

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM REV. A. R. R. CRAWLEY IN BURMAH.

Rangoon, March 4, 1870.

My DEAR Messenger,—

Tired—heart-sick, and more the last than the first. Out all day in the sun, and “who hath believed our report?” I try to stand with the Prophet by the valley of dry bones, “very many and very dry”—and to remember that the lesson there so vividly and impressively taught is as applicable now as then. The Prophet felt his faith stagger, more, perhaps, on account of the apparent inadequacy of the means proposed than of the magnitude of the results to be effected. And so in the present day, the “foolishness of preaching” and the “blowing of the wind” seem to the wise of this world equally idle and powerless agencies for the resurrection of the nations from the sepulchre of idolatry and heathenism; where they have lain for centuries.

But as my original intention was epistolary rather than expository, I had probably better confine myself to my first purpose. I left Henthada on the 1st inst., and arrived in the “diocese” of Moung Kyan, the much esteemed “bishop” of Paing-Zau-nan. The band of Christians in that place are steadily growing under the active and efficient leadership of their excellent pastor. To add, immediately after that cheering announcement, that their number has been diminished during the past year by nine exclusions, may be a sharp shock of discouragement to some. While the fact may serve to show that our work is not without its disheartening elements, this mitigating consideration must be borne in mind—not one of the excluded number has relapsed into heathenism. Idolatry, reverence for the old system are to them simply impossibilities. The offence of the majority is drunkenness,—a vice for whose rapidly increasing prevalence the Christian government of the country is directly responsible.

The queer-looking word at the head of this page is the name of a Christian Karon village, a few miles from Paing-Zau-nan. The church is a large one, connected with the mission of Rev. D. A. W. Smith, the very laborious and efficient brother missionary, successor of the lamented Thomas at Henthada. My object in coming here was to visit a neighbouring village of Burmese, all heathen, but reported to be exhibiting tendencies to inquiry.

My “out in the sun” above mentioned was among these so-called inquirers.

I saw nearly all the village and spent an hour with the Phogyee in his monastery; the results, so far as my own immediate hopes are concerned you have learned, from what I have already written. I forgot to add that on returning to “camp,” I read the 14th and 15 chapters of John, and the soul-weariness, which had clung to me like the weariness of death, and the heart-sickness, vanished, while the “pence of Christ” filled my soul with unspeakable joy, and confidence, that the despised “Nazarine” of more than eighteen centuries gone, “knew what was in man,” and needed not that any should tell Him of man, and that His own plan for the subjection of the nations to Himself, is the easiest and the best,—evincing its Divine origin in its grand simplicity, and is destined to achieve a glorious triumph, when the complicated, elaborated, deep-laid schemes and agencies of man shall have taken their place in history among the remarkable failures which prove the “foolishness of God wiser than men.”

On arriving at my post after an absence of nearly two years’ duration, I found the native pastors all more or less engaged in *making money*, in different ways, but principally in raising pigs for the pork-market. Very little observation was required to make it obvious that the result of this endeavour to unite secular pursuits with the engagements of their sacred office was simply a demonstration of its utter incompatibility. Having called them all together, I laid the facts before them and made them understand that the only inference deducible from those facts was that either the pastor’s office, or the secular pursuit *must be abandoned*. Mark the result: with one, or perhaps two exceptions, they unanimously resolved to give up their money-making, and give themselves unreservedly to the legitimate work of their calling, as preachers of the gospel to their countrymen. This action will be better appreciated if the fact is borne in mind, that they *could all make more money* than they receive as preachers.

One of the men on many accounts—the most

valuable of them all, at first announced without hesitation, and with a little offensiveness of manner, his deliberate purpose to “cut no more missionary money” but to be independent and accumulate a fortune for his family. Now this man is the most energetic and intelligent man in the whole mission. His place could not be filled by any other, and his usefulness to the mission is simply beyond calculation. *He could command any day a salary four or five times as large as that he receives from mission funds.*

Such a man’s withdrawal from the staff of native helpers, implied a very serious loss. Hence you can understand my relief and joy, when the next day, he came to me and said, in substance, his whole manner testifying to the sincerity of his words, “Teacher, forgive me. I was very foolish yesterday, to act as if I could believe that any worldly employment, however lucrative, could compensate for the joy of doing the will of Jesus! Now, teacher, send me where you will, set me at what work you will; while life lasts I will serve God and my Saviour, according to His own will.”

Henthada, March 9th.—Mail in—and the good news has come that the Georges were to leave in January for Burmah! Nothing, however, is said about the route they are to take, but I trust they are coming overland, and in that case they may be expected before the close of the present month.

It is an immense relief to know that this great district is now to have another missionary; and there is now good reason to hope that before many years more the gospel will have been preached to “every creature” in the Henthada province.

But, (that offensive monosyllable,) Dr. Tupper has written requesting us to drop from the native preacher’s list, all those who have hitherto been supported from the general fund. Reluctant to give up men who are doing much good, and who *must engage* in secular pursuits if their support is thus discontinued, I assumed the responsibility of retaining their names on the list, and wrote at once to Dr. Tupper, stating that I had done so, because, presuming his letter to have been written at the time when an immediate large outlay was required for Bro. George, it seemed probable that the directions would not have been sent, had it been known that Bro. George was not coming. Now, however, Dr. Tupper’s request must be complied with. *And that means that ten useful labourers must cease preaching and teaching*, and look about them for means of supporting their families. *What shall be done?* I propose the question, and would suggest, Mr. Editor, that you kindly devote a column of your paper to a reply.

And what makes the suspension of these labourers still more painful is the fact that the demand for native preachers, was never greater, never more imperative than now—

More anon.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM REV. W. H. PORTER.

BERMUDA, April 25th, 1870.

Dear Brother,—

To save the time and labor of writing to so many as I flatter myself may be interested to hear from us, I write to you,—ready to communicate.

We reached the five fathom hole, off St. George’s harbor, Bermuda, last evening, too late to venture the rather dangerous passage, and so cast anchor, and nested for the night.

We had made the passage from Halifax in 2 days and 10 hours. The passengers were chiefly English officers late from England, destined for Bermuda.

Early this morning we came in by the green hills and white quarries—the hills of cedar, oak and the pride of India, and the quarries of soft building sandstone, till the white roofs of St. George’s “rose to view.”

Bermuda is not an island but islands, numbering like those of Chester Basin, one for each day in the year. They are very pretty as seen from citadel hill, extending about 22 miles in length, and comprising a population of about 11,000. There seems to be but little attention to agriculture, though the soil is quite productive.

We saw great cactuses growing from the walls, as we came down from the citadel hill, and geraniums and oleanders in abundance. Garden flowers and vegetables were in full bloom and growth, and the whole islands, save the bold pride of India, looked as green as a Nova Scotia summer.

The aspect of St. George’s, on first seeing it

from the Harbor, was novel to our Nova Scotia eyes, the village having more the appearance of an English stereoscopic view, than anything we had ever seen; but on arriving on shore it seemed even more novel. The stone buildings with their plastered walls, and white roofs,—the narrow irregular streets, six paces wide, the quaint, quiet, appearance of everything was novel in the extreme. The first thing we did after stepping on the stone landing, was to stand and gaze around in wonder upon everything. I called with Capt. R. Weaver, on a Mrs. Long, of Liverpool, N. S., and was informed by her, that there was one other Baptist, a lady in St. George’s. I should like to have been able to preach to them, but time forbade. After enjoying the kind hospitality of Mr. James Musson and his amiable lady, during our short stay at Bermuda, we steamed out through the narrow passage, and among the white cottages in cedar groves, to roll along the dreary leagues of wave again, for St. Thomas. Will write you on reaching there.

W. H. PORTER.

For the Christian Messenger.

AN ORDINATION SERVICE IN P. E. ISLAND.

The brethren of the Bedeque and Tryon churches met at Tryon on the 7th inst., to consider the propriety of ordaining Bro. Jno. B. McDonald, M. D., to the work of the Christian ministry.

The following were present in Council with the brethren:

Rev. Jno. Davis, Charlottetown, and St. Peter’s Road.

Rev. Fred. Kidson, North River.

Rev. M. P. Freeman, Cavenish and Summer-side.

Bro. Davis was chosen chairman, and Bro. Freeman, Clerk of the Council.

The candidate having given a brief narrative of his Christian experience and call to ministry, and having been duly examined as to his doctrinal views, it was unanimously resolved, That this council recommend his ordination to the gospel ministry, and that the services commence—the following day, (Sat.) at 2 o’clock. Also resolved, that Bro. Davis deliver the ordination sermon; that Bro. Freeman ask the questions; that Bro. Kidson offer the ordaining prayer; that Bro. Davis give the charge to the candidate; and Bro. Freeman to the church, and that the candidate pronounce the benediction.

The ordination service took place on the 8th, according to the arrangement of the previous day in the presence of a large and interested congregation. The preacher chose for this text 1 Kings xxii. 43, and showed that the minister of the gospel is a warrior that he must be equipped with appropriate armor—that he must engage in active service against the enemies of the Lord—that he must shoot the arrow “at a venture,” and commit the results to God, and that there is a glorious reward for him who is faithful to the sacred trust.

We are glad to welcome Bro. McDonald into the gospel field. He has been laboring with zeal and success since his call to the churches of Bedeque and Tryon, and will have the privilege next Sabbath, (D. V.) of administering the ordinance of baptism to a number of willing converts.

M. P. FREEMAN, Clerk of the Council.

For the Christian Messenger

SAYINGS AND DOINGS AT OTTAWA.

Wearily the Session of Parliament wears away. Seventy-five days have elapsed, since Parliament was convened, and with the exception of about three holidays, five days of every week have been devoted to the public service. And confessedly the show for all this time and labour is not large.

The Government have not been very successful with their promised measures. The Interest Bill, the Election Bill, the Currency Bill have all come to grief. The Court of Appeal Bill is considered in moribund condition. Some smaller measures such for instance as the Divorce Bill are shelved and will not be revived this session, some useful good measures have passed and so of questionable value. The hot haste in which the Habeas Corpus act was suspended is clearly not justified. No doubt ministers thought that their intimation was reliable. But they were told in both Houses at the time that large and organized bodies of men with the necessary equipments for a dangerous invasion could no more be brought to the frontier without it being made a matter of public notoriety, no more than a thunderbolt could rush through the atmosphere and destroy life and property with never a cloud in the firmament. What kind of a force would that be for invading a country, that had never been drilled? Men and officers, infantry and cavalry who had never met before? By besides all this, the citizens of the United States along the frontier are on most friendly terms with Canadians, and would like

nothing better than to see the Fenian marauders whipped and gibbeted. Scarcely more dangerous or more to be dreaded, would a gathering of these lawless filibusters be to their enemies than to their supposed friends. It is therefore to be hoped that we have experienced the last of the Fenian scares. The next time general O’Neill approaches the frontier or threatens so to do with his guards in green, the better way instead of rushing forward to oppose them, will be, to withdraw and allow the rascals to get fairly in upon Canadian territory and then close up behind them and cutting off all retreat settle the question, once for all, on Canadian soil.

The Tariff; some observations, on which I made in my last communication, has been a fruitful topic of discussion debate and angry wordy warfare in the Commons. As I write the Bill has not gone up to the Senate although it is now quite ready I hear for the Upper House. It will not be a popular tariff. Duties are few and light, and such is a duty on coal,—duties on bread and meal, and rice, the poor man’s luxury, the sick man’s sustenance can only be justified by the necessity for, a Revenue which it would be impossible to raise from other articles. I sometimes think that if the finance minister would but consult the friends and supporters of the government before he committed himself and his colleagues to principles, which even his own political friends and supporters can hardly defend, he would better acquit himself in the discharge of the responsible, and often unpleasant functions connected with and inseparable from the department over which he presides.

The measure to which public attention is now keenly directed, however, the measure which is surrounded with the deepest interest, the forthcoming long promised measure which is to heal the distractions at Red River, and lay the foundations of self-government in that far off but magnificent portion of the continent, for this,—expectation is just now on tiptoe, and both Houses are waiting patient and breathless. Commissioner Donald Smith’s Report has just been printed, and it is quite a thrilling story. It discloses from the Hudson Bay point of view,—he is one of the Company’s officers—the causes of the insurrection. But the Red River men now here, contend that the Company’s officers, without perhaps anticipating the final and dire results of their passive resistance, if not actual encouragement, to the insurgents, are clearly culpable to a greater or less extent, for all that has happened. And there is much to justify that charge. The half-breeds and others controlled by Riel never amounted to half the population. And the Company’s officers needed but to have summoned the protestant and loyal portions of the population to their aid,—then the Company having charge and control of the Forts, the stores, the ammunition, and the war material,—and the result would never have been a matter of doubt. When the full extent of the mischief began to develop itself, when Riel lay hands upon the Company’s stores, seized their fire arms and took forcible possession, no doubt the Company’s agents began to be alarmed. But it was then too late to try back. Riel himself, like all insurgents similarly situated could not remain stationary. He must press on, or retire. Inflated with importance, inflamed with wine, and irritated at the Protestant opposition threatened, he soon discovered that success depended upon a bold assumption of unrestricted power, as boldly exercised. In this we have the secret of his action. The rash Councils, thus adopted, led to criminal conduct, first of a milder type, but soon developing into one of the most unjustifiable fiendish murders ever perpetrated. Public sentiment revolts at the very narrative of the story of Scott’s execution, and men of all classes stand agast. But beyond Riel himself, Lepine his adjutant and perhaps the persons who actually committed the murder, the criminality of the act would hardly be supposed to extend. The half-breeds, *Metis* as they are called in Lower Canada and others who gathered around Riel, supporting his quasi authority and government, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, are scarcely to be considered responsible for much if any thing of what has occurred in the Red River Settlement.

Since the foregoing was written the Government have laid upon the tables of the House of Commons a Bill for the government of the Province of Manitoba a name selected for that purpose which is to have Fort Garry for its capital, extending Westward to Lake Manitoba Southward towards the Lake of the Woods the bounds not at present very well defined as is the case also with the Northern boundary. This Bill had its first reading on the 2nd of May in the House of Commons and was very fully explained by Sir John A. McDonald.

The opposition benches criticized the measure very sharply. One ground of objection taken and a very serious one is, that the Western line of the new Province, is to be drawn from a point on the U. S. Boundary of 49° running thence due North to the Lake Manitoba, so as just to exclude the young flourishing settlement of Portage La Prairie, with no less than one hundred ninety families of Protestants. This village lies upon the Assiniboine, sixty five miles only from Fort Garry the Capital, and may be considered *par excellence* as containing the *ultra* loyal portion of the population—Scotchmen principally, and their descendants. As proof of their numbers, Rev. Mr. Fletcher, who was examined before the select Committee has since stated, that when the effort was made by Riel to establish self government, Portage La Prairie out of twenty four members to be elected, had three or one eighth of the whole number allotted to it. The reasons, given for excluding this village from the limits of the New Province, was its distance from the seat of Government. Several members however stated that some of the Counties of Ontario, had their Shire towns more remote from their distant municipalities, or portions of them, than sixty-