

which we had witnessed that day in Beth- lehem!

With a solemn benediction the services were ended; and when we had come out it seemed as if the very heavens were rejoicing over the tidings which had gone up of the soul that day redeemed.

And Mabel, still white as an Easter lily, but with her deep grey eyes full of a proud humility, a new happiness, a steadfast resolution to live henceforth for Christ, walked by my side, watching the great glory of the heavens, with her arm lovingly entwined in mine.

Beautiful, gay, fashionable, the pet of society, I knew her also to be a staunch upholder of all that was noble, good, and pure, and I felt a thorough conviction that she had indeed given herself up body and soul to Him who had chosen to send His Holy Spirit into her heart, as she was going out of the little village which bore the blessed name of Bethlehem.

F. BARROW.

-The Baptist.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONE CENT FOR MISSIONS.

As lost in reflection, And with "a collection," Slowly forward I plodded, Politely those nodded.

An stranger to me His manner impressed me; He "Rev'rend" address'd me;

Salute so respectful, made me unmindful Whom he might be.

"Your pardon, I'd ask you, But would it now task you.

How deep is my feeling? I heard you appealing For Heaven just now.

And greatly it trief me," He said "that beside me, I had to hear."

(And while he narrated Just what is here stated. Shook he with fear).

"A church mem."—(I started, His face he averted. Then his voice found).

"To himself thus speaking, While deacons were taking, The boxes around.

"For me thyself, O Lord, thou gave: I give of pelt One cent, just lent."

Thy kingdom come, O Lord I pray: I give this sum One cent, now lent To pave its way.

Souls sweep to hell, O Lord I know: I give—'ah well! One cent, just lent To check their flow.

For thee they cry, O Lord, they groan. To give I'll try One cent. Now lent To make thee known."

The stranger's words bamed me, and sudden I turned me. On him I gazed.

"Accuser! I know thee, Thy nature is shown me" Said I, though mazed.

"Avaunt thee, thou devil! Thou prophet of evil! Father of Lies!"

"Cast no such reflections, You have the collections." Quick he replies.

"Just prove false my story. Then over me glory Then bid me hence."

With zeal then I hasten'd. The parcel un- mistaken— "Ah! only cents."

Said he, at me leering, sardonically sneering, "What's there I pray? Completely astounded, Entirely confounded, What could I say?"

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.

These two letters, from Miss M. E. Armstrong and Miss Flora Eaton, were recently received by the Secretary of N. S. Central Board of the WOMAN'S AID MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, and are inserted specially, for the members of the Societies.

FROM BURMAH.

TAVY, July 9th, 1874.

My dear Mrs. Selden,—

I have very little to tell you of work that I have completed, but what I have seen I can tell you, and am sure that you will be glad to hear again from one of the "Mission Circle." Some of our dear friends are widely separated from us now; but when I think of the many happy hours which we were permitted to enjoy together, I feel that we are still united in heart, and trust that the blessing of the Master will so rest upon each one that our work shall at last appear as a whole.

The Karen and Burman schools of Tavay are in a flourishing condition at present. Upon the former the Lord has been graciously

pleased to bestow a special blessing within the last few weeks. This blessing seems to have been given just in connection with the daily christian exercises and instructions of the school. All the girls and many of the young men and boys have asked for baptism, while some have given good evidence of a change of heart.

Last evening, one of the boys, considered by some of the teachers, a hopeless case, prayed in the meeting, confessing his sins before God and asking for mercy. There has been no excitement; indeed, everything has been so quiet as to excite our astonishment when we see the result. Thus the Lord works. It has not been thought best to have the baptism immediately, but give time for fuller observation. I feel that the friends in the home churches who have recently enjoyed a similar blessing have been praying for this school—and now, this is the answer. May the refreshing extend to the Burman department also.

Karens often come in from the jungle, to visit the school; and we sometimes see persons from Siam also. A few days ago, several Siamese Karens came to Tavay to make a final effort for the recovery of the price of an elephant, which had been sold by one of them to a Burman about a year ago. They were heathens and Mrs. Armstrong took the opportunity of telling them about the true God. The men to whom the elephant belonged had been in town before on the same errand. He said that all along his way from Siam there were many gods, and he had worshipped all of them, hoping to obtain their assistance.

But now Mrs. Armstrong told him to pray to God. So in the afternoon he returned with the money, which he had obtained without any difficulty, declaring that now he wanted to learn about the true God; for he prayed to Him most earnestly this morning and He had heard and answered him, while the other gods could not help him at all. Now he wished to learn how to worship Him. And I saw him the same evening at the chapel, listening most eagerly to all that was said. The next day, before leaving, he promised to place his son at the Mergui school that he might learn to read, preparatory to coming here for instruction. Thus, sometimes the blessing will come immediately after the sowing; but in how many instances in this heathen country, years of patient working and waiting must pass before any result is seen. I am afraid that I envied your missionary that day, as I saw her talking with and instructing the heathen; for many others came, and some from the Burmese also.

One of the Burman teachers brought up his heathen school of between forty and fifty pupils, to visit Mrs. Armstrong.—When, in the distance, I saw them approaching very gaily dressed and carrying flowers, I thought that they were going to the pagoda just beyond us, to worship.—But they came up here, filling the Verandah; sitting on the floor before Mrs. Armstrong with their flowers raised before their faces in token of respect, precisely as they do in their worship. She heard them read, showed them pictures and talked to them of our holy religion for about an hour, when some of them presented the flowers, and all left again in procession. It is a blessed thing to be tired in such work as here, and I long for the time when I too, can do thus.

The clouds which have so surely separated me from the Karens are beginning to lift, and I hope that before many months have passed they will disperse entirely. I can talk a little and teach some. It is far easier to make them understand me than to understand them for they talk very fast and some of them use a great deal of betel nut so that it is sometimes very difficult for an unaccustomed ear to distinguish the tones exactly. But when I try to talk with the teachers or others they are generally very patient and for my benefit try to speak more slowly; and I know that with time all my difficulties of this nature will vanish. I am sure that my dear sisters of the "Aid Societies" are praying for me and I hope they will never forget that this assurance strengthens.

For a time I shall have to study entirely alone, as my teacher wishes to return home until after Convention, when he will rejoin our company for the tour through Siam. Besides teaching me, he has been sowing good seed among the Burmans, preaching in that language on the Sabbath and visiting from house to house, &c. At the request of his parents he goes to visit them now, for they fear that when he leaves Burmah they will "see his face no more." I have noticed with great pleasure and gratitude the movement at home—with re-

gard to "Mission Bands." It is a movement in which I have been interested for a long time. There are many ways in which those 'bands' can very materially aid the mission work. Our work is among the children to a great extent. Why should not the children at home work for the education and salvation of their dark brothers and sisters here, or rather, how can they help doing so if they know? I never saw such numbers of wretched looking children before as I have seen here. Many do not live beyond childhood and it seems well that they do not. Some of the children are very interesting looking and often a bright eyed little heathen face reminds me of some dear little ones at home.

Believe me faithfully yours, In the love of Christ, MARIA E. ARMSTRONG.

FROM SIAM.

BANGKOK, SIAM, June 7th, 1874. Sabbath Evening.

Dear Mrs. Selden,—

Amid the many exceedingly interesting and pleasant scenes of to-day, my mind has repeatedly turned backward, and viewed again those hours I spent with you one year ago to-day.

My trial, now I am on the field, is that I am dumb, that I am unable to tell the "old, old story," to the degraded beings about me.

Shall I give you a brief review of those scenes of to-day to which reference has already been made? At an early hour of the morning, Mrs. Churchill and I went by boat, four miles down the river to attend the Siamese services of Rev. S. J. Smith. His commodious dining room accommodates all who attend. This morning the number who listened to his sermon was over forty; but when meeting was dismissed, and only the church remained, to consider the case of a woman who had just professed faith in Christ and requested baptism, the number was very small.

The candidate being received, baptism was expected to follow immediately. But this is the rainy season, and just then we were having a heavy shower, and were obliged to remain under the shelter of the roof. Very soon the rain ceased to fall, the sun shone out brightly, and we followed Mr. Smith to the river. Here he made a short address, offered prayer, and as he led from the water, the first Siamese whom we have seen baptized, a verse was sung, and when we had returned to this house, the rain once more fell in torrents.

Soon the church members returned, and we met again for Conference and Communion. The woman lately baptized, was received into the fellowship of the church, and enjoyed with us the privilege of speaking a word for the Master, and then of partaking of the Lord's Supper at His own table.

These services in Siamese were to a very limited extent understood by us, yet we enjoyed them, and left the table of the Lord strengthened anew for the duties, trials and disappointments which may be before us.

After this we attended service in the English church, and were much edified by a sermon from Mr. Churchill. The Missionaries' conduct this service in turn, and Mr. Churchill has already preached three times.

We returned home, and have spent the evening as our Sabbath evenings are usually spent in reading and singing some of the pieces learned and loved while in our homes. Our reading this evening was of the labors and sufferings of Mr. Moffat in South Africa. Thus our Sabbath has passed. As we kneel to commend ourselves to our Heavenly Father's keeping to-night, our hearts are full of gratitude for the blessings which constantly attend us; and our prayer is borne upwards an earnest petition that we may be more consecrated to the service of our Master, and that very soon He will give us direct work by the doing of which His name may be honored and souls saved.

Praying that the good work of the Lord among you may spread and continue: I remain,

Your sister in Christ, FLORA J. EATON.

For the Christian Messenger.

"ALMOST RIGHT"

My dear Sir,—

At page 3 of "The Case of the Baptists" the following passage occurs:—

"Presbyterians will tell us that their mode of church government was the original mode, and that the Church of Christ was Presbyterian from the first. It strikes me that they are almost right on that point."

I am told that this passage has been misunderstood by some, and has operated as a stumbling block to others. An explanation has been asked. It is easily given.

It will be observed that there is no reference to infant baptism. On that subject our pedobaptist friends are not "almost right," but, as we believe, altogether wrong.

The reference is to the mode of church government. Our churches are governed by the people themselves, the administration being in the hands of the pastors. A Presbyterian church is governed by the "Session," which is composed of the minister and a certain number of "elders."

There was a plurality of elders, that is, of ministers, in the New Testament churches. See Acts xiv. 23; xx. 17; xxi. 18; Phil. i. 1; 1 Thes. v. 12, 13; James v. 14.

The reasonableness of this arrangement will be apparent, I think, to all who consider the variety of duties which have to be discharged, in these times, by a Christian minister. The propriety of a division of labour will be generally acknowledged. The preaching might be assigned to one; the teaching, and cases of discipline, to another; the care of the sick and afflicted to a third; and so forth. And the duties might be occasionally interchanged. The preacher of this month might be the teacher of the next.

Now, the Presbyterians are said to be "almost right," because they have several elders in every congregation. But they are only "almost" right. The New Testament elders were all ministers, and on an equality. They are sometimes called "bishops," or "overseers." The Presbyterian elders are *laymen*. The "Session" is composed of a minister and elders. The "Session" of an apostolic church, if we may so speak of it, was composed entirely of ministers.

We should be more apostolic than we are if we had a plurality of pastors in our churches. The question of support, and the difficulty of finding suitable men, stand in our way. I cannot enter into the discussion of that subject now; it may suffice to remark, at present, that the inconveniences arising out of what is sometimes called the "one man system" are commonly sought to be avoided by the choice of the best men of the churches for deacons, who thus become, though they are not so called, associate elders.

Yours truly, J. M. CRAMP.

Sept. 19th, 1874.

For the Christian Messenger.

RELIGION IN SIAM.

No. 14.

It is with some difficulty that in speaking of Siam, one is able to grasp and become familiar with the idea that the population of the country is probably more than double that of all British North America. Omitting the Malay Peninsula, Siam lies pretty compactly between the tropic of Cancer, or about 23. 30 and 10° N. L., and say 97 and 108° E. L. The principal rivers are the Menam and the Makong, the former emptying into the Gulf of Siam, the latter into the China Sea.

It possesses many valuable exports common to these latitudes. The population along the rivers and shores are maritime, familiar with boating and fishing, and expert in managing their small craft, their canoes and other vessels.

I have already had occasion to refer to the condition of education among them. Their Buddhist monasteries being all schools, and the priests teachers. Thus it is, that what we occidentals call common-school education, is in rather an advanced condition among the Siamese.

Since I commenced this series of letters, I have had an opportunity of perusing the Report of our Board of Baptist Foreign Missions, prepared and adopted by the Baptist Convention, which held its annual meeting at Portland, N. B. this present year.

It is in reference to this Mission, and its prospects, its present and its future, that I have been collecting such facts as I can gather, from reliable sources, and casting them into a readable form for more ready reference. In a matter of so much importance, it would be evidence of a weak and narrow mind to suppose that a writer thus endeavouring to throw light, or rather to diffuse it upon a subject like that under consideration, could have any sinister or unworthy motive, much less, any private or personal object in view. It may be that his ideas may run counter to those of others quite as competent to write or speak

on such a subject as he. If he errs or misapprehends matters, there are numbers of scribes to set him right, and protect the public mind from being misled or abused.

The age in which we live is one remarkable for this characteristic—that assumptions, no matter by whom propagated, unless capable of being demonstrated satisfactorily, are not permitted long to pass unchallenged. Since the days of Bacon there has not been a period in history when error, no matter how it glitters, or how specious its surroundings, is so certain to be speedily brought to the test and condemned, as alloy and base metal. And it is right it should be so. Any one who has been under a mistake, or a misapprehension on any subject, should always be pleased to find himself corrected.

Which of us can look back any considerable period of life, and if we are candid with ourselves, but must confess that mistakes almost innumerable have marked our pathway, and often cost us much pain and care sometimes to conceal, sometimes to correct.

I have not much opinion of this Siam Mission. I never had. Once fairly committed to it, however,—and I don't think we are yet—then let us make the very best we can of it.

My reasons for this last announcement, that we are not, I think, committed to any Siamese Mission, I base upon the last Report of the Foreign Mission Board. I have read it carefully, and it hardly conveys, I think, a very decided policy of any kind in reference to future operations in the East. In that respect it seems to me quite as non-committal as the Report of 1873, and is made up mostly, or largely of extracts of letters and correspondence, already given to the public through the denominational press.

The Boards' estimate of Buddhism, its perversities, and the serious difficulties likely to be encountered in Siam by the Missionaries, our good friend Mr. McKenzie to the contrary notwithstanding, is quite in harmony with what I have already written. In confirmation of the intimation, that it is still an open question as to the location of the Mission, I quote the following passage from the Report of 1874:— "Should it appear that the path of duty leads to Siam proper, as well as to the Karens in that Kingdom, it may be well to consider the arduousness of the enterprise.

The Siamese are Buddhists of the strictest sect, &c., &c." Again—"Buddhists are among the last class of the world's population, to yield to the power of the Gospel, &c." This smacks, methinks, somewhat differently from the good Secretary's announcement at the Academy of Music, and gives, I apprehend, a far more correct, though a contradictory reflex of affairs, and the obstacles opposing themselves to Missionary enterprise in Siam. They sound like words of warning.

The Board seem to have laid their plan at one time to reach a tribe called Red Karens, or Karengnes, in the mountainous districts towards the South and East,—but they have discovered quite recently, that the American Baptist Missionary Union claim the field as already in their occupation and the tribes dwelling there under their supervision, and the idea of further efforts in that direction have been given up. The Karens of Siam, or the Siamese, or both would seem now to be the only people, open and accessible to the Missionaries of these Provinces. The Presbyterians having established a Mission among the Laos, that door once supposed to be open, seems also, according to the courtesy, and amity acknowledged and practised among different Christian denominations, to be closed as against us.

If the good brother Carpenter was aware of the existing state of things in the East, he should have been full and explicit, and not have left our Board to grope for facts, and collect them, and be feeling their way, as they appear now to be doing, in a manner that, considering the great distance intervening, makes it exceedingly embarrassing, one would suppose, to them and their officers to pilot this great enterprise. If he was not aware of the state of affairs out in Siam as they now seem to present themselves, then he should have been I think, much more guarded and specific in his representations touching the country and its prospects than he was, when addressing the Convention at Windsor in 1873.

Nobody could for one moment suspect him of any intention to mislead our people in relation to Siam. Far otherwise. But how comes it to pass that such information as that the Red Karens are within the Mission field of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Union, and the La