

"It was here discoursed how to some the river had its flowings, and what ebbings it had had while others had gone over. It has been in a manner dry for some, while it has overflowed its banks for others.

"In this place the children of the town would go into the king's gardens, and gather nose-gays for pilgrims, and bring them to them with much affection. Here also grew camphire with spike-nard, and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all its trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, and all chief spices. With these the pilgrims' chambers were perfumed while they staid here and with these their bodies were anointed to prepare them to go over the river, when their time was come."

After this, how beautiful are the descriptions given of the final calling of one and another of the pilgrim band waiting by the river.

"Now, while they lay here waiting for the good hour, there was a noise in the town that there was a post come from the celestial city with matter of great importance to one Christiana, wife of Christian the pilgrim. So inquiry was made for her, and the house was found out where she was; so the post presented her with a letter and the contents were, 'Hail, good woman! I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth thee, and expecteth that thou shouldst stand in his presence in clothes of immortality within ten days. When he had read this letter to her, he gave her therewith a sure token that he was a true messenger, and was come to bid her haste to be gone. The token was an arrow with the point sharpened by love, which, by degrees wrought so effectually with her that at the time appointed she must be gone."

"When Christiana saw that her time was come she called for Mr. Greatheart, her guide and told him how matters were. So he told her he was heartily glad of the news, and could have been glad had the post come for him.

"Then she bid that he should give advice how all things should be prepared for the journey. So he told her saying, 'Thus and thus it must be; and we that survive will accompany you to the other side. Then she called her children, and told them she yet read with comfort the mark that was set in their foreheads, and was glad to see them with her there, and that they had kept their garments so white. Lastly, she bequeathed to the poor the little that she had, and commanded her sons and her daughters to be ready against the messenger should come for them.

Then follow the good matron's last words to the companions of her pilgrimage, Mr. Valiant-for-truth, old Mr. Honest, and Mr. Ready-to-halt; Mr. D. spontency, and his daughter Much-afraid, and Mr. Feeble-minded. What church or neighborhood of Christian pilgrims is without all these?

Old Mr. Honest wishes her fair weather when she sets out for Mount Zion. "And I shall be glad to see that you go over the river dry-shod." To which Christiana responds cheerily: "Come wet, come dry, I long to be gone; for, however the weather is on my journey, I shall have time enough when I get there to sit down and rest and dry me."

In the closing hours of this old year we have lingered over this sweet picture of the peaceful end of all mortal sorrows. In a thousand churches, in cities, towns and peaceful villages, are groups of friends, neighbors, acquaintances, come together to those years which lie on the banks of that river. Every month the messenger from the other side knocks at some house-door, and delivers a token to this or that inmate by which they know they must soon be gone. We have stood by when one and another whom we have loved and depended on, who stood to us as pillars that upheld life, have suddenly heard the voice of the messenger—the knock of the celestial postman. Then has come the delivery of the message. And thus taken from the other side, we have gone down with them to the brink of the river, held their hands and caught their last words, till the garments of mortality dropped from them. And now the going out of the old year finds us waiting our turn on the banks of the river.

But there are in many houses and hearts the messengers and tokens. "The arrow sharpened by love" is entering many a breast, and the ties of earth are gently, invisibly breaking. We must be prepared to give them up,

these dear ones of ours, for the King is calling for them.

And are there no tokens for us? Every silver hair, that never more shall be black, is a token. Every weakness that shows us that we cannot do what once we could, is a token to us. The oft-recurring liability to some form of disease, or the gradual weakness, is a token to us, saying, "This is not your rest; rise ye up and depart." We look around us, and see the tokens on others. Heads that we remember glossy with youthful curls are now snow-white. Those that we remember as the young men have become the old men. The caravan is moving, moving, and the first rank continually disappearing. And where are we? Waiting by the river!—waiting for the postman's knock, whether it come at even-tide, or cock-crowing, or in the morning!

"Even so: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

For the Christian Messenger.

THE HON. AND REV. BAPTIST WRITHESELEY NOEL.

Dear Brother.—

A few additional particulars respecting the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel will probably be acceptable to your readers.

Mr. Noel was a brother of the Earl of Gainsborough. He was educated in the University of Cambridge (Trinity College), and after the close of his college course received ordination as a minister of the Church of England, speedily obtaining great popularity as an able and eloquent preacher. Being appointed one of the Queen's Chaplains he had the opportunity of preaching before Her Majesty, and on those occasions was careful to select such topics for discourse as would render necessary the introduction of the cardinal principles of evangelical truth.

In 1825 he became minister of St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, London, where the Rev. Richard Cecil, the Rev. David Wilson (afterwards bishop of Calcutta) and other eminent clergymen had proclaimed the gospel to large congregations. (I once heard the Rev. D. Wilson preach in that place. The sermon is remembered to this day, though nearer sixty than fifty years have passed away since it was heard.) After labouring there twenty-two years he dissolved the connection in consequence of a change of sentiment, and took leave of his congregation on the first Lord's day in December, 1848. The reason for this step appeared in a volume which he published, entitled "An Essay on the union of Church and State."

In another volume, published the next year (entitled "Essay on Baptism") he announced his adoption of Baptist views. He was baptized in the Rev. J. H. Evans's Chapel, John Street, Mechlenburg Square, by the Rev. Mr. Shepherd M. Evans's co-pastor, Aug. 9, 1849. Thirteen others were baptized at the same time. In the autumn of that year he succeeded Mr. Evans in the ministry of that chapel, and secured the attachment of those who had listened for many years to discourses of no common order of excellence. That was not to be wondered at, for there were many points of resemblance between the two ministers. Both were intensely evangelical, though probably Mr. Evans was more Calvinistic than Mr. Noel. Both adopted a plain, popular style of speaking. Both aimed at the hearts of men not by "enticing words of man's wisdom," but in the language of the kingdom which is, "not in word, but in power," having "an unction from the Holy One." The object of both was rather to profit than to please, knowing that "if they pleased men they would not be servants of Christ."

Mr. Noel was Chairman of the Baptist Union in 1867. In his Address at the Spring Meeting he discoursed on the duty of the Churches with reference to the sacerdotalism of the "Anglo-Catholic priests." He retired from the stated ministry in 1868.

In addition to the works above mentioned, he published, in 1837, "Notes of a tour in Switzerland;" and in 1847, "Notes of a tour in Ireland." His Address on occasion of his baptism was issued in pamphlet form, and very widely circulated. An abstract of it appeared in the Christian Messenger, Sep. 7, 1849.

Mr. Noel was in the 74th year of his age.

Yours truly,
J. M. CRAMP,
Wolville, Jan. 23, 1873.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., January 29, 1873.

"A TOUR AMONG THE KARENS OF SIAM."

Those of our readers who have given careful perusal to the portions of Mr. Carpenter's paper on this subject in our last two weeks' issues will be intensely anxious to know the conclusions at which he arrives, drawn from what he saw, heard, and experienced while passing through the country; his opinions in regard to the field, what he says as to the condition of the people, the religious opinions they now hold, and the disposition of the government towards missionaries who may go to labor amongst them. These are matters with which our people, so much interested in mission work amongst the Karens of Siam, should become as familiar as possible, so that they may have some adequate conception of the great work before them:—

CONDITION.

The Karens as a people know nothing of the advantages of a division of labor, as practiced by civilized people and hence their communities are small. The main business of every family is to extract grain enough from the soil to sustain life. In the interval of reaping and sowing, each family builds and repairs its own rude house; each spins and weaves from the cotton of their own raising the few garments which they possess. In their wasteful system of cultivation they must labor hard and clear fresh fields by cutting down and burning the forest every year, getting but one crop of rice from the virgin mountain soil. Thus a small cluster of related families requires a vast tract of land for their support during a term of ten or twenty years. Then their very stomachs are in bondage to their superstitions. The Sgaws will not raise healthful fruit, for they must follow their tradition to plant no seed of which they cannot eat the fruit the first year. Their forests are full of fine game, but the Pwos will not touch it, neither will they raise pigs or poultry for food, for the Buddhist law forbids the taking of life. As a result, all of the Karens whom we saw were suffering for want of a wholesome diet. They eat no meat, and hardly any fish or fruit. Their sole diet is rice and vegetable carries so hot with chillies, that our Karens could not eat them with impunity. Christianity would be their physical salvation. They have many children, but most of them die in infancy for want of suitable food and clothing. As Christians there is good reason to believe that they would multiply rapidly.

NUMBERS.

It is quite difficult to form a reliable estimate of the whole number of Siamese Karens from the imperfect data in our possession. In the Red-stone or Me-klong-noi valley we visited* or gained definite information of 80 Karen villages, numbering by a careful computation 603 houses. If we reckon the villages remaining in the south and those back from the river beyond our reach at an equal number, we shall have in the western half of the Me-klong valley 1,200 families, or about 6,000 souls. In the eastern half of the valley, including the Se-saw region, we hear of one head man who has 70 families under him, and others with 20 or 30 each. Two of our preachers, Sah-poh and Ng'pok of Bassin returned this way from Ayuthia to Maulmain. They report the Karens more numerous than on the southerly route pursued by us, and more ready to listen to the gospel. On the whole, I think it reasonable to suppose that there are at least 15,000 Karens living south of Muang Oo-tai. Gerpau, another of our preachers, returned by a still more northern route. His report agrees with the testimony of many other witnesses, that the Karens in the Rabsang district, north of Muang Oo-tai, are much more numerous than in the south, the Sgaws predominating. If we add a reasonable number for the Zimay district, we shall have not less than 50,000 Karens in Siam. Compared with other peoples, or even with the same people in Burmah, this is not a large number, but it is to be remembered that the Karens are nowhere very numerous, and that they are everywhere a teachable and hopeful race. An experienced miner in California told me

that hydraulic mining would not pay, a few years ago, unless from 40 to 50 cents' worth of gold could be extracted on the average from every cubic yard of earth washed down, but now by improved processes seven cent' worth to the yard will pay. It is somewhat so in the Karen work. Thirty years ago we had little experience, the Bible and school books were not translated, the Seminary was hardly begun, the native preachers were few and ill-trained. Work in the more thickly inhabited Karen fields of Burmah would pay, but while these were unoccupied it certainly would not have been wise to divert a part of the scanty force to Siam. Now our position is different. We have the Bible complete in Karen. We have a small army of native preachers trained and ready to volunteer for this service. They will do the heavier part of the work. A few miles more or less of distance is nothing to them. They only ask a few, good white brethren to lead them.

(II.) RELIGION.

As to their religion, enough perhaps has been said. Within five or six years only, the Phon-gyees of Maulmain have made a grand effort with some success, to convert the Karen timber-men beyond the Thoung-yeen boundary, to Buddhism. In the red-stone valley the Pwos are generally professed but not bigoted Buddhists. There are several villages of a peculiar sect who worship the lord "Too-way" whoever he may be. There are others known as "yellow thread" people; others still are known as "oil-worshippers." The majority however still keep up their old superstitions and idol-worship. I do not anticipate that they will turn to Christianity as easily as did the Bassin Karens under Abbott, or the Toungoo Karens under Quah, but I do think that much fruit may be gathered among them,—far more than among the Siamese or the Chinese, at the present rate of gathering. The attempts hitherto made prove nothing. In order to become real Christians they must understand the gospel and feel its claims upon them. This they have never done. Some of them have held it at a distance and looked at it curiously as the white man's religion, but to their minds, the way for them to believe and enter Christianity has never yet been opened. Let missionaries be located among them permanently; give them schools and books for their instruction, and they will believe that you offer them the gospel in good faith.

(III.) DISPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

What is the real disposition of the Siamese Government towards Christianity? There are American missionaries located in Bang-kok itself, in Petchaburee, in Ayuthia and at Chieng-mai in Northern Laos. All preach and distribute books with perfect freedom; all testify to the friendliness of the Government to themselves personally; all believe that the policy of the Government is one of perfect religious toleration. But why is it, that after many years of faithful preaching by not a few good missionaries, so few of the Siamese subjects have accepted Christianity? It appears to me that there must have been a latent fear on the part of the people, similar to that expressed by the Karens. They know well that the king and chief nobles have the power of life and death. They know that for frivolous reasons even vengeance may be visited upon them. The late king was for many years at the head of the Buddhist priesthood, and he was a magnificent supporter of that religion throughout his reign. The present king, however, seems to be quite free from his father's devotion to the state religion. It is quite likely that under him the Siamese will feel greater liberty in religious matters. The subjoined translation of an extract from the Siamese Calendar for 1871, an official document, annually published by royal authority, seems to be satisfactory and is worthy of note.

"In regard to the concern of seeking and holding a religion that shall be a refuge to yourself in this life, it is a good concern, and exceedingly appropriate and suitable that you—all—every individual of you—should investigate and judge for himself according to his own wisdom. And when you see any religion whatever, or any company of religionists whatever, likely to be an advantage to yourself, a refuge in accord with your own wisdom, hold to that religion with your own heart. Hold it not with a shallow mind, with mere guess-work, or because of its

general popularity, or from mere tradition, saying that it is the custom held from time immemorial; and do not hold a religion that you have not good evidence is true, and then frighten men's fears and flatter their hopes by it. Do not be frightened and astonished at diverse events (fictitious wonders) and hold to follow them. When you shall have obtained a refuge, a religious faith that is beautiful and good and suitable, hold to it with great joy, and follow its teachings, and it will be a cause of prosperity to each one of you."

It is important that missionaries to the Karens should enter the country at Bang-kok, and make that the base of supplies. If this is done, there is every reason to believe that Government will grant them eligible places of residence, and afford them and their converts complete toleration and protection.

(IV.) VIEWS OF MISSIONARIES.

With regard to the views of missionaries in Bang-kok I can say that while few of them had much definite knowledge of the Karens, all as we anticipated, viewed the project favorably. Dr. Dean was very cordial in expressing his approval. Dr. House of the Presbyterian mission, Dr. Bradley of the American Missionary Association, Mr. Smith, and others gave valuable assistance and advice. The Karens in Siam are so separate from the other races, that a mission to them could not interfere with the work of other societies. New missionaries in any country need much counsel and aid. In Bang-kok certainly they will never seek these in vain.

(V.) WHERE TO BEGIN WORK.

As to the most eligible location for a Karen mission station, I had inclined to Kan-boo-rie and Rahaing, but Rev. Mr. Smith of Bang-kok, who has travelled quite extensively in the Karen country, advises Muang Oo-tai as more central and healthful. It lies between Kan-boo-rie and Rahaing,—is about four days by boat from Bang-kok, and eight days for natives on foot from Maulmain. There is quite a large Karen population on three sides of the place, and I incline to think with Mr. Smith that for a tentative effort at least, Muang Oo-tai is the best location. Two men at least should be sent there at the outset,—one to the Sgaws and one to the Pwos. They would need from ten to twenty native preachers from Burmah. As soon as churches begin to be formed, school work in the Sgau language should be begun, and in this work well-qualified single ladies might be of great assistance. The evangelization of the Siamese Karens cannot be effected, in my judgment, by natives alone.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE HALIFAX WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AID SOCIETIES on Thursday last, was, in many respects, exceedingly interesting. The addresses were all of first order. Varied in character and style, but yet so well adapted to the occasion that they afforded a rich treat to those who were present to listen. The attendance was not so large as it might have been, perhaps, to some extent, because the announcement was of the Women's Missionary Aid Society. Some may have supposed that it would not have the general character and interest of an ordinary Missionary meeting.

Rev. J. E. Goucher was to have taken the chair, but was not present. The reason of his absence was not exactly, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come," but he was called to officiate in a marriage service at the same hour, and consequently could not participate in this celebration.

[REM.—When young people wish to be married, they should ascertain if the minister is able to attend before they decide on the hour the marriage is to take place.]

The duties of the chairman consequently devolved upon one who would have greatly preferred occupying another place. The speakers were the Rev. John Miller, Rev. J. K. Smith, (pastor of the Fort Massey Presbyterian Church), Rev. Joseph Elliott, (Congregationalist), Rev. John Reed, (Methodist), Rev. D. A. Steele, of Amherst, and Rev. H. Morrow, of Sackville.

After reading the Scriptures, Rev. Mr. Elliott offered prayer.

The chairman, Mr. Selden, explained briefly the origin, nature and objects of the Societies, and what is now being done in Burmah by the two missionaries in that distant land. He also alluded to the anticipated adoption of Siam as the field of missionary operation for the Baptists of these provinces,