

composed his features, and, with his usual courtesy, resumed, "My little son has heard of you, sir; and he is very anxious to learn something about Jesus Christ. It is a pretty story you tell of that man—prettier, I think, than any of our fables; and you need not be afraid to set it forth in its brightest colors, for my Moung Moung will never see through its absurdity, of course."

The missionary threw a quick, scrutinizing glance on the face of his visitor. He saw that the man was ill at ease, that his carelessness was entirely assumed, and that underneath all there was a deep wearing anxiety, which he fancied was in some way connected with his boy. "Ah, you think so? To what particular story do you allude?"

Why that of the strange sort of being you call Jesus Christ—a great *nat*, or prince, or something of the sort—dying for us poor fellows, and so ——— Ha, ha! The absurdity of the thing makes me laugh; though there is something in it beautiful, too. Our stupid pongyees would never have thought out any thing one half so fine; and the pretty fancy has quite enchanted Moung Moung here."

"I perceive you are a *paramat*," said the missionary.

"No; O, no; I am a true and faithful worshipper of Lord Guadama; but of course neither you nor I subscribe to all the fables of our respective religions. There is quite enough that is honest and reasonable in our Buddhistic system to satisfy me; but my little son"—here the father was embarrassed, and laughed again, as though to cover his confusion—"is bent on philosophical investigation—eh Moung Moung?"

"But are you not afraid that my teachings will do the child harm?"

The visitor looked up with a broad smile of admiration, as though he would have said, "You are a very honest fellow after all." Then regarding the child with a look of mingled tenderness and apprehension, he said softly, "Nothing can harm little Moung Moung, sir."

"But what if I should tell you I do believe every thing I preach as firmly as I believe you sit on the mat before me, and that it is the one desire of my life to make everybody else believe it—you and your child among the rest?"

The sah-ya tried to smile, tried to look unconcerned; but his easy nonchalance of manner seemed utterly to forsake him when he most needed it; and finally,

abandoning the attempt to renew his former tone of banter, he answered quietly, "I have heard of a writing you possess, which by your leave, I will take home and read to Moung Moung."

The missionary selected a little tract from the parcel on the table beside him and extended it to his visitor. "Sah-ya," said he solemnly, "I herewith put into your hands the key to eternal life and happiness. This active, intelligent soul of yours, with its exquisite perception of moral beauty and loveliness,"—and he glanced towards the child,— "cannot be destined to inhabit a dog, a monkey or a worm, in another life. God made it for higher purposes; and I hope and pray that it may yet meet you, all beautiful, and pure, and glorious, in a world beyond the reach of pain or death, and above all, beyond the reach of sin."

Up to this time the boy had sat upon his mat like a statue of silence, his usually dancing eyes fixed steadfastly upon the speakers, and gradually dilating and acquiring a strange, mystic depth of expression, of which they seemed at first incapable. At these words however he sprang forward. Papa, papa, hear him. Let us both love the Lord Jesus Christ. My mother loved him; and in the golden country of the blessed she waits for us."

"I must go," said the sah-ya hoarsely, and attempting to rise.

"Let us pray," said the missionary, kneeling down.

The child laid his two hands together, and, placing them against his forehead, bowed his head to the mat; while the father yielded to the circumstances of the case so far as to reseat himself. Gradually, as the fervent prayer proceeded, his head drooped a little; and it was not long before he placed his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with his hands. As soon as the prayer was ended, he rose, bowed in silence, took his child by the hand, and walked away.

Meanwhile, that terrible scourge of eastern nations, the cholera, had made its appearance; and it came sweeping through the town with its usual devastating power. Fires were kindled before every house, and kept burning night and day; while immense processions continually thronged the streets, with gongs, drums, and tom-toms, to frighten away the evil spirits, and so arrest the progress of the disease. The *zayat* was closed for lack of visitors; and the mis-