

tion. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson followed soon after. This general favor to the Laos Mission continued until March, 1869, when the king, stirred up doubtless by the Buddhist priesthood, who represented that a certain famine which Laos had suffered had probably been due to the influence of the missionaries, requested of the King of Siam that the United States Consul should be compelled to issue an order withdrawing the missionaries from the Laos country. Rev. Mr. McDonald, who happened to be acting as United States Consul, made the reply that "A famine which occurred in 1866 could not have been caused by a missionary who arrived a year later, and that during the year 1868-69, while they still remained in the Laos country, accounts were received of an abundant harvest." The withdrawal of the missionaries was respectfully declined by the Consul, and the Siamese Minister of the Interior at Bangkok represented to the Laos king that he entirely acquiesced in this decision. The purpose of the Laos king being thus thwarted, made itself felt, however, upon the native Christians, and on September 12th, 1869, two converts were seized and barbarously put to death. Other church-members sought safety in flight. The next year, however, this king died, and the Laos Christians from that day have had rest from persecution, and have been admitted to greater privileges than ever.

The Laos field is now considered one of the most promising, tho twenty-eight years ago it seemed one of the most difficult, owing to the above-mentioned bitter persecution. The favorable reaction was strong. Martyr's blood in that distant region, as elsewhere, proved to be the seed of the Church. Compared with the people of Siam, especially at Bangkok, the inhabitants of Laos are more simple and confiding. They have the great advantage of being sufficiently removed from those corrupting influences of foreign contact which in all lands have proved so detrimental to the highest missionary success. Medical work has had a most salutary influence in winning the confidence of the people; and altho a former king was a persecutor, the princes of Laos in recent years have held a friendly attitude toward the missions, and there has been as great freedom in the proclamation of the Gospel in every part of that country as in the territories of the United States.

*The Thralldom of Superstition.*—In spite of the claims of Buddhistic philosophy, the superstitions of the people are virtually of the simplest character. Mendicant Buddhist priests appear everywhere with their bowls, and whatever salvation Buddhism is supposed to secure is purchased by gifts of rice to these priestly beggars. Anything like grace or Divine help in any form is unknown to the system; merit making is its one universal reliance. With the priesthood merit is gained by observance of the many and sometimes exacting rules of a self-centered monastic life. With the masses of the laity man's chief duty consists in feeding the priests. But practically there is with the people, and sometimes with the monks themselves, a chief reliance upon the superstitious worship or