

Maulmain Mission.

Letter of Mr. Howells, dated November 23, 1847. Encouragements—Christian death of two native females.

We have many discouragements in our work.—The want of spirituality among the native Christians, and the slight hold which the fear of God and the love of his law have upon the hearts of many of them, is the chief. But we have encouragements too. We see some who have been turned from the worship of idols, exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit, not only when in health, but also in sickness and death. We have lately been permitted to see two females go down into the dark valley and shadow of death, rejoicing in the hope of eternal life. One was a Karen, the wife of one of our Burman assistants. The other was an aged Burman disciple.—Both of them had been sick for a long time, and during their whole sickness manifested a spirit of meekness and trust in God. The wife of the assistant was unwilling that her husband should be hindered in his work by her sickness; and even when she needed constant care, would urge him to leave her and go out preaching. When she appeared to be very near her end, he proposed to pray with her. She succeeded in placing her hands together to her forehead, as the natives are accustomed to do in prayer, and died with them in that position. Thus she fell asleep in Jesus while in the act of prayer, leaving us a full assurance that she has gone to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. The Burman disciple also gave the clearest evidence of being prepared for death. It was a pleasure to visit her in her sickness. While able to speak, she was ever ready to speak of the great goodness of God in sending his Son to die for sinners, and in causing his servants to come to this country to make known the truth. She delighted to have the Christians and Missionaries come in to see her and pray with her; and, when unable to speak, would by signs request those visiting her to pray. She finished her course on the Sabbath, and entered into the joy of her Lord. The aged husband with whom she had lived upwards of sixty years, is left to finish his course alone. But their separation will be short; for his trust, too, is in the Lord our righteousness.

When we see one after another thus departing to be with Christ, we are encouraged to persevere in our work; for we know that our labour is not in vain.

Contrasted with the happy death of the two disciples above mentioned, was that of a woman who had heard the sound of the Gospel, and several of whose relatives are Christians. But she had remained a heathen. When it became evident that she must die, she was greatly alarmed, and cried out, "I cannot die—do take hold of me—put your arms around me—I cannot go;"—and with other such expressions. But her time had come, and there was no reprieve.

Preaching of the Assistants and Missionaries.

There are signs of good among the heathen. The truth is working its way into the hearts of the people in town and country. Many, very many, acknowledge some of the great and leading truths of the Gospel. The assistants are doing a great and important work; and from Maulmain the truth is sounded out to the remotest parts of Burmah Proper, as well as throughout the provinces. The fact is, no one knows what is being done by the assistants, who does not from time to time hear an account of their labours from their own mouths. They daily meet with traders and others from all parts of the country, and make known to them the leading doctrines of the gospel, answer their objections, and give them tracts and portions of scripture, which are thus scattered abroad, as upon the wings of the wind. And though some seed falls by the wayside, some among thorns, and some upon stony places, some must fall upon good ground, and bring forth fruit to the glory of God. The assistants also preach from house to house, by the wayside, and in the market places. Much preaching, too, is done by the Missionaries. Br. Stevens and Br. Stilson preach more or less every week, as other duties permit.—Br. Judson, though he feels it incumbent on him to confine himself, for the present, almost entirely to completing the dictionary, yet preaches in the chapel once on the Sabbath. My work is preaching and pastoral duties. To these I intend to confine myself, and to labour as much as I am able. Sometimes we find many to listen, and are much encouraged by the apparent desire to hear and understand. At other times we find but few to give us a hearing, and they appear listless.

A Lord's day evening at Maulmain.

Perhaps we have not been so particular in giving a statement of our labours as we ought. We desire so to labour as to have the approbation of God and our own consciences. We are in the habit of going into the different parts of the town to preach. The following sketch may serve as a specimen of our

Sabbath evening labours. Last Sabbath evening, Mr. Judson preached in the chapel; Br. Stevens at one extremity of the town and Br. Stilson at the other; while I found a good congregation at a house of mourning in one of the lanes of the city, where I met with a most cordial reception, and was urged to repeat my visit. Br. Stilson also had an attentive congregation in the street; and Br. Stevens found several who listened to him with seriousness. I was more than ordinarily interested in my congregation that evening. It was, as above stated, at a house of mourning. A young married woman had died, and according to custom the neighbors and acquaintances assemble at the house seven evenings in succession. When the woman was past any reasonable hope of recovery, the family had heard by some of their relatives from Amherst, that I sometimes gave medicine. They, therefore, came, and desired me to go and see her. I did so. And when I saw that I could do nothing for her, I got a physician to visit her. This little act of kindness opened the way for me; and Sunday evening, when I went there, I stopped at the head of the lane to converse with a few persons sitting there. The husband of the deceased woman soon came along, and after listening a few minutes, said, "Teacher, you will go to the house of mourning, will you not?" I replied, yes. And he said, "do come; there are many gathered there." I immediately went; and the parents of the deceased seemed to look upon me as a friend or brother, instead of a foreigner whom they had never seen until within a month. After a few expressions of sympathy, I began to preach, a part of the time in Peguan and a part of the time in Burman. I continued through the whole evening to make known the truths of the gospel to a good congregation,—all heathen. Only three persons were inclined to avail. Some paid very close attention.—And when I arose to come away, not only the husband and parents of the deceased, but several others urged me to come again.

When we find persons thus inclined to receive us, we feel encouraged in our work; but past experience has taught us not to be elated. It is a hard thing for a Burman or a Peguan to break away from the customs and religion of his fathers. We often see persons who appear fully convinced of the truth of Christianity and ready to receive it as their only hope; yet they draw back. Our work is a difficult one. It is not because there is not preaching, and the right kind of preaching, too, that the Burmans and Peguans here are not converted. There are other causes. But let no one think that our labour is in vain. We are surely, though slowly, undermining the strong holds of idolatry. The mighty fabric must fall before the gospel, as Dagon did before the ark of God. Yes, the fearful and unbelieving shall yet be put to shame. "Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."—Pray for us.

The Voluntary Principle.—Enterprize.

To every virtue there is an obverse—and contentment is no exception to the rule. There is an intelligent, cheerful, active, acquiescence in "whatever is"—there is also an indolent, dumb, stupid listlessness, which is by some men taken for it. The first is the satisfaction of a mind awake; which glancing at the grand outline of a "stupendous plot," the intricacies of which it is as yet, incompetent to unravel, calmly awaits the appointed hour for its solution, in unwavering confidence the minutest details are wisely arranged. The last is the reluctance of a mind to be roused from inactivity and torpor, and which like the Indians of North Western America, prefers the long idleness of savage life, with all its brutality, to the industry of civilization with all its refinement. Happy is he whose will consents to his lot, whilst the life within him is aspiring to an indefinite improvement of it! Such happiness, however, is not to be identified with non-resistance of a soul which knows no aspiration. Contentment and stolidity are far from being the same thing.

The spirit of enterprize would seem to be born of discontent—and, in some sense, but not a very qualified one, it is so. Mind—boundless, deathless mind cannot be satisfied with what it can measure. When we have seen all that belongs to a thing we cease to prize it. Every desire of the human soul, even sensual desires may be resolved into a native, instinctive thirst for knowledge. We invariably hanker after an acquaintance, which may be termed exhaustive, with the objects with which our senses hold familiar converse. We are uneasy until we have taken its dimensions—height, depth, breadth, and length—until we have discovered all its qualities—

and when we have done so it ceases further to attract us. It is thrown aside as a sucked orange. Were we able to comprehend the essence of things, we should probably be the most miserable of creatures. Therefore is the mind of man like the bee—ever on the wing—ranging over a wide sphere, and sucking honey, first from one flower, then from another, seemingly desirous of sipping nectar from all. And out of this insatiable desire to know, arises the spirit of enterprize. It may be a virtue or a vice in individuals, as it is wisely or unwisely directed; but the absence of it argues the ascendancy of morbid morals.

Enterprize is the salt of society. Wherever it is wanting there is moral putridity. A community settling on its own lees will quickly undergo the acetous fermentation. That restlessness among a people of any land which prompts them to be ever seeking an improvement of their state, like the tides of ocean, preserves society from stagnant corruption. An enterprising nation is never a degenerating nation. Its very activity throws out its vices. It grows better as it grows older.—And the converse of this is true. A satisfied people is no other than an ignorant demoralized, and essentially wretched people—a people whose condition, of necessity, gets worse and worse, until, at length, they cease, a distinct community to be. The very intelligence which in individual cases, is necessary to contentment, forbids, in the case of nations, every feeling of satisfaction; and he who is most actively consentient to "things as they are," in as far as they touch his own convenience only, will be most benevolently dissatisfied with "whatever is," as far as the community of which he is a member is concerned. The professor of the fee-simple of an estate will feel and act very differently from a trustee for society at large, or for succeeding generations. Enterprize, therefore, is identified with the moral as well as the social well being of all large masses of men, under whatever form of government. Its absence is usually attended by the most degrading corruption.

That the voluntary mode of sustaining Christianity promotes a spirit of enterprize need hardly be insisted upon with any thing like elaboration of argument. Whatever may be the philosophy of it, the phenomenon is undoubted. Throw but the religion of a land upon its own resources, and the spirit of active enterprize it evokes for its own support prompts, enters into and informs all other undertakings. Establish it, and just in proportion as you succeed, you damp the ardour without which enterprize must die. Take a map and glance at the several nations of the earth. Wherever religion is either wholly or in part self-sustained, there may be seen also a people distinguished in the main, for activity, energy, and a perpetual reaching after improvement. But mark the spots in which Christianity has comfortably reposed upon cushioned chairs and rich endowments—where priests have been many and their living sure—where churches are numerous and splendid—and where the maintenance of divine ordinances is most fully, permanently, and unchangeably provided for—and what is the uniform condition of the people of such lands? Without an exception, we think they will be characterized by that kind of *non-chalance*—that carelessness about bettering their own position—that indolent, stupid, settled-downness upon "things as they are," which excludes all present hope of social progress.—With them earth gets no nearer heaven, but rather recedes from it. Their tendency is downwards. They drive from bad to worse.

Or, to fetch an illustration from a quarter nearer home and therefore more accurately known, let us look back upon the history of our own country. When at first Christianity laid her soft hand upon this rude and unclad nation, and gently shook it from the troubled dreams of paganism—paganism which for ages like a nightmare had brooded upon the mind of society, causing to heave and labour in the deep sleep of their ignorance, and start affrighted at their own feverish superstitions, and cry out inarticulately and in vain for some deliverer—and when fierce Britain looked round upon the light of day, and forgot the horrors of the preceding night, how she stretched herself for action, and "and as man goeth forth to his labour in the morning," commenced the pursuits of knowledge, not spiritual only, but civil and secular. Here well nigh far back as the light of history conducts us, we find the voluntary support of Christianity, and the first sproutings of inquiry, activity and enterprize to be coeval. The Saxon irruption

could not wholly destroy them. The far north-west beyond the reach of barbarism, was to Europe a bright gushing fountain of civilization and knowledge. Roman Christianity—Christianity tethered by law to the soil, its maintenance made sure by tithes and enforced offerings, did no great deal for the people. Not till holy men were turned out of easy nests by persecution—not till ecclesiastical authorities thrust religion out of doors to get its own living, and find out the secret of its own strength, do we discern anything in England giving promise of its present superiority over nations. Dollardism, puritanism, nonconformity—in a word, that faith in truth which seems to rely upon the buttresses of compulsory support—that is what first prompted our country to noble undertakings. Our forefathers may have theoretically disclaimed, as indeed they did, the voluntary principle. But tyranny drove them into association with it. And when compelled to cast about them for the support of God's truth, they learned to cast about them for their own and for society's advantage. In the midst of these troublous times the national spirit of enterprize was born—Christian willinghood nursed it into strength—and the result may be seen in every quarter of the globe, for in every quarter may be found some traces of our greatness.

Let those who are disposed to question the accuracy of our conclusions, attempt to conceive what Great Britain would have been, if the Christianity which is in it had been suffered by Providence to snore on undisturbed until now, upon the downy pillows of state provision—if we had never had in this country a St. Bartholomew's day, which taught two thousand ministers of God, albeit with tears in their eyes, to turn out in the stormiest hour of adversity, and find a maintenance for the gospel. Stalled and fat priestism—did it ever prick nations into noble enterprize—ever fill the heart of society with any other image than that of a rubicund countenance, a double chin, and ample roundness of person? Has not its maxim been from time immemorial, "things as they are?" Look at it now! it shakes its head and purses, as well as collops of fat will admit of, its heavy brows at manufacturing industry. It has uttered its wish that the commercial enterprise of our great towns were utterly destroyed from the face of the land. There where it is triumphant—in rural districts, generation succeeds to generation without showing the smallest sign of improvement. The very traditional superstitions which survived heathenism their common parent, have always contrived to live in the neighborhood of wealthy churchism—and where ecclesiastical endowments are most ample, these hoary and wrinkled relics of ancient ignorance, find shelter in the congenial darkness.

But we must break off. It were easy to pursue the subject, and to us no irksome task.—The rationale of the phenomenon is not, we think, far to seek. It lies even upon the surface. National enterprize is only the outward result of a certain state of the national mind.—Care for Christianity induces this state. Nothing else can do it so effectually.—*Toronto Ex.aminer.*

Short Extracts from Old Authors.

Why should God exercise so much patience towards wicked men, and bear so long with them, were it not in great goodness to give them time for repentance, that they may escape eternal miseries? Why should he afflict good men all their lives, whose virtues deserve a most prosperous fortune, only to exercise their faith and patience, and to advance them still to more divine perfections, unless he intended to reward their present suffering and their eminent virtue, with a brighter and more glorious crown?—*Sherlock.*

Men of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share with them in their happiness.—*By Taylor.*

Good nature is the very air of a good mind, the sign of a large and generous soul, and the peculiar soil in which virtue prospers.

It is according to nature to be merciful; for no man that hath not divested himself of humanity, can be hard-hearted to others without feeling a pain in himself.

It is not in the power of a good man to refuse making another happy, where he has both ability and opportunity.—*Spectator.*

Emulation is a noble passion, as it strives to excel by raising itself, and not by depressing another.