

Letter From Burma.

DEAR EDITOR:—This writing is done in my boat as I tour along this coast and go up one river after another on the mainland, or touch at islands in the Margul Archipelago, on some of which Karens live. I do not know that another missionary in India does his touring in this way but none other seems possible in our field. It has decided advantages over other means of travelling in as much as I can take along almost any quantities of books, medicines, provisions, and what is most desirable in the jungle, a supply of good water. But another great advantage to me personally is that I get much time for reading, something hard to find in our busy life at home. What missionary would attempt to read The Work of the Holy Spirit, by Kayper, for instance, during ordinary work? a book of 650 pages. I have read it during this trip with great interest as well as several smaller works. This is no small privilege.

My boat is large and I usually have about ten men with me. The feeding of these would be quite an item but for the generosity of the Karens. I often have to ask them to carry back their gifts of rice, coconuts, eggs, chickens, ducks, etc., about all their limited supplies afford.

Our association was held the last of January and was of unusual interest. More than nine hundred visitors attended, and all these were entertained from Wednesday till Monday most cheerfully. Karens do not indulge in bread, butter, tea, sugar, etc., and missionaries carry these with them, but natives take nothing with them but good appetites, and they always find something better than ordinary fare at associations. This was the twenty-fifth anniversary of our arrival in Trevo, and unknown to us, a service was arranged to commemorate that event. After devotional exercises five of the pastors and teachers spoke on the kinds of work we had done, as follows: Our religious work, our educational work, our agricultural work, our work in assisting them in their troubles with government and our work for the social betterment of the Karens. After that the members of the Young Peoples' Society formed a circle round us and a young man read an address, and a young woman, whose father and mother had been pupils in our school. In a few appropriate words, presented a silver vase of Indian work. The service ended by singing an original hymn written for the occasion. This may seem a small matter to others but was interesting to us. We have often felt that we were laboring in vain, but the preparing and carrying through of such a service in itself was evidence of progress.

Perhaps I may say that it was left for us to introduce several changes, and the improvement has been wonderful indeed, not only in our field but the work has spread like a prairie fire into other districts. A few may be noticed. Twenty-five years ago every woman and girl wore only one thin cotton jacket, and married women often none at all. To-day every girl at least wears a waist under her jacket, and it has been so long since I have seen a Christian woman without a jacket that I almost forget that the bad practice ever existed. Every man and boy wore long hair. This has utterly disappeared among the Christian Karens, and scores of young Burman men cut their hair like Europeans. Every man, woman and child used tobacco, betel and other filth. To-day there are probably thousands of abstainers. In the Burman Theological Seminary every student has given these up. Rotten fish, formerly a part of every meal, is fast passing away in our field, and others will follow. Of course improved health is one result. "What has God wrought?"

Of course there are many evils yet existing among the best of these native Christians, some of which we may live to see uprooted. The words of Theodore Roosevelt apply to our work, "Keep going by steps, not bounds; we must keep our eyes on the stars, but remember that our feet are on the ground." Old habits of thinking or acting die hard, and civilization is a growth not a sudden transition.

I have now been forty days from home and have had some pleasant experiences. More than ten years ago I baptized a young man in our school. Soon after he married and removed to one of these islands where there was but one Christian family. But they built a little chapel, and from that day to this have remembered when Sabbath came and have had some religious service. An old man and his wife came from the island to our association and asked to be baptized. I promised him that I would go to his village and baptize him there. Last week I was there, and baptized twelve, five husbands and their wives and two other men. A Christian boy had been sent from the association and he has a school of nearly twenty. There is a large heathen community far up a difficult river that I have long desired to visit and try to begin work, but have been unable to do anything till the present season. Lately we sent a young man there, a recent graduate of our seminary, and the outlook is most encouraging. I spent three days there recently, had gatherings for preaching twice a day with an attendance of nearly one hundred at each meeting, and we visited and talked about all the rest of the time.

At the last service I called for any who would then and there surrender to Christ to tell us so. A woman holding a little child and whose appearance indicated an earnest spirit, answered, "I will!" and a man in another part of the assembly replied, "And I." The head man of the place and his wife who had come nearly four miles to attend the meeting and bring presents, followed me to my boat to tell me, "From this day we shall worship the eternal God." The young teacher with his thirty pupils, all from heathen families, stood on the bank, and as we floated away sang:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

I would have remained longer at that village but I had sent word to a Christian village that I would spend the Sabbath with them, and again my much speaking had caused a sore throat, and a rest was imperative. But I may return there before my trip is over. On the Sabbath baptized three from Christian families.

This is concluded at another entirely heathen place, and Bhuddist at that. When Karens embrace the religion of the Burmans they are more difficult to reach than the spirit worshippers. I am a long distance from the sea and as far as my boat will float but several miles yet from the Karens. My preachers have been at work and I went up this morning and had a delightful time. More than fifty assembled in one house and we sang and read and talked. It is of the greatest good to read to a Karen what "the white book" says. They have not altogether forgotten the old tradition. Many came with me to my boat, more than an hour's walk, and I gave them tea and biscuits. They promised not to forget what they had heard.

Had we competent teachers to go among these people, I feel a harvest would be reaped. We are trying to raise them up.

H. MORROW.

Mergui Jungle, March 5th, 1902.

India Letter.

In my previous letter I referred to a resolution passed by our Missionary Conference concerning further reinforcements. Permit me to call attention to it again. We urge upon the Board and the home churches the great need of more missionaries for the Telugu field, and earnestly request that several be sent out at the earliest possible moment.

THE MISSIONARY FORCE REQUIRED.

Some years ago the two Canadian Missions sent forth an appeal to the churches of Canada asking for a missionary for every 50,000 of the unevangelized in the Telugu country. This estimate of the real need was probably not at all overdrawn. Nor do we believe it impossible of accomplishment. But for various reasons we have ceased to appeal for so large a force. The limited means at the disposal of our Board, the large expense involved in sending out and supporting a missionary, the small cost of supporting native workers, and a growing conviction that ultimately the country must be evangelized largely by the natives of the country—all these reasons have led us to readjust our estimate and our policy. The former appeal would call for about 20 more men for our Maritime Mission. But we are asking for about one-fourth of this number.

OUR POLICY.

We think that our home churches can increase the missionary staff to twelve families and as many single ladies in the very near future, and that we should not think of doing less than this. Vizianagram city with 30,000 inhabitants, and the surrounding country with 270,000 more, has a very inadequate missionary force. Before we purchased this field it had two missionaries on it, and we have kept but one there. A second family for this great centre has long been a crying need.

The Savaras people are still without a missionary. A good beginning has been made in this work and now we urgently plead for a missionary who will devote his entire time to this most interesting people. Our Telugu Christians are being asked to help in this work of evangelizing the Savaras. They will doubtless render help but we cannot wait for them to overtake this work alone.

To the Northeast of Tekkall there lies within our borders a fine stretch of Telugu country thickly populated and almost utterly unreached by the gospel message. We call this the Sompel region. There is room there for two missionary families if we had them. Then there is the Raysjedda field where God has given us over forty converts in one village. This is a most interesting field to enter if we had the missionary.

SOME RECENT SUGGESTIONS

have appeared in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to the effect that perhaps no more missionaries are really needed on the field and that we would do well to devote all our energies from this on in the enlargement of our native staff. I think your missionaries are all agreed that we must increase our native agency as rapidly as it can be done with efficiency.

THE LACK OF NATIVE AGENTS

is a serious matter and no amount of money can overcome this difficulty. The men of suitable character and ability are simply not to be had. We have tried to im-

port some workers from our American friends to the South. In this way we have obtained a few good workers but this source of supply is exceedingly limited. Our own Christian community of 500 members is too small to provide an adequate supply. The work of developing a native staff such as we need for this work (with from 25 to 50 or 100 native workers under the guidance of each missionary) is certain to be a slow process. It cannot possibly be accomplished in the immediate future no matter how much money we may have. As the native Christian community grows it will produce a body of men and women for the ministry. We must patiently wait and gradually increase our native staff. Perhaps after another twenty-five or fifty years we shall have the kind of a native agency that we need. In the meanwhile we must meet the need as far as possible by foreign workers. It would be a grievous shame to leave the heathen to perish while we wait for native evangelists. Our people at home must rise to this great responsibility and this glorious opportunity. Let us increase the staff of missionaries until we have at least twelve families on the field (we have seven now).

Why not make the accomplishment of this object the chief aim of the "20th Century Fund" movement? Can we not within the next two years or so raise the staff to the above number and thereafter bend our efforts to maintain the staff at this number and then steadily push forward in the far more prolonged effort to greatly increase our native agency?

THE NATIVE CHURCHES

must also be developed in the line of self-support. As they grow in numbers and financial strength they must themselves assume an increasingly large amount of the burden of supporting its native agency. Surely God is calling us at the beginning of this new century to an undertaking that demands our best efforts, and one that is full of promise. A greatly awakened interest in our foreign missionary enterprise would, I believe, react powerfully and blessedly upon the life of the home churches.

We have perhaps reached a crisis in our denominational life. Shall we awake to our opportunity and make a grand forward move, or misuse the opportunity and retrograde?

W. V. HIGGINS.

Tekkall, March 13th, 1902.

Our Duty and Our Hope.

Believing, as we must believe in the light of medical science, that by far the larger part of the apparent degeneration of character in age is the result of purely physical causes, two duties are evident: The duty of us all to make large allowance for these asperities and puerilities which sometimes develop in consequence of pain and weakness, not forgetting that we too shall some day stand in need of equal charity from others; and the duty of men and women still in health and strength to put into practice that sound and wholesome "Christian science" of which Mrs. Eddy's system is a travesty—the power of the mind, the spirit, uplifted by a Christian faith, to govern in large measure the moods and impulses that arise from physical irregularities. If a man of forty can keep his temper with a neuralgic headache, and force himself to speak calmly under irritating circumstances, when he is seventy he is more likely to be a joy in the home than a burden. To surrender to one's nerves when one is in middle life is to prepare for wreck and ruin in age.

What about the future? When we are told that death brings no sudden change, that the man who dies simply goes on living out his old character in a new sphere, with gradual progress as the ages pass, does it mean that the crotchets and cranks of the poor old paralytic are to go with him across the river? That the fault-finding woman will go on finding fault with the angels and criticizing the heavenly choir? Does it mean that the man who has striven all his life against a bodily appetite, and has almost lost the battle at the last, though clinging pathetically to the better hope and the better life, shall enter the new life with his soul all crippled and bruised with the fight? Well, these are mysteries of which it is not permitted to speak with assurance. But it is not safe to trust the large mercy of the Maker of us all that when he delivers us from a transient body which is no longer a fit organ of the soul, he will also redeem us from the sins and the weaknesses which that body has fastened upon us by reason of weak will and unsubdued desire? Granted that the Christian's earthly struggle has been a brave one, will not the great Captain bestow the crown of victory when that struggle ends, taking steadfast purpose for achievement?

No, there is no fear for the soul that has been redeemed; salvation shall be worked out in ways too broad and generous for our understanding, and to be saved is to be free altogether. If age brings weakness of will and seems to dry up the springs of early affection and aspiration, let us be sure that from this brief bondage of the soul, death shall bring full deliverance. As we stand about the silent form of the aged dead, and note how the wrinkles of anxiety and the frowns of the latter days are smoothed into abiding peace; as we think of the distant past when the man loved and rejoiced in his time, and remember how he has borne in his weakness the burden of the generations and the secret sorrows of the world, we know that he has entered into life as he was in his best and strongest days—he loved best moment of his life has been chosen by the heavenly Artist for a heavenly type; and whatever of beauty and eternity was in his heart when he was at his best, shall be embodied in deathless purity and strength for God's delight.

"Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust."

—Standard,