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REV'DS. I. E. BILL & R. THOMSON, A. M.,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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[For the Christian Visitor.]

Messrs. Editors,—By request, I send you the following tribute, in memory of the late Rev. SAMUEL ELDER.

JACOB T. HOVEY.

Northampton, March 27th, 1854.

Thy presence—lives in memory still,
Though death despoiled thy manly form—
Though mute thy voice on Zion's hill,
The spoiler left us still a charm.

Thy deeds undying here remain,
As memories of some dear one dead;
Thy full-grown mind our love enchains;
That mind a cloudless light has shed.

That mellow voice is hushed in death,
Its melting strains we'll hear no more—
A songster flown from winter's breath,
Soft—warbling on some unknown shore.

That friendly hand we'll press no more,
The tide of life has ebb'd away;
And fleeting years can ne'er restore
Departed worth, or grief allay.

The lost, far in a nameless waste,
Alone, bereft, lies down to die—
So foreign soil thy form embraced,
Alone thy withered beauty lies.

"Rest loved one rest. Thy work is done,"
Rise hallowed spirit o'er the tomb;
The fadeless crown thy faith hath won,
In fair immortal beauty bloom!

[From the Missionary Magazine.]

RANGOON.

Letters from Mr. Granger.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE PAGODA—HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN LIBER- RALITY.

We descended through the covered stairway on the north side, which is the main entrance. The roof is a long succession of terraces, richly ornamented without, with carvings and mythological figures in bas-relief. It is supported by pillars, some of which are carved and gilded, and encircled near the base with the twelve signs of the zodiac. The ceiling within is ornamented with carved gilt rosettes, and the sides illuminated with innumerable figures illustrating scenes in the life of Gaudama. The entrance at the foot of the hill is guarded by two griffins, about forty feet high, the one holding a bullock in his mouth, and the other crushing a tiger, each of the size of life.

When we again stood upon the plain, and I looked back over the hills covered with sacred buildings and crowned with the glittering pagoda, and glanced along the many-terraced roof, so strangely carved, with gilded spires and crimson vanes planted at every angle, I seemed to realize some fancy picture of barbaric splendor,—splendor without elegance. "See," said a Christian friend unconnected with the mission, with whom I subsequently visited the same spot, "how these misguided people lavish their wealth in aid of their religion, while how hard it is to persuade Christians that it is their duty to do anything, to make any sacrifices, in aid of the cause of their Redeemer, and to give these people the knowledge of the true God!"

The pagoda at Prome has been compared with Shway Dagong, the pagoda at Rangoon. The latter, however, which is 366 feet above the terrace on which it rests, is much the largest. In most other respects it is inferior to the one at Prome. It has not the numerous statues, and figures in relief. Its covered

staircases are not so finely and expensively wrought, nor on so large a scale. The entrances and zayats, which at Prome are crowned with seven stories, at Rangoon have but three. Altogether, the sacred hill of Prome affords a much better idea, certainly at first view, of wealth and splendor in Burman architecture. Still, there are parts of the group at Shway Dagong superior to anything of the same kind at Prome, such as the two bells, the king's hall of audience, Thurrawadi's flag-staff and the chamber which holds his bell.

THE TOWN—ABJECT POVERTY—PRIESTS.

Leaving the hill we passed to the north side of the town, which we entered, and through which we returned to our vessel. This gave us a good idea of the interior of the town. Its population, including that without the walls is about 50,000. Many of the people, however, are wretchedly poor. Before entering within the walls, we found numerous huts where the people were pounding in their rice mortars the dried wood of the palm tree for food. Here, and in the deserted zayats, we found many of the poor people who were perishing with the fever induced in so many cases by famine.

At one place I found a number of priests, old men, who having been driven from their monasteries by the war, are now living in huts like the poorest of the people. The priests are usually very courteous and communicative, and always had received me with apparent pleasure. But in this instance, although I spoke to them kindly through an interpreter, they were evidently annoyed by my presence, and one man, whom I found sick on a mat, signified by impatient gestures that he wished me to depart. I was struck by this, and by the fact that so few priests were seen in the streets. Subsequently I learned from a variety of sources, much that may perhaps explain some of the facts I allude to.

THE POPULAR FAITH SHAKEN—THE PARAMATS.

Owing to the war, and perhaps from causes which I have not learned, the popular faith of the country has received a shock. The pagodas are in many places almost deserted, and the priests go unfed. Many of the latter, from the mere necessity of the case, have cast off the yellow cloth that they may seek other means of subsistence. The conquerors of the country have everywhere regarded the monasteries as public property and have forcibly expelled their occupants, while the soldiers have shamefully rifled the pagodas in searching for treasure. It is remarkable with what apathy all this is regarded by the people, especially when it is remembered that these sacred places have always been respected in all their civil wars, and are usually untouched by the most desperate among the robbers. There is a general feeling induced, as if the old religion had been broken down,—more especially in those parts of the country above Rangoon where little was previously known respecting the foreigners. Great numbers have recently avowed themselves to be *paramats*, a class of freethinkers who abjure Boodhism.

The founder of this sect, who was a religious teacher and philosopher, suffered martyrdom at Ava about fifty years since. Bowdau-pi-ya, the great grandfather of the present king, was a convert to this teacher. He was at one time a bigoted Boodhist, and began the building of the great pagoda at Ava, which he abandoned on the occasion of renouncing the faith of his fathers. When he entered upon the examination of religious questions, he first required the Boodhist priests to read and to explain their sacred books in his presence. But his scruples were not removed. He then sent for the mussulmans, and afterwards for the brahmins, and successively pronounced Boodhism, Hindooism, and Mohammedanism unsatisfactory. He then embraced the tenets

of the *paramats*, whose leading doctrine is, that *there is one self-existing and eternal law of right*, to which it is the duty of all men to conform, and in which alone resides the sum of man's religious duty. This law is a perfect rule, and is known only by the voice of conscience which proclaims it. During the remainder of the reign of this king, Boodhism was proscribed and the temples forsaken. Many of the Christian disciples at Ava were from this sect, which, though small in numbers, has continued to exist. Now that Boodhism has apparently received a check, as the natural consequence of the political changes which have been effected, multitudes avow themselves to be of this sect, in many cases, doubtless, with a very imperfect knowledge of the creed they embrace. They relinquish the worship of pagodas and images, cast off the rule and support of the Burman priesthood, and at once, without further inquiry, are ranked as *paramats*.

THE HOUR FOR ACTION.

The shock to the prevailing religion of which I have spoken is accidental, and will soon cease to be felt. It affords a present very favorable opportunity, not for those missionary measures which are slow in their plan and remote in the benefits they promise, but for the direct and open preaching of the gospel to the adult population. Unless the minds of the people, now remarkably open, are soon instructed in the simple truths of Christianity, they will return to their former unquestioning faith in Boodhism, more unquestioning and more bigoted than before. Thus it has proved in the old British provinces of Burmah, where idolatry has now a stronger hold upon the public mind than it has in Pegu. The present is the hour for action. If we neglect the opportunity, either from the want of men to use it, or from want of faith in the preaching of the gospel as the sufficient means for the conversion of Burmans equally with Karens, years must pass before we can regain the ground now open for us.

THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN PROME—ENCOUR- AGING TOKENS.

We met, during our walk in Prome, the Christian disciple, Moug Dwey. He was baptized by Mr. Kincaid in Arracan about ten years since. He is not a preacher, but has been employed at Rangoon as a teacher of the children connected with the Christian families, and is now in the employ of the assistant commissioner at Prome on a salary of twenty-five rupees a month. He is learned in the Burman books, and in the Pali. Capt. Latter, the assistant commissioner, spoke to us of him in high terms of approbation, and said that he accepted his offer only on the condition that he might be allowed to spend a part of his time daily in giving religious instruction to his countrymen. We found that he had large gatherings of the people nightly at his house, to whom he is accustomed without opposition to read and to explain the Scriptures. Moug Dwey assured us of the readiness of the people to listen to the preaching of the gospel. He had recently come from Rangoon, and knew the state of religious inquiry in that city, and thought that there was even greater encouragement connected with the state of the public mind at Prome. I believe that his opinion is well founded. I see no good reason why we should not expect the work of the Lord to advance among the Burmans, as it has formerly advanced among the Karens. I say this deliberately, as I must, for it involves a change in my opinions. I do not see why the same means should not be attended with essentially the same results in both cases. My observations and inquiries for five months past in Burmah, respecting the causes of the different results in both cases, have wrought this change of views. What I have seen of the remark-

able work of grace, which is now progressing in Rangoon and its vicinity among the Burmans, has confirmed the opinion on this point which I expressed before leaving Maulmain.

Mr. Kincaid brought with him to Prome, a disciple from Rangoon, a man of good education and sound judgment. He was several days in company with Moug Dwey, and spent the time in preaching to the people. He confirmed all which had been told us respecting the readiness of the people to receive religious instruction, and the falling away from the old faith. I could give many other confirmations of this view.

TRIP TO MEADAY.

On returning to our vessel at night, we found an invitation from Capt. Rogers, of whom I have before spoken, to accompany him to Meaday, in the war steamer "Medusa," which was to leave early the next morning, an unexpected opportunity which we did not hesitate to embrace.

We were on board the Medusa before sunrise Thursday, Sept. 1st, and received a cordial greeting from Capt. Rogers and the commander, Mr. Frazer. Here we found the members of the commission appointed to select a place for military head quarters, consisting of Brigadier Ford, Major Frazer, of the Engineer corps, and Dr. Montgomery, at the head of the medical staff in the country. The latter confirmed all I had before heard respecting Prome. He said, "The place at first seems inviting, both from the river and on ascending the banks. But we have experience and the testimony of the natives to show its unhealthiness. We can have no better proof."

From Prome to Meaday, a distance of forty-eight miles, nearly every important town has been destroyed by the dacoits, who still hover about it, protected by the jungle and their knowledge of the creeks and nullas. Our progress up the river was slow, in consequence of the strength of the current, so that we did not reach Meaday until evening.

KA-NEA AND THA-RET—THRILLING RECOLLEC- TION.

At 11 o'clock we were opposite Ka-nea, and in the afternoon passed close to the shores of Tha-ret, both on the west side. These are the only towns of any size which remain. When the country becomes quiet, Ka-nea will be easily accessible from Prome. It is a large town, noted for its healthfulness, and may yet become an important station for a native preacher and the occasional visits of the missionary. At this point the high hills on the shore divide, leaving a plain nearly a mile in width, through which a nulla comes down from the west. Near the shore are the native houses, beyond which, on the same level, but nearly two miles back from the river, are seen the tops of a large cluster of pagodas, zayats and tall fruit trees, to which more sacred retreat the native town doubtless extends. On the sides of hills near the shore I counted thirty three pagodas.

Tha-ret is also on the right bank, commencing about four miles below Meaday. It was formerly several miles in extent, but has been wasted by the war, famine and dacoity. Still several thousand inhabitants are found at the place.

Many at home must remember the thrilling account given by Mr. Kincaid in Philadelphia, in 1844, at the annual meeting of the American and Foreign Bible Society, of his interview at this place with an old man, who, hearing that a white "teacher" had anchored for the night at the place, sent messengers to him to ask for Christian books. It was late when they arrived, and wading in the water to the spot where his boat was anchored, they roused the missionary from his slumbers with the strange cry, "Teacher! teacher! have you got the Gospel according to John." We passed near the spot and I again li-