

Missionary Link.

CANADA

In the interest of the Baptist Foreign Mission Societies of Canada.

INDIA

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"The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Is. lx. 3.

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"Ethiopia shall soon Stretch out her Hands unto God"

PSALM lxxviii. 31.

From forests deep and river strands,
Where scarce a stranger's foot hath trod,
Lo! Afric stretcheth out her hands,
And seeketh after God.

He sought the fountains of the Nile;
She seeks the everlasting springs,
The stream that makes the desert smile,
And health and gladness brings.

She seeks, unknowing what may be
The end and object of her quest;
She asks—yet all unconsciously—
For life, and peace, and rest.

Speed, speed the Word! Too long hath night
Lain heavy o'er those regions fair;
Draw back the curtain, that the light
Of Heaven may enter there.

How beautiful, o'er vale and bill,
By river-side or stately grove,
Shall be their feet who tell the tale
Of Jesus and His love!

God of all power, give Thou the Word!
And swiftly shall Thy heralds move;
So Afric's sons shall own Thee, Lord,
Enjoy and bless Thy love.

—Missionary Herald.

A Native Ministry.

[From a paper read by Rev. J. N. Murdoch, D.D., Corresponding Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, at the last annual meeting.]

It is quite apparent that the power and efficiency of the native ministry are constantly augmenting. It has long been well understood that the preaching which is to win the kindreds of the people to Christ is to be done by native pastors and evangelists. The work of our missionaries is to make beginnings, to plant churches here and there, based on the New Testament model, and to gather and train faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. This work has been materially aided by the noble theological schools at Rangoon and Ramapatam, and by other schools in Burmah and China. It is gratifying to witness a growing intelligence in the native ministry, and also a growing willingness on the part of missionaries to ordain native men, and commit to them the responsibilities connected with the teaching and guiding of their people. These native preachers were formerly stationed in towns and villages within a convenient distance of the central stations; and the missionaries visited them, examined and baptized their converts, and exercised whatever responsibility the necessities of discipline required. In other cases, the people thus enlightened came in flocks to the central stations, to be examined and baptized. But there is

now apparent a growing willingness on the part of missionaries to put these native men in positions not only to baptize, but to teach and guide, those who are led to believe in Christ through their word.

The opinion has long been entertained, that some of the missionaries have been too timid about ordaining native preachers, and too slow in placing responsibility upon them. This over-caution, as we have sometimes regarded it, is nevertheless natural; in fact, well-nigh inevitable. The missionaries have known these native men as children in knowledge and apprehension, saturated with the superstitions of the old religions, and ever liable to trip into the vicious practices of their former lives. Moreover, the traditions which hedge the sacred office in Christian, especially in evangelical lands, have retained their full power, in spite of dissimilar conditions, and seemed to preclude the exercise of its solemn functions by men so comparatively ignorant, crude, and untrained. And so it has often fallen out, as is sometimes the case with the sons and junior partners of business men, that they have proved unenterprising because they were untrusted, and inefficient for lack of the stimulus which comes only from the proper adjustment of the faculties of planning and execution.

More than eight years ago one of our Asiatic missionaries, who was about to return to this country, in reply to the question, what could be done for his station, a large and important one, in the event of his leaving, advised that it should be left in the care of a native preacher then connected with it. That advice was not followed, probably because it was not concurred in by other missionaries; and several years passed before this preacher was even ordained. But, in the providence of God, the station was vacated again; and this man, now ordained, was left in charge of the large interests connected with it. The superintendence of the town school, the counselling of preachers and teachers located in distant villages, the instruction of inquirers, and the performance of jungle work, all fell to his charge. It is much to say, considering the ability, experience, and efficiency of the men who have held that important station; but it is only just to say, that it was never more wisely, energetically, or prospectously administered than since its care devolved on this man, whose enterprise is equalled only by his prudence, and the incisiveness of whose suggestions as to the methods of evangelical work are so admirably balanced by the modesty and deference which characterize their expression.

The change to which we now refer will vastly increase the efficiency of the evangelistic force on which we must chiefly rely. The native helpers need to be weaned from too great dependence on their teachers and leaders from over the sea, and to be left more to their own resources. Never, till we cease to treat them like children, will they learn to quit themselves like men. Our Lord left his disciples alone, that the great quality of self-reliance might be developed in their character. He placed them as sheep among wolves, that they might be watchful for themselves, and skilful in shunning the wiles of the adversary. A ministry that must be held in leading strings is always wanting in a genuine, personal force. It is better that men should sometimes go wrong, than that they

should forever be tamely led. To make a native evangelizing force efficient in the highest sense, it must be trained first to rely on God, and then to rely on itself. With a body of native evangelists thus mobilized we shall soon realize more fully than heretofore the significance of that prophecy, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Another benefit which is sure to result from the greater prominence of native agencies will be to reduce the liability to disease and death among missionaries from this country. Many precious lives have been lost because there were no native laborers who could be trusted to work in places and at times which are utterly fatal to the health of the life of Americans and Europeans. It is true, there are circumstances where missionaries must stand in their lot, even though death should confront them. It is better that a man should risk life than that God should be left without a witness in a dark land. No true man will flinch when such an exigency comes. It has been one of the special glories of our work, that we have always had men and women who have not counted their lives dear unto themselves; missionaries who would rather die than that the preaching of the word of life should cease among the perishing.

It has, indeed, become somewhat the fashion of late years to hint, if not openly to assert, that the heroic age of our missions is past. Even missionaries, exceedingly jealous for the honor of their high calling, have been heard to mourn over what they have regarded as a lack of self-forgetfulness in the current missionary life. But this is all misconception, arising from what is incidental to missionary surroundings, but not essential in missionary character. The heroic element in missions has not ceased, and it never will cease while love to Christ, and to the souls of men, glows in consecrated Christian hearts. The record of the last year bears more than one example of self-renouncing heroism in the cause of Christ. Our brethren Roberts and Freiday, with their devoted wives, calmly deciding that they ought not to forsake their newly opened field at Bhamo, though deserted by the British Resident, to whom they had before looked for protection, and warned that they could remain at their post only at the peril of their lives, will be cited in times to come as worthy of the palmiest days of missionary daring. It is difficult for us here to take in the gravity of the peril which threatened them, or to measure the heroic fortitude which decided their course. The slightest hint from that human tiger at Mandalay would have been followed by their instant execution. They were literally among lions; but He who animated their hearts to stay, shut the mouths of the lions so that no harm has befallen them, while immense prestige has been gained for the cause, to serve which they thus put all to the hazard. A like spirit was evinced by Mr. King, the new missionary to the Nagas, in attempting, in the face of threatened war, to locate at Samaguting, among the Angami Nagas. He went forth, as he quietly says, because he thought this was the thing which Christ and his brethren expected of him: "When the cloud of war burst, it literally swept him from its path, and he was compelled, at serious if not