

THE MIRACLES OF MISSIONS.—No. III.

[EDITORIAL.—A. T. P.]

THE "WILD MEN" OF BURMAH.

WHEN the missionaries first landed in Burmah they were not even aware of the existence of the Karens or Kàrians or *wild men*, a rude race inhabiting also Siam and parts of China, dwelling in jungles and mountainous districts, and numbering from 35,000 to 40,000. They reckon themselves by families, and though a family should number hundreds of souls it has but one house. Their government is primitive and patriarchal. They wear but little clothing, generally a long sleeveless shirt of coarse cotton. It is now sixty years ago since these obscure people were discovered by the Baptist missionaries. They were oppressed and virtually enslaved by the Burmans.

While their Burman oppressors turned proudly away from the cross, and clung the closer and the more resolutely to the follies and absurdities of their atheistic idolatry, these humble people emerged from their obscure hiding places and not only heard the simple message of the gospel with a strange gladness, but bore the tidings from village to village till hundreds had been baptized and added to the church of God. Wherever the missionaries went the good news had preceded them, and in even the most remote, retired, and untraveled quarters they found some who, like Simeon, were waiting for more light and prepared for its reception. Side by side with preaching went the mission schools. By lessons in language and science, as well as in the faith of Christ, these devoted men and women sought to lead the young from the vanities, idolatries and superstitions of their ancestors, and displace the doctrines of Gautama by the teachings of Jesus. The printing press was also brought into requisition. Within ten years after the mission was begun fonts of type were prepared in each of the Karen dialects, and thousands of copies of books, tracts and portions of the Scriptures were published. The natives speaking the several languages soon learned to print them and became valuable helpers both in producing and distributing the issues of the press.

It may be worth while to trace at least the grand outline of this wonderful history of modern gospel triumphs. When in 1828 Mr. Boardman removed from Maulmain to Tavoy there lived in his family a middle-aged man who had been a slave till the missionaries themselves purchased his freedom. Already a convert to Christianity, soon after their arrival in this stronghold of Gautama with its two hundred Buddhist priests, this poor Karen was baptized. His name was Kho-Thah-byu. He was the first Karen convert; his turning to Christ was the turning point in the history of the degraded race to which he belonged,