

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVIII., No. 39.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, September 24, 1873.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVII., No. 39.

Poetry.

A SPIRITUAL SONG.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD, AFTER NOVALIS.

If I him but have,
If he be but mine,
If my heart hence to the grave,
Ne'er forgets his love divine—
Know I nought of sadness,
Feel I nought but worship, love, and gladness.

If I him but have,
Willing I depart;
Follow with my pilgrim staff—
Follow him with honest heart;
Leave them, nothing saying,
On broad, bright, and crowded highways straying.

If I him but have,
Glad asleep I sink;
Of his heart the gift he gave
Shall to mine be meat and drink;
Till, with sweet compelling,
All is leavened by its soft indwelling.

If I him but have,
Mine the world I hail;
Like a cherub, happy, grave,
Holding back the virgin's veil;
While the vision thralls me,
Earth no more with earthliness appals me.

Where I have but him
Is my fatherland;
Every gift to me doth come
As a heritage in hand;
Brothers long deplored
I in his disciples find restored.

Scribner's Monthly.

THE COMMON OFFERING.

BY HARRIET MCKENEN KIMBALL.

It is not the deed we do,
Though the deed be never so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with holy care
In the heart of the deed so fair.

The love is the priceless thing,
The treasure our treasure must hold,
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,
Or tell the worth of the gold
(By the love that cannot be told).

Behold us, the rich and the poor,
Dear Lord, in thy service drawn near,
One consecrateth a precious coin,
Ours droppeth only a tear:
Look, Master; the love is here!

AS WE MAKE IT.

We must not hope to be mowers,
And to gather the ripe, gold ears,
Until we have first been sowers,
And watered the furrows with tears.

It is not just as we take it—
This mystical world of ours;
Life's field will yield as we make it,
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.

Religious.

THE HAND IN THE DARK.

All men confess to a feeling of dependence, and would gladly grasp some guiding hand, when they come to those points in life where different ways meet. No man ever aimed to make a journey to a definite place beyond the line of immediate vision, that he did not seek or wish some one to guide him. When human assistance fails, help from beyond is sought, and if wisely sought, then well.

If a journey may be repeated, if a second effort may be allowed, to achieve some special work, the errors of the first may be avoided if they are noted. But life's journey is made but once. Its steps are never retraced. The purpose, the word, the act of each passing moment congeals into eternal fixedness. Tears, nor prayers, nor blood can wash out or change the lines we trace upon the map of life.

The way is all untried and new, the traveller without a guide cannot determine beforehand where the quicksands lie, nor where the tempting paths lead off. Left alone man wanders on through life like one lone and lost upon a continent, or like the ship upon the sea without chart, or compass, or guiding star.

To an intelligent existence bound by

such limitations and encompassed by such dangers, how infinitely sweet and welcome is the voice of God whispering to the soul, "I will guide thee by my counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory." Then comes back the language of dependent faith, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

The lamp of experience can light us through only such dangers and trials as have been already past. The wisdom of the world can only guide us along the line of its own limited observation, but He, who knows the end from the beginning, who can sympathise with our infirmities and watch us in our wanderings, whose "hand can hold us and whose right hand can lead us"—He alone is able to satisfy the deep-felt wants of our dependent being. What an infinite joy to have such an arm to lean upon, such a hand to guide us, extended, too, with the precious assurance written all over, that they who put their trust in Him shall neither be left nor forsaken—that neither "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword" shall separate them from His love. Though trembling in our weakness and stumbling in our blindness, we are "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Experience blunders and the wisdom of the world fails when we most need an unfailing guide, but God's promised presence never fails those who put their trust in Him.

Only he that is too much of earth to think of Heaven, too much dazzled by the perishable to think of the immortal, too circumscribed to recognise what lies unseen, can fail to confess the need of some friendly sympathising hand to extend the light of revelation from the darkness beyond, and heavenly grace to sustain men and guide them in life's pilgrimage to a better land.

HE IS ABLE.

God is able of these stones to raise up seed to Abraham.

Able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

What he has promised he is able to perform.

Able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.

I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, who is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Able to keep that which I have committed unto him.

Able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Able to succor them that are tempted.

Able to keep all whom the Father hath given him, so that he will lose not one.

Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Believe ye that he is able to do this?

To bring highest principle to the fulfilment of commonest duty, and by the influence of lofty motives to elevate every-day life by consecrating it to the noblest purposes, is the true function of practical Christianity.—Donald McLeod.

Although men are accused by not knowing their own weakness, yet perhaps as few know their strength. It is in men as in soils, where sometimes there is a vein of gold which the owner knows not of.—Swift.

An injury is frequently done to the cause of truth by the manner in which some men attempt to defend it.

Foreign Missions.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE KARENS.

As the Baptist churches of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are about to establish a mission for one portion of this interesting people, some information with regard to their history and characteristics may be acceptable.

1st. The Karens belong to the large family of so called *aboriginal tribes* which are found scattered among the stronger races of idolaters in all parts of Southern and Eastern Asia. The American aborigines have no aptitude for labor or christian civilization and education. Not so the aborigines of Asia. In Japan on the island of Yesso there are the Ainos in China the Miautz tribes; in Siam the Laos, the Kars and the Karens; in Burmah the Karens, the Paloungs, the Ka Khyens, &c.; in India the Kols, Shans, Sontals, Mikirs, Garos, &c. These tribes in their native state are not idolaters. They worship evil spirits or geni, a belief in which is still retained by the dominant, idol-worshipping races, as the Burmans, Siamese, Chinese, &c. They have no written languages. They are wilder than their neighbors on the plains, but more honest and more teachable; they possess nobler traits: and from the fact perhaps that they do not worship idols and still retain a controlling belief in the supernatural, they have received the gospel far more readily than the idolatrous races, wherever efforts have been made to win them.

2d. In the 11th and 12th centuries there was a kingdom called *KARIEEN* in what is now known as the province of Yunnan in south-western China, adjoining Burmah Proper and the Laos states on the south. This is supposed to have been the home and kingdom of the people whom we know as Karens. About 1210 A. D. according to Dr. Lobscheid, this kingdom was overthrown by the Mongols in their conquest of China from the Northwest. The surviving Karens were mostly driven southwards into Burmah and Siam, where they have dwelt mostly in by-places and the mountainous outskirts of these lands apart, maintaining their old customs, language and traditions. They have never affiliated or intermarried with their idolatrous neighbors to any extent.

3d. As to their *ancient religion*, they retained the idea of a great, eternal spirit. They believed in good and evil spirits, *genii locorum*, but sought to propitiate the latter alone by their sacrifices and prayers. They are very superstitious in their heathen state. They practice witchcraft, charms and incantations to a great extent. Yet their *moral character*, even before the advent of the missionaries was far superior to that of the idolatrous races around them. Intemperance was their great vice. They were remarkable for chastity, honesty, truthfulness and a peaceable disposition. There were in vogue among them distinct traditions of the first pair, their fall through the eating of a forbidden fruit, the flood, the ark, &c. They also believed that their ancestors once possessed a written language and a sacred book which they lost through some fault of their own, and they had long been expecting that their younger white brethren would bring back to them from the west, a sacred white book. These traditions seem to have prepared their minds in a wonderful manner to receive the gospel.

4th. *Their reception of Christianity.* As we have seen, the Karens, as a people, had nothing in the world to be proud of. They were a small people. They had no kingdom, no literature, philosophy, civilization or religion worthy of the name, yet in themselves they were a lovely people, full of promise for God's praise.

Judson, and those who first followed him went to the Burmans. Nothing

was known of the Karens for many years. After six years of labor, Judson baptised the first Burman convert in 1819. Kothahbyoo the first Karen convert was baptised in 1828 by Mr. Boardman. Once begun, the work spread like wild-fire. Boardman died but Mason, Vinton and Abbott entered into his labors. Wade reduced the language to writing. A large number of native preachers were raised up. God blessed their efforts. In 1852, the English opened Pegu to unrestricted missionary labor. The wonderful work in Bassein which had been going on for years without the direct aid of a missionary, was thus brought fully to light. The equally extensive work in Toungoo followed, gladdening the hearts of all christians. The work has gone on with alternations of ingathering and consolidation until the present time. While we give all honor to our brethren who are laboring so faithfully for the Burmans, and while we believe with them that christian labor for that people "pays" richly, it is right to take note of the fact, that with not more probably than half of the money and labor expended on the Burmans, the Karen missionaries have been permitted to gather more than ten times as many converts. We have at present ten Karen Associations in Burmah, some 350 churches, about 400 Karen preachers, of whom over 70 are ordained, and about 18,000 living communicants. In the Bassein district, the Sgau churches support their own preachers and primary schools entirely, without any aid from America; the average contributions of the 6000 disciples for religious and educational purposes is about Rs. 20,000 per year. The 3000 christians in Rangoon district are reported as giving last year Rs. 14,000; the 1600 christians in Henthadah (Karens) Rs. 3700, &c.

5th. Note a few of their characteristics.

(a) They are not a *decaying* race like the Hawaiian Islanders. Their numbers are rapidly increasing especially where they have accepted Christianity.

(b) They have strong desires and great aptitude for *Christian education*. President Dodge, of Hamilton, N. Y. told me that he had graduated several young men of the African, Burman, and Karen races. Judging from these specimens he would place the Karen mind first decidedly in power and aptitude for culture. English officials in Burmah often remark on the superiority of the Karen schools.

(c) Their piety is of the simple hearted type, at the same time they appear to be stable christians, and many of them have much of the real missionary spirit.

(d) They have rare *fidelity*. Beyond any people I ever knew they will not betray a trust or desert their teacher when he is in a hard place. They are *patient* too, able to endure hardness, or persecution even for Christ's sake. While they have much *humble docility*, they have as much manly independence as any Eastern race. They never crouch. They are not a money seeking race.

For these and other reasons we love the Karens and believe that they have a glorious future. May God bless you in your mission to the same people in Siam.

C. H. CARPENTER.

THE BURMAH ENVOY'S JOURNAL OF HIS TRAVELS.

On the return to Burma of the Mission from the Court of Ava, who have lately visited Europe, one of their number communicated to a Burmes vernacular newspaper in Rangoon a short account of their journey. It does not enter into many details, and says nothing of the impression made on the members of the Mission by the novelty of much they must have seen. There are, however some portions of the account of their visit to Europe which are of interest.

The story begins by the remark, "nothing to be compared with the following has ever been recorded in previous histories," and then goes on to say—"A mandate having been issued by the king of kings, the founder of Mandalay, that an embassy should at once proceed to visit other sovereigns, we started by water in the steamer Tset-kye-yeen-woon, the vibration of whose engines is sufficient to shake the universe." The stay at Rangoon is passed over shortly. The sea was unusually calm "like a silver mat." They reach Suez and take the railway to Cairo, stopping at the various stations on the way; "everything round about these places seemed delightful." The writer remarks "there is a Viceroy at Egypt which is within the Turkish dominions; he received us in a very friendly manner, and a real lasting friendship had been contracted." The Pyramids are mentioned as wonderful objects, believed by many to be burial places, and to be 5,000 years old, but no great astonishment is expressed at that. Crossing over to Italy they gradually reach Rome. In these words, "the same day we were conducted to several old theatres and cathedrals," they dismiss all Roman antiquities. After an interview with the Minister of State and the heir apparent they proceed to a reception given by the King "and the lawgiver Paulee." The journal goes on to say, "Emanuel, the sovereign of Italy, accorded us a very suitable reception, and after exchanging compliments and cordialities we attend a review of troops. Glittering decorations were bestowed on each of the embassy in token of friendship." The ruins of Pompeii are noticed as very wonderful. At "Pa-loo-ni" (Florence) "where one might enjoy himself and wonder without bounds at the superb buildings," the Mission bade farewell and started for France. They pass through Genoa, "with its beautiful gardens and ship-building yards much to be admired" and reach Turin, where "a supply of cannons and muskets in heaps resembling mountains are kept in readiness." Altogether the Mission remained in Italy twenty days, which, the writer says, is "longer than usual."

Arrived at Paris, they visited the public places "such as the Palace Gardens, the main streets, and market places," after which they had "an interview with the Minister who held the reins of Government in France." Thus France is very briefly dealt with. They crossed over from Calais to Dover and "waited for two settings of the sun to consider what course to pursue." Then, "after a salute of 19 guns, the sound of which was enough to rend the earth, a deputation of many persons headed by Major McMahon arrived and held a great reception ceremony." Passing on to London they took up their abode in a building "called Gro-ba-da" (Grosvenor Hotel) "and made the acquaintance of many of the principal officers of State and others, with whom tokens of friendship were exchanged." The journal here breaks into a more exalted strain and says, "Her Majesty the Queen of England, the light of whose glory illuminates the earth, the seal of whose fame has been distinctly impressed on the universe, and who is the model of beauty resembling the moon when situated above a cloud, having invited the members of the embassy, we proceed to the Royal Palace. Here there is a ceremony where one sovereign receives the other." "The Royal letters and presents, bracelets and other ornaments, were handed over and received with Her Majesty's own hands, the Royal decoration, the jewelled Talway, was also accepted by Her Majesty, who is the sovereign and pride of her people." With this burst of eloquence, intended no doubt to be highly complimentary, the journal really ends, but there is added a reflection which is truly Burman in conception—"Now that a lasting friendship has been formed with the Golden City of Mandalay—the city of London will prosper more than heretofore!"