveller feels that he is making progress, when he can go twenty or thirty miles an hour, and effect a saving of money, time and strength; and the change was by no means delightful on leaving the pleasant motion of the "winged horse" to climb the bleak mountains and hobble over the frozen mud.

The distance from Truro to Pictou is forty miles. Midway stands Mount Thom, the highest land in the province, settled to the top, and covered with a mantle of snow while the country around is bare. It was interesting to trace one stream to its source in a little alder swamp and then discover the origin of another stream near by which flows in an opposite direction. It led one to think of the irrepressible curiosity of those who encountered dangers and death to find the source of the Nile and of other mighty rivers, and of that ancient philosopher who leaped from his bath on discovering the solution of a difficult problem, and cried out "eureka"—I have found it. We like to trace the origin of things. But even in so simple a matter as the source of a small rivulet there is a limit to human knowledge. So in the deep things of God if we can trace His works to their author we need not wonder if we can penetrate no further.

Midway between Merrigomish and Antigonish occurs another range of mountains covered with perpetual snow in winter. Here the streams are larger. The Post road passes along the bank of the streams through a deep gorge, with steep walls on each side three or four hundred feet high covered with a noble hardwood forest.

About forty four miles from Truro, on the East River, and not far below the Albion coal mines, I arrived at the town of New Glasgow. Here temperance seems to be in the ascendant. On enquiring for a hotel I was told, Yonder is a hotel but it is a dry one. What do you mean by "a dry hotel?" O they have nothing to drink. No water? Yes, plenty of water; but no strong drink. A horse requires nothing stronger than water, and a man should not be worse than a horse. A temperance hotel is it? That is just the place for me. Thank you. I was afterwards informed by W. Lippincott, Esq., a good friend of temperance, that very little intoxicating drink is sold in the place except privately. In the county of Pictou the cause seems to be rapidly gaining ground. Although I saw a few of "the sons of Buechus flow with insolence and wine" or something baser than wine, yet it is to be hoped that the further progress of temperance principles will make such characters the subjects of history or of the Asylum for the Insane.

At Merrigomish I turned from the direct road to visit brethren Lowden and Meldrum. About ninety miles from Truro by the route taken is situated the town of Antigonish. Here we had preaching on Sunday, and an educational lecture on the next evening. One hundred and twenty four dollars were added to the Manning Fund, mostly notes of hand. Here is a nucleus for a flourishing church, and we should not miscalculate upon the strength of the instrumentality required to promote the cause of religion in this place. The Roman Catholics have a flourishing college, and when they complete their plans in the establishment of full monastic institutions for the purpose of educating the population, it will require no mean effort to stem the tide. It would be well if some devoted man could establish a good high school to counteract the immense influence that will soon be brought to bear against the cause of the gospel. "The brethren here are under weighty responsibilities." May they have grace to fulfill them. Instrumentally they are set for the defence of the truth. Never were Christians placed in a more favorable position for good if they are faithful, or for evil, if they shrink from their duties, or fail in their professions of piety.

Thirty-five miles from Antigonish is the Strait of Canso. Midway is Tracadie. The Baptist church is situated along the banks of the river for six or eight miles from the shore. They are colored people. I had special reasons for wishing to spend the night among them. They have their new meeting house boarded and shingled. But they do not worship in it. Having taken the material of their old house to build the new, they now worship in private houses. Elder Richardson visited them in the autumn, and they look for him again this winter. Here is an interest which requires special care. From their peculiar excitability they nearly all unite with the church and many at a tender age. Hence the need of spiritual teaching "line upon line," to keep them in the right way. I stopped at the ministers' home the house of Mrs. John Bowden and was kindly entertained. She employs a teacher to instruct her family and in the evening all were busy at their reading, writing and cyphering. Although there would be a provincial allowance from the treasury, they have no school in the settlement. Will not some devoted and pious young woman go to that place and teach them and labor withal to lead them to "the Saviour." I can think of no missionary aid that could be of greater ser-