

Youth's Department.

FUNERALS IN INDIA.—A lady, who recently went to India to assist in a Mission school, sends us the following letter. It tells us something about these people, whose souls our Missionaries are striving to convert to God. What a scene of delusion or despair is the funeral of a heathen! How different from that sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection, with which Christians commit to the earth the body of a child of God, whose soul God has taken to Himself. Think, whether you are doing all you can for the propagation of that Gospel, by which the Heathen, who now lie in darkness, may be made partakers of the same glorious hope with ourselves.

"Dear Sir,—Living, as I at present do, in a part of Madras where funerals are very frequently passing, I have taken great interest in them, and, as I think some of your readers may feel as I do, I venture to send a short account of the mode of burial here.

"As soon as possible after death the body is prepared for the grave, as it must be interred within twenty four hours. It is dressed as when alive, with the exception of having the head shaved and bare, instead of a turban being placed on it. There are three distinct races, viz., the Mussulman, the East Indian (generally of Portuguese descent, and consequently Roman Catholics), and Native, the latter being subdivided into Christian and Heathen; very rarely, and only by the better classes, that is among Christians, is a coffin used. Servants, laborers, workmen, and small tradesmen cannot afford it; a bier is used instead, and is more or less ornamented, according to the means of the deceased. The most simple form is that of an oblong tray, about six feet long and twelve inches deep, over which a sheet is thrown and festooned around the edges. The body is laid on this and covered with another sheet, leaving the face and head exposed. The bier has a long pole like a bowsprit, projecting from either end, but longer in front (I suppose to steady it), and is placed on other poles, and raised on the bearers' shoulders. At this season (January), when flowers are in profusion, the tray is filled up with them, and very often there is a crimson canopy over it, which is hung with wreaths of flowers, as are also the sides of the bier. The wreaths of flowers do not look quite so nice as you would be apt to imagine, as they nip off the flowers close to the head, and have no green leaves intermingled. The corpse is always preceded by music: the Native by the discordant tom-tom, and the Portuguese by a noise almost equally discordant, being caused by a trumpet and a muffled drum. The Roman Catholic assistants who precede the corpse are as shabby a set of people as you can see. They wear a sort of coarse cassock, walk sometimes barefoot, sometimes with thick grey stockings and heavy shoes; over the cassock they wear an alb of muslin, which is so thin and so dirty that it looks more grey than white. The Mussulmans are preceded by a person reading or singing verses from the Koran. When they arrive at the grave, the corpse is taken out, wrapped in the sheet, and laid in the ground; the burying grounds are surrounded by high walls, to prevent the jackals getting at the bodies, which they would do in a few hours unless kept off. One caste of Natives bury their dead in a sitting posture, so that before the body stiffens they set it up against the wall in that attitude, and of course the hole has to be dug very deep to put them in. Before the grave is closed, the attendants throw cocoa-nuts at the head, for the purpose of splitting the skull, as it is believed that one of the six vital airs is contained in it, and would not otherwise escape. This is the only caste who do not burn their dead. From what I have observed since I have resided here, I think burning is the most rational way of disposing of the body in these hot climates, and though revolting to English ideas in England, is I think, much less so here, than the dread of having the body devoured by jackals, to which it is liable occasionally in spite of precautions.

"When a body is to be burned it is placed on the pile without any covering, and the wood is placed over it, but I am told that when the fire first reaches it the muscles contract, and the corpse starts up in a sitting posture which must be rather startling to those unaccustomed to such scenes. I can assure you the vicinity of a burning ground, when the wind blows from it, is anything but agreeable.

"Since writing the above, I saw the funeral of a rich Roman Catholic Christian pass. The body was covered with a crimson shawl, and three or four cloths, about six yards long, were placed on the ground for

the procession to walk over; when the corpse had passed, the attendants took up the last cloth and ran on to the front again with it.

"The whole expense of the very commonest funeral is about a rupee (2s.)—*Gospel Missionary.*

THE BUTTERFLY CHASE.—Little William ran into his father's garden on an early summer's morning, to pluck a bunch of pinks and stocks, from his own flower bed, as a present to his mother, for it was her birthday. As he entered the garden he saw a beautiful butterfly, fluttering here and there. Then the boy forgot his mother and his flowers, and tried to catch the insect. At first he followed it, bending down and with light steps so as to seize it unawares; but his desire increased with every step, and the butterfly seemed to him more and more beautiful the further it went. At last it settled on a young fruit tree, which was bearing its first blossoms. This tree stood close to the flower bed, which belonged specially to William, and indeed his father had also given him the tree. For which reason and also because it was so young and well grown, the boy prized it exceedingly. As he now saw the butterfly resting on the blossom, he sprung towards it, and struck both tree and insect so violently with his hat, that all the blossoms fell to the ground, and two branches were broken off. Then he looked down in trouble, and saw not only the branches lying at his feet, but also the butterfly quite dead, with its beautiful wings torn and destroyed, and he discovered that he had trampled down all his hyacinths and stocks and pinks. Then William returned home crying and lamenting, without either flowers or butterfly—a picture of passionate grief and grasping after pleasure.—*Krummacker.*

Selections.

Quedah; or, Stray Leaves from a Journal in Malayan Waters. By Captain Sherard Osborn, R.N., C.B., Officier de la Légion d'Honneur. Longman & Co. Whatever marks of immaturity there may be about the style of *Quedah*, there is no deficiency of humor, or interest, or clear description in it. We breathe in it the very atmosphere of the tropics, as we float along between

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea; while half-naked Malays and English tars are associated and contrasted in a way hardly to be found out of *Robinson Crusoe*. The special service in which Captain Osborn was engaged was the blockade of Quedah, in co-operation with a Siamese army, advancing from the continent. Quedah is a province in the Malay peninsula, originally Malayan, conquered by the Siamese, and about the year 1838 re-conquered by the original owners. The Malays, however, appear to have no recognized national existence, and the aid and countenance of the English were bestowed—very much against Captain Osborn's sympathies—on the Siamese. But the contest was not a sanguinary one on our side. The English force consisted only of a single 18 gun corvette, the *Hyacinth*, with some half dozen gun boats, manœuvred in a great measure by friendly Malays. Its duty was merely to blockade, and as the enemy had a great respect for English prowess, the blockade never became a fight. The Siamese army advanced, the forts fell before it one by one, and the chief duty which fell to the lot of the English was that of assisting their conquered enemies to escape from the massacre which their victorious allies were eager to inflict.

Sherard Osborn, then a midshipman of the *Hyacinth*, commanded one of the gunboats, the *Emerald*, alias *Numero Tergo*, or "Number Three," as her crew unpoetically preferred to call her. Here is his introduction to them:—

"My swarthy crew received their new commander in the height of Malay *tenue*. The gayest pocket-handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and their bodies wrapped in the tasteful cotton plaid of the country, called a sarong, and their bare legs and sinewy arms, with the warlike creese, gave them the air of as many game-cocks. Not a soul of them could speak a word of English, and until I could master enough Malay to be understood, my sole means of communication lay through an individual who introduced himself to me as 'Iambo, Sir!'—Interpreter, Sir! 'And a very dirty one, too,' I mentally added."

Language, however, does not seem to have been long a difficulty. He soon mastered sufficient to communicate pretty freely with his chief officer, Iader, a very remarkable character indeed. Born among the Battas, a wild race who lived in trees, and had the reputation of cannibals, he was captured in some ma-

rauding expedition, and began life as a slave on board a Malay galleon. By skill and bravery he got advanced to the rank of a fighting man, and after a variety of adventures found himself at last in a Singapore prison, under sentence of death. A happy chance saved him. A Chinese murderer was to be executed; the executioner was missing; and Iader was only too glad to supply the vacant place, and win his freedom with no other penalty than the appellation of Jack Ketch, which ever after stuck by him. Taught by experience, he now took service with the Company, and so became serang, or boatswain to the *Emerald*.

Captain Osborn has a high opinion of the Malays. He thinks them an ill used race, driven into piracy by continued persecution—a sin which he attributes chiefly upon the Dutch—but possessed of higher qualities, mental and bodily, than most of the tribes who have gained a higher place in our favor. We do wrong, he thinks, in omitting to cultivate more friendly relations with them. These are his reflections, after an account of a long and laborious expedition with them:—

"I have been thus minute in the last two days' operations to show the reader how zealous, docile, and cheerful the Malays could be when the occasion required it. They had no rations since the previous day, at about 8 a.m., and no water since the previous night; they had been twenty-four hours upon their oars during the last forty hours, yet not a murmur escaped them; and I would defy seaman of any nation to have exceeded them in any quality which makes a sailor valuable. I cannot but feel that, in a nation like ours, possessing a vast colonial empire, which, in the event of a war, either for our commercial supremacy with America, or for our civil and religious liberties with despot Europe, we might be sorely pressed to defend, it behoves every loyal man to cherish and uphold a race of sailors who combine, with all their faults and all their vices, many of the finest attributes of a seafaring people. They may be pirates, they may be buccaners; so were we; and we still pride ourselves upon the naval glories of men who founded our reputation as a naval nation upon what was nothing less than robbery upon the high seas.—Restrain and bring the Malays under our rule gently, and they will serve us heartily and zealously in the hour of England's need; they are the best race of colonial sailors we possess; grind them down, shoot them down, paddle over them, and they will join the first enemy and be their own avengers."

But it is by no means Captain Osborn's habit to be didactic. Reflections and moralizings are brief and scarce. The journal is what a journal should be, a narrative of things seen and done, with just enough of what was felt and thought to give a human interest to it. Here is a specimen of description clear enough for Landseer to paint from:—

"Passing clear of the belt of mangrove, we soon floated amongst the luxuriant vegetation of an Indian jungle; the underwood here and there giving place to small patches of grass or weed. Large alligators, which had been ashore on either bank, launched themselves slowly into the creek, or turned round and kept a steady watch with their cruel-looking yellow eyes. Bright colored iguanas and strange shaped lizards shuffled along the banks, or lay in the branches of trees, puffing themselves up as to look like nothing earthly; the shrill cry of the peaben, and the eternal chattering of the monkeys, gave life and animation to a scene which did not lack interest or beauty. Pushing our canoe in amongst the overhanging wild vines and creepers, so as to hide her, we sat smoking our cigars to await the curiosity of the monkeys. It was not long before they commenced their gambols or attempts to frighten us. A string of black ones, whose glossy coats would have vied in beauty with that of a black bear, came breaking through the trees with frantic cries, and threw themselves across the creek, and back again with amazing energy; then a hoarse round made us turn suddenly with a flashing suspicion of Malay treachery, to meet the gaze of a face almost human, with a long grey beard, which was earnestly watching us through the foliage of a withered tree; bring a gun to the shoulder, and the old man's head would be seen to leap away upon the disproportionate body of some ape. But nothing could equal in ludicrous interest a family monkey scene taking place in some clear spot at the base of a tree. There a respectable papa might be seen seated at the roots, stretching out his legs, enjoying the luxury of a scratch, and overlooking with patriarchal pride, and to small degree of watchfulness, the gambols of his son or daughter; while with fond solicitation his better half, a graceful female monkey,