

**The Karen apostle: or, memoir of Ko Thah-byu, the first Karen convert, with notices concerning his nation / by Francis Mason.**

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**Publication/Creation**

Boston (Mass.) : Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1843.

**Persistent URL**

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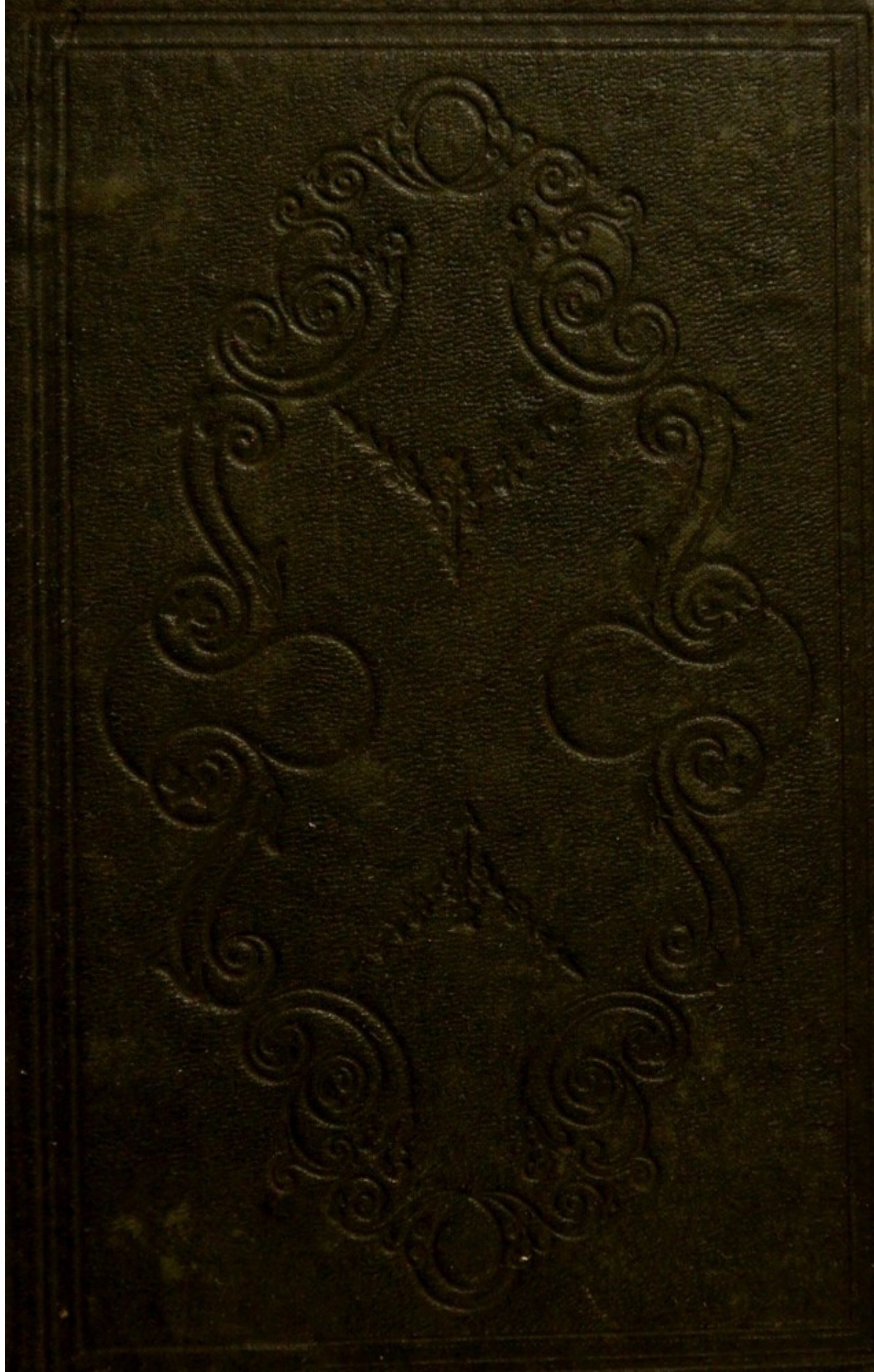
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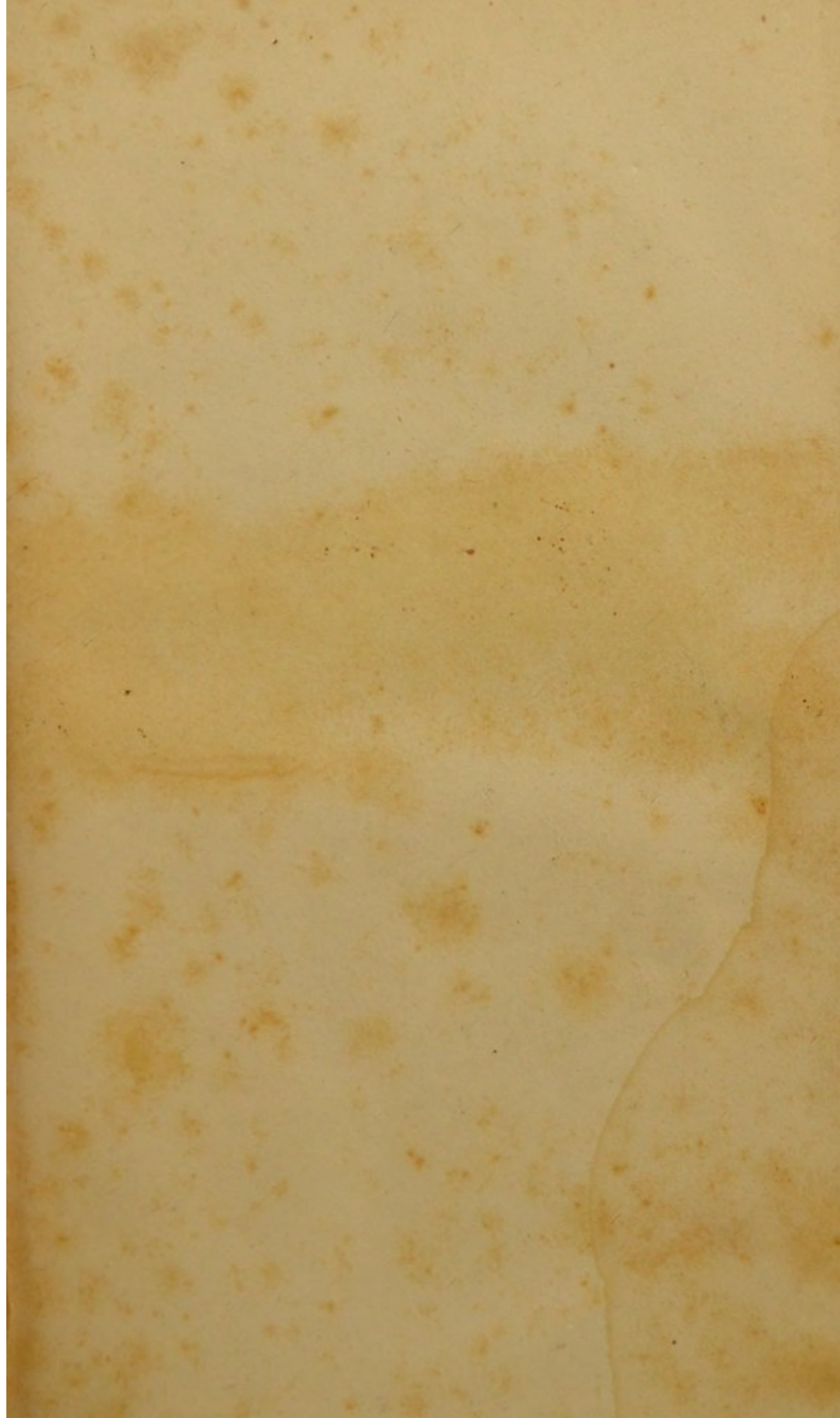


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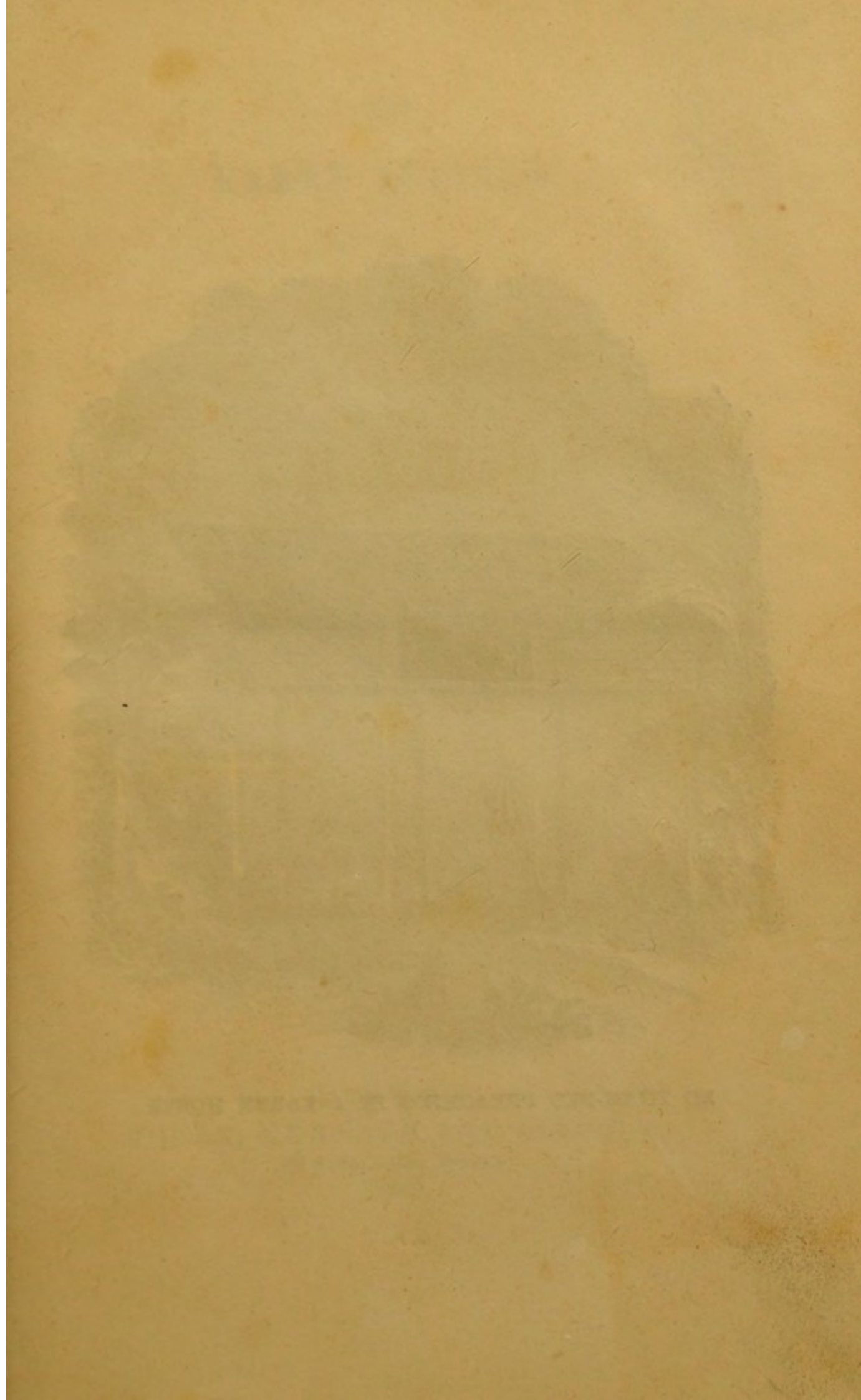
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KO THAH-BYU PREACHING IN A KAREN HOUSE.

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THE  
KAREN APOSTLE:  
OR,  
MEMOIR  
OF  
KO THAH-BYU,  
THE FIRST KAREN CONVERT,  
WITH NOTICES CONCERNING HIS NATION.

BY  
REV. FRANCIS MASON,  
MISSIONARY TO THE KARENS.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION, REVISED  
BY  
H. J. RIPLEY,  
PROFESSOR IN NEWTON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

BOSTON:  
GOULD, KENDALL AND LINCOLN,  
59 WASHINGTON STREET.  
1843.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1843,  
By GOULD, KENDALL & LINCOLN,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.



WEST BROOKFIELD:  
C. A. MIRICK AND CO., PRINTERS.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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THE following pages were sent to me by the REV. MR. MASON, with the request that I would superintend their publication in this country. They are accordingly now sent forth, in hope that the interest which has been felt in behalf of the Karens may be deepened, and that the cause of missions to the heathen in general may be promoted, by the striking proof of the power of the gospel here exhibited.

The maps which accompany the Memoir, are reduced from Rushton's Bengal Gazetteer of 1842, and are more correct than any thing else of the kind heretofore published in this country. All the interior of Tavoy and a part of Mergui, as presented in that work, were taken from an original manuscript map of MR. MASON'S. "As all the Karen stations mentioned in the missionary



journals, are here marked, besides those visited by Ko Thah-Byu, they will be useful in reading other missionary accounts." The drawing of the Karen house, is MRS. MASON'S work. "The house differs in appearance from some drawings of Karen houses that have been made, but many are built in this way." The other cuts are from MR. MALCOM'S TRAVELS IN SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA.

In discharging the trust committed to me, I have omitted a paragraph, or two, in the second chapter, and in another part of the book have altered the arrangement of the materials. I have also inserted the author's name on the title-page, and added a few notes. The notes which I have added, are distinguished by the letter E.

H. J. RIPLEY.

NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION,  
*March, 1843.*

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# MEMOIR.

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## CHAPTER I.

Early life of Ko Thah-Byu.—His Conversion and Baptism.

OFTEN had the Christian voyager gazed on the rocky promontories of Burmah, crowned with their whitened pagodas that glow amid the eternal verdure of tropic climes ; but he little thought, that “ the misty mountain tops,” in the distance, threw their shadows over the eery dwellings of a people, that generation after generation had charged their posterity never to worship idols.—Xavier had passed their mountain homes when he went to look on, but not to enter, inhospitable China, and find a surreptitious resting place and grave upon its barren rocks.—Swartz had labored half a century to destroy the three hundred thousand gods of India, without hearing of the nation that had rejected them all from



the remotest ages.—Carey had made his forty versions without a line for the people, that were longing, with “hope deferred,” for the word of God.—And Judson had lived seven years in Rangoon, preaching the Eternal God, before a single individual would admit his existence; while the poor unnoticed Karens were continually passing his door, and perhaps singing by the way,

“God is eternal, his life is long,  
God is immortal, his life is long;  
One kulpa\* he dies not,  
Two kulpas he dies not;  
He is perfect in meritorious attributes,  
Kulpas on kulpas he dies not.”

The Catholics, who preceded Protestants in Burmah several decadest† of years, appear to have entirely overlooked the Karens; and it was not till after the late war between the English and the Burmese, and the removal of the Baptist mission to the Tenasserim Coast, that they began to attract the attention of the missionaries. The first allusion to any of that nation, is found in Mr. Judson’s journal of April 22d, 1827, where among three hopeful inquirers he mentions “Moung Thah-pyoo, a poor man, belonging to Moung Shway-bay;” but it was not till Mr. Judson’s second notice, at the close of

\* Some long period of time.—E.

† Tens.—E.



the year, that we learn the individual mentioned was a Karen. At that time, Mr. Judson speaking of his hopeful inquirers, says, "The second is Moungh Thah-pyoo,\* a Karen by nation, imperfectly acquainted with the Burman language, and possessed of very ordinary abilities. He has been about us several months and we hope that his mind, though exceedingly dark and ignorant, has begun to discern the excellency of the religion of Christ." This is the individual to whom the following reminiscences relate. It is very true that he was a man "possessed of very ordinary abilities;" and has therefore left no literary relics, from which to compile a bulky memoir. It is true, that he was degraded among a people that characterize themselves as "a nation most debased among the debased;" that he was a poor man, and a slave, till Mr. Judson set him free. But it is also true, that he was afterwards a faithful and successful missionary, and a distinguished instrument in the hands of God to arouse the attention of the Karen nation to Christianity. From the day of his baptism to his death, he never intermitted his labors in preaching Christ, where the Saviour had not so much as been named, from Tavoy to Si-

\* The word *Moungh* is a Burman title of respect applied to middle aged men. *Ko* is a similar title applied to elderly men. *Pyoo* and *Byu* are different modes, which have been successively adopted, of spelling the same word. Hence *Moungh Thah-pyoo* and *Ko Thah-byu* designate the same man at different periods of his life.—E.



am ; from Martaban to the borders of Zimmay ; and from Rangoon to Arracan. And though he was the first of his nation to go down into the baptismal waters, he lived to see hundreds and hundreds follow his steps, in whose conversion he held a distinguished part. We cannot err in honoring those whom God honors ; and it therefore seems proper, that the name of Ko Thah-byu should be rescued from oblivion, and inscribed among the worthies of the church ; that the rising generation may learn what “very ordinary abilities,” when *wholly* consecrated to God, may accomplish.

Ko Thah-byu was born about the year 1778, at a village called Oo-twau, four days’ journey north of Bassein. He resided with his parents until he was fifteen years of age. He was then, as he represented himself, a wicked and ungovernable boy ; and, when he left his parents, he became a robber and a murderer. “How many of his fellow men he had murdered, either as principal or accessory,” writes one of the brethren, “he did not exactly know himself ; more than thirty, without doubt, according to his own confession. His natural temper was diabolical. After the Burmese war, he went to Rangoon, and got into Mr. Hough’s service.” There some religious impressions were made on his mind, and he ever remembered Mr. Hough with great affection ; and not unfrequently “Teacher Hough” was mentioned many years afterwards in his public



prayers in Tavoy. "He followed Mr. Judson to Amherst," where "Ko Shway-bay," writes one of the missionary sisters, "paid for him a debt of ten or twelve rupees, and took him into his family as a servant.\* We had before felt," she continues, "an interest in the Karens as a people who had not adopted the systems of idolatry exhibited by the more civilized nations around them; and this being the first opportunity we had enjoyed of presenting to their minds the religion of the Bible, we naturally felt deeply anxious that the grace of God should make it effectual to his salvation. Truth seemed, however, to make no impression upon his mind for a long time; and Ko Shway-bay getting discouraged with regard to doing him any good, informed us that Ko Thah-byu's moral character proved to be such, that he could no longer retain him in his family. Mr. Judson, however, who at the time lived with us, proposed to pay the debt, if we could find employment by which he could support himself; and he was accordingly transferred to our family. Soon after this period, he began to pay more attention to religious instruction, and though his fits of violent temper gave us a great deal of trouble, it was not very long before we began to see signs of repentance, and the first dawnings of faith in a crucified

\* According to Burman law, the debtor becomes a slave to the creditor.



Saviour. His mind was, however, extremely dark ; he was very slow to believe ; and then his violent temper often cast him down and quite discouraged him from praying. After some time, however, his faith began to gain a little strength, and we with great joy perceived a gradual improvement in his character. The little Burman church were, however, very slow to perceive the change, and though he often begged for the privilege of baptism, yet, not having gained a full victory over his violent passions, they could not think he had really been ‘ born again.’ After having been with us about a year, the church gained sufficient evidence of the change to receive him as one of their number, and the next sabbath was appointed for his baptism. During the year, however, another Karen man with a family, and a young woman with her two little orphan brothers, relatives of the family, made their appearance in Maulmain, and, being in a most miserable starving condition, we gave them a little place to live in, and took the young woman into the girls’ school, while the two little boys were put into Mr. Boardman’s school for boys. The young woman improved much in the school and gave good attention to religious instruction ; so that Ko Thah-byu had married her previous to the time appointed for his baptism. He had likewise been studying very diligently in order to be able to read the Burman Bible. But before the day for his baptism arrived, Mr.



Boardman being ready to sail for Tavoy, and wishing to take the two little Karen boys with him, Ko Thah-byu concluded to accompany him, as his wife was unwilling to be separated so far from her little brothers ; and his baptism was accordingly deferred until he should arrive in Tavoy."

His baptism is thus recorded by Mr. Boardman, in his journal of May 16, 1828.

"Repaired early in the morning to a neighboring tank, and administered Christian baptism to Ko Thah-byu, the Karen Christian who accompanied us from Maulmain. May we often have the pleasure of witnessing such scenes. The three Karen visitors were present. They appear to be impressed with the truth of our doctrine. They have urged Ko Thah-byu to accompany them, so that I have left it for him to choose, whether he will go or stay. He has concluded to go. Perhaps God has a work for him to do among his countrymen. He is very zealous in the cause of declaring what he knows."

Before following him into the jungles, it may not be deemed inappropriate to notice, in a separate chapter, the preparation of the Tavoy Karens to receive the gospel.



## CHAPTER II.

Burman oppression of the Karens.—Singular prophecy.—Arrival of the English.—Prophecies fulfilled concerning white foreigners.—Attachment to them.—Arrival of Teachers.—The Karens obtain books.

THE remarkable traditions of Scripture doctrines and facts, which make the Karen nation a people prepared for the gospel in a manner above all other unevangelized nations, are well known, and will not be repeated here. But the following extracts from an unpublished address to the English Governor General, written by Sau Qua-la, a Karen assistant missionary, exhibit the local condition and anticipations of the Tavoy Karens so vividly, that, should they contain any thing irrelevant to the present subject, it will be overlooked, it is believed, from the consideration that every sentence is the unsuggested production of a Karen, who, when Ko Thah-byu entered the jungles, was wild as "the untaught Indian."

"Through the goodness of God, my nation, sons of the forest, and children of poverty, ought to praise thy nation, the white foreigners, exceedingly ;



and we ought to obey your orders, for the Karens, the sons of the eastern forest, have neither head nor ear. They are poor, and scattered every where ; are divided in every direction ; at the sources of the waters, and in the glens above them. When they fall among the Siamese, the Siamese make them slaves. When they fall among the Burmans, the Burmans make them slaves. So they live on one stream beyond another, and cannot see each other. They have had other things to do rather than visit. The Burmans made them drag boats, cut ratans, collect dammer, seek bees' wax, gather cardamums, strip bark for cordage, clear away cities, pull logs, and weave large mats. Besides this, they demanded of them presents of yams, the bulbo-tubers of arum, ginger, capsicum, flesh, elephants' tusks, rhinoceros' horns, and all the various kinds of vegetables that are eaten by the Burmans. The men being employed thus, the women had to labor at home. Sometimes the men were not at home four or five days in two or three months. Further, the young females had to secrete themselves, and affect rudeness, and blacken their faces ; for if they did not, the Burman officers would drag them away and make them prostitutes. If any one was reputed handsome, and it came to the ears of the Burman rulers, she was taken away immediately ; so that the young females dared not appear openly. Sometimes when a Burman asked, 'Is she a maiden?'



the Karens would reply falsely, 'No, she has a husband.' The married women, also, that were handsome, had to conceal themselves. The men were compelled by the Burman rulers to guard forts, to act as guides, to kidnap Siamese, and to go from one place to another, till many dropped down dead in the midst of the jungle. Notwithstanding they did all this, they had their arms twisted behind them, were beaten with stripes, boxed with the fist, and pounded with the elbow, days without end.

"In the midst of these sufferings, they remembered the ancient sayings of the Elders, and prayed beneath the bushes, though the rains poured upon them, or the musquetoos, the gnats, the leeches, or the horseflies bit them. The Elders said, 'Children and grandchildren, as to the Karen nation, their God will yet save them.' Hence, in their deep affliction, they prayed, 'If God will save us, let him save speedily. We can endure these sufferings no longer. Alas! where is God?'

"Sometimes the Burmans would kidnap the Karens in Siam and carry them up to Ava, to the presence of the king; and thus separated from father or mother, husband or wife, child or grandchild, they yearned for each other, and many sickened and died on the way, before reaching the monarch's feet. Sometimes the Siamese kidnapped the Karens in Burmah, and subjected them to like treatment. The Karens in Siam knew that those whom



the Siamese brought from Burmah were their relatives, and their tears flowed when they saw them; yet they dared not tell the Siamese, or supplicate for them. So those in Burmah, when they saw the Burmans leading away the Karens they had kidnapped in Siam, knew they were their cousins; yet they dared not speak or entreat for them; for if they said they were their relations, or begged for them, death was the immediate consequence. Moreover the Karens dared not dwell near the cities; for the Burmans took away all their rice and paddy, and every thing they had, and carried off their women by force. Hence they went far off, and dwelt on the streamlets and in the gorges of the mountains. After all, the rulers sometimes took their paddy; and in a state of starvation they would eat at random the roots and leaves of the jungle, and thus great numbers died. Sometimes the rulers assembled them together near the city, where, having nothing to eat, great numbers died of sickness and starvation. Sometimes they would have to carry rice for soldiers under march, and being unable to cultivate their fields, great numbers died of hunger from this cause. Then, those whom the rulers called, if unable to go, either from sickness in their families, or in their own persons, had to give money to the officers that came, and money for the rulers that sent them; and if they had no money, they were compelled to borrow of the Burmans, and thus became their slaves.



“Furthermore, the Karens were not permitted to go into the presence of the rulers. They were only allowed to hold a little communication with the Burman that was set over them. At one time, in the days of Diwoon, when the Karens were fast dying off with starvation, and were so employed that they could not cultivate the land, my uncle, who is a chief, determined to go and ask the governor to give the Karens liberty to cultivate the land and raise provisions to a small extent. So he went in to Diwoon; but he was thrown into prison immediately. His brethren had no rice to bring him, and they could feed him there only with the stems of wild plantain trees, the male blossoms with their spathes, and the young shoots of bamboos.

“Great Ruler, the ancestors of the Karens charged their posterity thus; ‘Children and grandchildren, if the thing come by land, weep; if by water, laugh. It will not come in our days, but it will in yours. If it come first by water, you will be able to take breath; but if first by land, you will not find a spot to dwell in.’ Hence, when the Karens were in the midst of their intense sufferings, they longed for those that were to come by water, to come first.

“Again, the Elders said, ‘When the Karens have cleared the Hornbill city\* three times, happi-

\* The site of an old city near Tavoy, which the Karens were called in to clear occasionally, when the trees grew up over it.



ness will arrive.' So when the Burman rulers made them clear it the last time, they said among themselves, 'Now we may suppose happiness is coming, for this completes the third time of clearing the Hornbill city;' and true enough, for before they had finished, we heard that the white foreigners had taken Rangoon! Then the Burman rulers made the Karens carry stones and throw them into Tavoy river, that the foreign ships might not be able to come up. They compelled them also to become soldiers, and to muster, each one with a bow and quiver; and as they had no guns, every one had to arm himself also with a cudgel; for the Burmans said, that, when the foreigners got on land, they would be unable to walk, and might be beaten to death with sticks. When, however, the news came that the foreigners had entered the mouth of Tavoy river, the Karens let themselves down over the wall of the city by night, and fled into the jungles. Then the Karens all ran and secreted themselves, both men and women and children; cooking food only when the smoke could be concealed by the clouds and vapors; for they were apprehensive that if the Burmans were overcome, they would fly also, and trace them by the smoke. Some of the men in the city were unable to get away, and remained till it was taken; and some that fled were unable to find their families, they having previously secreted themselves. In a little more than ten



days however, we heard that the foreigners had taken possession, and that those, who wished to go to the city, had liberty. Then the Karens rejoiced and said, 'Now happiness has arrived. The thing has come by water. Now we may take breath;' and those that were concealed returned to their homes with their wives and little ones.

"The Karens soon learned, that the foreigners were not vile like the Burmans; and they came to the city frequently, and the women with them. Formerly the women were afraid of the Burmans, and dared not come to the city; so they had never seen it. Besides, it was very pleasant to look at the foreign soldiers, standing in straight rows; and as they were quiet and civil, the Karens brought their wives and little ones to look at them. Then we remembered the words of the prophet, who said, 'See, see, the white foreigners! the white foreigners! They stand gracefully, sit gracefully, eat gracefully, drink gracefully, sleep gracefully, dwell gracefully, go gracefully, return gracefully, speak gracefully, talk gracefully;' and he had sung,

'The sons of God, the white foreigners,  
Dress in shining black, and shining white.  
The white foreigners, the children of God,  
Dress in shining black, and shining red.'

"And so we saw them. They came with black soldiers and white soldiers, and the rulers were dressed just as the prophet had said. We had never



seen white foreigners before ; but we had heard the Elders say, ‘ As to the white foreigners, they are righteous. They were the guides of God anciently, so God blessed them, and they sailed in ships and cutters ; and can cross oceans, and reach lands.’ The Elders said further, that the Karens were originally seven brethren, of whom the white foreigners were the youngest. Still the generation before us, that told us these things, had never seen them, and knew not how they looked. They merely related what the Elders said anciently. Through the goodness of God, my generation is permitted to see them. The Elders further sung, in relation to the white foreigners, as follows,

‘ The sons of God, the white foreigners,  
Obtained the words of God.  
The white foreigners, the children of God,  
Obtained the words of God anciently.’

“ Great Ruler, afterwards we heard, that after staying three years, the white foreigners would return. Then we wept aloud. We said to each other ‘ If the foreigners go away, the race of the Karens will be wholly cut off ;’ for in the days of Alompra and Diwoon\* they died like dogs ; whole families often dying off together ; and about the time

\* Alompra was a courageous chief, who, about a century ago, usurped the royal power among the Burmans. Of Diwoon I find no information. He was, doubtless, an individual of some distinction at a more recent date.—E.



the white foreigners arrived, the Burmans were preparing to make an end of them, having assembled them together near the city. But the Karens having heard reports that the white foreigners were coming, they prayed diligently for their arrival. The prophet too sung at worship,

‘The city of Ava says, she is great;  
She is not equal to the heel of God’s foot.  
The city of Ava says, she is exceedingly great;  
She is not equal to the sole of God’s foot.’

“Thus they sung, and prayed, that the white foreigners might come. When they arrived, the Karens in Burmah and Siam heard of each other, and saw each other.

“After the foreign rulers and their soldiers had been here a short time, the white foreign teacher Boardman arrived, and came into the jungles and preached the words of God. We gave attention and remembered, that the Elders said, the white foreigners had obtained the words of God, that they were our younger brethren, and that they were righteous. Again, the Elders said,

‘Who created the world in the beginning?  
God created the world in the beginning.  
God appointed every thing:  
God is unsearchable.’

“All things in heaven and on earth, O children and grandchildren, God created them. ‘Never forget God. Pray to him every day, and every night.’



And before the arrival of the white foreigners, a prophet singing, said,

‘Great mother comes by sea,  
Comes with purifying water, the head water.  
The teacher comes from the horizon :  
He comes to teach the little ones.’

Hence not a few of the Karens believed.

“We next heard that teacher Wade, at Maulmain, had made Karen books ; so teacher Mason sent up Kau-la-pau and myself, in a ship, to learn. Then many of the Karens, here and there, learned to read their own language ; and we remembered, that the Elders had said again, ‘Children and grandchildren, the Karen books will yet arrive. When their books arrive, they will obtain a little happiness.’ Therefore, O great Ruler, God having given thee great goodness and kindness, we are very happy. Now, the Karens, though they be maidens, or mothers, or children, may come and dwell in the city ; may dress as they wish ; put on what they wish ; and adorn themselves as they wish. It was not so in the days of the Burmans : we could never do so then. In the providence of God, how numerous are the reasons that we have to praise thy goodness, and thy beneficence ! May God establish thy towns, and thy cities, thy lands, and thy territories. Through thy acts, the Karens, the children of poverty, and the sons of the forest, breathe with ease. May God, then, make great



thy power and thy might, till thy government shall embrace all the children of poverty throughout the earth. And may God, whom thou worshipest, do good unto thee, and watch over thee, and thy children and grandchildren.

“ Again, the Elders said, ‘ Children and grandchildren, when the white foreigners and the Karens fight, then happiness will arrive. And how will they fight? The white foreigners will come in ships, and shoot at the Karens; and the loads of their cannon and muskets will be changed to savory plantains, and sweet sugar cane; and the Karens will eat them. On the other hand, the Karens, armed with adzes, will go and make holes in their ships. Then the Karens and white foreigners will recognize each other as brethren; and one will say, O my younger brother! and the other will say, O my elder brother! And they will become real brethren, and there will be peace and happiness.’ Now the white foreign teachers, that preach Jesus Christ the Son of God, came by ship; and before the people understood what they heard, they contradicted; but the teachers talked to them till they understood, and then they knew that God [whom the teachers preached] was the One God; and the teachers made us books, and were thus able to teach us. Great Ruler, formerly the Karens had no books, and when they wished to learn to read, they went to the Burmese, or Siamese, or Taling



kyoungs.\* There they made them pull up weeds around the pagodas, carry bricks to build new ones, and go out and beg food, and they beat them and whipped them; so that they could never learn well.

“Through thy favor and kindness, the people of my generation are very happy; and we hear again, and more perfectly, of God, of whom our ancestors told us. Great Ruler, though we heard anciently of God from our ancestors, yet through the persecutions of the Burmans and Talings, we gave random worship to images; but we still hoped that our God would save us, and we prayed to him on our pillows. Now, through thy goodness and beneficence, we worship God as we please. May God establish thy city and thy generation.

“Great Ruler, our ancestors said, that the white foreigners were our younger brethren, that they guided away God anciently and obtained books and ships, and that they are more skilful than all other nations, and are able to reach lands, and cross oceans. Furthermore, the Elders said, ‘When their younger brother arrives, the Karens will be happy. Their younger brother was able to keep in company with God.’ And now we see you! We are a worthless nation. We are the poorest of races. We are a tribe of wild men. We are a na-

\* Monasteries of the priests.—E.



tion of slaves to all people. Among fools, we are the greatest fools. Now, through the goodness of God, the white foreign teachers have taught us to read, and I am enabled to write to thee.

“Great Ruler, thy goodness and beneficence to the Karen nation we shall never forget, down to the generations of our children and grandchildren. Great Ruler, forget us not ; cast us not away into the hands of other nations. We are exceedingly happy in thee. Thou art as he of whom we sung anciently,

‘The Great Chief, his words are bliss,  
As the impervious shade of the great Banyan.’

“We are happy in thee, far above all other nations that ever ruled us before ; but we fear that the white foreigners will go back, and the Siamese and the Burmese will come and persecute us again. Great Ruler, we, the Karen nation, have no cities, no towns, no villages, no hamlets. We are now dwelling beneath thy shadow, and are exceedingly happy ; and obtain our sustenance with great ease. Because thou hast been merciful, may God have mercy on thee, generation after generation. If thou givest us up again into the hands of the Burmans, our race will really be brought to an end. Formerly, we dwelt as in the midst of a thorn bush ; but in thee, we dwell as on a mat spread down to sleep



upon. May God make thee joyful and happy, generation after generation.

“The white foreign teachers have preached the words of God, and some of us have become disciples. Great Ruler, it is of thy goodness and beneficence. Further, the Karens, the sons of the forest, a nation of slaves, a people of the deepest poverty, thou hast freed from taxes. Thy goodness and beneficence is so great, that we rejoice till we can rejoice no more. And the people of thy nation, the white foreigners, that live with us here, the ruler of the city and the ruler of the provinces, the officers and soldiers, the doctors and teachers, are good men. Great Ruler, through thy acts I believe the words of the Elders. The Elders said, ‘The white foreigners are righteous. They will not do any thing that is improper. They do not act regardless of every thing, like the Talings and Burmans. They never use compulsion. They dwell with truth. When they arrive, the Karens will be happy.’ I believe these words. The Karens have been slaves, generation upon generation. When demands were made of us, we must give, whether we had whereof to give or not; when they called us, we must go, night or day, whether able to go or not; they made us sick, they persecuted us, they killed us like insects. But thou, Great Ruler, thou hast snatched us from the hands of an evil people. Truly, thou hast bought us, and then given us our



liberty for nought. Truly, thou art righteous ; truly, thou dwellest with truth, as our ancestors said. Verily, thou dost love ; verily, thou art merciful. The goodness and beneficence of thine acts to us are so great, that they go far beyond what we could ever conceive. May God be with thee. Thy goodness and beneficence in freeing us and making us happy, we will never forget, but tell it to succeeding generations, as our ancestors told us of the white foreigners anciently. Great Ruler, may God watch over thee, and do good unto thee ; and widen out thy kingdom and territories, generation after generation forever."



KAREN GIRL.









### CHAPTER III.

First journey into the jungle, to Khat.—Second to Thalu.—Seeks his countrymen in the city of Tavoy.—First journey across the eastern mountains, to Tshiek-ku.—Second visit to Tshiek-ku.—Third journey to Tshiek-ku.—Accompanies Mr. Boardman on his first tour among the Karens.—Visits the southern Karens at Toung-byouk, Pai, and Palouk.—Teaches school at Tshiek-ku.—Goes to Siam.—Journey into the Maulmain Karen jungles.—Returns to Tavoy with Mr. Boardman.

IMMEDIATELY after his baptism, Ko Thah-byu, accompanied by two of his countrymen, that were present, left Tavoy to visit the Karens beyond the eastern mountains, in the valley of the Tenasserim. The rains, which had commenced, were so powerful, and the streams so high, that he was compelled to abandon his intentions; but he turned aside, on his return, to a little settlement of Karens on Khat creek, a few miles south of his path, and a short day's walk from town. "It was planting season," says one of my Karen correspondents, who lived there, "and we had gone to plant on the hill sides, when one of those, who had been left behind in the house, came and said, 'Here is a man come from the up country, to trace his genealogy to us: come



and listen.' We went and found Ko Thah-byu, who preached and explained the catechism. All gave attention, and Moungh Khway resolved at once to become a Christian; and he went with Ko Thah-byu, on his return to town, to see the teacher." This man, the first fruits of Ko Thah-byu's labors, was brother to the Chief of the village, and became a most valuable member of the church. He was an efficient auxiliary in the evangelizing of his village, nearly the whole of whose inhabitants ultimately became Christians. At the time of his baptism, Mr. Boardman writes concerning him; "He appears remarkably well. With but little opportunity of receiving instruction, he has made great progress in Christian knowledge and practice. His experience and heavenly-mindedness might, perhaps, put many a worldly-minded Christian to the blush."

Mr. Boardman, recording his return, says, "Ko Thah-byu finding the rains very violent, and the brooks much swelled, was obliged to abandon his plan of visiting the Karen teacher's village. He returned last evening. During his absence, he met several people, to whom he spoke as he was able. Many of them heard with attention, and two of them accompanied him on his return, in order to gain further instruction. They profess a readiness to receive the gospel, and wish me to visit them after the rains."



“Last evening, two respectable Karens, whom Ko Thah-byu saw in his late tour, called for further instruction. They live a day’s journey from Tavoy. They profess a full belief of the truth of the gospel. May their professions prove to be sincere.”

In July, he visited another Karen settlement, Thalu, it is believed, where the writer of this memoir subsequently found several converts. Mr. Boardman noticing his return, says, “Ko Thah-byu, the Karen Christian, who went out five days ago, to visit a Karen village, returned to-day, and says that all the people of the village listened to his words.”

While in town, he was busied in looking up his countrymen, who for various purposes occasionally visit the city. “About a month since,” writes Mr. Boardman in August, “a very interesting young Karen was found by Ko Thah-byu, in the niche of a pagoda, where he had been fasting two days. Knowing only the religion of Gaudama, which he had heard from the Burmans, he had embraced it so far as to practise this austerity, in the hope of obtaining a great reward in a future state. Our Karen Christian explained to him the folly of fasting, as practised by the Burmans, and invited the young man to our house, where he paid a very serious attention to Christian instruction. After learning the way of the Lord more perfectly, he took a Christian book and returned to his native forest. Our prayers accompanied him. We all remarked something pe-



cularly interesting and amiable in his appearance. I have often wished to have him live with me, in hope that he might become a Christian, and a herald of the gospel. Yesterday, this young man returned to us, with three of his relations, to receive further instruction. After conversing with me for some time, and attending Burman worship with us, he went to Ko Thah-byu's apartment, where I heard them talking of the gospel till near midnight; and at break of day, this morning, the conversation was renewed. This afternoon, he expressed a wish to live with me, in order to learn more fully about the true God and Saviour. On my inquiring how long he would be willing to stay for this purpose, he replied, 'Ten or twelve years, till I can learn fully about God and Christ. Many of the Karens will also come.' He is a youth of good understanding, quick apprehension, and amiable manners. He says, he wishes no longer to worship heaps of brick, but to know and serve the everliving and true God."

He felt the greatness of the missionaries' work, and the inadequacy of the means in operation to carry it forward; and hence we find in Mr. Boardman's journal of the following day, "After evening worship in Burman, the Karen Christian, having related the adventures of the day, said to me, 'There is one subject on which I wish to await your decision: I wish you would write to America, for more teachers to be sent out.'"



About the end of September, before the rains had fully closed, he started again to visit the eastern Karens. He went to the village of Tshiekku, where the teacher or prophet, that brought the sacred book\* to Mr. Boardman, lived with his disciples.

Moung Sekkee, the Karen who was his companion and guide over the mountains, writes; "Teacher Boardman preached to me the words of God, and I understood a little, but not fully: Ko Thah-byu taught me in Karen so that I understood perfectly, and I went with him to Tshiekku, where the people listened and built a zayat for the teacher, who soon after came to visit them, when Moung So and Moung-Kya asked for baptism." The two men last mentioned have been valuable assistants many years; and the latter writes, "When I heard at first, that a teacher with a Karen man and his wife had come down from Maulmain, I asked the man's name, and was told, Ko Thah-byu. Then I said, what has he come for? 'To preach the words,' was the reply, 'of the God that made the heavens and the earth.' So I went to Tavoy to hear; and after Ko Thah-byu had preached to me, I said to him, 'Brother, truly it is the word of God! Come out and preach at Tshiekku.' He asked permission of teacher Boardman, who readily consented, and he afterwards came out, and lived with the Bookho,† going out from his

\* See Appendix—Karen Prophets.

† The teacher or prophet, referred to above.



house to visit me and others, and then returning. The Bookho, however, had a quarrel with his wife, and would not obey the word of God; and having heard of it, I went to Ko Thah-byu and said, Brother, come and live with me, and he came."

Mr. Boardman, noticing his return from this journey, says, 'Ko Thah-byu returned from the villages, where he has spent the last ten days in making known the gospel to his countrymen. The Karen teacher, or rather conjurer, mentioned in former journals, came with him, and appeared somewhat tamed and in his right mind. He says now that he will practise no more joger's tricks and ceremonies, but will, from the heart, worship the eternal God and his Son, Jesus Christ.'

He soon after made a second visit, and returned to town again in November with ten converts. Mr. Boardman says, "Ko Thah-byu returned from the villages, with ten of his countrymen, several of whom profess to have become converts to Christ. One of the more promising, is the chieftain before mentioned."

About a month afterwards, he made a third tour to the same settlement, and was in town again in January 1829, to conduct Mr. Boardman into the jungles. Mr. Boardman writes at this time, "Three days since, two Karens arrived, who had travelled three days' journey in expectation of finding me at the Karen settlements; but not finding me there,



they came three days' journey farther to see me at my own house. They appear very desirous of receiving Christian instruction; and Ko Thah-byu is unwearied in his efforts to impart it. One of them came from the province of Mergui, and he states that the Karens in Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim, have all heard of us, and are desirous of listening to our instructions."

A few days afterwards, Mr. Boardman, accompanied by Ko Thah-byu, made his first tour among the Karens. After Mr. Boardman had preached in Burman, Ko Thah-byu was in the habit of interpreting as much of the discourse as he could remember into Karen; and on other occasions, as opportunity offered, he preached himself. Once Mr. Boardman remarks, "After breakfast, Ko Thah-byu discoursed to them in Karen, an hour or two, on the being and perfections of God;" and in another place, "one man who had heard the gospel repeatedly from Ko Thah-byu, presented a request for Christian baptism."

He returned to town with Mr. Boardman, and was busily employed there in searching out the Karens, who visited the city on business. In March, Mr. Boardman writes, "A very respectable looking old Karen, said to be the chief of his nation in the province of Mergui, was introduced by Ko Thah-byu. He states, that all the Karens in Mergui and Tenasserim have heard of us; and his great desire



to see us had brought him thus far from home. After listening to the gospel awhile, he took his leave, saying, he would return in the evening."

"Ko Thah-byu has concluded, with our approbation, to go out on a missionary tour of several weeks. It is surprising how magnanimous a naturally weak man becomes, when the spirit of Christ and the love of souls inspire him. This poor Karen, who, to say the least, does not excel in intellectual endowment or human learning, is continually devising new and judicious plans of doing good. 'There are,' says he, 'the districts of Pai and Palau, and several other places near the mouth of the river, where there are many Karen settlements which I wish to visit. There are also many Karens in the province of Mergui; I wish to declare the gospel to them all. And before long, I want to go across, and visit the Karens in Siam, and afterwards to visit Bassein, my native place, near Rangoon. Many Karens live there.' Such are in general, this old man's plans. An event has occurred this evening which seems a providential intimation of present duty. The old Karen chief who was here this morning, has desired Ko Thah-byu to accompany him to Mergui in his boat, promising at the same time to see that he shall be accompanied from one Karen settlement to another, till he shall reach this province again. Ko Thah-byu is inclined to go, and expects to be absent five or six weeks."



A few days after, Mr. Boardman adds, "A good number of Karens are now with us, and Ko Thah-byu is engaged day and night in reading and explaining to them the words of eternal life. It seems as though the time for favoring this people had come."

Mah A, Ko Thah-byu's wife, was baptized on the twentieth of this month, March, 1829. Mr. Boardman, recording her examination, remarks, "She was formerly very ignorant and very wicked; but under the care and instruction of her husband and Mrs. Boardman, she has within the last few months become a very hopeful inquirer, and we are encouraged to hope that she is now truly converted. She requested baptism three months ago."

Immediately after his wife's baptism, Ko Thah-byu started on his tour to the south, intending to go as far as Mergui. He did not however accompany the Karen Chief, previously referred to, as "the Chief of his nation in the province of Mergui;" and as this is the last notice of that Chief, it may be here remarked, that he was baptized by me in the year 1837. He has been a valuable member of the church; and his descendants, who are almost as numerous as Jacob's, when he went down into Egypt, have very generally followed his footsteps into the baptismal waters. Ko Thah-byu was accompanied, on this journey, by Moung Sekkee, who writes, "We went to Toungh-byouk and Men-



thah creek, where we preached the word of God to Sau Co-klay, and Sau Yu-khay; and then we went to Kyouk-toung, where we preached to Sau Ke-krau and family." These places are in the neighborhood of Toung-byouk, and the persons mentioned were baptized several years afterwards. "We next," continues Sekkee, "went to Pai and Palouk, preaching to both Pghos and Sgaus, but no one listened. At Palouk, Ko Thah-byu was taken sick." Here, sick among strangers and unbelievers, it might be supposed that he could ill spare his only Christian companion; but the preaching of the gospel was more to him than his own comfort. Hence Sekkee adds, "He made me go on to preach at Pyeekhya, and leave him behind at Palouk." His health was such that he felt wholly unable to go on to Mergui; and as soon as he was well enough to travel again, they reluctantly turned their faces towards Tavoy, travelling slowly, and preaching in all the Karen settlements by the way, through which they were led by the zigzag path they had chosen. The man, with whom Ko Thah-byu staid while sick in Palouk, was the first baptized in that settlement, in the year 1838, and is now one of the pillars of the church. In May, Mr. Boardman writes; "Ko Thah-byu arrived, having spent the last seven weeks in the wilderness, making known the gospel to his countrymen. His account of his tour is interesting and encouraging.



We are concerned, however, to find that he is in a bad state of health. May the Lord spare him for much more usefulness among his benighted countrymen."

The succeeding rains he spent principally teaching school near Tshiekku, the former scene of his labors. Mounge Kya writes; "He came with his wife, and both lived with me; and he taught us how to worship God. When the dry season arrived, he said to me, 'Brother, it is very pleasant staying with thee, but my wife wishes to go and stay at Tshiekku.' So he placed his wife at Tshiekku, and went over the mountains to Thalu; and after his departure, his wife preached\* the word of God at Tshiekku, till hearing that he was sick; when we took her to where he was living."

About this time, the rebellion took place in Tavoy and Mr. Boardman went up to Maulmain. On his return in October, he remarks; "Ko Thahbyu, it seems, has come to town twice since our absence, but as he left his wife and two little brothers sick in the jungle, he returned to them before our arrival. They have passed through various hardships and perils since they left us at the wharf:

\* Mr. Judson remarks in one of his journals, "Though I began to preach the gospel as soon as I could speak intelligibly, I have thought it hardly becoming to apply the term *preaching*, to my imperfect, desultory observations and conversations."—Throughout this book, the term is used so as to embrace the informal ways of making known the gospel, as defined above; and it is so used by the natives.



but the Lord has delivered them out of them all, and blessed be his holy name."

Two weeks afterwards, Ko Thah-byu arrived; and after another preaching excursion of a few days in the jungle, he was in town again, when Mr. Boardman writes, "Moung So, the baptized Karen headman's mother having died lately, he fears that the other relatives of the deceased will wish to perform the heathenish customs practised among the people, subsequent to the funeral; and to counteract the bad effects of such practices, he proposes to erect a preaching zayat near the grave, and has invited Ko Thah-byu and his wife to go out with him, and 'hold forth the word of life,' while the heathens around may be indulging in their wicked customs.\* I have consented to their going, and they are to leave to-morrow."

About the middle of December, Mr. Boardman, returning from village preaching, remarks; "I had scarcely seated myself, when Ko Thah-byu and two of the baptized, and several others from Moung So's village, arrived. After a short discourse in Burman, prayers and thanks were offered to God, in both Burman and Karen. Twelve Karens were present. Of these, two had come to solicit baptism. Two were females, who have been listening to Mrs. Boardman's instructions, for a year past. Three

\* See Appendix—Karen Funeral Rites.



were headmen of villages, among whom was our hitherto faithful brother, MOUNG SO. He and KO THAH-BYU represent, that during the heathenish ceremonies occasioned by the recent decease of his mother, MOUNG SO and the other Christians of his village, having built a zayat near the grave, spent the time in listening to Christian instruction. They felt no reluctance, but a pleasure, at abandoning those heathenish practices in which they had formerly indulged."

The day after KO THAH-BYU's arrival, he brought forward the subject of a journey into Siam. MR. BOARDMAN says, "We have concluded to encourage KO THAH-BYU's going to Siam. The journey across will occupy six or seven days. He expects to leave to-morrow, and to be absent seven or eight weeks." And he adds the next day, "KO THAH-BYU has long wished to go across the great mountains, and visit the Karens in Siam; and having lately seen some of them, who urgently invited him over, he has laid the subject before us for our consideration and decision." And on the third day, he gives the conclusion; "Having solemnly commended the Karens, and especially KO THAH-BYU, to the divine blessing, we sent him on his journey this morning. I gave him an affectionate letter of introduction and recommendation, written in both Burman and English, to the people and 'the powers that be.'"

MOUNG SEKKEE who accompanied him, writes;



“When we reached Siam, the ruler there would not allow Ko Thah-byu to proceed. He said, that were we to go on to the next town, the king would call him down to Bangkok, because he was an Elder. So he had to return, but I was permitted to go on, and I preached and found some that listened.”

When Mr. Boardman went up to Maulmain to take charge of that station, in April, 1830, Ko Thah-byu accompanied him, and soon after his arrival, in company with Ko Myat-kyau, a Taling assistant, he left town to preach in the Karen jungles as he had done at Tavoy. In July, Mr. Boardman writes ; “A month ago this same person who speaks Karen tolerably well, set off in company with Ko Thah-byu to visit the Karen settlements up the river. I gave them a large supply of books and tracts for distribution. Four days ago, they returned delighted with their tour ; the Karens had received them in the same manner as those in Tavoy had previously received Ko Thah-byu. Many of them listened with the most encouraging attention to the message of redeeming love. Books were most eagerly received both by those who could read and those who could not ; ‘For’ said they, ‘we will ask others to read them to us.’ Long before the close of their tour, their supply of books failed, and Ko Myat-kyau was compelled to give away the books from his own private satchel. On their return five Karens accompanied them to town, four of whom profess to be



decided in embracing the gospel, and have applied for baptism; but though I believe I should get a unanimous vote in their favor from the whole native church, I feel inclined to delay their baptism for further proofs of sincerity and steadfastness."

When Mr. Boardman returned to Tavoy in November, he was again accompanied by Ko Thah-byu, who, on their arrival, immediately departed for the Karen settlements to announce their return. Mr. Boardman in his last journal, under date of December 16, writes; "In the afternoon, Ko Thah-byu arrived, with about forty in his train, all of whom, he said, had come to receive baptism. It appeared, that there were in the company all the disciples, except the two who had previously visited us. So that we have now met with each one of the thirteen Karen disciples; and a large number of others who wish to be baptized. How pleasing is our interview. But I am too feeble to describe it."



MR. JUDSON'S HOUSE, AT MAULMAIN.



## CHAPTER IV.

Ko Thah-byu's successful labors.—Style of preaching.—Scene of his successes.—Shades in his character.—Ignorance.—Love of knowledge.—Passion.—Habits of prayer.

FROM the time that Mr. Boardman became unable to labor, to more than a year after the writer of this memoir joined the mission, with the very important exception of Mrs. Boardman's invaluable and indefatigable labors with the people when they visited town, the whole watch care of the church, and the instruction of the inquirers, devolved on Ko Thah-byu; and the numbers that were baptized within this period afford the best comment on his labors.

During the rains of 1831, he taught a school, as he had done the previous year, near Tshiekku, where the principal part of the Christians resided; and his diligence in this department of labor was as conspicuous, as in every other in which he engaged. Some of his pupils at the close of the school could repeat verbatim whole Burman tracts.

Early in 1832, accompanied by Ko Thah-byu, I made an exploring tour through the province. We stopped about noon the first day at Shen Mouktee,



an old walled town, but reduced to an inconsiderable village. This town is remarkable for containing the most famous idol in the province, it having been found (such is the received tradition) floating up the river on a peepul log, which stopped opposite the town; and the little brass idol, from being a few inches high, has miraculously grown to the full size of a man beneath the spreading peepul, that sprung from the log on which it was found. Sometimes, when war or pestilence was approaching, it has been known to weep and moan. These, with other equally veracious legends, draw to its shrine all the piety of the province; and once a year, the inhabitants of Tavoy have a fete for several days, when nearly the whole population make a pilgrimage to this most holy place. The occasion had passed, but some of the most devout still lingered there; and while the Burman assistant and myself went round to some neighboring villages, distributing tracts, I left the old man to rest himself in one of the zayats, supposing that, as natives usually do, he would lie down to sleep. I was surprised, however, on my return to find him surrounded by a large congregation of Burmans, whose attention seemed to be rivetted on his flashing eyes, less, apparently, from love, than from an indescribable power, that may best be compared to the fascinating influence of the serpent over an unconscious brood of chickens. The first sentence I



heard on coming up, was, "Your god was a black kula."\* The words were uttered with such a peculiar expression of countenance, that the events of a dozen years have done nothing to efface the impression from my memory. "If ever a man hated idolatry," observed one of the brethren in conversation, "Ko Thah-byu did." Now, were I able to throw on canvass Ko Thah-byu's countenance at that moment, as it exists in the picture gallery of my mind, every one that looked on it would go away and say, "If ever a man hated idolatry, Ko Thah-byu did."

On the evening of the fourth day we were, for the first time, in the vicinity of Karens at Ka-nyen, and, though exceedingly fatigued, he requested permission to go and look up his countrymen. In like manner when we came to Pai, the next stage, he could not be easy to rest in the Burman village over the sabbath, but must go up the river to preach to the Karens. So it was through the whole journey. If Karens were accessible, no fatigue, no obstacles, would prevent his seeking them out; but if not, he would attack the Burmans and their idolatry most unmercifully, utterly heedless of the ridicule, that they would sometimes heap upon him, for being an ignorant Karen. At Palau, near the southern boundary of our journey, he was left a day or

\* That is, "a black foreigner."



two to rest on account of his infirmities, while I visited and returned from Pa-la; but it appeared on our return, that he had spent nearly the whole of both days in the kyoung, talking with the priests and all that came to visit them. In short, Ko Thah-byu had a passion for preaching; and it was his ruling passion. On one occasion when out in a boat with one of the missionaries at Maulmain, he was in evident danger of losing his life; when he cried out, not for God to have mercy on his soul, as might have been expected, (that he felt was safe,) but, "I shall be drowned, and never more preach the word of God to the Karens."

Mr. Boardman has recorded the following specimen of his preaching. "Ko Thah-byu had been describing the folly and hurtfulness of worldly things and worldly tempers, and proceeded to say, 'A worldly man is never satisfied with what he possesses. Let me have more houses, more lands, more buffaloes, more slaves, more clothes, more wives, more children and grand-children, more gold and silver, more paddy and rice, more boats and vessels; let me be a rich man. This is his language. He thinks of nothing so much as of amassing worldly goods. Of God and religion he is quite unmindful. But watch that man. On a sudden his breath departs, and he finds himself deprived of all he possessed and valued so much. He looks around and sees none of his former posses-



sions. Astonished, he exclaims, 'Where are my slaves? Where are my buffaloes? I cannot find one of them. Where are my houses and my chests of money? What has become of all my rice and paddy that I laid up in store? Where are all the fine clothes, that cost me so much? I can find none of them. Who has taken them? And where are my wives and my children? Ah, they are all missing. I can find none of them. I am lonely and poor, indeed. I have nothing! But what is this?' The preacher here enters upon a description of the sufferings of the soul that is lost; after which he represents the rich man as taking up this lamentation, 'O, what a fool have I been! I neglected God, the only Saviour, and sought only worldly goods while on earth, and now I am undone.' While the old man was preaching in this strain, every eye was fixed on him, and every ear was attentive. Soon after he pursued the following strain: 'All in this world is misery. Sickness and pain, fear and anxiety, wars and slaughter, old age and death, abound on every hand. But hearken! God speaks from on high; Children, why take ye delight, and seek happiness, in that low village of mortality, that thicket of briars and thorns? Look up to me; I will deliver you, and give you rest where you shall be forever blessed and happy.'"

On reaching the eastern Karen settlements, which had been the principal scene of his labors, and, with



the exception of a single visit of two or three days from Mr. Boardman, of his labors alone, the writer penned his impressions in the following language :

“ I cry no longer, the horrors of heathenism ! but, ‘ the blessings of missions : ’ I date no longer from a heathen land. Heathenism has fled these banks. I eat the rice, and yams, and fruit, cultivated by Christian hands ; look on the fields of Christians, and see no dwellings, but those inhabited by Christian families. I am seated in the midst of a Christian village, surrounded by a people that love as Christians, converse as Christians, act like Christians, and look like Christians. If it be worth a voyage across the Atlantic to see the Shenandoah run through the Blue Ridge, surely a voyage around the globe would be amply repaid by a sabbath spent in this valley.”\*

The succeeding rains, of 1832, he spent preaching and teaching school at Thalu, the Christian settlement west of the mountains ; and at their

\* Since writing the above, I have seen the History of American Missions, and learned for the first time, that this description “ has been censured as more glowing than true.” The only persons able to censure understandingly, are those, who have followed me over the same ground ; and on subjecting it to their criticism, I am authorized to say, that the only objectionable word is *land*, in the clause, “ I date no longer from a heathen land.” “ *Land*,” it was remarked “ is too extensive in its application ; some word like *station* would be better.” The criticism is just, but more was never intended by the word than *the land* on which I was located. Were I describing the results of my own labors, the pen would at once be drawn through the whole passage ; but it has reference solely to the labors of those that pre-



close I went out, and baptized a goodly number of his scholars, and others, that he had brought under the influence of the truth.

There is, however, a shade to the picture. Nothing can be more true than that Ko 'Thah-byu was a man "possessed of very ordinary abilities." Add to this, he was far advanced in life before he began to study; and it will be readily believed, that the great body of the church members, especially the younger portion, soon knew more than their teacher, and hence his labors with them became less and less acceptable. He was adapted in a most special manner for a pioneer; and it would be singular indeed, did we not believe in an overruling providence, that, without any plans either on his own part or on that of the missionaries, he became in succession the first Karen preacher to his countrymen in the districts of Tavoy, Maulmain, Rangoon, and Arracan. Still, it ought to be recorded to the credit of his intellectual character, that he knew enough to value the knowledge which he had not acquired

ceded me; and the man that could, then or now, approach a large Christian settlement of Karens, by a journey of three or four weeks through the unconverted heathen, and feel less or see less, must have a heart dead to Christian feeling, and eyes blind to moral beauty.

"Who has no inward beauty, none perceives,  
Though all around is beautiful.  
The rill is tuneless to his ear, who feels  
No harmony within."



himself; no very common attainment, by the way, in Christian lands.

While in Tavoy he had a son, and when asked what he was going to call him, his reply was not, "golden flower," "yellow bird," "silver loins," or some other name in like taste, as was expected; but *Joseph*: the first Christian name conferred by native parents in this country. "From the birth of this child," writes one of the brethren that was associated with Ko Thah-byu in Rangoon, "he often spoke of his desire that he might live to become a preacher to the Karens. He was very anxious that he should early be taught to read, not only Burmese and Karen, but as soon as practicable, English, in order that he might get a better knowledge of things, than he could through the two former languages. Considering his own ignorance, the desire that his son, and two other lads, of whom he was the guardian, should be better instructed than the common youth of the country, was remarkable. One great hindrance to the spread of light in all heathen countries, is the extreme apathy of the people in regard to literary and scientific knowledge, as well as religious, and though he could not of course duly appreciate the value of either, he had discernment enough to perceive that the teachers, and other foreigners, even those who were strangers to the influence of religion upon their own hearts, were incomparably wiser than his own people, in regard to things pertaining to this life.



This was much more than the mass of either Burmans or Karens are willing practically to acknowledge. It is true, they often express astonishment at the superior skill of foreigners, in many species of mechanism, but without manifesting the least desire to become acquainted with that skill."

Another sombre touch, and I pass on. "His natural temper was diabolical," and "under the influence of the gospel he would at times exhibit the relics of such a temper." His frailties, however, should be compared, not with those of one, who was born under Christian influences, and has been subjected to the restraints of civilized society; but with those of a youth and manhood spent in a manner that makes me shudder to think of, and unwilling to repeat.

Often, under the influence of passion, he said things that would be quite inexcusable in others, but I shall not blot my pages with the painful details. The recording angel has torn out the page on which they were registered, and trampled it beneath his feet. I am not the man to gather up the fragments. He must have wiry nerves and an insensible heart, that could deliberately record the failings of a man, who "was in the habit of spending several hours daily in prayer to God."

"It is the sole prerogative of heaven,  
Not to be tainted with the smallest error:  
But that immunity was never given  
To earth."



## CHAPTER V.

Returns to Maulmain.—Goes to Rangoon.—Visits the Karens.—Second tour.—Spends the rains at Maubee.—Great success.—Burman persecution.—Flees to Pegu.

EARLY in the year 1833, Ko Thah-byu left Tavoy for Maulmain, where we find him immediately employed in preaching to his countrymen. Mr. Bennett writes in February, "Several old, venerable, grey-headed Karens are here, from the wilderness, to whom Ko Thah-byu, who has just returned from Tavoy, has been communicating the precious truths of the gospel. Their sands are almost run, and they have spent their lives in ignorance of the one living and true God; possibly at the eleventh hour of their existence, they may be brought into the precious fold of the Redeemer. An old, grey-headed woman, a relative of his wife, has taken refuge with him from the persecuting spirit of her other relatives, who seem to feel, that the old woman is only a trouble to them, she being near eighty years of age, and unable to do any thing for her own support. Thus too many are treated in this land of cruelty and idolatry. The old woman listens to the good



news of salvation, and seems to feel a veneration for the truth. There is some reason to hope that she will yet become one of the few, who profess to follow Jesus, in the hope of a glorious resurrection."

He did not, however, remain long in Maulmain. "In the spring of 1833," writes Mr. Bennett, "he accompanied me to Rangoon. At that time, the Karens of Burmah proper had never heard the gospel, as no teachers, either native or foreign, had ever visited them. They had no knowledge that their language had been reduced to writing, and a tract printed in it. Neither had they heard that any of their countrymen had embraced the religion of the Saviour."

"Two days after his arrival in Rangoon, he leaves his family in the care of the teacher, and with a Burman disciple for a guide, he is found making his way to the Karen villages in the vicinity of Rangoon. His labors, his appeals, his earnestness, and his desire for the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, were not in vain. Very soon fruit began to appear, and inquirers multiplied."

In his journal, Mr. Bennett writes in April, "Ko-Thah-byu (the Karen apostle), who came round with us in order to search out his countrymen, who are scattered in the wilderness about us, and preach the gospel to them, this morning took his staff in his hand, accompanied by a Burman disciple, and departed, leaving his wife and child with us. May



the spirit and zeal of a Paul be with him, and abundant success attend his labors."

His return is noticed in May. "Ko Thah-byu came this evening, having visited more than seven villages, and given a hundred and fifty tracts. He reports rather encouragingly. He has been among his countrymen, the Karens. At first, they were not disposed to listen to his message, but quietly telling them by degrees his object in visiting them, they listened. They said, if the new language for them was good, and there was no deception in it, they would attend to it by and by. They are very much afraid of the government."

A few days afterwards, Mr. Bennett remarks ; "Ko Thah-byu left us to-day for another tour among his countrymen. We earnestly pray that his nation may give him audience, and receive the words of eternal life."

His return at the close of the month is thus recorded. "Ko Thah-byu, who has been absent among the Karens more than a month, arrived to-day with a nephew of his, a very respectable looking young man. One of the disciples who lives at a distance, brought with him to-day the first Karen inquirer I have seen here. Ko Thah-byu had not before seen him. He lives only a few miles from this place, and appeared very well. He seemed anxious to know the truth. Though he understands Burmese pretty well, Ko Thah-byu had the pleasure



to talk in his own language, and tell of the wonders of redeeming love. In the tour which he has just completed, he has distributed two hundred tracts, and carried the news of a Saviour from sin, to some who were before ignorant. In order to accomplish this, he has had to wade streams to his arm-pits, and sometimes through mud and water, as the rains fill the hollows. He relates an interesting account of his tour, and feels confident of ultimate success. He meets with much opposition from those of his countrymen, who are Boodhists; but those who are not, give generally an attentive ear, as far as they dare, being very fearful of offending the Burmese government. There are several in the vicinity of a village where his brother is Saukai, or Governor, who wish to learn to read; and he thinks, if we should approve of it, of spending a month in endeavoring to teach them Karen. He feels very sanguine that if there were three converts, the work would spread rapidly. The work is the Lord's, and his cause will prosper."

In July, the visit of another Karen inquirer to Mr. Bennett is thus recorded: "Another Karen inquirer called to-day. He is from the village of Thah-meing. Ko Thah-byu had given him a tract, on one of his excursions, which he had read, and, liking the contents, called to get more light on the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. The roads are so bad that it is nearly impossible for any to get into town."



Ten days afterwards, he left Rangoon to spend the rains in Maubee. "Ko Thah-byu has left to-day," says Mr. Bennett, "for the Karen wilds, with three hundred more tracts. As the rains render itinerating nearly impracticable, he is permitted, on this tour, to attend to the teaching of a few of his countrymen in Maubee, who, he says, are very anxious to learn Karen."

At the close of the rains in October, Mr. Bennett gives an animated view of the fruits of Ko Thah-byu's labors, that then began to appear, in the two following letters to Mr. Judson.

*"Rangoon, Oct. 28, 1833.*

"Dear brother Judson,

'We are in distress, and send to you for relief. For the last several days, our house, and the small house of Ko Thah-byu, ten cubits square, have been thronged. As Ko Thah-byu has not been able to go out as soon as he had intended, in consequence of his wife's illness, the Karens are thronging us from Dalla, Leing, Maubee, Kya-dan, and many places I have not heard named, men, women, and children, and all anxiously inquiring about the religion of Jesus. One Sau-kai has formally requested baptism of me and the church, and several others have of Ko Thah-a, and Ko Thah-byu. They are all anxious for schools, and offer to build zayats for preaching, or schools, if some one will come and



teach them. There are very many who already keep the Lord's day, read our tracts, and endeavor to instruct one another the best they can. They daily read the tracts, and all get together in their families, and sing, and pray to the God who rules in heaven. The heads of families not only do this themselves, but they teach their children. They declare they have left off drinking spirit, and, as far as they understand, endeavor to practise according to the requirements of the Scriptures.

“What shall we do? Ko Thah-byu is only one, among a thousand. He cannot preach the gospel, and teach these people to ‘read in their own language’ the precious truths of God's word, at the same time. We want one man, to go to Bassein; another to go up to Prome, and along the river; another to Maubee, and vicinity, towards old Pegu. All these to preach the gospel; and we certainly need as many more for school masters. Can you send us any assistance? If so, do; for Christ and his cause require it. I hope Ko Thah-byu will be able soon to go out, and do something; but he cannot do all alone. There, surely, is the sound of rain; and, if I might not subject myself to the imputation of *enthusiastic*, I would say, ‘of much rain.’ O could we go among these people, as freely and easily as in the provinces, I have no doubt, hundreds would be added to the Lord.

“I think the Karens here superior to those in the



provinces, so far as I have seen; and, could they be collected together, and civilized, and christianized, they would be a lovely nation. When will this happy time arrive? Hasten it, Lord, in thine own good time, for Jesus' sake.

"I am yours affectionately."

*Rangoon, Nov. 11, 1833.*

"Dear brother Judson,

"I have only a few moments to write, being full of business, and having only a few minutes before the vessel leaves. Suffice it to say, four of the Karens were, yesterday, baptized, and are the first fruits of the plentiful Karen harvest, which these ripening fields present to our view. We want *help*, we want *faith*, we want *patience*, and *perseverance*, we want a mind, (to say all in a word,) the same mind which was found in our dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Pray for us, and for the Karens who are looking up to us for the bread of life, their eyes brightening as they hear of Jesus and the way to heaven. There have but very few, as yet, called on us, something like fifty or sixty; but they all say, In a few weeks, (when we have gathered in our rice,) we will come with our wives and children, all of whom wish to hear the gospel. Our neighbors, too, will, many of them, come. And some of those who say thus, also add, When we come, we shall *ask for baptism*! Those who



have just been here (and it is only a few hours since a party of twelve left,) we have examined. Some of them appear to be true disciples of Jesus, while one or two were regular atheists. One man, especially, says, he does not believe there is any *God*, or *heaven*, or *hell*.

“ We have good reason to believe the work is genuine among the Karens, if opposition is a test ; for the devil is sorely disturbed, and mustering his forces. What the issue of the campaign will be we cannot say ; but those who were yesterday baptized, said, if the Woon-gee\* should issue an order to cut off their heads, then let him cut them off : they believed in Jesus ; and if they should be killed, they would go where Jesus is, and be happy. I could relate many interesting anecdotes of these simple sons of the jungle, had I time. Suffice it to say, one very respectable man, a Saukai, says he formerly was a great drunkard ; but, for the last six months, he has not drunk a drop, not since he first heard of Jesus from Ko Thah-byu. He says he believes, and will come, by-and-by, and be baptized. He is said to be a very influential man. They all talk more or less Burmese, and our examinations are in that language, which is far better than to draw it through an interpreter. We have proposed to some of the young men (who also understand

\* A Burman Magistrate.—E.



Burmese,) to go around to Maulmain, and *learn* KAREN, and return and teach their countrymen! I hope, in a few months, some will go. They would now, if their rice were gathered. I hope they will go; and, if so, what they will *see* and *hear*, and *learn*, I do hope, will do more to keep their countrymen from believing the Burmese, than years of our labor. There were thirty present at worship, yesterday morning; after which, the four Karens were examined, and received; afterwards, Ko Thah-a accompanied them to the King's tanks, and baptized them."

Extracts from Mr. Bennett's journal will be continued, in which the labors and successes of Ko Thah-byu are recorded so fully and graphically, that little more is left to be desired. Under various dates in October and November, he writes, "A Karen from Maubee, called, who said he had been in town three days and had not before found our house. He said, he would call again, and staid but a short time."

"The Karen mentioned yesterday, called with one of his neighbors; both of whom appeared extremely well. The one who has not been here before, says, that he has several of our tracts, which were given him by Ko Thah-byu, which he reads and then bows and prays to the eternal God. He asked anxiously, what more he should do to enter heaven?"



“After worship, Moungh-Thah, (a Saukai) mentioned Aug. 26th, came forward, and formally asked for baptism. He bore a good examination, and I really believe he is one of the chosen of God; but, as he is the first who has come out, we thought best for him to wait a short time, that we might become more acquainted. We have the best reason to hope the good work of the Spirit is operating among the Karens of Burmah, and our prayers are, ‘O Lord, smile upon the poor, ignorant, and oppressed Karens of Burmah.’ This is the first Karen about Rangoon, who has asked for baptism. O that he may be only one of ten thousand, and this the commencement of a new era in this idolatrous empire.

“As Ko Thah-byu has been kept at home by the illness of his wife, the Karens are calling on him.

“A large party of Karens from Dalla, called to day. Ko Thah-byu’s house is thronged from morn to night, and our verandah below, by people who have come to the festival.”

“Ko Thah-byu complains that the Karens throng his house, so that it is breaking down. Crowds have all day long been coming and going, and he has been busy preaching from morn till night. They are here from various parts of the country, and many he has not seen before. They are very urgent from Bassein and Dalla, on the south of us, and west from Maubee and vicinity on the north, that Ko Thah-byu, or some Karen teacher should come



among them and teach them to read, and preach to them the gospel. They offer, of their own accord, to build zayats and school-houses. O for laborers to enter this whitened field, and gather the golden grain !”

“ Our house has been thronged, to-day, by Karens from various places around Rangoon, who listened most attentively to the gospel. The Karens here, generally, understand Burmese pretty well, so that an interpreter is not needed. Poor people ! how my heart has been affected for you to-day, when, hearing the honest, simple truth, you confessed that you were ignorant, and wished instruction. How unlike the proud, Pharisaic Burmese, who feel proud that they are not like other men, especially, not like the poor Karen !”

“ Lord’s day. After worship, three Karens came forward, and asked for baptism. Two of them passed most admirable examinations, and perhaps the third would, could he have conversed as well in Burmese. The native brethren seemed surprised at the readiness of their answers, and the correct notions they seemed to possess of gospel truth. They evidently appeared to have been taught by the Spirit. These men say, that from the first of their hearing of Jesus from Ko Thah-byu, six months since, they have believed, and prayed daily to the eternal God. They keep the Lord’s day, and meet together to read the tracts, and instruct each other.



One of them says, that not long since, he was tempted, by a neighbor and his wife, to join them in the worship or feeding of the Nats, but he refused, saying, "He meant to worship Jesus Christ to the end of his life." The neighbor then asked, if Jesus could save him from the power of the Nats. He said he *did not know*, but he had been *told* so, and he *believed it*. He *knew* the Nats could not save him from sickness or death, though he should feed them ever so much; and he meant to go to Rangoon, as soon as he could, and find out more of Jesus Christ. When told that this neighbor of his was made use of by Satan, to tempt him to sin, he said he did not know, but it seemed very much like it. As the Saukai, mentioned Oct. 13, could not come to-day, having a lame foot, and as we wish to be more thoroughly acquainted with these men, they were advised to wait until the next Lord's day, or some other opportunity, when the church would again examine them; and, if received, they would be baptized."

"More than twenty Karens came, to-day, from Maubee, and, among them, are those who asked for baptism last sabbath. We had twelve of them at evening worship, and it would have been exceedingly gratifying, could our friends in America have heard the examination they underwent after worship. When we consider that it is only a few months since they first heard of the gospel, and



know they have not been taught by human aid, we are forced to believe they have been taught from above. Four of this number have come for the express purpose of being baptized on the morrow."

"Lord's day. Thirty-two present at worship; after which the four Karens were examined and received. Soon after this, they repaired to a tank, near the city, and were baptized. This afternoon, the celebration of the Lord's supper was observed; twenty-two communicants present. After evening worship, had much interesting conversation with the Karens. Many of them, beside those baptized, appear to believe with all their hearts. They have entirely thrown away their old superstition of Nat-worship, have broken short off with strong drink, (a Karen besetting sin,) and, since they have heard the gospel, have kept the sabbath day."

"To-day the Karens left for their homes, rejoicing in the truth which has so recently reached their ears. This evening, Ko Thah-byu, and Kat Shay, one of the Karens just baptized, proposed that some one of the teachers should go into their village, and preach Christ to the people. This is just what is anxiously desired, but I cannot leave Rangoon."

"To-day the Karen preachers, Taunah and Panlah, arrived from Maulmain. We hope and pray they may be blessed in itinerating among their countrymen."

"This morning the Karens left us for Maubee;



but as they met Ko Thah-byu on his way home, and several Karens with him, they all returned together. Ko Thah-byu has a school of twelve or fifteen Karens in Maubee."

In February, 1834, Mr. Bennett writes, "This morning, Taunah and Panlah, with two school teachers, who have been preaching, and teaching school among their countrymen, in Maubee and vicinity, left for their families near Maulmain. Just after the vessel had weighed anchor, and was dropping down the river, Ko Thah-byu, our Karen assistant, with several people from Maubee, arrived, and added their crying, urgent request, that some one should come from Maulmain, and baptize the willing converts, who are like fruit fully ripe in the wilderness, which only wants to be gathered. It does sometimes happen, that missionaries labor for years, and have no apparent success; and it seems also to happen, that where none of them have sown the seeds, the ripened sheaves wait to be gathered to the garner. O when will these poor souls be gladdened, by being permitted to follow their Saviour in his blessed ordinances. I have had much conversation with these people, to-day; and they are so artless, so honest, so simple-hearted, and withal, so full of love to Christ, that no one, who knows the sweets of pardoning mercy, could hear their tales unmoved. They proposed, to-day, a plan, (which I fear could not be granted in the present state of affairs,) which



is, to petition the Woon-gee for permission to have schools in their own language, and adopt whatever religion they pleased, and still enjoy the same freedom from molestation they have ever done, when without any religion. Should they obtain such permission, Boodhism would hardly lose any of its votaries; for these people, in general, detest the worship of idols."

"The Karens mentioned yesterday, came up this morning, and stated that they were commissioned by their brethren in Maubee, to come and beg we would promise not to leave Rangoon, until some one came from Maulmain. They say they went to the wharf yesterday, in order to send word to Maulmain, to have a teacher come immediately; but they were too late, as the vessel was moving down the river. They called to Taunah, but could not make him hear, he was so far distant. They endeavored to get a boat to go on board, but failed. In view of all these things, I dare not leave until some one does come, and have promised the natives accordingly."

After Mr. Bennett's departure from Rangoon, Mr. Webb, who next took charge of the station, noticing Ko Thah-byu and the fruits of his labors, under different dates, in September and October, says,

"Five Karens from Maubee, arrived. They give interesting accounts of the state of feeling there.



Our two most valuable Karen brethren from Maulmain have been laboring at Maubee for four or five months ; also three lads, young brethren from above Maulmain, formerly members of sister Hancock's school. They say that between one hundred and two hundred Karens attend worship every sabbath at the three or four different places where these several brethren exhort, and pray, and read their solitary tract, the only thing, except a spelling-book, ever printed in their language. It is an interesting fact and worthy to be often recorded, that this poor neglected and despised people, who but two or three years since had not a letter in their language, are now able, some of them, both to read and to transcribe their thoughts to others. When these Karens arrived, I had received for them, from the Karens in Maulmain, fourteen letters written in the Karen language.

“ Seventeen Karens arrived from Maubee village exceedingly fatigued, having walked in one day a distance which usually occupies two, in order to be here before the sabbath. Seven of them were women, four of whom had been examined and accepted before brother Bennett left Rangoon, but not baptized. After worship in Burman, in which they took a part by singing a Karen hymn, they went to their lodgings on the verandah, and offered their evening devotions to God. These simple Karens, unshackled by the finespun systems of the Bur-



mans, hear the gospel with cheering benefit. The seventeen now here, think themselves converted to God by the preaching of Ko Thah-byu, a Karen who formerly assisted our lamented brother Boardman, Moung Panlah, and the three Karen lads before mentioned. I asked, 'Do the Karens mostly attend worship?' 'Yes, but there are some Pharisees who do not.' 'And after you have done worship, you all go home and work, I suppose?' 'No: we remain together all day.' 'But what do you do all day.' 'We read the Scriptures, and preach, and pray five or six times.' One of their number was seized, by order of the head man of the village, and questioned concerning his religion. His reply was, 'I believe in Jesus Christ, and no more worship the Nats, nor the pagodas, nor images, nor drink spirits. I worship the Eternal God.' He was fined sixty-five rupees, and ordered not to receive the 'foreigners' religion.' 'Well, now,' I said, 'you are all very much afraid, I suppose.' 'Some of the people are afraid, not the *disciples*; but they come to meeting every sabbath, one or two hundred of them, to hear Jesus Christ's law.' 'But perhaps the rulers will take your money, or whip you: why are you not afraid?' He replied simply, with an air of confidence, 'Because the Eternal God governs.'

"Yesterday, in connexion with brother and sister Cutter and Ko Shway-bay and Ko Sanlone, two of our most experienced and valuable Burman assist-



ants, we examined for admission into the native church, nine Karens. Three of them were rejected; two, principally because of their being so young; we feared they had not sufficiently counted the cost, though they appeared exceedingly interesting; and one, because we feared he had not sufficiently seen the evil of his own heart. The examination occupied the whole of the day, from nine in the morning till five in the afternoon, except one hour and a half's intermission. We were obliged in most cases to speak through a Karen interpreter. The other six were received, who, together with four that had been examined six months before, make ten whom I baptized this morning.

“ It was a beautiful morning. The sun shed his brilliant beams on the gilded spires of the hundreds of surrounding pagodas, as if to invite the lifted eyes of their devotees to look above these spires to the God who made the sun, and gave him power to shine. We passed through a beautiful grove of mango trees, covered with immense flocks of a snow white bird called the rice bird, watching their nests. These trees surround a cluster of kyongs, or monasteries of priests, through which we passed to the ‘ Royal tank,’ a beautiful little lake encircled by trees. Here I baptized the ten, and after offering our thanks and a prayer for the divine blessing in Burman, the Karens returned to their jungle and we to our dwellings. This has been one of the



brightest scenes of my life, a day which for ten years I have anticipated with intense interest. To lead these benighted heathen to the Lamb of God, to introduce them into the church of Christ, to raise them to civilization, to teach them the use and the worth of the social and domestic relations ordained by Heaven, and the bliss of loving God ; these brought us from our native land, our home, the fireside of our youth, from parents, friends, from what our hearts hold dearest of all on earth, from all the blessings which we came to bring. And 'tis a glad exchange. We would not forego our toil for a crown and sceptre, except a crown in heaven.

“ Sabbath. Ten Karens arrived on Saturday evening, six of whom ask for baptism. Four of the six, we have judged it best, should be set aside for the present ; the other two will be baptized next sabbath. Ko Toung-yo, one of the four set aside, is an interesting old man. He says he believes in the Eternal God, and always has ; that his parents taught him, when a small child, that the world did not spring up of itself, as the Burmans say, but that it was created by a God, who is himself without beginning and without end, whom the Karens call Kah-tsah-yu-ah ; and that he must not worship images, nor pagodas, nor priests, nor books, but must worship Kah-tsah-yu-ah. But we feared he did not sufficiently realize the nature of sin against God, and therefore told him to wait a little.



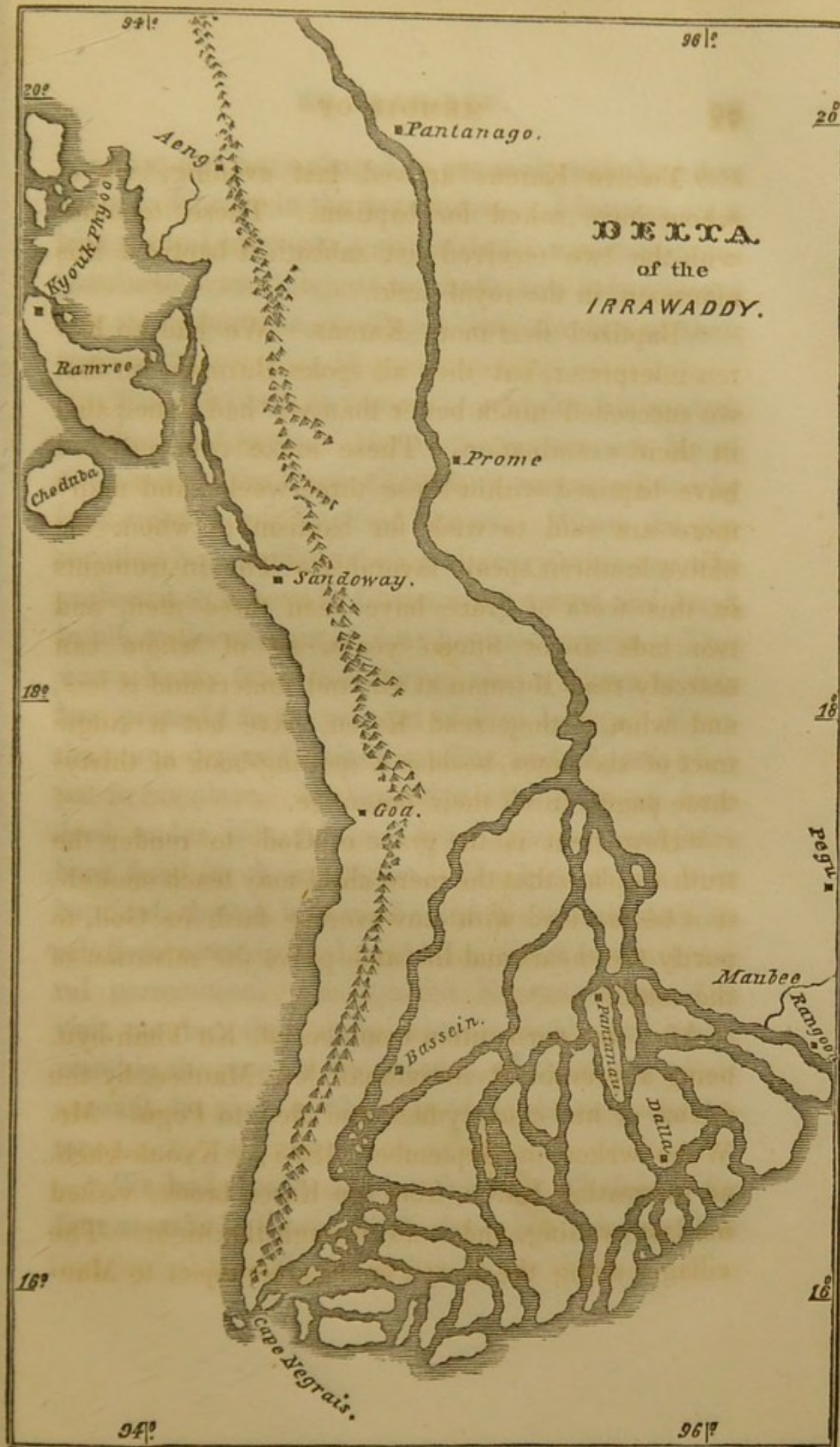
“Twelve Karens arrived last evening, six of whom have asked for baptism. These, together with the two received last sabbath, I baptized this afternoon, in the royal tank.

“Baptized four more Karens. We had no Karen interpreter, but they all spoke Burman, so that we succeeded much better than we had anticipated in their examination. These make twenty-two I have baptized within these three weeks, and many more are said to wish for baptism, of whom the native brethren speak favorably. The instruments in this work of grace have been three men, and two lads under fifteen years, all of whom can scarcely read Burman at all, and understand it less, and who, if they read Karen, have but a single tract of six pages, besides a spelling-book of thirty-three pages, in all their language.

“How great is the grace of God, to render the truth so plain that the mere child may teach enough, if it be received with unwavering faith in God, to purify the heart and life and prove the salvation of the soul.”

After the persecution commenced, Ko Thah-byu, being a prominent individual, left Maubee by the advice of his countrymen, and fled to Pegu. Mr. Webb writes in September, 1835; “Kyouk-kheh, an interesting Karen, from the Karen brook, visited me last evening, and staid through the night. The villages along the Karen brook are subject to Mau-











bee city, and have shared in common with the other Maubee Karens in the persecution. I learned from him several interesting particulars; a circumstance peculiarly gratifying, as we have not before heard any thing from these villages since the first of their troubles."

"The Maubee governor has under his control, one thousand houses. Before the persecution, Myat-thah, one of the Karen Christians, was appointed by him, ruler of one hundred houses. When the persecution began, Myat-thah and every other one who professed to believe in Christ, were seized and fined, in all, to the amount of four hundred rupees. This was a heavy fine, considering that a Karen seldom has property to the amount of fifty dollars. Myat-thah was deposed from his office, and Kyouk-kheh put in his place. He says, that among the one hundred under him, fourteen are Christians, and have been fined for their religion. He has not yet been baptized, though he says he and his wife, and all his relations worship God, and all suffered in the general persecution. He says the Karens are afraid to visit me, but they daily worship God, and never worship the nats, or the pagodas. Indeed, the whole account he gives of them is of a pleasing character.

"We had heard nothing from Ko Thah-byu for four months. Kyouk-kheh says, he has heard of

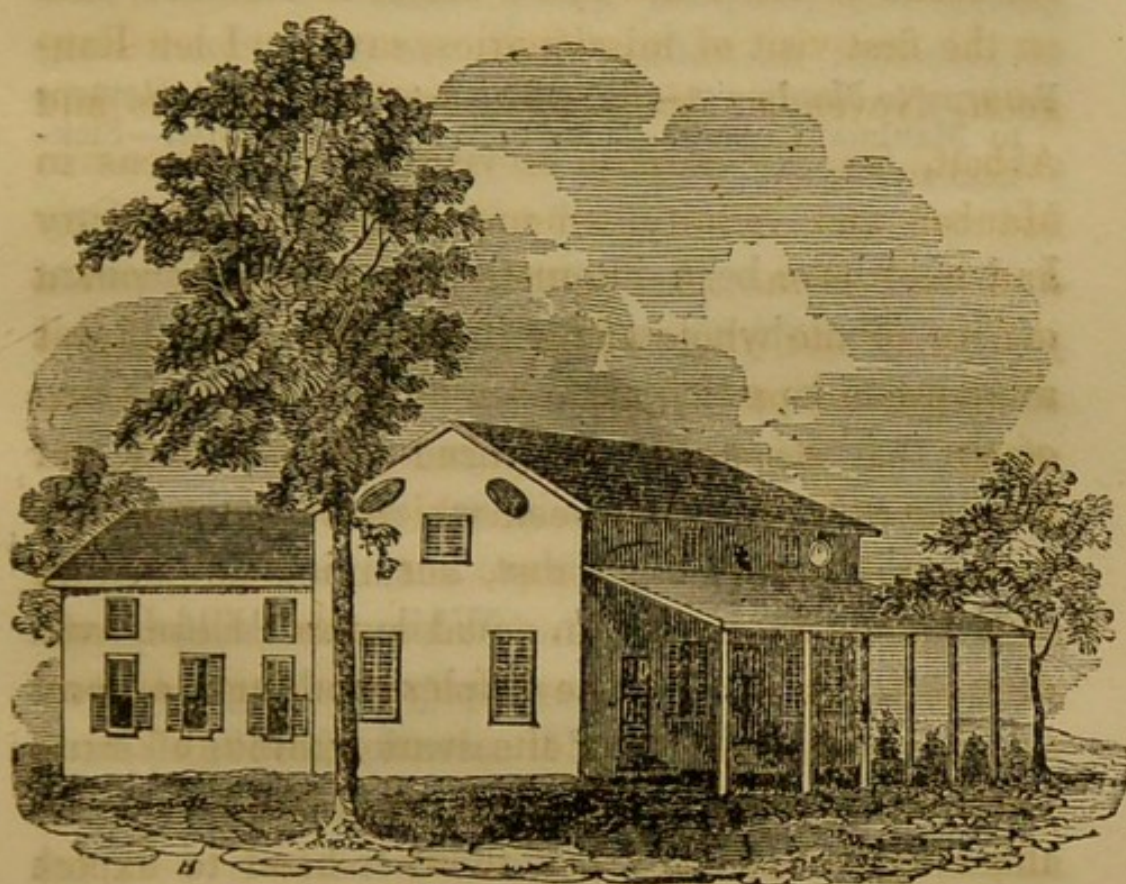


him at Pegu, preaching among about two thousand Karens who live in that vicinity. When the persecution commenced at Maubee, his brethren advised him to avoid it; and so, like an apostle, when they persecute him in one city, he flees to another."

In December, 1836, Mr. Howard, writing from the scene of Ko Thah-byu's labors in Maubee, and on the first visit of missionaries, says; "I left Rangoon, November 18th, with brethren Vinton and Abbott, for the purpose of visiting the Karens in Maubee and vicinity, among whom no missionary had ever been. As brother Vinton sends you a journal of the whole affair, it is unnecessary that I should detail particulars. I will only add my testimony, that the persons baptized (one hundred and sixty seven) during the week which we spent among these children of the forest, sustained as good an examination as any of an equal number I ever witnessed in America. The helpless condition of man as a sinner, and the way of salvation through Christ alone, were truths apparently well understood by all; and though they had every reason to expect that cruel persecution would be the result of their professed allegiance to the Saviour, yet their's was the confidence and the joy of those, who could say, 'I know in whom I have believed.' In this section are probably a hundred or more believing Karens, who are still waiting for an opportunity to be



baptized. The most who are now believers, profess to have been so for one, two, or three years, or from the time they first heard the gospel. The Lord has carried on this work, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, by native Karen assistants, and principally by Ko Thah-byu."



PRINTING OFFICE AT MAULMAIN.



## CHAPTER VI.

Returns to Maulmain.—Second visit to Rangoon.—Returns to Maulmain again.—Goes to Aracan.—Success.—Sickness and death.

It would have been interesting to read the account of Ko Thah-byu's wanderings in Pegu, and his attempts to go overland to Maulmain; but it is one of the withering curses of ignorance, that all her subjects must serve in silence, without the power to record the sufferings that her minions, poverty and wretchedness, inflict. While the skillful hand of education, oft "gives to airy nothings, a local habitation and a name," the stern realities of humble life are left, like the untrodden forest, in all their native grandeur, without a hand to sketch them.

In the year 1837, he was in Maulmain, but went to Rangoon again with Mr. Abbott in April, who thus writes; "He immediately went into the Karen jungle and visited the Christian villages around and near Maubee, where he had formerly preached, and had been instrumental in Christianizing a good



many of his fellow countrymen. He remained there, at this time, about six months, preaching altogether among the Christian villages. The old man's days for itinerating had passed away. He was afflicted with rheumatism and blindness, and was consequently unable to undertake any difficult journey. The Maubee villages being compact, and having good roads from one to the other, he was able to visit them by making a long stay at each. Another cause that deterred him from preaching among the unchristianized, was, the Burmese government had become alarmed at the fact of so many Karens having embraced a foreign religion. The Christians were oppressed, fined, imprisoned and annoyed in every conceivable manner. Every petty Burmese officer felt himself called upon to manifest his loyalty and his attachment to the institutions of his country by persecuting the Karen Christians. The land swarmed with "informers," who were the hired menials of said officers. Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that old Ko Thah-byu felt himself justified in remaining quiet among the Christians. Even had he been able to travel and preach, and had he attempted it, he would soon have been apprehended. His health becoming more feeble, and war being expected between the English and the Burmese, he returned to Maulmain, in November. When I left Maulmain in February, 1840, I knew not certainly that I could obtain assistants from Burmah,



and called Ko Thah-byu, and he accompanied me to Sandoway, with his family. Immediately on my arrival I sent him to a small Karen village, a few miles from where I live, where he remained and preached awhile, and then returned to me and commenced teaching a class of boys. The small pox breaking out in my school, and Ko Thah-byu's young children having never had it, he took his family and went again to the village near. At this place where he spent all his time while in Arracan, four have been baptized. Several now stand candidates for the ordinance, and a good many are nominal Christians, all of whom first heard the gospel from Ko Thah-byu."

Here, in the midst of his work, the summons came for him to cease from his labors. Here in this village, which he had so recently entered, a moral wilderness, he was called away to the world of spirits, just when it was budding and blossoming into beauty, as so many and distant regions had done before, beneath his fostering hand. And he went,

"Not, like the quarry slave, at night  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

"His rheumatic complaint," continues Mr. Abbott, "had become distressing, so that he was many



times unable to walk or even to rise up. A few weeks after he left me, the disease settled upon his lungs, accompanied by violent inflammation, and the old man seemed to be aware that he was near his grave. As it was the rainy season, I could not go to him, but sent a boat and had him brought in, he having sent me word that he wanted to come and die near me. He came, but was unable to walk. I saw he had but a few days to live. He was perfectly willing to die; had no fears; 'as it pleases God,' seemed to be the frame of his spirit. He suffered severely from his rheumatic complaint, notwithstanding the constant attention of the physician whom I called. He was very irritable at times, and his old temper would occasionally show itself. He required a good deal of attention, and many a time was I awakened in the night by his calling 'Teacher, please come and champoo me,' which I did, as he seemed to think no one could do it so well as myself. On the whole, he was submissive under his pains, until they brought him to the grave, on the ninth of September, 1840. To the last, he had not an anxious thought as to his future destiny; his usual reply to my questions on the subject was, 'Teacher, God will preserve me.'"

What a glorious system of blessings is Christianity! There is not a passion, that it cannot subdue; not an evil propensity, that it cannot destroy; not a vicious habit, that it cannot eradicate. For the



sleepless horrors of a guilty conscience, it has rest and peace ; and for every sting, a sure and abiding antidote. How amply it justifies the rich promises of its divine founder ! And what marvel that the fearless Apostle, amid the contemptuous disciples of Plato and Zeno, lifted up a dauntless front, and gloried in " Christ, and him crucified ! " The dialogues of Plato live ; but as to their influence on the opinions and characters of men, their " glory is departed : " the disciples of the Stoa\* have passed away, without leaving a trace of their existence, save the ruins of the porches in which they taught. But the doctrines of the cross still live to humanize inhuman man ; to change a villain, from whose presence the virtuous instinctively shrink, into a " good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," who scatters blessings wherever he goes, whose path through the world is traced by a track of glory, and whose

—" Memory is the shrine

Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers ;

Calm as on windless eve, the sun's decline ;

Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers,

Rich as a rainbow with its hues of light,

Pure as the moonlight of an autumn night,"

Where the blue mountains of Pegu so often glad-

\* *Stoa* is properly a Greek word, signifying *porch* or *portico*. It is here used in reference to the portico, in which the philosopher Zeno delivered his instructions. From this word, the followers of Zeno were called *Stoics*.—E.



den the eyes of the weary mariner, after half circumnavigating a world of waters,\* sleeps Ko Thah-byu. No mound marks his grave; no "storied urn or animated bust," indicates his resting place; but the eternal mountains are his monument, and the Christian villages that clothe their sides are his epitaph.

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,  
When woods in summer wreaths are drest;  
And oft suspend the dashing oar,  
To bid thy fervent spirit rest.

Long, long, thy monumental clay  
Shall melt the musing wanderer's eyes;  
'O vales and wild woods,' shall he say,  
'In yonder grave a giant lies.'"

\* The mountains of Pegu and Arracan are often the first land seen in India, by ships coming from Europe and America.



## CHAPTER VII.

Karen mission most encouraging.—Most successful.—The cheapest.—Native preachers most useful.—An establishment required to educate them.—Susceptibility of the Karens to religious impressions.—Testimony of various missionaries.

MR. MALCOM remarks concerning the Karen mission, "We have been perhaps too much disposed to esteem the importance of a mission in proportion to the amount of population.\* We ought rather to regard the indications of providence. In this respect, so far as I know, no other mission of modern times holds out such encouragements." Here we have the testimony of a man who was deputed for the special purpose of visiting the different mission stations, "to collect such information pertaining to missions, as might enable the Board to dispense the sacred charities entrusted to them with the greater skill." And after visiting the missions of nearly all denominations in the East, he records it as his deliberate opinion, that on the very point which ought

\* The Karens are much more numerous than Mr. Malcom was aware.



to give importance to missions with those that support them, "No other mission of modern times holds out such encouragements."

I do not flatter myself, that I can add any thing to give greater weight in the public mind to this testimony; but at a time when the hearts of those, who conduct the missionary enterprise, are beginning to quail for the want of funds, and official documents moot the question of abandoning missions, and calling home missionaries, it cannot be deemed either unimportant, or invidious, to offer a few considerations to show, that the Karen mission is the cheapest of American missions in the world.\*

The Karens do not require so much teaching, in the first instance, to bring them to a knowledge of the truth, as other unevangelized nations. Their traditions teach them the existence of an eternal God, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Their traditions teach, that this God created the heavens and the earth, and all which they contain; that he created man holy like himself, but that man fell from his state of holiness into a state of sin and misery by eating the forbidden fruit; through the temptation of Satan; but that God has promised to redeem and restore man to his favor, and that for this future salvation they are to wait in hope. These acknowledge articles of belief among

\* Foreign missions to the heathen are of course to be understood.



them, with many other similar items of information, and a moral code, in the commands of the Elders, that leaves little to be added,\* save the missionary an immense amount of time and labor; for other nations need to learn them all from those that teach Christianity. The consequence is, that with far less instruction, the members of the churches are much better acquainted with the doctrines and duties of Christianity, than the converts from other nations; and hence to bring them to a given point in their progress to knowledge, requires less foreign aid; and therefore less money.

Again, in no modern mission has an equal amount of success attended such a very small amount of funds as has been expended on the Karen mission. The baptism of Ko Thah-byu in 1828, was the commencement of the mission; for not till this period were any efforts made for the Karens, as a people. For several years, one ordained missionary only was devoted to their service; and after a lapse of twelve years at the time of Ko Thah-byu's death, there were five, and one assistant missionary, with their wives. At the end of these twelve years, one thousand two hundred and seventy Karens are officially reported as members of the churches in good standing. So far as my knowledge goes, no mission will admit of compar-

\* See Appendix.



ison with the Karen, but the one to the Sandwich Islands. This mission was commenced in 1820, with two ordained missionaries, and five assistant missionaries, and their wives; and at the end of twelve years, in 1832, there were no less than twenty two ordained missionaries,\* six assistant missionaries, their wives, and two single females connected with the mission; more than four times the number of Karen missionaries at the end of the corresponding period, while the whole number of persons admitted to the church from the commencement of the mission to the same date, was five hundred and seventy seven: less than half the number of Karens in good standing in the church, at the end of the same period. Thus it appears, that in the most successful of American missions, except the Karen, it cost more than four times more men and money than it did in the Karen, to produce less than half the results.

The cheapness of this mission as compared with other Eastern missions, is seen again in the operations of the press. Mr. Trevelyan, as quoted by Malcom, says, "There are probably not five hundred persons in all India, not educated by Europeans, who could take up a translation in their own

\* It may be objected that eight of these had but recently joined, but this was also true of one of the five belonging to the Karen mission, so that before these accessions the proportion was as one to three and a half



character, of any work in philosophy, morals, or religion, and read it extempore with understanding." Still, to reach the small fraction that can be benefitted by books, the different missions are compelled to circulate books by tens of thousands annually. The waste, though unavoidable, is immense. The writer of this memoir once asked a missionary of some ten years' experience in India, what proportion of the books circulated were read. "Oh! I do not suppose a page in a thousand," was the reply. Another said, "One in ten." How different the circumstances in respect to the Karens. All the readers have studied in schools taught either by the missionaries or their assistants, and their numbers and attainments are known; so that there is no necessity to give a single book where there is not a moral certainty, that it will be both read and understood.

Again, it is a remarkable feature in the progress of the Karen mission, that from the commencement to the present time, the work has been carried on pre-eminently by the natives themselves. Where is there a mission that has produced a native preacher, who has been so successful as the preceding pages show Ko Thah-byu to have been? A dozen such men, would, with the blessing of God, renovate the whole nation. Native preachers, it is well known, are supported at a tenth of what it costs to support missionaries; so that the cheapness of the mission



appears again under this aspect. To make the native assistants most valuable, however, they must be educated.

Ko Thah-byu laid about him with the arm of a giant; but he was a blind Cyclops. No one valued him, as the missionaries did; yet no missionary ever ventured to ordain him; and that because, in common with all his countrymen, he wanted a well regulated mind, such as a thorough training in a good mission school is adapted to impart. Thus it appears, that the Karen mission, beyond all others, should be amply provided with means to instruct the native Christians; and yet in this department it is remarkably deficient. There is not a single missionary devoted to the education of the people, while at each of the principal stations there ought to be two, with that as the prominent object of their labors. No matter what name is employed, whether schools, academies, or seminaries; it is institutions of learning that are required, not brick walls or Corinthian columns. There should be a liberal supply of missionaries to teach, so that if one be sick, as one often will be, another may be able to take his place, that the machinery may not run down, as it otherwise assuredly will; and there should be a sufficient supply of money to support the pupils while studying, and to provide them with bamboo dwellings. Karen scholars are supported for eighteen dollars a year, including board, clothing



and buildings ; but exclusive of books and the salaries of the missionaries that superintend them.\*

A Karen preacher, or school teacher, is supported, when employed in the native villages, at from twenty five to fifty dollars annually : much less than in most other missions.† Now all we ask is, half a dozen more well educated missionaries, and funds enough to do all the good they can, on the economical scale given above. Is this an extravagant request ? While there are twenty four ordained missionaries sent to the one hundred thousand Sandwich Islanders, is it beyond the bounds of propriety or practicability, to sustain an establishment of half that number, for the many hundred thousand Karens ? Such an establishment as is desirable, might perhaps involve an annual expense of twenty thousand dollars, exclusive of the operations of the press ; and such an establishment, with God's blessing, would change the whole nation, and make them as truly a Christian people as are the English or the Americans.

\* The whole expense, including every thing, may amount to from twenty-five to thirty dollars.

† If other missions are more expensive, or less successful, it is not the fault of the missionaries ; and if the Karen mission is cheaper, or more successful, than others, no credit is to be here attributed to the Karen missionaries, above their brethren. It is to be wholly attributed to peculiarly favorable providential circumstances ; and these things are not mentioned for the sake of drawing invidious comparisons, but because they are some of " the indications of providence " referred to above, and because they are facts that ought to be known.



And surely the six hundred thousand Baptist communicants of the United States, embracing a Baptist population of three or four millions, will not withhold a sum so paltry, to accomplish an object so glorious.

“Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves. If our possessions  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike,  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd,  
But to fine issues; nor Nature ever lends  
The smallest scruple of her abundance,  
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines  
Herself the glory of a creditor,—  
Both thanks and use.”

But the Karens, apart from all other considerations, have peculiar claims on Christians on account of their remarkable susceptibility to religious impressions, and the spirit of piety evinced by the converts. Here we will not argue, but produce testimony; such testimony, as would be more than sufficient to establish any point in law.

The first witness we shall bring into court, is Mr. Boardman on his dying couch. Hear his testimony in the midst of the Karen converts coming forward for baptism. “If I live to see this one ingathering, I may well exclaim with happy Simeon, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ How many ministers have wished they

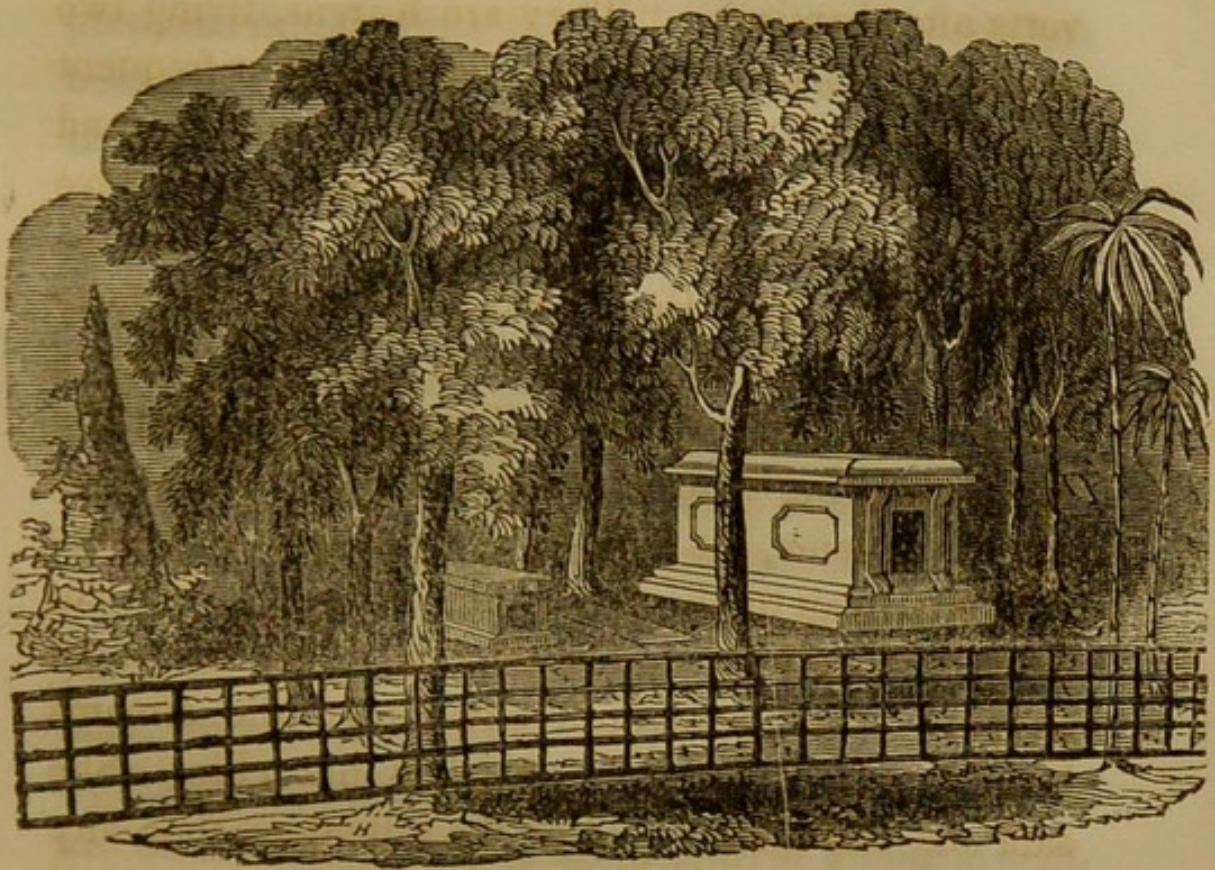


might die in their pulpits; and would not dying in a spot like this, be even more blessed than dying in a pulpit at home? I feel that it would."

The next that comes in, is Mrs. Boardman, in her widowhood, testifying to the conduct of the converts after baptism. "They are Karens, living two or three days' journey distant, who, by their frequent visits to us, over almost impassable mountains and through deserts, the haunt of the tiger, evince a love for the gospel seldom surpassed. What would the Christians in New England think of travelling forty or fifty miles on foot to hear a sermon and beg a Christian book? A good Christian woman, who has been living with us several months, told me that when she came, the water was so deep that she was obliged to wait till the men in the company could cut down trees and lay across the streams for her to get over on; and sometimes she forded the streams herself, when the water reached her chin. She said she was more afraid of the alligators, than any thing else. The reason of their coming at so bad a time was, we had appointed a church fast, and sent to the Karen Christians living near, to unite with us; but a rumor of it spread beyond the mountains, and they were so afraid that they should not observe it *at the right time and in the right way*, that a large company of the best disciples came immediately to inquire about it. As far as we can learn, they manifest the same tenderness of con-



THE TOMB OF BOARDMAN.



"Among my luxuries at Tavoy, were several visits to the grave-yard where, among others, is the tomb of Boardman. I made the sketch above, in the assurance that the friends of missions would love to see the resting-place of that great, good man."—*Malcom's Travels*.







science and fear of doing wrong on every subject ; and I can say with truth, that the more we become acquainted with them, the more reason we find to love them as Christians, and to believe that the work is of God. Some of them have lived on our premises month after month, and their conduct has been most exemplary ; and we have not heard of an instance of immorality among any of the church members during the past year."

Miss Cummings, after living a year with the Karens in their own wilds, adds her testimony, and says, "A year happier than has been the past, I have never seen."

Our next witness is Mr. Vinton, who comes forward to testify of the joy with which the Christians receive a new missionary. "We left Maulmain the second of this month, and on our arrival here, were received by the native church, and indeed by the whole village, with expressions of joy, such as are seldom witnessed on the arrival of a long absent, yet endeared, friend. Even the children were not content, without letting us know the interest they felt, by joining their parents in carrying our things up the steep ascent to the house. At evening, the whole village came together for worship. It was a season of deep interest to me. I told them as well as my scanty knowledge of the language would allow, the object of my coming among them. The greater part seemed drunk up with interest at the



thought, that one was to be devoted to the work of making known to them the messages of mercy through a Saviour. The next day they brought us such fruits and vegetables as the land afforded, and indeed they have continued to make their offerings in such abundance, that hitherto we have been more than supplied. These, though of trifling value, are like the widow's two mites, which, in the sight of God, were of more value, than all the offerings of the rich; and seem to presage the pouring out of that divine blessing, annexed to bringing in all the tithes into the store-house. I have baptized two, and shall probably baptize again next Sabbath. Inquirers are multiplying, and I trust the time is not far distant, when this whole land shall be Emmanuel's land, a mountain of holiness, over which the blessed Jesus shall reign without a rival."

Next hear Mr. Wade's evidence concerning the susceptibility of the people to the truth. "As often as I think of the little church at Yeh, and of the hopeful inquirers there, I feel that we have reason to exclaim, 'What hath God wrought?' What, but divine power, could have induced so many to believe the doctrine of foreign teachers, when their views of their own worldly interest inclined them to take a directly opposite course? What God has done there for part of the population, he is able to do for the whole; and he is able to do the same in every heathen settlement where the gospel is preached.



The means of grace there have been small on the one hand, and on the other the people were at first, with one consent, violently opposed to every effort to introduce the gospel among them.—It was astonishing how they had acquired so much knowledge of the way of salvation, with so little means.”

Mrs. Wade adds her testimony to the Christian character of the members of the churches. “We had a pleasant season at worship in the morning with thirteen Karen Christians: two came with us, one was from a distant village, and ten belong to this place. Several others besides children were present. At evening I felt much better, and conversed for some time with the Christians who appear steadfast in the faith and some of them ‘growing in grace.’

“They are far separated from any other Christians, and can but seldom see the missionaries; but they seem to live a life of prayer and simple faith in God. Every Sunday they assemble, and read and pray and sing, and truly the blessing of the Lord rests upon them. O, it is *delightful* to sit and hear them tell how peaceful and happy they are, since ‘God gave them new hearts.’—On our arrival at Matah this morning we found the Christians had repaired the old house and spread their mats on the floor, and made all things look quite comfortable. We spent the remainder of the day in conversing with them, attending to the sick, &c., until evening,



when they beat a small gong, which called them all to the zayat for worship. It was truly a delightful sight to see above one hundred and fifty, all seated in perfect order, and waiting to hear the word of the Lord from their teacher. Their singing was really melodious, and their attention and behavior every way, might be a useful example to many congregations in our own dear native country.—I have now been a month among these dear Christians, and am compelled to exclaim, ‘what hath God wrought?’ I really did not expect to find such lovely examples of simple, humble piety, as I see exhibited in the lives of many of them, while their means of instruction have necessarily been so limited.—I will not retire without recording the goodness of God; for this has been one of the happiest days of my whole life. The morning was spent in examining candidates; the afternoon in a kind of church conference, until the cool of the day, when we had a short service. We then repaired to the beautiful banks of the Tenasserim, where twenty-five lovely converts were buried with Christ in its crystal waters. The assembly was large, the singing animated and melodious, and the scenery around most romantic and delightful. Surely it was one of those scenes in which angels love to mingle. Dear brother Boardman ‘went forth weeping, bearing the precious seed;’ brother Mason has toiled hard here alone in ‘watering;’ and we are permitted to gather in the



‘increase,’ which God has given. Well, we here on earth will join our brother in glory, in giving all the praise to Him who hath redeemed them and us by his own precious blood.”

Miss Macomber follows to testify to the reality of the Spirit’s influence in the progress of the work. “I have now the happiness to inform you that the excitement, which I attributed wholly to novelty, proved to be a gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. A number of these poor dark heathen, who were then bound in Satan’s double chain, (idolatry and drunkenness,) have been liberated and brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel of Christ, and are now rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

“The progress of the work has been deeply interesting to all, who have been acquainted with it, and particularly so to myself. Never were the power and mercy of God more manifestly displayed, and never did his saving grace shine through a more feeble instrumentality. But God can work according to his will; and blessed be his name, the heathen shall be given to his Son.

“Our first baptism was on the 12th of January. Chung-pau, a man rather advanced in years, but of a sound good mind, and who has thus far manifested a most devoted spirit, had from the first listened with uncommon interest; and I think I shall never forget the sensations it gave me, when he would come and sit down by me, and, with a countenance



which bespoke a soul awakened to the interest of eternal realities, would ask, 'What is it to believe? What can I do to believe? I want to escape hell and obtain heaven. I wish to trust in Jesus Christ. What shall I do?' O what would I have given in that moment for an easy use of the language; but I said what I could, and the Spirit taught him as man could not."

Mr. Kincaid comes forward to testify to the eagerness with which the Christians flocked around him to hear the word of God, and their desire to understand it. "Set off in a Burman canoe to visit some Karens, twenty-five miles distant. I found the village delightfully situated on the margin of a mountain stream, but the most pleasant part was, to witness the eagerness with which they flocked around me to listen to the word of God. My feeble, emaciated appearance drew from them the tenderest sympathy. Though unable to sit up more than an hour and a half at a time, I still had strength to preach to them every morning and evening. My congregation averages about sixty. They sing the songs of Zion in the sweetest manner. There was a melody and sweetness in their singing, which perhaps is rarely ever heard.

"The Karen Christians are coming in almost daily; often seven or eight together; and they would come by twenties if we had not sent them word that it would be imprudent, and exposing



themselves unnecessarily to fines and imprisonment; perhaps to long servitude, and possibly to death. Some who had been bound with cords, and cruelly beaten till nearly senseless, for preaching Christ and the resurrection, came to see us. Often when we returned from a walk in the evening, through some part of the town or suburbs, we found four or five, or seven or eight, in our room, nearly worn out with their long march through the heat of the sun. Still they would sit up till after midnight, asking questions about Christian doctrines and duties, and having difficult passages of scripture explained; and even at that time of night, it was not easy to get away to sleep, they were so eager to have every thing obscure made plain. Some of these are assistants, who have from twenty to sixty families each under their care. They are pastors, as well as preachers; each one in his own parish visiting from house to house, reading the scriptures and praying with the sick, conducting public worship on the sabbath, preaching to the unconverted, and performing the rite of marriage according to Christian usage. They also preside in the respective churches under their care. They are not ordained, and therefore do not administer baptism and the Lord's supper. They are indeed God's 'anointed ones,' and we have no doubt but in time they will become efficient pastors and evangelists. It would be imprudent now to entrust them with power to baptize and ad-



mit persons to church membership. 'They must have more instruction in the 'mysteries of the kingdom,' more experience, and more knowledge of character, or there would be danger of their filling up the church with mere nominal Christians. Two of the young men who were in irons and stocks last year, are now sitting near me, reading the New Testament. Both of them are fine, active young men.

"The assistant who has been laboring in the vicinity of Bassein, where the celebrated young chief resides, has just arrived in Rangoon. The work of divine grace in that region is wonderful. The house of the young chief is thronged much of the time by Karens who come to hear the gospel, and learn to read. In that district, between two and three hundred are waiting for baptism. Such is the power of the gospel among that people. We have examined six or seven native assistants, and given them all the instruction which so short a time could allow. Our prayers go with them in their blessed labors. They have the highest wisdom; that is, wisdom in winning souls to Christ. Their purpose and feelings are exclusive. One settled design appears to engross all their thoughts and wishes. Persecution does not dishearten them; fines and imprisonment do not terrify them. The spread of the gospel, and the salvation of their countrymen, is the all-engrossing subject by day and by night."



Mr. Hancock testifies to the appearance of the people while suffering from the "pestilence that walks at noon-day." "My visit to Matah was an extremely interesting one, though I have since paid dearly for it. Brother Mason and myself left Tavoy on Wednesday morning, and reached the "City of Love"\* Thursday evening, about five o'clock. We were heartily welcomed by brother and sister Wade. In the evening, by request, I addressed an assembly of between two and three hundred Karens, from these words: 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' Many of them had lately lost friends by the cholera, and their hearts were still bleeding from the wounds which had been made; many, also, had contemplated a removal from the place, from fear of contagion. I directed their minds to the words above quoted, as a 'balm for all their wounds, and a cordial for their fears.' It was the largest congregation of natives I had seen in the country, and a more attentive one I have never seen. When the meeting was over, all were anxious to testify their welcome to the stranger, by a shake of the hand, and it was with much difficulty I made my way through the crowd."

Mr. Abbott's evidence relates to the manner with which the Christians bear persecution; to "whole villages having turned to God;" and to the efficiency of the native preachers. "During a few weeks

\* Such is the meaning of the whole word *Matah-myu*, of which *Matah* is an abbreviation.—E.



after the 'young chief' and his associates were released, but few Karens ventured to call on me at Rangoon; yet more than I wished. About the first of October, three men came from Bassein, to ask that question which was to me the precursor of evil—'Teacher! what shall we do?'—'for,' said they, 'four of our brethren are in the stocks.' They informed me that an assistant whom I had sent to that region, and three young men who had joined him there, were out on a preaching excursion, and stopped at a large Karen village one evening, which was near to the village of a Burman officer, and, as their custom was, called together the people, and preached to them the kingdom of God. They were warned that their course would possibly awaken the wrath of the officers. But, as it seems, they deemed it advisable to obey God rather than man, and continued their meeting till a late hour at night. The next morning, before they had time to get away, these four young Karens were apprehended, and beaten, with several who had listened to their story the preceding evening. They were then (the four) cast into the stocks and reserved for threatened torture. In ten days I heard again: the four had been liberated before the men who came to me reached home. But the officers had extorted a hundred and fifty rupees from the Christians, which sum had been immediately made out by voluntary contribution, some giving one anna, and some two, and some one rupee;



yet not a Karen in this whole region has been baptized, except the 'young chief.'

"On the 20th of November, the assistant mentioned above, came to me at Rangoon, pale and emaciated from disease. I asked him how he felt while they were beating him? 'Prayed for them.' But were you not a little angry? 'No; I told them they might beat me to death, if they wished, but they would not make me angry, and I should live again at the resurrection. When they heard this they laughed, and after beating me a little, stopped.' Since that time he has been preaching in villages more remote from the Burmans, and has not been molested. The account he brings relative to the work of the Lord in those regions, surpasses every thing I have known in modern days among heathen nations, and if it be of God it will stand.

"At Maubee and the surrounding villages, there are very many who have learned to read within the last year, and many who have embraced the gospel, and are waiting for baptism. The church stands firm amid storms and threatenings, oppressions and persecutions.

"At Bassein, the 'young chief' continues to be as actively engaged in doing good as ever. His house is a great Bethel, a temple of God, whither the people from the neighboring and distant villages resort, to learn to read, and how to worship God. He is the only baptized individual in that region,



and consequently is the only one who can be reckoned a member of the church. How many there are there, who would be considered proper subjects of baptism, it is impossible to say. The assistants think there are from six hundred to one thousand, who are decidedly Christians. Although but one has been baptized there, still the line of demarcation between those who serve God and those who serve him not, is distinctly drawn; and generally, there exists on the part of those who reject the gospel, a most bitter hatred towards the Christians. In fact, the Karen converts fear their own countrymen, who are enemies to the gospel, more than Burman officers. Sometimes, even in families, there exists the most deadly opposition; and not only are 'a man's foes they of his own household,' but they are often his bitterest foes. Notwithstanding, I know of several villages where the people are all decidedly Christian; and although it has been denied by some that there are 'whole villages who have turned to God,' yet if they will take a trip with me into the Karen jungles, I will show them several such! It is easy to account for the rapid spread of the gospel in these regions. I attribute it, under the blessing of God, to the efficiency and apostolic zeal of the Karen native preachers."

Mr. Malcom, returning from inspecting the mission, comes in to testify to the temperance of the Christians, and to their gratitude to the American



churches; closing with a Karen baptismal scene. "The change in regard to temperance is not less remarkable. Unlike the Burmans, whose religion utterly forbids strong drink, and who scarcely ever use it, the Karens use it universally, and generally to excess: every family make arrack for themselves, and from oldest to youngest partake. Drunkenness, with all its train of horrors, is rife among them, of course. But no sooner do any become serious inquirers, and consort with the disciples for further instruction, than they totally abandon the accursed thing. The children of the very men who were sots, are growing up without having tasted or seen it. The consequences to domestic peace and general welfare may be supposed.

"When endeavors to do good fail, it is a sweet reward to see those we meant to benefit, grateful for our interference. And when good is really done, our pleasure is often neutralized by the pain of being ungratefully requited. Those, who support our enterprise, ought to know that this people testify aloud their continual gratitude towards the Christians of this country for the knowledge of Christianity. They often compare their former degradation and misery with their present comforts and hopes.—We had a church meeting, at which, among other business, three candidates for baptism were received. Some others were deferred for the present. The rude-looking assembly (lately so rude



indeed, and so ignorant of eternal things) transacted their business with much order and great correctness of judgment. Now, and several times before, I addressed them officially, through Mr. Judson, examining into their degrees of religious knowledge, and leaving them various injunctions relating to both temporal and eternal things. In the afternoon, we met again, and, after religious exercises, walked in procession to the water-side, where, after singing and prayer, I baptized the candidates in the name of the Holy Three. The river was perfectly serene, and the shore a clean sand. One of those lofty mountains which I have described, rose in isolated majesty on the opposite shore, intercepting the rays of the setting sun. The water was perfectly clear, the air cool and fragrant, the candidates calm and happy. All was good. May that lonely mountain often, often echo with the baptismal hymn, and the voice of prayer. How blessed, and golden are these days to Burmah! Men love to mark the glorious sunrise. Painters copy it; poets sing it; all derive pleasure and elevation as they gaze while it blazes up the heavens, turning to gorgeous purple every dull cloud, gilding the mountain tops, and chasing the mists from the valley. God seems present, and creation rejoices. But how much more glorious is the dawn I am permitted here to witness! All the romance which swells the bosom of the sentimentalist, gazing on early day, is coldness and



trifling, compared to the emotions a Christian may cherish, when he sees the gospel beginning to enlighten a great nation. Surely we may hope such is the case here, and that the little light, which has invaded this empire of darkness, will issue in perfect day. I see a dim twilight; others will rejoice in the rising sun, and others in the meridian day. O Lord, come with thy great power. Inspire the churches to do all their duty, and prepare all people for thy truth."

Finally, to express the feelings of every Karen missionary, Mr. Judson comes forward exclaiming, with the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "The dying words of an aged man of God, when he waved his withered, death-struck arm, and exclaimed, '*the best of all is, God is with us,*' I feel in my very soul. Yes, the great Invisible is in these Karen wilds. That mighty Being, who heaped up these craggy rocks, and reared these stupendous mountains, and poured these streams in all directions, and scattered immortal beings throughout these deserts, He is present, and accompanies the sound of the gospel, with converting, sanctifying power. THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US."







## APPENDIX.

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THE KARENS are a people so little known, that a few historical and geographical notices concerning them may not be unacceptable to the reader of the preceding Memoir. The writer has also furnished the public with various Karen traditions; but as they lie scattered in different periodicals, he has presumed, that a revised account of them with additions, would be deemed desirable and appropriate, at the close of the memoir of "the first Karen convert."

### HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

The Karens have well defined traditions of being comparatively recent emigrants in Tavoy. They say, "The Elders said, we came down from the upper country. Some fled from punishment, and some came because they heard that it was a good country. At first, we came down and settled on the Attaran; next, we came to Ya; and finally to Tavoy." This tradition receives confirmation from the fact, that while the dialects spoken at Tavoy and Maulmain differ in many respects, the Karens on Balu Island, at the mouth of the Salwen, are said to speak "precisely the same dialect as is



spoken at Tavoy ;" which may be easily accounted for on the supposition, that the Karens on that island are descendants of the original wanderers from the upper country, who did not go further south.

The testimony of tradition is equally definite as to their recent introduction into Siam. "The Elders said, the Karens have not been long in Siam. Many went thither when Martaban was destroyed, because they heard it was a good country : some, whom the Siamese had kidnapped, were there before, and some went when the Siamese besieged Tavoy." This tradition is made probable by the well established fact, that there are no Karens in Siam except on the western side of the Meinam. It is well known that there are none in Arracan, except a few that have straggled over the mountains into the southern province of Sandoway.

Thus we are enabled to trace them satisfactorily to the valleys of the Irrawaddy and the Salwen ; and we have equally definite traditions that their original home was not there ; but whence they came to inhabit these regions is not clear. Tradition says, "The Karens, anciently, came from beyond the waters of running sand, and, having marked out Zimmay for themselves, returned. Afterwards, when they came to dwell there, they found the Shans occupying the country. Then the Karens cursed them, saying, "Dwell ye in the dividing of countries. May Ava make war on you on one side, and Siam on the other." There is a hint on this subject in Dr. Richardson's account of the red Karens, who, he says, represent themselves as having come from the north west. Malte Brun, too, arguing from the accounts of Marco Polo, confirms this tradition. He concludes, "Thus the country of Caride is the southeast point of Thibet, and perhaps the country of the nation of the Cariaines ; which is spread over Ava."

This view is strongly confirmed by Mr. Kincaid, who,



writing wholly from original sources of information, says ; "The result of all my inquiries is, that Kakhyen is only another name for the Karens. All these mountain tribes, through the whole extent of the Shyan country and still north into Thibet, are called Kakhyens, except in the Hukong valley, between Mogaung and Assam, where they are called Thing-bau-kakhyen. The whole mountain country between Mogaung and Cathay is inhabited by the same people. Around the Martaban gulf, and thence inland as far as the Burman population has ever extended, the mountain tribes are called Karens. Between Rangoon and Toung-oo, and between Toung-oo and Ava, they are very numerous, as also between Toung-oo and Monay, a Shan city, about two hundred and fifty miles east of Ava. There are some tribes scattered along between Burmah and the Shyan states, called Karen-nee, red Karens, and these extend as far east as Zim-may. These are less civilized than those who live in the vicinity of Burman towns. Some have erroneously considered them as belonging to the Shyan family. Their language and every thing else pertaining to them is Karen. In addition to this, the south east part of Thibet is inhabited by Kakhyens ; at least I have reason to believe so, as the Shans, who live in the most northern part of Burmah and adjoining Thibet, call the country, 'The Kakhyen country.' It will be seen, then, that these mountain tribes are scattered over a vast extent of country, and their population I make to be about five millions."

Dr. Helfer testifies strongly to the "Caucasian countenance" of the Karens ; and Captain Hanney, speaking of the Kakhyens, says, They "are remarkable among all the nations around them, in being wholly destitute of the Tartar countenance, having long faces and straight noses." Testimony so independent, and so free from all theory on the subject, goes far to prove the identity of these tribes.



Admitting that the Karens are emigrants from the borders of China and Thibet, it could hardly be expected, that at Tavoy much evidence of the fact would be found. Still, there are some things in their customs and traditions which point strongly that way. The nation is divided into two parties, which may not be improperly denominated sects: one of these is in the constant practice of making offerings to the departed spirits of their ancestors; a custom, which could not well be derived from any but the Chinese. The other sect denounces this practice, and is careful to avoid it, as they say their ancestors were; which further goes to show that the practice has been ingrafted on their ancient customs. Again, Teen, the Chinese name for God, exists in Karen poetry as the name of a false god, which they regard as having been worshipped by a people with whom they were formerly in contact; though they have not the most distant idea, that that people were the Chinese.

One little coincidence would indicate a connexion also with Thibet. The names of the months in Karen are usually significant, each designating some circumstance or labor indicative of the season; but the two months corresponding to June and July, are exceptions, being designated numerically. June is called the seventh month, and July the eighth month; by which enumeration, the first month would be December. Now no people, of whom I have read, commence their year in December, but the Thibetians; and they also denominate their months numerically. In the publications of the Asiatic Society it is stated, 'The civil year commences differently in different parts of Thibet, varying from December to February. At Asadakh, it begins in December. The months have several names expressive of the seasons, &c. but they are usually denominated numerically, first, second, &c.'

Finally, evidence to the connection of the Karens with the north western tribes is furnished by their language. Of a



vocabulary of seventy words, published in the periodicals to illustrate the language of those tribes, about fifty, with slight modifications, are found in one or other of the Karen dialects.

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## SCRIPTURAL TRADITIONS.

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### *God, Eternal.*

"God is unchangeable, eternal,  
He was in the beginning of the world ;  
God is endless and eternal,  
He existed in the beginning of the world.  
God is truly unchangeable and eternal,  
He existed in ancient time, at the beginning of the world.  
The life of God is endless ;  
A succession of worlds does not measure his existence,  
Two successions of worlds do not measure his existence.  
God is perfect in every meritorious attribute,  
And dies not in succession on succession of worlds."

### *God, Omnipotent.*

"The Omnipotent is God,  
Him have we not believed.  
This Omnipotent one,  
We have not believed."

### *God, Omniscient.*

"God created men anciently,  
He has a perfect knowledge of all things :  
God created men at the beginning,  
He knows all things to the present time."



*God, Omnipresent.*

"O my children and grandchildren ! the earth is the treading place of the feet of God, and heaven is the place where he sits. He sees all things, and we are manifest to him."

"God is not far off. He is among us. He has only separated himself from us, by a single thickness of white. Children ! it is because men are not upright, that they do not see God."

*His countenance shines.*

"The face of God is said to shine continually like the rays of the sun ; and the wicked dare not look straight at Him."

*His glory enlightens heaven.*

"There can be no night in heaven, there can be no darkness ; for the rays of God enlighten it continually like the sun."

*He cannot look on iniquity.*

"On those that use obscene language, or swear, or commit fornication, or drink, or kill, the righteous One in heaven cannot look. Avoid wickedness, for the righteous One in heaven cannot look upon it."

*He created heaven, and earth.*

"God created heaven and earth. The creation of heaven and earth was finished."

*The sun, moon, and stars.*

"He created the sun, he created the moon, he created the stars. The creation of the sun, the moon and the stars was finished."



*Man.*

"He created again (creating) man. And of what did he create man? He created man at first from the earth. The creation of man was finished."

*Woman.*

"He created a woman. How did he create a woman? He took a rib out of the man, and created again (creating) a woman. The creation of woman was finished."

*Life.*

"He created again (creating) life. How did he create life? Father God said, In respect to my son and daughter, I love them. I will give them my great life. He took a little piece of his life, breathed into the nostrils of the two persons, and they came to life, and were real human beings. The creation of man was finished."

*Food, quadrupeds, and birds.*

"He created again (creating) food and drink. He created rice, he created water, he created fire, he created cows, he created elephants, he created birds. The creation of animals was finished."

*Eden.*

"Father God said, My son and daughter, father will make and give you a garden. In the garden are seven different kinds of trees, bearing seven different kinds of fruit; among the seven, one tree is not good to eat. Eat not of its fruit. If you eat you will become old, you will die. Eat not. All I have created I give to you. Eat and drink with care. Once in seven days I will visit you. All I have commanded you, observe and do. Forget me not. Pray to me every morning and night."



*The Temptation, and Fall.*

"Afterwards Satan came and said, 'Why are you here?' 'Our father, God, put us here,' they replied. 'What do you eat here?' Satan inquired. 'Our father God created food and drink for us; food without end.' Satan said, 'Show me your food.' And they went, with Satan following behind them, to show him. On arriving at the garden, they showed him the fruits, saying, 'This is sweet, this is sour, this is bitter, this is astringent, this is savory, this is fiery; but this tree, we know not whether it is sour or sweet. Our father God said to us, 'Eat not the fruit of this tree; if you eat, you will die. We eat not, and do not know whether it be sour or sweet.' 'Not so, O my children,' Satan replied; 'the heart of your father God is not with you; this is the richest and sweetest, it is richer than the others, sweeter than the others, and not merely richer and sweeter, but if you eat it, you will possess miraculous powers; you will be able to ascend into heaven, and descend into the earth; you will be able to fly. The heart of your God is not with you. This desirable thing he has not given you. My heart is not like the heart of your God. He is not honest. He is envious. I am honest. I am not envious. I love you and tell you the whole. Your father God, does not love you; he did not tell you the whole. If you do not believe me, do not eat it. Let each one eat carefully, a single fruit, then you will know.' The man replied, 'Our father God said to us, 'Eat not the fruit of this tree, and we eat it not.' Thus saying, he rose up and went away. But the woman listened to Satan, and thinking what he said rather proper, remained. Satan deceived her completely, and she said to him, 'If we eat, shall we indeed be able to fly?' 'My son and daughter,' Satan replied, 'I persuade you because I love you.' The woman took one of the fruit and ate. And Satan, laughing, said, 'My daughter, you listen to me well; now go, give the fruit to your husband, and say to him, I have eaten the fruit; it is exceedingly rich. If he does not eat, deceive him, that he may eat.' The woman, doing as Satan told her, went and coaxed her husband, till she won him over to her own mind, and he took the fruit from the hand of his wife and ate. When he had eaten, she went to Satan, and said, 'My husband has eaten the fruit.' On hearing that, he laughed ex-



ceedingly, and said, 'Now you have listened to me, very good, my son and daughter.' "

### *The Curse.*

"The day after they had eaten, early in the morning, God visited them; but they did not (as they had been wont to do) follow him, singing praises. He approached them and said, 'Why have you eaten the fruit of the tree that I commanded you not to eat?' They did not dare to reply, and God cursed them. 'Now you have not observed what I commanded you,' he said; 'the fruit that is not good to eat, I told you not to eat; but you have not listened, and have eaten. Therefore you shall become old, you shall be sick, and you shall die.' "

### *Origin of sacrifices to demons.*

"After this, one of their children became very sick, and the man and his wife said to each other, We did not observe God's command, 'Of the fruit of the tree eat not,' but we ate. Now what shall we do? God has cast us off; we cannot tell what to do. We must go and see Satan, and ask him. They arose and went to him. 'O Satan,' they said, 'God commanded us, Eat not of that fruit. Thou saidst, Eat; and we hearkened to thy words, and ate. Now our child is sick, what wilt thou say? What wilt thou devise?' Satan replied, 'To your father God you did not hearken, you hearkened unto me; now that you have hearkened unto me, hearken unto me to the end.' "

Satan then institutes the principal sacrifices, offerings and ceremonies, that are practised in worshiping demons. First, he orders a *hog* to be sacrificed; and when that fails, a *fowl*; and after that, he prescribes the mode of fortune-telling by fowls' bones, with many other rites and ceremonies, the details of which would not be interesting.

### *Creation and Fall, in verse.*

"In ancient times God created the world;  
All things were minutely ordered by him.



In ancient times God created the world ;  
 He has power to enlarge, and power to diminish.  
 God created the world formerly ;  
 He can enlarge and diminish it at pleasure.  
 God formed the world formerly ;  
 He appointed food and drink.  
 He appointed the fruit of trial ;  
 He gave minute orders.  
 Satan deceived two persons ;  
 He caused them to eat the fruit of the tree of trial.  
 They obeyed not, they believed not God ;  
 They eat the fruit of the tree of trial,  
 When they eat the fruit of trial,  
 They became subject to sickness, old age, and death.  
 Had they obeyed and believed God,  
 We should not have been subjected to sickness ;  
 Had they obeyed and believed God,  
 We should have prospered in our doings.  
 Had they obeyed and believed him,  
 We should not have been poor."

### *Temptation and Fall.*

Although the Elders say, "Satan is a being of super-human powers, able to take the form of either male or female," he is usually represented as a woman ; but in the following fragment he appears in the character of a dragon. This tradition is further remarkable for giving the names of the progenitors of the human race ; and it is worthy of observation, that had it been a modern composition, Adam would not have been Tha-nai ; nor Eve, E-u,\* but A-wa, as written and printed by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Burmah.

" God commanded man anciently ;  
 Satan appeared, bringing destruction.  
 God commanded man formerly ;  
 Satan appeared, deceiving unto death.  
 The woman E-u and the man Tha-nai

\* U, pronounced like the French u.



Did not meet the eye of the great dragon ;  
 The woman E-u, and the man, two persons ;  
 The dragon looked on them, and they did not meet his mind.  
 The great dragon deceived the woman and Tha-nai ;  
 How is it said to have taken place ?  
 The great dragon succeeded in deception, deceiving unto  
 death ;  
 How is it said to have been done ?  
 The great dragon took a yellow fruit,  
 And gave to eat to the son and daughter of God :  
 The great dragon took a white fruit,  
 And gave to eat to the children of God.  
 They did not observe all the words of God ;  
 They were deceived, deceived unto death :  
 They did not observe all the commands of God ;  
 They were deceived, deceived unto sickness :  
 They transgressed the words of God,  
 And God turned his back on them :  
 Having transgressed the commands of God,  
 God turned away from them."

*Tree of life and Tree of death.*

"O children and grandchildren ! in the beginning, God, to  
 try man, whether he would or would not observe his com-  
 mands, created the tree of death and the tree of life, saying,  
 concerning the tree of death, 'Eat not of it.' He wished to  
 see whether man believed. Not believing, he ate of the fruit  
 of the tree of death, and the tree of life God hid. Because  
 the tree of life has been hidden, men have died ever since  
 that time."

"Temptation, temptation, the fruit of temptation,  
 The fruit of temptation fell on the ground ;  
 The fruit of temptation was bad,  
 It poisoned to death our mother ;  
 The fruit of temptation, 'Do thou eat it not.'  
 In the beginning it poisoned to death our father and mother.  
 The tree of death came by woman,  
 The tree of life by man."



*The Curse.*

"O children and grandchildren ! because we did not believe God we have to work and sweat. Then do not be angry because you have to work ; for it is the consequence of man's transgression against God at the beginning."

*Death.*

"O children and grandchildren ! because in the beginning man ate the fruit of the tree of death, poison descends to us and we all die."

*Angels.*

The Karens believe that there are beings in heaven, who have never sinned, and that they are employed in executing God's purposes.

"The sons of heaven are powerful,  
They sit by the seat of God :  
The sons of heaven are righteous,  
They dwell together with God ;  
The sons of heaven are good,  
They lean against the silver seat of God.  
The beings whom God employs to execute his purposes,  
Have, to the present time, the reclining place of God."

*Satan.*

Satan is known by several names ; among which the most common are Ku-plaw, the deceiver, from his deceiving the first man and woman, and Yaw-kaw, the *neck-trodden*, from the belief that man will ultimately tread on his neck, or overcome him. The Karens believe that he was formerly a holy being in heaven, but that he disobeyed God, and was driven from heaven.



"Satan in ancient times was righteous,  
But he transgressed the commands of God ;  
Satan in ancient times was holy,  
But he departed from the love of God ;  
And God drove him away,  
He deceived the daughter and son of God,  
And God drove you away;  
For you deceived the daughter and son of God."

"O children and grandchildren ! though we were to kill Satan, he would not die ; but when the time of our salvation comes, God will kill him. Because that time has not yet arrived, he still exists."

### *Deluge.*

Though I have never met with any direct traditions of the deluge, indirect allusions are occasionally found in their fabulous stories. For instance ; "It thundered, tempests followed ; it rained three days and three nights, and the waters covered all the mountains." Again ; "Anciently, when the earth was deluged with water, two brothers, finding themselves in a difficulty, got on a raft. The waters rose and rose, till they reached to heaven ; when seeing a mango tree hanging down, the younger brother climbed up it and ate ; but the waters suddenly falling, left him in the tree."

### *Dispersion of Men.*

"O children and grandchildren ! men had at first one father and mother ; but because they did not love each other, they separated. After their separation they did not know each other, and their language became different ; and they became enemies to each other and fought."

"The Karens were the elder brother,  
They obtained all the words of God ;  
They did not all believe the word of God,  
And became enemies to each other :



Because they disbelieved God,  
Their language divided.  
God gave them commands,  
But they did not believe him ; and divisions ensued."

### *Resurrection.*

The astronomical systems of all the nations around the Karens, teach, that the sun, moon, and stars revolve round a great north mountain, in planes parallel to the surface of the earth ; while the Karens retain the old idea, that the heavenly bodies go round the earth, descending under and rising above it. Under the earth, they suppose, that there is another world, where people go at death. It is enlightened by the same heavenly bodies as the earth ; but its days and nights are the reverse of ours, the sun rising there when he sets here. It is regarded as an intermediate state, where all the dead go, and where the inhabitants are employed much as the inhabitants of the earth, corresponding to the Jewish idea of Sheol.

Connected with this subject, the Karens have an obscure notion of a final resurrection. One of their old prophecies says,

"O children and grandchildren ! you think the earth large. The earth is not so large as the Entada bean ! When the time arrives, people will be more numerous than the leaves of the trees, and those who are now unseen, will then be brought to view. O my children, there will not be a hiding place for a single thing on earth."

The Karens explain this by saying, that the earth is as large as a bean when compared with the whole of God's works. Concerning the numerous people that are to appear, they confess their ignorance, but think that the inhabitants of Hades [the invisible, or lower world,] are intended, whom God will cause to come up on the earth.



Another statement, is, that after the world is burnt up, God will come and raise men to life again; when "the lazy shall become dogs, but the industrious, men."

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## SCRIPTURAL PRECEPTS.

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### *Love to God.*

"O children and grandchildren! love God, and never so much as mention his name; for, by speaking his name, he goes farther and farther from us."

### *Prayer.*

"O children and grandchildren! pray to God constantly by day and by night."

### *Repentance and Prayer.*

"O children and grandchildren! if we repent of our sins, and cease to do evil, restraining our passions, and pray to God, he will have mercy upon us again. If God does not have mercy on us, there is no other one that can. He who saves us, is the only one God."

### *Idolatry.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not worship idols or priests. If you worship them, you obtain no advantage thereby, while you increase your sins exceedingly."

### *Honor to parents.*

"O children and grandchildren! respect and reverence your mother and father; for, when you were small, they did



not suffer so much as a musquetoe to bite you. To sin against your parents, is a heinous crime."

"If your father or mother instructs or beats you, fear. If you fear not, the tigers will not fear you."

### *Love to others.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not be fond of quarrelling and disputings, but love each other. God in heaven looks down upon us; and if we do not love each other; it is the same as if we did not love God. O children and grandchildren! quarrel not, but love each other."

### *Relative duties.*

"O children and grandchildren! parent and child, master and slave, husband and wife; let not the child deceive his parent, the slave his master, nor the wife her husband."

### *Associates.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not associate with the wicked. Those that associate with robbers, become robbers; those that associate with the honest, become honest; those that associate with the passionate, become passionate."

### *Murder.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not take the life of man. If you kill, you must bear your sin. In the next world, you will be killed in return."

### *Wantonly killing animals.*

"O children and grandchildren! we may eat any thing on earth without sin; for God created them all for us; but do not kill or destroy any thing wantonly. If we kill or destroy wantonly, we sin."

### *Robbery.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not forcibly take the property of another. Observe, my children, that robbers



quickly become slaves. Should you even be a slave, good remains ; but there is no calling on God in hell."

### *Theft.*

"O children and grandchildren ! do not steal the goods of another ; for the owner worked for them until he sweat. Thieves will have to repay."

### *Adultery and Fornication.*

"O children and grandchildren ! do not commit adultery, or fornication, with the child or wife of another ; for the righteous one looks down from above, and these things are exposed to him. Those that do thus, will go to hell."

"If you meet the wife of another, avoid her, and pass on the lower side of the road."

### *Polygamy.*

"O children and grandchildren ! if you have one wife, lust not after another female or male ; for God, at the beginning, created only two : one male and one female."

### *False swearing.*

"O children and grandchildren ! that which is not true, swear not to, by the true One. Swear not to that which you do not well know."

### *Lying and Deception.*

"O children and grandchildren ! do not speak falsehood. What you do not know, do not speak. Liars shall have their tongues cut out."

"O children and grandchildren ! do not use deceitful language, but speak the words of truth only. The righteous one in heaven knows every thing that is said."

"O children and grandchildren ! do not talk at random concerning that which you do not know. Random talkers speedily become slaves."



*Swearing.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not curse, or use imprecations, and do not use obscene language. If you curse, or use imprecations, they will return on yourselves."

*Giving alms.*

"O children and grandchildren! give food and drink to the poor; and, by so doing, you will obtain mercy yourselves."

*Doing good to all men.*

"O children and grandchildren! according to your ability, relieve the distresses of all men. If you do good to others, you will not go unrewarded; for others will make like returns to you."

*Idleness.*

"O children and grandchildren! while in this state here on earth, be not idle, but labor diligently, that you may not become slaves; and when persons visit you, have food and drink to give them."

*Covetousness.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not envy the possessions of others. Though exceedingly abundant, covet them not. Work yourselves, and eat your own things."

*Intemperance.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not be guilty of excess in eating and drinking. Be not intemperate, but take that which is proper only."



*Obedience to kings.*

"O children and grandchildren! obey the orders of kings, for kings, in former times, obeyed the commands of God. If we do not obey them, they will kill us."

*Earthly-mindedness.*

"O children and grandchildren! do not covet the good things of this world; for when you die, you cannot carry away the things that are on earth."

"O children and grandchildren! do not desire to be great men, and possess authority. Great men sin exceedingly, and when they die, go to hell."

*Anger.*

"O children and grandchildren! never get angry. If we are angry with others, it is the same as if we were angry with God. The righteous One looks down from heaven upon us. The person who looks on the great and small, the vile and the wicked, children and youth, without anger, and gives them food and drink, he shall be established unchangeably."

*On Forbearance and Humility.*

"O children and grandchildren! though a person persecute you with deceit, anger and revenge, though he strike you, thump you, beat you, do not return him evil. If you return evil, you derive no advantage thereby. Then with the heart forbear, and speak to him respectful words; by doing thus, you will not go unrewarded."

"The man, who without anger endures all with humility, shall be established unchangeably, for by doing thus, the advantages of meritorious qualities are his."

*Circulating evil reports.*

"O children and grandchildren! transgressions in the house do not carry into the woods; transgressions in the woods do not bring into the house."



*Love to enemies.*

"O children and grandchildren! if a person injures you, let him do what he wishes, and bear all the sufferings he brings upon you with humility. If an enemy persecute you, love him with the heart. On account of our having sinned against God from the beginning, we ought to suffer."

*How to act when one cheek is struck.*

"O children and grandchildren! if a person strike you on the face, he does not strike you on the face; he only strikes on the floor. Therefore, if a person strike you on one cheek, give him the other to strike."

*When spit on.*

"O children and grandchildren! if a person spits in your face, do not spit in his face in return. He only spits in the air."

*The two Roads.*

"O children and grandchildren! the road that leads to heaven, is a track scarcely discernible, but the road that goes to hell is very great."

*Rewards and Punishments.*

"Good persons, the good,  
Shall go to heaven :  
Righteous persons, the righteous,  
Shall arrive at heaven.  
Unrighteous persons, the unrighteous,  
At death go to hell :  
Wicked persons, the bad,  
Shall fall into the fire of hell :  
Wicked persons, the wicked,  
Shall fall into the deepest hell."



## NATIONAL TRADITIONS.

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*A people beloved of God.*

“O children and grandchildren! formerly God loved the Karen nation above all others, but they transgressed his commands, and in consequence of their transgressions we suffer as at present. Because God cursed us, we are in our present afflicted state, and have no books. But God will again have mercy on us, and again he will love us above others. God will yet save us again; it is on account of our listening to the language of Satan, that we thus suffer.”

*The Word of God.*

In one of their old war songs, the Sgau Karens boast in possessing the word of God.

“Though thou sayest the Pghos are insignificant,  
Thou must pay a fine for killing them.—  
The Sgaus have the word of Jehovah:  
They will pay no fine for the life of a Pgho.”

*Departure of God.*

Many of the Karen traditions both in prose and verse allude to the departure of God, but to what event reference is had, it is difficult to say; for all the accounts are evidently fabulous in their details. For instance, “The Elders said, that God returning anciently said to the Karens, ‘Karen, guide me.’ The Karens replied, ‘The weeds are very thick, we cannot guide thee;’ and God said, ‘May you pull up weeds generation after generation.’ Coming to the Burmans, he said, ‘Burman, guide me.’ The Burmans replied, ‘we



are hewing out a canoe, we cannot guide thee ;' and God said, ' May you hew out canoes generation after generation.' So said one after another in succession till he came to the white foreigners, the youngest brother, to whom he said, ' White foreigner, guide me.' The white foreigner replied, ' I have no ship, no boat, I cannot guide the ; but I wish to guide thee.' Then God made him take off his hat and put it in the sea, and it became a large golden ship ; in which they conducted God away to the west. When they arrived, God blessed them, saying, ' May you ride in ships and boats : May you cross waters and reach lands : may you dress in fine clothes : may you be handsome : may you have rulers from among yourselves : may you have large towns and great cities.' Then God went up to heaven, and the white foreigners returned. Hence it is, that the white foreigners are more skilful than all other nations, and ride in ships to the present time."

Some poetical pieces represent God as calling upon the sun, moon, and all created beings, to come and weep at his departure ; as in the following fragment.

" God about to return commanded, commanded,  
God about to depart commanded, commanded ;  
He commanded the sun to come and weep for him,  
He commanded the moon to come and weep for him,  
He commanded the birds to come and weep for him,  
He commanded the squirrels to come and weep for him."

### *Return of God.*

The return of God is confidently expected ; and the dead trees are represented as blossoming on his arrival.

" At the appointed season, God will come ;  
The dead trees will blossom and flower :  
When the appointed season comes, God will arrive ;  
The mouldering trees will blossom and bloom again :



God will come and bring the great Thau-thee ;\*  
 We must worship, both great and small.  
 The great Thau-thee, God created ;  
 Let us ascend and worship.  
 There is a great mountain in the ford,  
 Can you ascend and worship God ?  
 There is a great mountain in the way,  
 Are you able to ascend and worship God ?  
 You call yourselves the sons of God,  
 How many evenings have you ascended to worship God ?  
 You call yourselves the children of God,  
 How often have you ascended to worship God ?”

Sometimes he is represented as coming with a trumpet.

“ God comes down, comes down ;  
 God descends, descends :  
 He comes blowing a trumpet,  
 He descends sounding a trumpet ;  
 Blowing, he gathers men, like the flowers of the Areca,†  
 Sounding, he gathers people, like the flowers of the Areca.”

Sometimes angels in glory would seem to accompany him, while the great among the people play on golden harps.

“ The glittering, the angels of heaven,  
 The dazzling, the angels of heaven :  
 The great trumpet that God comes blowing !  
 The great one that strikes the golden harp.”

In one fragment God is represented as coming in rags.

“ O children and grandchildren ! before God comes, Satan will come deceiving men ; and in order to deceive, he will come dressed in fine clothes and handsome attire ; but follow him not, children and grandchildren ! After Satan, will come one with scarcely clothes enough to cover him. Follow him. That one is God. When God comes, he will take the appearance of the poorest of men ; and will dress in rags. Follow him.”

\* A mountain so called, which is to be the seat of future happiness, according to some statements.

† The flowers grow thick and are very numerous.



Sometimes God, it is said, is to save them by his youngest son.

"O children and grandchildren! God will yet save us again. He has saved us twice, and his youngest son will be able to save us again."

### *Appearance of Satan.*

Some statements represent Satan as coming to deceive men before God returns. The elders said,

"O children and grandchildren! before God arrives, Satan will appear, and the unrighteous, and the lascivious, and adulterers, and deceivers, and the contentious will follow him; and when they have all gone after him, there will be happiness, and God will come."

### *Darkness to come.*

A Karen assistant after reading the account of the plagues in Egypt, related the following. "The Elders said, there will yet be a great darkness. The darkness will be such that men will not be able to see each other, and they will be compelled to creep and feel. At that time the fagots will become serpents; and the bamboos snakes; and people will feel here, and they will lay their hands on a serpent; and there, and they will lay their hands on a snake."

In the following fragment God is represented as purifying men.

"When the generation arrives and the time comes,  
When the age arrives and the time comes;  
Woman will take two husbands,  
Man will take two wives.  
It will not please God,  
God will strike and the earth will quake:  
When God shall purify the earth,  
He will purify thee and me and all."



*King.*

Many of their compositions represent them as expecting great temporal prosperity under their own kings.

"O children and grandchildren! the Karens will yet dwell in the city with the golden palace. If we do well, the existence of other kings is at an end. The Karen king will yet appear, and when he arrives, there will be happiness."

For this they have been in the habit of praying. The following are specimens of their prayers.

"O Lord, we have had affliction for a long succession of generations; have compassion, have mercy upon us, O Lord. The Taling kings have had their season, the Burman kings have had their season, the Siamese kings have had their season, and the foreign kings, all have had their season; the Karen nation remains. Let our king arrive, O Lord. Thou, O Lord, whom we adore, to whom we sing praises, let us dwell within the great town, the high city, the golden palace. Give to us, have compassion upon us, O Lord."

"O Lord, the God whom we adore, have compassion, have mercy upon us. Let us have kings, and let the city, the town, the great town, the silver city, the new town, the new city, the palace, the royal residence arrive to us all, O Lord. Have compassion, and grant unto us, O great God."

Sometimes they represent themselves metaphorically as becoming civilized, while other nations become barbarous.

"The Elders said, Children and grandchildren! the high mountain will be leveled; and the plain will become a sink. The deer will ascend the mountains, and the wild goat will descend to the plains."

"The great mountain will become a plain,  
Children be happy and play:  
The great mountain will be leveled,  
Children be joyful and play."



Some compositions represent the Karen king as the sole monarch of the earth, and that there will be neither rich nor poor in his reign, but that all will be happy.

“ Good persons, the good,  
Shall go to the silver town, the silver city ;  
Righteous persons, the righteous,  
Shall go to the new town, the new city ;  
Persons that believe their father and mother,  
Shall enjoy the golden palace.  
When the Karen king arrives,  
There will be only one monarch ;  
When the Karen king comes,  
There will be neither rich nor poor ;  
When the Karen king shall arrive,  
There will be neither rich man nor poor ;  
When the Karen king shall come,  
Rich and poor will not exist.”

They believe when the Karen king comes, the beasts will be at peace, and cease to bite and devour one another.

“ When the Karen king arrives,  
Every thing will be happy ;  
When the Karen king arrives,  
The beasts will be happy ;  
When Karens have a king,  
Lions and leopards will lose their savageness.”

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## FUNERAL RITES.

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Death is a fearful event to a Karen. Whenever the death of an individual is announced, the man drops his axe, the woman her shuttle, and the child his toy, not to be resumed again that day ; and the unfinished work, never. The house,



or canoe, or other article, on which the man was at work when the intelligence reached him, is abandoned to the beasts of the forest; and the labors of the loom are given to the worms, as articles more deadly than the tunic of Nessus.\* The corpse is bandaged up in cloths, or mats, shortly after the person has expired, so that no part is visible, and then the spirits of deceased relatives are called to visit the person who has just died, and guide him to Hades. Rice is next poured down at the head and feet of the corpse, and a basket, such as a Karen carries on his back, with an axe, a knife, a bag, a cooking pot, and a drinking cup, are placed by its side, while one exclaims, "O dead! eat as in thy state of consciousness on earth; eat, fear not, be not ashamed." As the neighbors and friends arrive at the house, each one expresses his grief in expressions like the following: Alas! what is this! Now I am afflicted indeed. Alas! alas! formerly thou conversedst happily with me. Alas! what shall I do! O Lord, take this my friend, and suffer him not to go where he will be subjected to suffering."

If the visiter comes from a distance, food is brought out, and before he eats, addressing the corpse, he says, "O deceased! eat and drink; eat and drink as in thy state of consciousness formerly." After the company has assembled, they commence a musical chant typifying life: Thus—

## ONE PERSON.

"What is the matter?"  
 "What is the matter?"  
 "What is the matter?"  
 "What is the matter?"  
 "What is the matter?"  
 "What is the matter?"

## WHOLE COMPANY.

"Ascending the trunk."  
 "Ascending the branch."  
 "Taking the fruit."  
 "Descending the branch."  
 "Descending the trunk."  
 "Depositing the fruit."

*General chorus.* "Pitying the dead exceedingly,  
 Unable to wake him up again."

\* In ancient mythology, *Nessus* was the name of a centaur, whose tunic proved the occasion of death to Hercules.—E.



This is repeated, or supposed to be repeated, in several different languages which no one understands, but which have been represented to me as in part from an old language, and in part from the Kyen language.

The people next engage at "tiger and fowl," a game resembling drafts, intended to prefigure the struggle of mankind with evil spirits. After this is over, the company rises, and, marching slowly round the corpse, sings ;

"One house post, a pillar red,  
Two house posts, a pillar red :  
Stamping round a smooth path,  
Beating round a smooth path.  
Catch a red cock of Hades ;  
He will crow at night and show the morn easily.

*Chorus.*

O deceased, deceased ! art thou dead, hast thou departed ?  
We speak, we call, but he cannot reply.

One house post, a pillar white,  
Two house posts, a pillar white :  
Stamping round to the starting point,  
Beating round to the starting point.  
Catch a white cock of Hades ;  
He will crow at night and show the morn easily.

*Chorus.*

O deceased, deceased ! art thou dead, hast thou departed ?  
We speak, we call, but he cannot reply."

When evening comes, lights that burn for a short time only, are placed near the head and feet of the corpse, to represent the evening and morning stars, which in their legendary lore, are lights showing departed spirits the way to Hades : and believing, as they do, that that world is antipodal to this, they say to the corpse, "the foot of the tree is there," pointing to the summit of a tree ; "the tops of the trees are



there," pointing to the roots; "the west is there," pointing to the east; and "the east is there," pointing to the west. At the close of this address, the people commence singing the following lines;

"The light at the head of the corpse is red, red,  
The light at the foot of the corpse is red, red.  
He goes with a torch, the morning star,  
He goes with a light, the morning star."

Hot water is next poured out near the head and feet of the corpse, which closes all the regular ceremonies till the burning of the body, which may occur next morning, or be delayed a day or two.

The interval is occupied with drinking and singing, slowly marching round the corpse. The compositions that are sung, often partake of a dramatic character, and the dialogue is sung by men and women alternately; and are usually but ill adapted to the solemnities of the occasion. Love and war are the most prominent subjects. The following are offered as specimens.

### *The Deadly Feud.*

Lututu killed Likoku's wife with a spear;  
Likoku's wife he went and stabbed with a spear;  
Likoku resolved to fight him,  
Likoku resolved to attack him.

Thy slaves are how many? how many?

Thy people are how many? how many?

My slaves come to the number of five hundred;

My people come to the number of five hundred:

They come in ranks from all parts,

They come in ranks from every quarter.

Who is the leading champion?

Who is the foremost champion?

The champion is Saule's son;

The foremost man is Saule's son.

Where do the spears meet? where?

Where are the arrows shot? where?



The spears meet at Klekhoda,  
 The arrows are shot at Klekhoda.  
 Thou saidst, though the arrows hit they injure not ;  
 Thou saidst, though the spears pierce they hurt not.  
 The arrows have hit and slain thee outright ;  
 The spears have pierced and slain thee outright.  
 They weave thy bier, they carry thee ;  
 They weave thy bier, they bear thee.  
 They have borne thee over the gravelly plain ;  
 They have borne thee past the gravel plain.  
 Thy house comes in sight to-day ;  
 Thy house is in sight to-day :  
 Thy house comes in sight, thy children know ;  
 Thy house is in sight, thy wife knows :  
 At once thy children wail for thee,  
 Thy bearers tread the steps to thy house ;  
 At once thy wife is wailing for thee,  
 Thy bearers tread the ladder of thy house.  
 They have reached the middle of the hall,  
 They have reached the centre of the hall.  
 Where shall be performed thy funeral rite ?  
 Where shall be performed thy mourning rite ?  
     Perform them in the great hall,  
     Mourn for me in the great hall.  
 How many klos\* shall be hung around ?  
 How many klos shall be hung in the hall ?  
     Hang up five hundred and ten,  
     Hang around five hundred and ten."

### *The Lovers.*

#### *Woman.*

" Formerly one heart,  
 But now divided :  
 Formerly of one mind,  
 Divided now into two.  
 The brinjal† wild is of a handsome yellow,  
 The wild brinjal is of a beautiful yellow.  
 May thy wife be white as a flake of cotton,

\* A musical instrument of metal, that is played on by beating.

† The young man is meant to be indicated by the brinjal.



Working like the rapid thunder :  
 The brinjal wild is yellow and handsome,  
 The wild brinjal is yellow and beautiful :  
 May thy wife be white as the opening cotton pod,  
 Working like the running thunder.

*Man.*

Thou hittest my heart, thou pleasest me ;  
 Thou touchest my heart, I am pleased with thee.  
 But thy mother does not love me,  
 Thy father does not love me.  
 Listen to my words,  
 Then stone and water will give light like sand.\*

*Woman.*

I conversed with thee under the eaves,  
 I talked with thee under the eaves.  
 Our bracelets we put off and exchanged,  
 Our bangles we put off and exchanged.

*Man.*

The country of Sere, of Sere,  
 The land of Sere, of Sere ;  
 It is famed for the frogs that are there,  
 It is famed for the fish that are there.  
 The hornbills ascend high in the sky,  
 And fly away two abreast."

In the morning, when the body is burned, a bone is taken from the ashes and preserved with great care till a convenient time for assembling a large concourse of people. Booths are then built on the bank of some stream, a feast made, and the ceremonies renewed around the bone, which have been described above as performed around the body. On the evening of the day that the bone is buried, the friends

\* The Karens sometimes pray, "May my heart be white as stone and light as sand; pure as water and light as sand."



of the deceased assemble around the bone and sing a particular dirge, of which the following is a part :

“ Clear the road,  
The Queen will go forth,  
Clear the road well,  
The Queen will go forth again.  
The seven great roads,  
Go the middle road ;  
The seven great paths,  
Go the middle path.  
Mother brought up her daughter,  
Mukha\* has seized her ;  
Mother brought up her son,  
Mukha has got him.  
Black-backed Mukha  
Leaped down from behind the partition ;  
Black-winged Mukha  
Leaped down from about the partition.  
The great hall descends gradually,  
A short post remains firm ;  
The great hall descends slowly,  
A beam remains firm.  
We do not love to die,  
Thus we are made insane ;  
We do not love to depart,  
We are driven to insanity.  
The flat-billed duck,†  
The dead goes with him ;  
The flat-nosed duck,  
The dead returns with him.  
Tie up the cord of seven strings‡  
That the dead may arrive at his grave ;  
Tie up the cord of seven strings,  
The dead arrives to-day.”

\* An evil spirit, that is supposed to seize and kill persons who become obnoxious to him.

† The wild duck is supposed to go and return to and from Hades.

‡ Between the place where the funeral ceremonies are performed and the grave, strings are tied across the streams, a bridge for the departed spirit.



At the close of the ceremonies around the bone, a bangle\* is hung up, and a cup of rice placed under it. The departed spirit is then called; for it is supposed to be hovering around, till the funeral rites are completed. When the spirit answers the call, the string trembles, the bangle turns round, and the string snaps in two as if by miracle. If no answer is returned, the spirit is gone to hell. When he signifies that he is present, he has guided to the grave yard, which is always one of the best spots in the neighborhood. Here the bone is buried, and money with other articles thrown on the grave. Should any one take the money that is left on a grave, he would become childless, and his family extinct, which is a sufficient terror to a Karen to keep him honest. After burying the bone, the spirit is addressed, as follows: "Now thou mayest go to thy land, thy country, thy kingdom. When thou arrivest, do not forget us. We shall come to thee. Go not to hell, go to the abodes of bliss. As to this silver, if thou art taken by force, buy thyself with it. Go. Here is thy small house; thy great house is on the river Naudokwa.† Go."

The Karens suppose that these ceremonies are of a comparatively recent origin, and say that they formerly buried their dead. Burning the body and singing around the bone were first introduced, as some of their traditions say, by an individual of the name of Mautau, to whom many of the songs are attributed. Others charge the whole on Satan himself; to which I see no special objection, for their funerals are complete scenes of bacchanalian revelry, in which the spirit of Satan most certainly presides. The most detailed account of the origin of these rites, is in a tradition that Mr. Wade obtained from a Maulmain Karen, and is as follows:

\* An ornament worn in India, upon the arms and ankles.—E.

† This is a river either in Hades or on its borders.



*Origin of the funeral rites.*

"Afterwards the man and his wife died. Of the children that they left behind them, some became sick and died, others became sick and recovered, and others died of age. When a thousand years were completed, God looked down and had mercy on them again, and came to them. He said, 'Your parents at the beginning I commanded, but they did not listen to my words; they listened to Satan, and ate the fruit of the tree of temptation. They became sick, and old, and died; as in like manner have their descendants unto you. Now I have looked down and I pity you. I will save you, will you obey my words? If you will listen to me, I will save you.' God having spoken thus, men consented, and said, 'O Father God; our parents anciently did not listen to thy words: we observe them. They listened to the words of Satan, and ate the fruit of the tree of temptation. Death and old age came upon them, and these things have descended to their children, even unto us. Have mercy upon us, and save us. We are exceedingly glad.' God replied, 'If you will obey my words I will help you; but if you do not obey, you will suffer and die.' Having said thus, God proceeded to direct them as follows: 'When any one dies, bind him up in seven thicknesses of wild plantain leaves, and go place him in the road. As soon as seven days are fulfilled, he will come to life again.' Having said thus, God departed. Two or three days afterwards, a man died. As God had directed, they bound him up and placed him in the road; and, as God said, when seven days were completed he came to life again. For a hundred years they observed the word of God, and were happy.

"After a hundred years had passed away, Satan was born, and at fifteen years of age he began to ruin man again. He said, 'Children and grandchildren, doing this way is not the way to be happy: I will show you how to obtain pleasure.' Having said thus, he rose up and killed his father. Having killed his father, he took the body, placed it in the hall, and called his uncles and aunts, his brothers and sisters, and all his other relatives. His relatives having assembled together, he adorned the young men and maidens with new garments, and caused them to walk around the corpse of his father and sing. Addressing his relatives, he said, 'Let some weep, let some laugh, and let some sing. In this way we shall have



real pleasure. No body listened to him, except his relations; they did as he told them, but the worshipers of God would not obey him.' Satan after devising within himself the course to be pursued, directed his relatives to make handsome clothes, showing them how to dye various colors, and how to ornament their garments. His relations having adorned themselves with new clothes, in striped and variegated garments, he caused them to go out and sing.

"The children of those that worshiped God came to see. Satan at the funeral feast saw them, and induced them to dress themselves in new garments and sing. They went away and called their relations to come and do likewise, saying, 'Brethren! as to what Satan is doing, we went to see, and found it very pleasant.' 'What does he do?' was the inquiry. They replied, 'What he does we cannot tell you; you must go and see with your own eyes.' 'If we go,' was asked again, 'shall we like it?' 'Like it!' they replied, 'you will like it exceedingly; and more than like it, for if you go to him, he will give you new garments, and cause you to walk and sing.' After conversing in this manner they all went to Satan, who as soon as he saw them, laughed and said, 'There was no pleasure in doing as your parents taught you. I will teach you how to obtain pleasure. Go, sing.' 'Why, Satan,' they replied, 'we do not know how.' 'I will show you,' he continued; and he dressed them in handsome clothes, and taught them how to sing funeral songs. They then said to others, 'Brethren, what Satan has taught us is very pleasant;' and in this way, whenever any of Satan's relatives died, they assembled at the funeral.

"After a long time, their parents all died off, and they had not learned the customs connected with praying to and worshipping God; they had learned only, the customs that Satan had taught them, so that when any one died they knew not what to do, but went to Satan and asked him. He came and taught them as above, and charged them, saying, 'Teach your children and grandchildren to do them; when I have gone and taught all nations, I shall be hidden. All I have taught you, my children, observe and do.' Satan, having charged them thus, died, and the Karen nation have observed his commands from generation to generation unto the present time."



## DEMONOLOGY.

We live in two worlds; the visible world which we apprehend by means of our senses, and the invisible world, of which we have no faculties to take cognizance, and of which we know nothing more than revelation teachers. From that it appears, "the angel of the Lord," unseen, "encampeth round about those that fear him;" and that ministering spirits, unrecognized, are ministering to the heirs of salvation.

Now a Karen has so far a knowledge of truth, that he has a distinct belief in the existence of these two worlds. The first, or visible one he calls the outer; and the second, or invisible one, the inner. This spiritual world, however, brings no consolation to his heart, for his imagination peoples it, not with angels watching over him for good, but with demons that are ever devising evil, and seeking his destruction. Besides beings that he regards as of the nature of Satan, he believes that every country and sea, every mountain and stream, every large tree and great rock, has its guardian spirit; and to propitiate these beings, he makes sacrifices and presents offerings. A full account of these superstitions would fill a small volume. One specimen must serve in this place.

When about to sacrifice to the Earth, a small house, two or three feet high, is built, and a fowl or two sacrificed by cutting off their heads, the blood and feathers of which are daubed on the posts of the house. The fowls are next cooked, and then presented with the following prayer:

"Lord of the Earth,  
Lord of the mud,



Lord of the water,  
Lord of the land,  
Lord of the mountains,  
Lord of the hills,  
Lord of the sun,  
Lord of the moon,  
Lord of the trees,  
Lord of the bamboos,  
Lord of the great mountain,  
Lord of the middle mountain,  
Come, come.  
I will sacrifice for you to eat,  
Birds that are savory,  
Fowls that are fat:  
Fowls, both cock and hen.  
We that dwell  
By one stream of water,  
On one district of land,  
With our people, our dependants,  
Both great and small;  
May our skin be cool,  
May our flesh be comfortable.  
Lord, put forth your hands,  
Put forth your feet;  
I will wash your hands,  
I will wash your feet:  
Eat rice,  
Drink water, O Lord."

When a Karen sets fire to the fallen trees and dry brush-wood that cover the field which he has cleared, he addresses it as follows:

"Arise, field of fagots!  
Arise, arise!  
Arise, comb thy head!  
Arise, wash thy face!  
Arise, devour the cleaver clearing!  
Arise, devour the axe clearing!  
Arise, devour the massy rocks!  
Arise, devour the abrupt precipices!  
Arise, devour the mountains!  
Arise, devour the hills!"



Arise, devour the central mountain !  
Arise, devour the central hill !  
Arise, field of fagots !  
Arise, arise !”\*

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## PROPHETS.

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Power to see into the world of spirits is occasionally imparted. When Elisha's servant was filled with fear for the safety of himself and his master, Elisha prayed, “Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man ; and he saw, and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” So Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, saw the heavens opened, and “the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” The Karens also believe, that this power of seeing into the invisible world is possessed by prophets, a degenerate race of whom are still supposed to exist among them. “There are two classes of prophets,” say the Elders ; “the one holds communication with demons ; the other, with God.” And after adding that the good prophets are not now sent unto them, on account of their disobedience, they say, “God would have given us one for each generation, but because we did not obey, prophets abound, and they are unrighteous.” These existing prophets confine themselves to directing what offerings shall

\* The two extracts given above, though not poetry, that is, the lines having neither rhyme nor measure, are yet, like many other Karen compositions, a poetical prose, which can be best represented by being written in parallel couplets.



be made to appease the demons, that are supposed to produce sickness; and they are constantly consulted for this purpose. They pretend to hold a conversation with unseen spirits, when applications are made to them for information, and according to the response of the "familiar spirit," they decide.

There is another class of persons, called Bukhos, who are more directly connected with the worship of God, and who often unite the character of extraordinary religious teacher with that of prophet. These Bukhos usually, if not uniformly, condemn the practice of making offerings to demons; and represent to the people, that God is, in some way or other, about to appear for their salvation.

A distinguished one, who lives about ten days' journey up the Yun-za-len, a tributary of the Salwen, that rises near Toun-g-u, is mentioned by Mr. Judson, in his journal of May, 1832, as "an extraordinary young man of twenty, who, while he pretends to hold communication with the invisible world, professes also to be desirous of finding the true God, and becoming acquainted with the true religion. Our people remained with him three days; during which time, they were surrounded with a crowd of his followers, and were obliged to preach day and night."

I visited this prophet in the year 1837, and found him, like many others, with whom I have met in my travels, without any settled principles, unless a heterogeneous mixture of old Karen traditions and Boodhism can be called such. His leading object, as with most of his class, seemed to be, to give himself importance, and acquire an influence over the people. In this, he appears to have succeeded tolerably well, for at the last dates he had successfully headed a revolt of the Karens against the Burmans, and compelled a detachment of their soldiers, that was sent against him, to retire.

One of the most extraordinary of these men, is the one



that brought the Book of Common Prayer to Mr. Boardman. The following notices of him were furnished by Sau Qua-la.

“He commanded the people of Mergui and Tavoy, saying, ‘Come and worship with me. Happiness will return, but those who neglect worship, when happiness arrives, will not be allowed to participate in it.’ Great numbers, old and young, male and female, came from every direction, and worshiped with drums, and gongs, and singing of every description. He made himself a great man, and compelled others to prostrate themselves before him. He had men go before and behind him with swords and spears: while others beat drums and struck the cymbals. In the zayats where the people worshiped, he had two divisions made, one for the women and another for the men; and there he taught them to sing and pray to God. The people made him offerings of white cloth, and silver in considerable quantities; and he would take the latter and throw it into the streams, saying,

‘The flowered silver, the ingots of silver will flee,  
The white silver, the round silver I see.’

“This he called making an end of Burman silver. The people, however, continued to bring him money, notwithstanding he threw it away in the manner he did. In later years he came and worshiped at Shenmouktee,\* near Tavoy. There, the Karens of Mergui and Tavoy assembled with him in great numbers. They walked around the image night and day, and worshiped standing, and worshiped sitting, and worshiped lying down. This was the way, he said, to bring the worship of the image to an end. The Burman officers, intending to massacre the Karens, went to the governor of Tavoy and said, ‘In the day there is not a single Karen to be seen; but when night comes, they cover the

\* A village six or eight miles south of Tavoy, where there is a famous image of Gaudama.



whole plain. Give us permission, and we will go and kill them, lest they rebel. The governor replied, 'Fear not, the Karens can never succeed in rebellion ; let them alone.' Not long afterwards, however, one of the Karens themselves went and informed against him to the governor, saying, 'He is endeavoring to bring thee, and the king at Ava, into contempt ; and he prays, that the white foreigners may come and take the city.' Then the governor called him and, taking away his sword and spear, threw him into prison. Here he obtained two books. Sometimes he said, that a white foreigner gave them to him ; and sometimes, that a foreign priest gave them to him ; and sometimes, that God gave them to him ; and sometimes, that he received them from an inhabitant of heaven.\* They were written in Karen, he said, and he prostrated himself before the books morning and evening ; and made the Karens do so likewise, telling them, that, when the time arrived, they would be able to read them, but that the time was not yet come. The governor took away one of his books, and the other was the book of Common Prayer, which he subsequently brought to Mr. Boardman. He was set at liberty through the intercession of a Karen chief ; and he afterwards went down to Palaw, where we heard he was flogged, and one of his disciples fined a hundred rupees, and narrowly escaped with his life. The following couplets are specimens of the compositions, that he taught the people to sing at worship :

" This worship is excellent worship,  
The worship that the great God appointed ;  
This worship is pure worship,  
The worship that the great God gave us.  
Ascend and worship on the mountain vale of Maurai,†

\* I have heard two or three diametrically opposite statements from his own lips.

† This is the name he gave to the zayat where he worshiped, but why, no one can tell.



The mountain vale of Maurai is the place where God reclines.

Ascend and worship on Maurai,  
 The mountain vale of Maurai is the seat of God.  
 The wicked, those that are wicked,  
 Shall fall among the Fetid Cassia ;\*  
 The good, those that are good,  
 Shall ascend the smooth bamboo.  
 Clear away the wild Egg-plant,†  
 Build our city of peace.  
 Root up the wild Egg-plant,  
 Rebuild our old city.  
 He has come, he has come, God has come ;  
 Bring offerings, bring offerings of early rice.  
 He comes, he comes, God comes ;  
 Bring offerings, bring offerings of white boiled rice.  
 The golden ship has arrived, has arrived,  
 It has arrived with our younger brother.  
 The worship that God appointed,  
 The great worship, has reached the Karens.  
 O the thinking of the great worship !  
 Lo ! it expels sleep.  
 O the thinking of the origin of the worship !  
 Lo ! no more sleep can be obtained."

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## ROMANCE OF MISSIONS.

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In Christian lands, there is a halo of romance sometimes thrown around the mission enterprise, which the realities of life often dissipate ; but still oftener, scenes of surpassing interest are witnessed on missionary ground, whose bright colors are never seen at home.

\* The Cassia tora of Linnaeus, a common weed in Tavoy.

† A species of Solanum that grows wild in great abundance, but more especially on ruins and old walls.



The history of the introduction of Christianity among the Karens is, perhaps, too full of "truth stranger than fiction," to be believed by those who have not been actors in the scenes, themselves. Take Mergui for a single instance. Mr. and Mrs. Wade were the first to visit the Karen villages of Mergui with the gospel, and a more interesting reception than was given them, it were difficult to find on record. They were led by an intelligent chief, now a pillar in the church, and were met on their arrival by "several young women whom he had invited, among others, to meet them," singing a hymn of which the first verse and chorus was,

"The Lord his messengers doth send,  
And he himself will quickly come ;  
The priests of Boodh, whose reign is short,  
Must leave the place to make them room."

Three or four years afterwards, the writer of these pages entered the province at its other extremity ; and writing on the spot, he says, "My entrance into this village reminded me of Paul's into Lystra. The people almost quarrelled for the honor of receiving me, each protesting, 'my house is the best.' They had never heard of the gospel before, and were more attentive, and quite as orderly at worship, as any Christian congregation I ever saw."

These people now form a part of the settlement at Te-wa, where there is a flourishing little church.

On descending the river two days' journey further south, "We met," says the journal, "with a religious teacher and his wife, who live in the neighborhood. They begged us to stop ; but after a little conversation, they concluded to return, and started on before us. On reaching his house, where I now am, we found every thing prepared for us, in the very first of Karen style, with their garments spread on the floor, for me to walk upon from one room to another.



While listening to the reading of the View\* in Karen, he occasionally exclaimed, 'The Lord,' 'The Lord,' 'The Lord.' He has built an addition to his house as a place of worship; and himself and such of his neighbors as are disposed, assemble every night to worship, where they pray and sing hymns. In his place of worship, I found a shrine surrounded with something resembling a Chinese pagoda, and many ridiculous ornaments. I told him, these things were not proper. 'Well, then,' said he, 'I will destroy them, if you say they are wrong. I made them through ignorance, not knowing what was proper. I have been long living in hopes, that I should see a teacher among us, and now you have come, I am determined to do as you say.' "

"I was awaked in the middle of the night, by the singing of some women in the next room, who composed as they sung. I caught a few verses."—

"If we know the Lord Jesus Christ,  
We are delivered from our sins;  
Whoever knows the Lord Jesus Christ,  
Is delivered from his sins.  
Upon the whole earth,  
No other God should be worshiped;  
Throughout the whole earth,  
No other God should be worshiped.  
Praise the law of God,  
It is pure as water, even as sand;  
Praise the truth of God,  
It is pleasant as water, smooth as iron."

This man and his wife, with many of their neighbors, were subsequently baptized and formed the little church at Tamla, most of whose members have since moved up the river to Mata.

Ten days later, on returning to Tavoy from Mergui by the seaboard through the Burman villages, we lost our way, the

\* The title of a tract.—E.



day after leaving Mergui, as detailed in the following communication written a few years after.

“My cogitations were interrupted by a man behind calling out in his idiom, ‘the road is lost.’ Sure enough, the road was gone, and we soon found ourselves on the edge of a dismal swamp, covered by a species of ficus with its thousand arms, the sure index of inextricable mazes and inundating tide waters.

Having been walking from the first blush of morn, with a view to reaching a small Burman village by the middle of the afternoon, we were sufficiently fatigued to lie down and wait for the fresh impetus of the morrow ; but unfortunately our scrip was out, and every voice counselled to move on, but in what direction, was not so clear. After a short pause, the Karens instinctively turned to the mountains, and we plunged through a thick undergrowth of briars and creepers.

—‘The tropic sun had laid his burning head  
On twilight’s lap,’

when we suddenly found ourselves on the banks of a mountain stream, and entered a path that appeared to lead to a Karen house. The energy of hope carried us up the hills till the last gleam of day died away, and the stars of night hung trembling in the heavens. We reached a field that had been cultivated, but alas! it had also been abandoned. Nature was exhausted, and after making a fire to keep away the tigers heard around, we spent a few minutes in considering the passage, ‘Thy will be done,’ and closed with prayer and praise to Him that doeth all things well. Not having either dinner or supper to prepare, our arrangements for the night were soon made. I moved away the large stones in a small ravine, and, under a few wild plantain leaves to defend me from the dew, lay down to sleep to the music of a sleepless brook that rolled at my feet. We awoke with the wail-



ing cry of the long-armed apes,\* bounding from tree to tree in the forests beyond us. 'The morning has whitened,' said a Karen at my side, pointing to the first glow of dawn on the mountain summit; and while the morning fog swept in gigantic fleeces over the plain below, except an occasional knoll peering above its waves, like an island in the ocean, we commenced retracing our steps down the hill to a path at the foot, that had been observed leading to the north. Endeavoring to conjecture in what way our losing the road would be overruled to our profit and usefulness, we moved on till nine or ten o'clock, when our eyes were gladdened by the sight of a Karen house. An old man on the verandah gazed at us a few moments in immovable silence, like the deer of his native hills, and then turning to his family in the house, he called out, 'The teacher has arrived; the teacher has arrived.' The next moment he was before me, saying, 'I will show you to the zayat. It is close by; only a call distant.' This was passing strange to me, but as it appeared all a thing of course to the old man, I followed on to a more than ordinarily comfortable zayat in the neighborhood of some Karen houses, whose inmates were soon around me, like Cornelius and his friends, looking, though not saying, 'We are all here present before God to hear the things commanded thee of God!' It appeared on explanation, that it had been told them, 'The teacher is in the jungle, and will call on you. You must build a zayat for his reception, and listen to his precepts.' The zayat was just completed, and they were looking for my arrival daily, when I lost my way; and instead of leaving their settlement many miles to the eastward, as I intended, I was most unintentionally led among them. I had fallen on

\* The animal referred to by Dr. Helfer, who says, "A *Hylobates*, though the most common species in the interior, howling most pitia-  
bly in the solitary forests, seems to have hitherto escaped the obser-  
vation of naturalists."



an oasis in the desert, and here a few days were spent which afford pleasure in the retrospect, and will afford pleasure, it is believed, in eternity. We parted with mutual regret, the people loading us with substantial proofs of their attachment in the shape of rice, fowls, eggs, yams, sweet potatoes, and sugar cane, while their last words were, 'You must come again next year and baptize us.' Another year came, and another, and another; each year bringing with it that share of culture to this little spot, which the missionary and his native assistants could spare from a large field with numerous and urgent demands. The result was, a Christian population of about fifty, nearly twenty of whom have learned to read, and more than twenty of whom have united with a Christian church on a profession of faith." They now form a part of the flourishing village of Ka-bin.

"From the uttermost part of the earth we hear songs;  
'Glory to the righteous.'

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,

And as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it  
to spring forth;

So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
To spring forth before all the nations."\*

\* Isaiah 24: 11. 61: 11.







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In noticing the lamented death of Mr. Boardman, Mr. Judson, in one of his letters, thus speaks of his late worthy co-worker on the fields of Burmah:

"One of the brightest luminaries of Burmah is extinguished,—dear brother Boardman is gone to his eternal rest. He fell gloriously at the head of his troops, in the arms of victory,—thirty-eight wild Karens having been brought into the camp of king Jesus since the beginning of the year, besides the thirty-two that were brought in during the two preceding years. Disabled by wounds, he was obliged, through the whole last expedition, to be carried on a litter; but his presence was a host, and the Holy Spirit, accompanied his dying whispers with almighty influence. Such a death, next to that of martyrdom, must be glorious in the eyes of heaven. Well may he rest assured, that a triumphal crown awaits him on the great day, and 'Well done, good and faithful Boardman, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

Mr. Mason, his worthy fellow-laborer among the Karens, says:—"I have been busily occupied all day and evening with the examination of candidates for baptism, and have received thirteen. Thus the work of conversion seems to have been produced, by the blessing of God, by means precisely similar to those which are blessed by revivals at home. The whole however, is to be traced to Mr. Boardman's first visit to the jungle, in 1829. An impulse was then given to Karen minds, which, I confidently anticipate, will never stop until the whole nation is converted."

*From Rev. J. O. Choules, author of History of Missions.*

I have read the Memoir of Boardman with great satisfaction. It is a volume of no ordinary merit, and will compare advantageously with any similar production. The great charm in the character of Mr. Boardman was his fervent piety; and his biographer has succeeded admirably in holding him up to the Christian world as the pious student, the faithful minister, and the self-denying, laborious missionary. To the student, to the Christian minister, it will be a valuable book, and no Christian can peruse it without advantage. I hope our ministering brethren will aid in the circulation of the Memoir. Every church will be benefited by its diffusion among its members. I am much mistaken, if the perusal of this volume does not lead some youthful members of our churches to look with an eye of pity on the wastes of Paganism, and cry, "Here am I, send me."

Yours, &c.,

JOHN O. CHOULES.

*From Rev. Baron Stow.*

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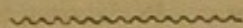


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