

"Letters from Heathen Lands."

Rev. S. F. Smith, D. D., is making a tour to Burmah, and writes some interesting "Letters from Heathen Lands," to the *Watchman*. Dr. S. is the author of the beautiful poem "The Lone Star," referring to the Telooogo mission. He gives an account of his meeting with a company of Telooogos at a Tea-meeting in Burmah. He says:

"Many Telooogo and Tamil people came from the opposite coast of India, who are extensively employed as servants and coolies. There is a church of these people at Rangoon. It was formerly a branch of the English Baptist church, but has recently been organized as an independent body. They number about ninety members, and baptisms occur nearly every month. They have a Telooogo pastor, and worship on the Sabbath in their own language. The members appear earnest and faithful, and conscious of their obligation to honor the gospel by their lives. When converted, they have a taste for adopting Scripture names; hence we were introduced successively to John, Abraham, Jacob, Israel, Paul, Aaron, Samuel, Sarah, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Naomi. The pastor, Johann, speaks English. I visited him afterwards in his house, and saw his English books and Scripture pictures. One of the number present at this evening gathering, was an original member of one of the earliest churches among the Telooogos in India. Another had been a successful teacher in Calcutta. He was baptized by Mr. MacLaurin. Two Bible women were present,—one of them the first person baptized by Mr. Smith, many years since, in Henthada. One of the men is an efficient clerk at the mission printing office; another, a faithful disciple, who began to be interested in the gospel in Prome. His heathen mother heard of it, and ordered him at once to return home. She hoped to prevent him from becoming a Christian. But when God begins a work, He never fails to complete it; and though men plot against His methods, His chariot rolls on. The son returned to Rangoon in obedience to his mother's command; but he came directly under gospel influences, was converted, and baptized, and now he and his mother also are walking in the light.

After the "creature comforts" were disposed of, the disciples sang a beautiful melody, wild and weird, led by one of their number. Then the pastor, Johann, introduced the speaking. It seems he had heard of "The Lone Star," and learned that the author was present. Self-moved,—for no one had suggested it to him,—he gave the company a version of the hymn in Telooogo, and introduced the author of it as the English speaker of the evening,—he himself acting as interpreter. It seemed almost like a dream realized, to see that body of Telooogo Christians together, part of the host who are praising God in the same dialect beyond the Bay of Bengal, men and women from whose lips the cup of salvation had well nigh been taken away, through the lack of faith in the churches of America, but among whom modern missions have achieved their crowning glory. One could almost say, in surveying the scene, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And yet this was but the earnest of a grander triumph. There were many beating hearts and damp eyes in the assembly that evening; and, as the exercises proceeded, it was easy to say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." The address, with its interpretation, was followed by prayers, singing and benediction. The doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," admits of being sung gloriously to the one tune of Old Hundred and two or three different languages when the heart sings as well as the lips.

Could a person have been present on these three evenings, sceptical as to the power of the gospel to renovate men,—remembering what these people were, and seeing what they had become,—surely he would have been convinced of the power of the gospel of Christ. Could a Christian have been present who had not been interested in missions, he would have seen his mistake and exclaimed, "What hath God wrought!" The experiences of these evenings were a repetition of the words of Mark's Gospel, chap. 16: 20.

A subsequent letter has some passages of deep interest. Dr. Smith says:—

Our visit to Bassein was of great interest. The town lies about one hundred and twenty-five miles west of Rangoon, and on another of the mouths of the great Irrawaddy. The voyage from Rangoon to Bassein occupied about thirty hours. On our arrival, we found the missionaries of the station on the pier, awaiting our coming. The whole company dined together that evening with us, and "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." It was Saturday evening, and "the Sabbath drew on." And such a Sabbath! At 7, A. M., was the Karen prayer-meeting; at 8, English preaching in the Karen Chapel to the missionaries and others; at 10.30 Karen preaching; at 11, preaching to the Burmese in Mr. Jameson's chapel; at 2.30, Karen Sabbath school; at 6, address to the Karens through an interpreter. This hardly made the Sabbath a day of rest, but it was a day full of employment, excitement and spiritual joy. It was pleasant to talk over together the days, the scenes and the men of the past. It brought the earlier periods of missionary history into living contact with the present, and made the present scene but a link in the chain which belongs to, and is to be perfected in, the grand consummation.

Bassein is the centre of a great educational and evangelistic work. Here through the energy and enterprise of Mr. Carpenter, has been erected at the expense of the Karens themselves, the beautiful and commodious Ko Thabgyu Hall. The building contains a large and comely chapel, two large and smaller recitation rooms, a library room, and a bell tower, in which is a bell, of American manufacture, given to the Institution by the Sabbath school of the First Baptist Church, New York. Besides the fact of the gift from this source, the words are cast on the bell, "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." The work of the gospel among his people begun that day, fifty years ago, has had a glorious sequel, and the first solitary convert has been followed by a train of many thousands. On the front of one gallery in the chapel is printed in Karen, the passage, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" and on the corresponding front of the opposite gallery, "Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children."

From Bassein as a central point, Karen churches can be reached in every direction. Both heathen and Christian populations swarm in the fields and hide themselves in the forests. In connection with the Bassein mission, according to the last annual report, there are 56 Burman church members, 6,777 Sgau Karens, and 1,035 Pwo Karens.

One morning I was brought into closer contact than before with heathen worship in its painfully revolting and unsatisfactory forms. I had seen men and women before bowing down to priests and pagodas, muttering their worship and placing their fantastic offerings on the shrines of their divinities. I had seen heathen mothers teaching their little children to clasp their hands and bow their heads and present their paper charms before their Gods of brick and mortar. But in the course of a morning walk in Bassein, I saw an act of idolatry savoring of a "darkness that might be felt." In the inclosure of the fine pagoda, grim with fabulous lions and glittering with gliding, while I lingered in the presence of the images of Buddha, of brass, and brick, and marble, a woman came and knelt down to worship. She seemed about sixty-five or seventy years of age, and she had a troubled but sincere face. Evidently idolatry had not given her peace. On her head she bore a tray, containing in small dishes six or seven different articles of food. Bowing down on her knees and elbows, she offered the whole to an image of Buddha, with great reverence and a few mumbled words, which, of course, I could not understand. Then she poured a little rice into a saucer, took it to the foot of a sacred peepul tree growing in the enclosure, knelt again and offered it to the nat which is supposed to reside in the tree. After this she poured the rice upon a shelf, affixed to the tree for the reception of the offerings. The hungry crows instantly pounced upon the rice and devoured it, and the few grains which fell to the ground were picked up by lean and hungry dogs, numbers of which hang around the idol houses

waiting for the food which they can thus secure from the misguided worshippers. The woman had laid up merit by having presented the offering, and did not concern herself to ask what became of it. If she acquires merit enough, she hopes in her next state to be born to a higher destiny,—perhaps to become a man. Returning to her tray she bowed before the god, and alternately mumbled her prayers and conversed with a man who had also come to worship, both of them as carelessly and thoughtlessly as if they had not been engaged in acts of prayer and consecration. This was heathenism; these were the gods, and these the worshippers! And these were specimens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, who, if missions are not prosecuted with far greater energy, will certainly die for generations to come, without the knowledge of the way of life. I discovered that these persons before me had heard of the eternal God, and had had the cup of life put to their lips, but they had refused to drink. These mighty fields are ready to be sown and reaped; but what is one laborer to a thousand acres? What is one reaper with his sickle to the Interminable harvest.

Temperance.

THE DEVIL'S BUSINESS.—If the devil were to live on the earth in the form of a man, and to choose a trade, what do you suppose he would choose? Would he be a schoolmaster? No, he hates light and knowledge. Would he be a blacksmith? No, he does not like hard work. What, then, would he do? Why, he would keep a beer-saloon. That is just the trade for the devil, for he would lead an idle life, and do a deal of mischief.

A Tragic Heart History.

One day last summer a temperance lecturer was being driven from one town to another, where he was to hold a meeting in the evening. His friend, whose carriage he was riding in, and who was most zealous in everything associated with temperance, was asked, "How is it that you, who have never felt the tooth of the serpent, should always be so ready to make sacrifices for the good cause?"

He gave a quick, searching, telegraphic glance at the speaker. A tear gleamed in his eyes as he said, "One reason why I wanted to ride with you was to tell you the story of a most important crisis in my life."

"I was born in the year 1823. My father was a very intemperate man. The most of his time was spent in the tavern in my native town, or at a village tavern three miles distant. We often suffered for the necessities of life, while my father poured all his earnings into the tills of those two tavern-keepers. My mother was quite expert with her needle, and thus kept the wolf at bay by her industry and close economy. Our little home had been left to us by my grandfather in such a way that my father could not deprive us of a shelter. We kept a cow, which furnished a large share of our living. The family consisted of myself and three sisters."

"One day, when I was about seven years old, my father went to the tavern, and while taking his accustomed drink, discovered that some one had spoken of him as a common drunkard. He furiously demanded of the landlord the name of the person who had said this, and the fellow replied, 'Your wife knows all about it.' He came home infuriated with drink, and began abusing my mother in language which it makes me shudder to remember, she protesting that she did not know anything about it. Finally, his face purpled with passion; he dealt my mother a terrible blow, which prostrated her bleeding and insensible to the floor."

Here the relater broke down completely, bursting into tears. After a moment, he said, "I hope you will pardon my emotion; but now, after a period of nearly fifty years, I cannot refer to this picture without the sad, suffering face of my mother, who is now a saint in heaven, rising before me. My sister shrieked, 'Oh, father, you have killed my mother!' Affrighted, I sprang from my bed, and ran to the barn and hid myself."

"When daylight came, and all was still in the house, I crept back to find that my grandmother had gone to seek a doctor, who finding my mother in a critical condition, told my father, who had just risen from his drunken slumber, that he would certainly be punished for his violence. He gathered what few clothes he had, together, and absconded, leaving us to get along the best way we could. When my father had left the house, my mother tenderly drew me to her breast, and, with the tears streaming over her cheeks, made me promise never to drink a drop of liquor while I lived, and sealed that promise with a passionate kiss, which left an indelible impress upon my heart. For nearly fifty years I have kept that pledge. That summer we got along comfortably."

"With the help of our neighbors we cultivated the little patch of ground and with our cow we did not suffer for food. My mother raised a flock of turkeys also, with the sale of which she hoped to obtain means to purchase our shoes and other necessary clothing for winter. There was to be a militia muster near the village. The landlord of the little tavern I spoke of, came to purchase our turkeys for that occasion, offering a good price, which my mother gladly accepted. He put them in his cart, and handed my mother a bill which my father had contracted at his bar, and jumping into his cart, drove away as fast as his horse could go."

"My poor mother stood there dumb-founded, and bursting into tears, walked into the house. Early and late that autumn she worked, sometimes till past midnight, to get our winter clothing, and I went bare foot until the snow covered the ground, before she could purchase our shoes. When I think of my poor mother and my sorrow-laden childhood, do you wonder that I am a radical temperance man? It seems as if God's retribution followed that tavern keeper. He died a poor, loathsome drunkard, forsaken of God and man."—*New York Christian Herald*.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
From Rev. John Brown.

DEAR BRO. SELDEN,—

I have been very slow of late in communicating with you. If thoughts were letters both you and many more friends would have more than you would care to read. Forgive my delay.

How welcome is the *Messenger* as it visits me weekly! How eagerly are its pages scanned! Mingled feelings are experienced as the varied items of news are read. Many I find have been called away by death since I left your favoured land. Not a few of whom I had learned to love. The record of their deaths caused me sorrow but, "Why should friendship grieve for those, who safe arrive on Canaan's shore?" How welcome must the rest that remains to the people of God have been to the rightly honoured and beloved Dr. Tupper after such a long day of work for the Lord. And my dear old friend and brother beloved Asaph Marshall, as well, and others whose names are in the book of life. Thus they are crossing over one by one, and before long the youngest of us will be called away. Have you ever thought when you would like to die? I have. Is it weak of me? So let it be. I should like to die in Spring time, when this fair world is at its best, when birds are singing their very sweetest after the gloom of Winter; when earth is most like Heaven, and as to the day, let it be toward the evening of God's own day,—then let me die! Then let me shuffle off this mortal coil, and pass on to where

"Everlasting Spring abides,
And never withering flowers."

to the land.

"Where Sabbaths have no end."

Such wishes may or may not be gratified, nor will it matter in the least. The question, How shall I die? is far weightier than when?

I am very glad indeed to read of so many conversions in various places. Such news always cheers. Glad also to see that Isaiah has recovered from his illness, and is again able to prophesy in the name of the Lord, and that many believe his report. I have been also much gratified at the frequent reports of donation visits. It speaks well both for pastor and people, that the latter in addition to the regular salary find it in their pockets and their hearts too to make such valuable presents to their minister. There are some who think that these donations are not donations but salary; they should be made to know better than that. Do they suppose for a moment that a Baptist or any other minister would call that a gift

which is their own proper due for services rendered? It is astonishing how uncharitable some people are!

What a sad muddle the Foreign Mission work seems to have got into. It is devoutly to be hoped that the explanation of Bro. Armstrong's resignation, and the ready acceptance thereof will be satisfactory to all concerned. You must take care that you do not lose him and his wife as you did Mr. and Mrs. Boggs. It is no use to cry over spilt milk, but it was no small loss to your Society when Mr. B. was well nigh, if not quite, compelled to seek the aid of another Society to send him and his wife to their loved work.

Mr. Carey has safely arrived in Liverpool, as you will probably know before this reaches you. I trust and expect he will have a prosperous career in that famous town. I hope to see him in London next week at our Spring meetings.

[After some reflections on the illness of Lord Beaconsfield, who was then living, Mr. B. proceeds:]

Mr. Gladstone appears to have quite recovered from his accident, and is as hard at work as ever. His Irish Land Bill it seems has given considerable satisfaction to Irish members, which speaks more for it than any commendation from any number of Englishmen.

I was sorry to see by the *Messenger* that that large consignment of apples from Annapolis to London did not turn out as well as expected. I am happy however to say that one barrel that came by that steamer was in splendid order with the exception of perhaps a dozen apples. This said barrel was kindly sent me by my esteemed brother Robt. Marshall of Clarence. All who saw and tasted them, and they were not a few, were greatly delighted with their beautiful appearance and rich flavour. They consisted of Baldwins and Nonpareils. Bro. M. is a master apple grower, he won several prizes last year, he also sets apart a large apple tree, the product being devoted to Missions. It is called "The Missionary tree." It just served him right that he won those prizes, at least that is my opinion. The promise of a good fruit season in England is very hopeful. I hope this does not cast any gloom over the minds of any apple farmers who may read it. They must live in hope that the promise may be all, and that with them the crop may be abundant. In about a month the long looked for Revised New Testament will be published. It is waited for with keen interest. I think the prejudice against it will not be so strong as was once supposed. One improvement upon the old will be that it will be paged, which will be a great convenience; this will be especially the case when the Old Testament comes out. The preacher when he announces his chapter or text in Zephaniah for instance will not see some of his hearers looking for that prophet towards the end of the New Testament as I have seen are now.

With most affectionate remembrance,

J. BROWN.

Melksham, Wilts, April 18th.

Letter from Greece.

I have just closed a long and interesting conversation with one of the clergy of the Greek Church upon the common topics of politics and religion, both bearing upon the talked of contest between the Turks and Greeks. My friend the priest, assumed that there is a real necessity for war growing out of the condition of our countrymen who still chafe under the Turkish rule. In some manner I sympathize with this opinion; but while I acknowledge that war is, evidently one of the means of extricating our patriots from despotism, I assert, also, that the true weapon of warfare, and which is in the hands of the clergy to use for the nation's best and highest good, is the *gospel*, which brings prosperity, righteousness and peace.

I am greatly strengthened in my convictions that a nation's prosperity is based upon its religious freedom. The motives, words and acts of a people in its ecclesiastical and civil government should be a living reality and not a mere formalism.

Every possible means is being taken to strengthen the increasing army, and for the comfort and help of the sick and wounded in the event of battle. Movable hospitals have been sent by the wealthy Greeks in various places from France,