

THE Canadian Missionary Link

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

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VOL. VII., No. 9.] "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—*Is. lx. 3.* [May, 1885.]

The Perishing.

BY EMILY C. PEARSON.

It is estimated that a thousand millions of the human race have not heard of Christ.

They're crowding down the slopes of death,
A thousand millions strong;
A soul is lost, at every breath,
Of that benighted throng.

They're groping 'mid sin's hopeless ways,
A thousand millions blind;
On them have dawned no gospel rays,
No path of peace they find.

O Christians! these have never heard
Of Jesus' precious Name,—
Have never read His Holy Word,
Know not to die He came.

"Go preach my gospel!" Christ has said;
"Go, all my famished feed,
To every creature give Life's bread
O'er earth my message speed!"

And yet amid the darkened lands
For light vast millions cry,
Ye that are stewards of God's wealth
How can you pass them by?

The Bassein Karen Mission.

From Spurgeon's Sword and Trowel.

The following is from a review of Rev. C. H. Carpenter's work on Self-Support in Bassein:—

Bassein is a district as large as Wales, on the sea-coast of southern Burmah, at the mouth of the Irrawaddy, having a population of four hundred thousand. Its rich lowlands form the finest rice-district in the world. Its principal town, Bassein, on the Bassein river, eighty miles from the mouth, contains thirty thousand inhabitants, and can be reached by the largest vessels without difficulty. In 1835-6, flying visits were paid to the district by missionaries who distributed Burmese tracts; but it was not till 1837 that E. L. Abbott, the spiritual father of the Bassein Karen Baptists, set foot in the region. He had come to Maulmain in the previous year, at the age of 26; and after weathering an almost fatal attack of jungle-fever, and acquiring the Karen language, resolved to visit Bassein. He travelled by boat up the Irrawaddy, landing at every village to preach the gospel, and finding almost everywhere tokens of a remarkable work of the Holy Spirit among the people. The tracts and the gospel tidings carried by native Christians had caused a wide-spread awakening, and he found in several places converts of more than a year's standing awaiting for baptism. Leaving the river, a three days' tramp through the wilderness brought him well

within the district of Bassein, to the village of an old and wicked chief, whose people were as wild as mountain deer. He arrived on December 23rd. The scene of the following day, when he preached the word of God to company after company, all day long, and far into the night, shall be told in his own words. "Dec. 24, Sabbath. By ten o'clock this morning, seventy or eighty had assembled for worship. Very good attention was given, and some appeared to be pricked in their hearts. At one o'clock the assembly dispersed, and another company of about the same number came. These listened till sunset. After these had left, other companies came flocking in from distant villages, many of whom had travelled all day without eating, fearing that they should not arrive in time to see me. We had commenced singing a hymn, the people still flocking in, when the cry was heard, "The house is falling." The people hastened out, spread a mat on the ground in the open field, upon which I sat, and themselves gathered round, and sat upon the ground. A few old men sat near, who would question when they did not understand. All around was the darkness and stillness of night. Not a cloud obscured the heavens, which were spread out over our heads as a beautifully bespangled curtain. In one hand I held a dimly-burning taper: in the other, the Word of God. The firmament on high showed God's handiwork in the creation of the world; the Bible in my hand taught the wonderful story of its redemption by Jesus Christ. Midnight had long passed ere the assembly dispersed, and then they withdrew reluctantly." On the following morning the missionary was obliged to return to Rangoon, but he left a young native Christian to teach the people to read, and to exhort them to take heed to the things which they had heard.

The work thus begun rapidly spread, and notwithstanding the fierce opposition of the Burman authorities, who at that time held the Karen race in subjection, and who treated any communication with the white man, or any enquiry after his religion, as an act of rebellion, little companies continually came to Mr. Abbott for instruction; and wherever he travelled through the Karen district of Rangoon he found converts pleading to be baptized. He held many affecting midnight meetings, baptizing companies of earnest converts by moonlight, and administering the Lord's Supper to them in the still night by river-side or lake-shore. In the following summer some Christians arrived from Bassein, bringing a letter from Shway Weing, the young chief of the village which Mr. Abbott had visited, who had become a Christian, and had already learned to read and write his own language. The letter begged importunately for books and instruction, and Mr. Abbott immediately began school with fourteen pupils. Not many days after, Shway Weing himself arrived with nine more, and joined the school. He told Mr. Abbott that his house had for weeks been thronged with visitors from distant villages, who came to enquire concerning the new religion. They would stay a few