

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

At a special meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions, held at St. John, N. B., on the 20th inst., the following resolution was passed:—"That the President of the Baptist Convention of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island be requested to call a Special Meeting of that body at as early a date as practicable, to take into consideration the communication from our Missionaries relative to the choice of a field of labour."

JOINT LETTER OF THE MISSIONARIES.

The following is a copy of the referred to in the resolution:— RABAING, SIAM, Feb. 13, 1875. TO THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Dear Brethren,— Four of your missionaries have at length met in Siam. We arrived in this northern town a few days since, Brethren Sanford and Armstrong having come across the country from Maulmain, and Brethren Churchill and Boggs up the river from Bangkok.

The object of the journey, as you are aware, was to gather reliable information and ascertain facts, concerning the Karens of Siam, and in view of these facts to consult together in reference to future movements.

We have now spent several days together in prolonged consultation, to which we have brought all the information gained thus far, which bears on the questions at issue, and all the earnest thought and judgment of which we are capable. And we have sought the guidance of our Heavenly Master in our discussions.

And now permit us to lay before you the facts we have ascertained, and the conclusions we have reached.

1. In reference to the proposed mission to the Karens of Siam:

Brethren Churchill and Boggs, on their journey up from Bangkok, visited Muang Oo-tai, a place formerly spoken of as probably suitable for a Mission Station, having in view the Siamese Karens. At an interview with the governor of Oo-tai, they understood him to make the following statements: That there are no Karens in the District of Oo-tai. That there are Karens and Toungthoos to the westward, but they are from ten to fifteen days distant, and reached with difficulty. No definite information could be gained as to their numbers.

Now, supposing the above statements to be in the main, correct, the conclusion is, that Muang Oo-tai is out of the question, as a place from which to reach Karens. The distance and difficulty of the way amount to inaccessibility. If they are ten or fifteen days west, they must be near the British boundary.

Again, it had been supposed that Karens might be found in considerable numbers in the vicinity of Rabaing. Brethren Sanford and Armstrong, however, in coming from Maulmain, passed through the supposed Karen region, and they and the native preachers who accompanied them, made full inquiries concerning Karens, and yet they failed to find or hear of more than a very small number scattered about the mountains.

We are led to the same conclusion in reference to the district of Chang Mai, or Zimay. We have obtained information from Rev. Mr. McGilvary, (who is at present in Rabaing, on his way to his mission field at Chang Mai) and from others who have travelled through that country, and their statements agree in representing the Karens as few and scattered.

The other region which remains to be considered, is that of the Meklong River, and the neighborhood of Kanbooree. According to the highest conjectures within the range of probability, there are not more than 10,000 Karens in both the Redstone and Meklong valleys. These, taking as a standard, the 3,000 actually found by the Rev. Mr. Carpenter, the native preachers who accompanied him, and by native preachers on a previous tour, are about equally divided between Pwos and Sgau. This gives us of one language 5,000 persons, and a large proportion of even this small number are practically inaccessible from Kanbooree, scattered as they all are on the whole length of two long valleys, and on the mountain ranges which bound them.

From the foregoing facts we are led to the following conclusions: 1. That the number of Karens in Siam is very much less than was supposed.

2. That they are very widely scattered, no large villages or towns having thus far come to our knowledge.

3. That they inhabit, chiefly, the mountain ranges running north and south near the boundary between Burmah and Siam; and are therefore so far west as to be practically inaccessible from the Mienam River, the great highway of Siam.

To the above may be added the fact, testified by many who know the actual state of things, that Karens are constantly emigrating from Siam across to British Burmah, so that in some cases where villages existed a few years ago, no Karens are now to be found.

We therefore feel that the facts do not warrant us in making any further efforts, looking to the establishment of a mission to the Karens of Siam.

II. Supposing this to be disposed of, the next question which arises before us is, to what people shall we now turn our attention?

One course that has suggested itself to us is, that we should all come to Siam, and undertake missionary work for the Siamese proper. Three of your missionaries having lived in Siam, now nearly a year, it is natural that in their minds a deep interest should be awakened in behalf of this people.

In connection with this proposal we may offer briefly the following statements:

For some time the Baptists have had no missionary actively engaged for the Siamese.

The Presbyterians of the United States have for many years occupied portions of the country. They have had missionaries at Bangkok, Ayuthia, and Petchabooree, laboring for the Siamese proper, and at Cuang Mai, for the Laos.

Notwithstanding this the destitution of the country is great, and its need of the gospel as pressing as that of any heathen nation can be. No evangelistic work is being done in all the country from Bangkok to Chang Mai, with the exception of a brief visit from some missionary once in several years.

But at the same time there would be great disadvantages in the case of our people undertaking a mission to this country.

During the four or five years that would necessarily elapse before the missionary could preach with acceptance, there are no native preachers to be employed.

The want of books would be a serious hindrance, as the New Testament, translated by Dr. Jones, is out of print. A considerable outlay would be required before the Scriptures could be distributed.

Again, a majority of your missionaries have studied the Karen language; two of them viz., Mrs. Armstrong and Miss DeWolf being well acquainted with it, and prepared to employ it in missionary labor. This advantage would, in all probability, be lost, if Siam should become our field.

If then the disadvantages and the unpromising outlook in Siam, should be such as not to warrant our settlement in this country, where shall we look next for a field.

III. At this point, the thoughts of some may turn to the proposal recently advocated, viz., that we should again seek to consummate a union with our brethren of Ontario and Quebec, and to obtain a share with them in the Telooogo field.

The objections to the adoption of this plan, as to our minds, many and serious, among which are the following:

1. There are grave obstacles in the way of a union at present with our brethren of the Upper Provinces, and a long period of suspense would have to be endured, while negotiations were going forward, before your missionaries could enter without hesitation, on the preparation for their life work.

2. But it may be said a union with the Canadian brethren is not necessary; let us enter the field without it. To this we would reply that the country is already occupied by the missions of two Baptist Societies, besides those of the American Lutherans, the Church of England, the London Missionary Society and the Presbyterians.

3. What has been said above, in reference to a number of your missionaries having studied the Karen tongue, applies with equal, if not greater force, in this case.

4. From all we can learn, the Telooogo country is an extremely expensive one in which to carry on missionary operations.

IV. We believe that a field fulfilling all the conditions required, and offering just such a sphere of effort as we, and

the brethren at home could desire, lies open before us.

At the last Session of the Burmah Baptist Convention held at Henthada, in November, 1874, we were invited by the unanimous voice of missionaries and native brethren, to take up and work any unoccupied field in British Burmah.

In our judgement it is wise to accept this invitation, for the following reasons:

1. Burmah is the field of our sympathies and efforts and successes during the past of our Foreign Missionary experience. The work among both Burmese and Karens may well continue to engage the prayers and benevolence of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces.

2. It seems very undesirable to remove to another people all those already committed to the Karen language, and our sisters in particular, who have become so successfully engaged in work for the people.

3. It cannot but be urged that British Burmah to-day is in pressing need of at least a dozen Baptist Missionaries, to occupy new stations, besides as many more to man the stations already occupied. We are confident, however, that the missionaries in the field would earnestly plead for a much larger number.

4. There is ample room in British Burmah for all your missionaries to labor side by side and shoulder to shoulder with their brethren of the Union, without crowding upon foundations already laid, or clashing in any wise with the work now in operation. Identical with them in faith and church order; having the fullest sympathy with the Union, their missionaries, and the missionary work carried on by them, we can only wish to be fellow-workers with them in the promotion of Christ's Kingdom. The Constitutions, bye-laws, and aims of the Burmah Baptist Missionary Convention invite us, without modification or compromise on the part of either to a free participation in the privileges and labors of that body.

As to our occupation of new fields in British Burmah we see no serious objections, which legitimately would lead to a marrying of the work, an impediment to the Missionary Union, or a compromise of the principles upon which we stand. On the contrary, after carefully considering the matter in its various bearings, we are led to the conviction that this course gives promise of issues the most successful that the friends of Baptist missions in Burmah could desire.

A variety of Providential circumstances combine to recommend this sphere of labor. The reasons are many, clear, and strong. To present them faithfully and at length, however, demands greater space than this, our present communication to you will admit. We beg you to entertain this proposition, and carefully consider, with us, the little difficulty in, its solution.

5. British Burmah presents to us a far more inviting field than any other. Its population is increasing marvellously, by immigration from Upper Burmah, Siam, and Hindostan. The rapid development of its resources, the immense advantage which wholesome British rule gives to the carrying on of missionary work, the appliances, which we have good reason to believe are available at once, and which are especially favorable to our strength, all unite in leading us to this field of labor.

6. Two inviting stations present themselves at once, viz., Ma-oo-ben, and Thayet-myo. These are the chief towns of two Deputy Commissionerships, or Governmental Districts on the Irrawaddy. The former is a new District just formed, and situated between Rangoon, Bassein, and Henthada Districts. It comprises a dense population of Burmese, Sgau and Pwo Karens who have been too far removed to receive the repeated labors of any missionary. The latter is bounded on the North by Burmah proper, and on the south by the Prome District. It comprises within comparatively narrow limits a rapidly increasing population, of some 140,000 souls. The town of Thayet-myo is about the size of Henthada. It is some fifty miles north of Prome, and is the military station for Northern Pegu. It was recommended to the Union several years since as a field which ought to be occupied at once.

These two Districts not only present themselves to us, but our attention has been directed to them by our missionary brethren in Burmah. We did not, however, feel ourselves

at liberty to entertain this project, or to lay it before you until now.

It should be added that the occupation of these two Districts would place us in a position to extend operations into Independent Burmah, which in all probability will, before very long, be fully opened to the missionaries of the Cross.

Permit us dear brethren to submit the above for your careful consideration, humbly praying that you and we may be guided by Infinite Wisdom.

RUFUS SANFORD. W. F. ARMSTRONG. GEORGE CHURCHILL. WM. B. BOGGS.

Notices.

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Barrington.—Mrs. M. D. Forbes \$ 3.00 Upper Aylesford.—Mrs. J. L. Read. 9 00 Canoe.—Miss C. A. Cunningham. 10 00 Waterford.—E. C. Morse. 9 00 North Brookfield.—Miss Susie A. Leadbetter. 10 00

M. R. SELDEN, Sec'y.

Halifax, April 25th, 1875.

"The History of Indian Harbor West" in our last, was written by EDWIN COVEY, not "Edwin Hubley" as our compositor put it. What could have led him to so mistake the name we know not.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

MAHON BAY, April, 1875.—Dear Editor, Brother C. Kennedy wishes to acknowledge among the many expressions of sympathy from many friends, the following received per Rev. E. M. Saunders, from

Hon. Dr. Parker. \$5.00 E. G. W. Greenwood, Esq. 1.00 Wm. Ackhurst, Esq. 1.00

Yours, H. E. S. M.

LETTERS RECEIVED.

G. Robbins, Esq., \$2.30. C. D. Nichols. J. Dickson, 1 sub., \$1. Rev. W. H. Riehan. W. A. Porter. W. H. Sabean, \$2. J. Read. Rev. Dr. Tupper, \$2. Charles McNeill. A. Freeman, \$6.40. T. Graham. A. McKeen. R. D. Middlemas. A. P. Shand, 1 sub. A. J. Stevens. W. Turner, \$2. Rev. J. C. Morse. J. P. Nowlan. Rev. A. J. Cogswell.

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