

the gospel and distributing the Scriptures throughout the entire mass of the population. Could this be accomplished, it would form a grand era in the history of the Indian missions.

An official notice from Bombay has been extensively circulated through Asia, in several languages, establishing two commercial fairs in Scinde—one at Kurachi, to commence on December 1st, and last sixty days; the other at Sukkur, about two hundred miles inland, to commence on January 1st, and last forty-five days,—the East India Company undertaking to provide for the preservation of order and the prevention of crime when the traders meet. These fairs, it is expected, will furnish an inlet to the almost unknown nations of Central Asia, and will, doubtless, be taken advantage of by missionaries in Western India.

The aspect of affairs in the Burmese empire seems to indicate that one of the events likely to arise out of the present war will be the opening of that country to the messengers of the gospel and to Christian civilization. All classes of the nation are imploring British protection. They express themselves sick of a tyranny to whose ravages they have been long exposed, under which "life, fame, property, and families are not worth five minutes' purchase." The Karen Christians have been long praying for the English to come and take their country and give them liberty; and now that there is some appearance of their prayers being answered, they are watching the events of the war with intense interest. The Karens are a portion of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country who occupy all the mountain regions of the southern and eastern portions of the Burmese territory,—many of whom are Christians, under the care of native evangelists, who some years ago introduced the gospel among them. They are a patriarchal people, whose traditions have so much of a Scripture character as to have led some to conclude that they are of the Jewish race. This, however, is very improbable. It is more likely that these traditions are faint vestiges of primitive christianity. The Karens, wherever they have been met with, have manifested great readiness to receive the gospel.

The hopes excited by the recent accession of Chau-fa-Mongkut to the throne of the kingdom of Siam appear about to be realized. That enlightened and liberal prince has invited the American missionaries, who were driven from the coun-

try by the persecution of his predecessor, to return to Bangkok, the capital, promising them protection, and expressing a desire to have his subjects instructed by them. They have accordingly renewed their labours in that populous city, and find themselves at liberty to preach the gospel throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom. The missionaries' wives are also, at the special request of the King, who has a great love for learning, engaged in teaching his royal sisters and the ladies of his harem the English language.

In China, the members of the respective missions are actively engaged in preaching the gospel and promoting christian education. Scriptural knowledge is becoming widely diffused among the people, and considerable numbers are, from time to time, being added to the churches. Notwithstanding the statements that have appeared respecting the general education of the Chinese, it is found that a large majority of them are unable to read their own books. This must necessarily be the case, as it is acknowledged by educated natives that it requires many years' study to master the *written* language of China. The missionaries are therefore endeavouring, by the use of the Roman alphabet, to give them a literature in their *spoken* language. With this view several small works have been prepared and printed, and the practicability of teaching the natives to read the colloquial language by means of a foreign alphabet has been tested in some of the mission schools.—The result has been encouraging—children have been able to read and understand such books in the short period of a few months. Should this undertaking prove ultimately successful, it will greatly contribute to facilitate missionary labours in China.

It will be a gratification to other Protestant Missionary Churches to find that the Wesleyan Society is about to extend its operations to the Chinese empire, and has appointed three agents to that vast field of missionary enterprise.

The prospects of Africa are daily brightening. Treaties have been concluded by our naval commanders with the King of Dahomey and all the African chiefs whose rule extends along the Bight of Benin, for the total abolition of the slave trade, which is at present entirely suppressed in those parts. It is estimated that there are on the coast of Western Africa 50,000 native christians.