

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Language. No 3.

In closing our theme, which has perhaps already been protracted beyond the bounds of propriety, we cannot refrain from adverting to a part of our subject of the most absorbing interest. We refer to

5. Legible language.

Many pleasing points of inquiry may be waved in this connection, whilst we call to mind the triumphs of that happy genius, who, tracing sounds to their simplest elements, reduced them to a few vowels and consonants, and thus laid the foundation of that infinite variety of combination of which language is susceptible. In vain do we inquire,—to whom are we indebted for this sublime and refined discovery? Concealed in the depths of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of the honor due to his memory, and which would be cheerfully paid by all the friends of knowledge and science. Be their inventor who he may, the universal tradition among the ancients, is, that letters were first introduced into Greece by Cadmus the Phoenician, who was the cotemporary of Joshua, or as some say, of David. It is by many considered most probable that alphabetic characters took their rise in Egypt, the first civilized kingdom of which we have any authentic account, and the great source of arts and policy among the ancients. In that country, the favorite study of hieroglyphical characters had directed much attention to the art of writing. Cadmus himself, though he passed from Phoenicia to Greece, is affirmed by several of the ancients, to have been originally of Thebes in Egypt. Moses may have carried with him the Egyptian letters into the land of Canaan, which may have been adopted by the Phoenicians, and thence transmitted to other parts.

It may, however, be well to mention here a tradition, current among the Jews, that Abraham introduced alphabetic characters into Egypt on his migrating from Ur of the Chaldees. In whatever part of the globe the system was invented, it was doubtless quickly transmitted to other parts and soon became a permanent method of communication between man and man. This is one of the noblest arts ever invented by the unaided efforts, if unaided they were, of the human understanding. This is an art which gives stability to thought, and enables us to present in imperishable colors, a portraiture of the soul. By it we can send our thoughts abroad to the remotest parts of the earth, can lift up our voice and speak to the most distant nations, and prolong that utterance to ages yet to come. Without this power, how painful would oft be the separation of friends. Without it the traveller might become an exile from his home, he might sigh in vain for the consoling information that his family and friends were in health and prosperity, and that he himself was still embalmed in their affections. Without this, what to us would be the wisdom of past ages, or the history of former generations. The chain of nature would be broken in all its links, and each generation become in succession an isolated and individual world, cut off by an impassable gulf from the past and the future. Whilst the language of the lips is as fleeting as the breath itself, confined to a single spot and moment, the language of the pen may enjoy an adamant existence, and perish only with the globe itself. Before its mighty touch time and space became annihilated. It links epoch with epoch and pole to pole. To it belongs the imperishable honor of conveying down from the depths of the past, as on angelic pinions, the mighty behests and all momentous disclosures of him who is

"Glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises,
Doing wonders."

And its office will never cease, until earth's drama shall close,

"And we shall see the great transaction
When Christ, in judgment, shall appear."

Until the great assize is past, when with united voice the "redeemed shall wake the echoes of eternity," or the wicked begin "the wail of everlasting woe."

March 17, '58.

LECTURE.

IMMORTALITY.—The better men are, the more terrible it would make death if there were no future state. For the better they are the better they love God. Good men have found the fountain of good. They have experience of a much better happiness in life than others; and therefore it must be more dreadful for them to have their beings eternally extinct by death.—Hence we may strongly argue a future state.—Edwards.

[Some of our readers may have seen the following interesting narrative before, as it has been in some English and other publications. We are glad, however, that our friend has taken the pains to re-translate it, seeing it illustrates so well the constancy of native preachers,—a point of deep moment to our churches at the present time. Taken in connection with the letter from Brother Crawley on our first page it will confirm the act of the Missionary Board and shew the wisdom of the appropriation for native preachers, to which reference is there made.—Ed. C.M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Gopi Nath Nundi,

A native Missionary in India.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

As I have not seen the following interesting facts in English, I furnish for your columns a free translation, with some abridgement, from the *Semear Canadien*, of an extract from a letter of Rev. Dr. Duff, dated Nov. 6th, 1857.

"Gopi Nath Nundi, a converted Hindoo, and a minister of the Presbyterian Mission from America, was stationed at Futtehpore at the time of the recent revolt in India. By the 24th of May the political horizon presented an aspect so threatening, that the authorities of Futtehpore advised all the European ladies, as also the native Christian women, to leave the station, and go to Allahabad. Gopi Nath, deeming it his duty to act in accordance with this advice, set out for that city, with his family, as also the wives and children of the native converts; intending, however, to return to his post so soon as he should have seen them all safely in the fortress. On the morning of the day in which they reached Allahabad, the revolt broke out there; so that they stopped at the mission houses, situated on the banks of the Jumna, about a league from the city.

"There, during the evening of that disastrous day, they were terrified by the sight of numerous fires in the environs, as also by the report, confused and distant, of moving fire of musketry, indicating many furious skirmishes. These poor fugitives soon perceived what was going on. Separated from the fort, and from all the European community, who were shut up, after five or six hours of terrible indecision, Gopi Nath and his wife formed the resolution to attempt to cross the Jumna, and to go on foot to Mirzapore, distant about twenty leagues. Having arrived on the other bank at the dawn of day, they proceeded in the direction which they had chosen. They had with them three children, two sons aged about 8 and 6 years, and an infant at the breast. Their domestics, notwithstanding offers the most advantageous, refused to accompany them. After they had gone some miles, the broiling heat of the sun so overwhelmed them, and their feet became so sore, that they fell down by the way, wholly exhausted.

"In this terrible situation, (these are Gopi Nath's own words,) not knowing what to do, we lifted our hearts to Him who is always disposed to lend an ear to the supplications of those who trust in Him, and to grant their requests." Nor was it in vain that they hoped in Him. While they were praying a man came along with an empty carriage, and, for a reasonable price, carried them some miles, to a place agreed upon. He then left them on a level plain. Presently, to their great surprise, they saw themselves surrounded by some villagers of that vicinity, all armed. As these were preparing either to rob or to kill them, Gopi Nath and his wife besought the Lord earnestly to interpose in their favour. Thereupon the Zemindar, (or Magistrate,) a Hindoo, appeared suddenly, and at the favourable moment. Gopi Nath at once declared to him that he and his family were Christians, and that their confidence was in the God of the Christians. The Zemindar, more enlightened than this armed populace, aware of the resources of the Christian Government of Great Britain, and without doubt fearing a future retribution, persuaded the people not to do any harm to this family. He engaged a carrier for a moderate sum, to conduct them to Mirzapore. They were taken to lodge for the night with a Brahmin, who, though he professed friendship for them, yet appears to have had evil designs against them. They did not close their eyes all the night; and by that means, no doubt, eluded the plans of that wicked man. The morning came; but the carrier had departed in the course of the night. They had only just set out on their journey, when they were assailed by a band of robbers, who, life excepted, took all that they possessed. While these were disputing about the division of the spoil, our pilgrims escaped.

"Unable, however, to reach Mirzapore, they returned toward Allahabad. But as they were about to recross the Jumna, some Mussulmans surrounded them, who, learning that they were

Christians, began to cry out, that they must be killed. This would inevitably have taken place, if God had not disposed the heart of a Hindoo goldsmith to take pity upon them, and to receive them into his own house. He, and his son, seeing that they could not protect their guests, entreated the furious populace not to kill them, but to conduct them to the Maulavi. Then took place an interview, which I will repeat as correctly as possible in the words of Gopi Nath. The Maulavi:—"Who are you?" Gopi Nath:—"We are Christians." M.—"Whence came you?" G. N.—"From Futtehpore." M.—"What do you there?" G. N.—"I preach and teach the Christian religion." M.—"Are you a minister?" G. N.—"Yes, sir." M.—"Is it you who have been accustomed to read and distribute books in the streets and villages?" G. N.—"Yes, sir, I and my catechists do this." M.—"How many Christians have you made?" G. N.—"I have not made any Christians; for one man cannot change the heart of another; but God, by means of me, has led thirty or forty to the belief and profession of the true religion."

"Upon this the Maulavi, losing patience, cried out in a rage, "Fie! fie! what gross blasphemy! God never made Kafirs, (a name of contempt for Christians); for the religion of Mahomet, which we follow, is the only true religion. How many Mahometans have you perverted to your religion?" G. N.—"I have not perverted any; but by the grace of God about a dozen Mahometans have been turned from darkness to the glorious light of the gospel."

At these words the countenance of the Maulavi became flushed with rage, and he cried out with fury, "You are but a rogue and a villain. I condemn you to have your nose, ears, and hands cut off at many times, that your sufferings may be prolonged. Your wife shall be treated in the same manner, and your children shall be sold as slaves." Hereupon the wife of Gopi Nath, animated with extraordinary courage, exclaimed, "Ah well! since we must die, the one favour which I will request is, that we may not be separated in death, and that instead of torturing us, you will slay us speedily." There was something in this remark which appeared to touch even the hard heart of the Maulavi. He cried out, "God be praised! You appear to me a respectable man. I pity you and your family. Consequently as a friend I advise you all to become Mahometan. By this means you will not only have life saved, but you will obtain an elevated rank." To these propositions Gopi Nath replied, "that they would prefer death; and that no offer could induce them to abandon the faith which they had in Jesus Christ, as the only true Saviour." The Maulavi then pronounced the following sentence:—"Oh well! through pity, I grant you three days for reflection. During that time you will have leisure to study the Koran. At the expiration of that term I will look to you. If then you believe and become Mahometan, so much the better for you. If not, in accordance with my former sentence, your noses, ears, and hands shall be cut off." To this Gopi Nath replies, "All this is useless! it is absolutely useless to wait so long a time; for God continuing to us his grace, we shall not renounce our faith. And as the grace of God never fails those that trust in Him, it would be better that you should cause us to be beheaded at once. To these words the Maulavi made no reply.

When they arrived at the prison they were surprised and afflicted to find many other native Christians, an English officer covered with wounds in a putrid state, another English gentleman, with his wife and five children, &c. The wicked jailor, perceiving that the words of Gopi Nath were cheering his companions in captivity, resolved to separate him from his family, and all the others. He protested against this undeserved and cruel change. Upon this a band of the rebels seizing Gopi Nath, drew him out and put his feet in fetters. They seized his wife by the hair of her head, and inflicted a large wound in her forehead by striking it with a brick. They kept him without in fetters, without any shelter, with his head uncovered, exposed to all the heat of the sun, and to the searching winds.

"These prisoners had also to endure the tortures of hunger and thirst. Toward the middle of the day there was given them a handful of roasted grain, and at evening a little poor thin cake, and for their thirst a very little filthy water. Presently the emissaries of the Maulavi came, threatening to take away their life if they did not immediately become Mahometans.

"On the sixth day the Maulavi came to try again if he could, either by threats or promises, force or persuade them to renounce Christ, and to embrace the faith of Mahomet. His patience

appeared exhausted by the express refusals of these poor victims, and their immoveable perseverance in confessing faithfully the name of the Lord Jesus. Disappointed and chagrined he went away, declaring that he would take vengeance in a summary manner.

"But that same day, which was the seventh of their captivity, the valiant Neil, with his little band of European soldiers and Sikhs, coming out of the fort, attacked the rebels, who, after a hot contest, were completely defeated. The enemy abandoned Allahabad with such precipitation, that there was not time to bring out the prisoners; by which means they escaped massacre. Gopi Nath, his family, and many Europeans, as soon as they were set at liberty, with joyfulness praised the name of their God, who had so marvellously sustained them through so great trials, and sufferings so severe."

This narrative strikingly exhibits special interpositions of Providence, evidently in answer to the prayer of faith, and in seasons of extreme danger and deep distress. It also evinces intelligence, energy, and constancy in a successful native Preacher in India. Hence it affords encouragement to employ and sustain in the East such persons, for the promulgation of the gospel.

Ever yours in Christ,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, March 25, 1858.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notice.

CAPT. WILLIAM LESLIE,

Died, at North Sydney, C. B., Feb'y 19th, '58, deeply lamented by all who knew him. He was 64 years of age, being born in Dundee, Scotland, in 1794. He left his home for this country in youth, and married Miss Eleanor Musgrave of this place shortly after,—about this time he was awakened to attend to the concerns of his soul. Then the gospel was not to be heard along these then desolate shores. The people were immersed in gross darkness, and, apparently, "no man cared for their souls." But God had a people to be gathered from these bleak coasts, of whom he was not unmindful: for this end He sent a faithful devoted young man, John Hull—now in glory, to proclaim all the words of this life. On returning from a foreign voyage, Mr. Leslie went to hear the young preacher, and there devoted himself to God, having obtained mercy through Jesus Christ. Some years after this, while at sea, he resolved to read the Holy Scriptures, with particular reference to the subject of baptism, which was then warmly opposed in the settlement. He, however, was soon convinced that believers were the only suitable subjects, and immersion the only proper mode. Immediately on his return he offered himself to the Baptist Church, believing it to be a New Testament Church, and was buried with Christ in baptism by the hands of Elder George Richardson. He ever after this conducted divine worship on board of his vessel, his men looking up and esteeming him as a true servant of God. To whatever port he entered, he never failed to interest himself in the cause of the Sailors, and if practicable all would visit the Bethel. He was not unmindful of the cause in his adopted home. He resolved, by the help of God, that a Bethel should be erected at this place, and persevered until he saw it accomplished, and, in the absence of a minister, until death, continued to conduct Divine service with acceptance and profit. This is now his monument—the only place of religious worship in the community; but where all sects of Christians worship God.

Mr. Leslie was a Christian of the highest order, a man of truth and integrity,—"an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile." He continued in the employ of Messrs. Archibald & Co., and retained their entire confidence for 34 years.

The day before his departure from this life a friend asked him if he had no fears in reference to the future, to which he replied, "I dread nothing but the pains of death. I am prepared to go at my master's call." Next day he and his partner drove out in their sleigh, and returned to all appearance refreshed. He then sat down near a comfortable fire, and without a sigh or groan or the moving of a limb fell asleep in Jesus. That which he dreaded he felt not, and in taking his devoted servant God himself closed his eyes. His funeral was the largest ever known here: the members of 4 Divisions of the Sons of Temperance, together with the religious public generally attended. Sermon by the pastor from Prov. xiv. 32,—"But the righteous hath hope in his death.—Communicated by Rev. Augustus Shels.

SOMETHING TO WONDER AT.—To see millions of heavenly bodies moving with such unerring regularity is a striking proof of divine power acting by laws which itself produced. But it is much more wonderful to see millions of holy beings and millions of restored beings all revolving in the orbits of obedience, under the powerful influence of love.—John Cox.

When any little boy or girl is always talking to you about the faults of others, you may be sure that they are in the habit of talking to others about your faults.

Dig a well before you are thirsty.