

the scientist than for the humblest believer in Christ. Agnosticism assumes a position of impartiality between Theism and Atheism which it is as impossible to maintain as a philosophical speculation as in the business of life. A consistent Agnostic will approach the question of miracles without prejudice either for or against their truth. If there be a God who may interfere for the highest purposes in the affairs of men (and on this point the Agnostic will say that he has formed no opinion whatever) miracles are not impossible, nor the account of them incredible. But the leaders of Agnosticism are the first to forget these admissions when they speak of miracles. By taking for granted that they cannot be true they show that, in speculation as well as in the affairs of life, Agnosticism and Atheism are practically one and the same.

WILLIAM ANDERSON.

---

ART. III.—BRITISH BURMA.

*Personal Recollections of British Burma, and its Church Mission Work in 1878-79.* By the Right Rev. J. H. TITCOMB, D.D., First Bishop of Rangoon. Pp. 183. Wells Gardner, Darton and Co. 1880.

THE See of Rangoon, taken out of that of Calcutta, was founded in the year 1877. Churchmen in the diocese of Winchester raised £10,000, and to this noble contribution another £10,000 was added as a benefaction from the Societies for "Promoting Christian Knowledge," and for the "Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and from the "Colonial Bishops' Fund." To these sources of endowment the Indian Government also consented to add the pay of a Senior Chaplaincy. The area of the diocese, coterminous with that of British Burma, including also the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is about 100,000 square miles, and the population amounts to more than 3,000,000 souls. The great delta of the river Irrawaddy, which covers an area of about 11,000 square miles, is intersected by an immense network of tidal creeks with paddy-fields yielding rich harvests of rice. The richness of the soil may be imagined from the information that beneath these rice crops alluvial mould can often be pierced to the depth of twelve feet. In Tennasserim, one of the three divisions of British Burma—Arakan and Pegu being the other two—excellent tin is found; ores of manganese and iron are abundant, and coal has been discovered, although from the expense of removing it the seams are not worked. The tracts of uncultivated land in British Burma are enormous; but the percentage of increase on lands under cultivation is rising steadily.

The export trade, both foreign and coasting, in 1877-8 increased by 21 per cent. over that of the preceding year. The gross receipts of revenue for the same period were £1,988,244; out of which, after disbursements of every sort, as much as £544,338 (net cash) was remitted to the Imperial exchequer of India. The material prosperity of the country, in fact, is very great, and, under wise administration is likely to develop with rapidity. Its wealth, however, largely lies in non-Christian hands—*i.e.*, among Buddhists, Parsees, Chinese, Jews, Armenians, and Mohammedans. Local resources available for Christian Missions are limited. Many a long year will have to pass, writes its first Bishop, before British Burma can look within herself, however prosperous, for the due supply of her own Missionary finances.<sup>1</sup>

In November, 1877, the Bishopric of Rangoon was accepted by the Rev. J. H. Titcomb, Hon. Canon of Winchester, whom many of our readers will remember as some five-and-twenty years ago a hard-working incumbent in Cambridge. Brought back to England for a season by family affliction, Bishop Titcomb has done well in writing an account of his diocese, of which at present but little is known. His interesting "Personal Recollections," sent forth "to create sympathy with him in his labours, to extend information concerning a remote portion of the Indian Empire, and to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ," form a very timely addition to our store of Missionary works.

Leaving Calcutta February 17, 1878, the Bishop arrived at Rangoon on February 21. The scene in the roads of that city he describes in glowing terms. He says:—

The season in which we entered Rangoon river being especially devoted to the rice trade, all things were unusually busy; so that the shipping which was anchored along its shores impressed us with an amazing conception of the prosperity of the country. Upon steaming into port, indeed, the whole place strikingly reminded me of Liverpool. The line of buildings also—chiefly public offices—opposite to which we were moored, struck all of us as far more like European than Oriental edifices. Thus we were cheered with a home-like feeling from the first moment of our arrival. One thing alone dissipated this sensation—namely, the variety of costumes worn by the inhabitants; for Rangoon may be truly termed cosmopolitan. *First*, we have the indigenous Burmese, whose dresses, when grouped together in any large numbers, form a perfect flower-garden, particularly on Buddhist

---

<sup>1</sup> In referring to Mission work in British Burma, generally, the Bishop mentions as the first difficulty the variety of races and languages; Burmese, Chinese, Tamil, Telegu, and Karen. Another difficulty is the total lack of Christian literature in these languages; even school books for children to read have to be compiled. "The whole work of Church Mission is carried on in connection with the S.P.G., and is almost entirely supported out of its annual income." There were four ordained Missionaries in the country when Dr. Titcomb arrived; he left it with twelve.

festival-days, when pink, blue, green, yellow, scarlet, mauve, and every intermediate tint mark both their turbans and their tunics, or as they are more properly called, "putsoes." Besides which, the women, who walk about as freely as the English, constantly wear flowers in their hair, and that with an art which lends them a peculiar charm; a charm which is rather enhanced than lessened by their merrily pacing the roads with large cheroots, being smoked, or thrust through a hole in the lobe of the ear. I use the word "merrily," because the Burmese are among the most happy, good-humoured people possible; perpetually laughing and joking, never working when they can possibly afford to be idle, and often playing with all the joyousness of children—I grieve, however, to add, with a taste also for gambling, which constantly leads them into fatal quarrels. *Secondly*, we have a large Tamil population from the Presidency of Madras, who come over chiefly as household servants. The reason is that the Burmese are far too independent to act among the Europeans as household servants. Hence the force of circumstances has induced a great influx of these Hindu strangers, who for the sake of the high wages they are able to command leave their own land, returning to their homes and families as soon as they can save enough to live comfortably. They are generally dressed in white, the men, however, having very frequently red turbans, and the women scarlet linen carefully covering the breast, with one shoulder exposed. Nor are these the only Hindus. Chittagong supplies us with sailors and boatmen; Bengal with durwans, barbers, dhobies and tailors; Telugu and other parts of India with coolies (or street porters), whose more than semi-nudity adds a peculiarity to the streets which, at first sight, strikes the European visitor with astonishment. Then we have Bengalee Baboos of higher caste, and more refined look, who are employed as clerks in mercantile firms and Government offices. *Thirdly*, there is a large and increasing number of Chinese settlers employed as gardeners, agricultural labourers, pig-breeders, shoemakers, and carpenters, whose neat coats, either of black or white, and long pigtails increase the picturesqueness of the streets. Add to this, *fourthly*, Armenians, Jews, Parsees, and Mohammedans, who are generally shopkeepers or merchants, and whose dresses are all more or less divergent, together with European civilians, and British soldiers and sailors in their unmistakable uniforms.

Such a mingled mass of people, writes Dr. Titcomb, give to Rangoon a character almost peculiar to itself; nothing comparable to it, he thinks, is seen in Ceylon, Madras, or Calcutta. Every road, almost, out of the city is lined with beautiful trees, blossoming at certain seasons with variegated flowers;<sup>1</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Almost all the trees in the country are evergreen. Although the year is divided into two parts, known by the names of wet and dry seasons, which are regulated by the setting in of the south-west and north-east monsoons, and although the latter continue without rain for six months, yet the foliage on the trees is as luxuriant and green at the end of that time as at the beginning. True, the grass is burnt up with heat; nevertheless, among trees where the roots lie deep the soil is sufficiently preserved with moisture to make Nature an everlasting summer.

houses of the European residents are all detached on intersecting roads in what looks like a fine park, but which is really the relic of an old primeval forest; banks of extensive lakes are covered with tropical verdure of the most luxuriant kind. A city of about 100,000 souls, with wide granite-paved streets, Rangoon possesses a custom-house, town-hall, law courts, a railway terminus, barracks, assembly rooms, clubs, and so forth; there are two daily newspapers, and at least nine places of Christian worship.

Of the climate of British Burma the Bishop gives an encouraging description. It is by no means unhealthy, he says, or unadapted to the European constitution:—

In the frontier towns of Thayetmyo and Toungoo there is, during the cool season, a fair amount of cold weather: enough to make great coats and blankets extremely serviceable. At Akyab, also, the air is cooled by sea breezes up to the end of April. On the more southern coast-line, however, of Rangoon, it must be allowed that cold weather is nominal rather than real. The nights are nevertheless cool for the most part, even in the hottest weather—a circumstance by which one's strength is pleasantly renovated, and daily duties are made cheerful. Of course there are often cases in which persons expose themselves too much to the sun or who violate the laws of Nature by trifling with damp; who indulge in intemperate diet, or persist in over-fatigues without proper food and rest, and who then go home to their relatives saying that the climate has killed them. I admit that in low situations, such as the banks of rivers and jungle villages, there is necessarily a malarious and feverish climate; but on high ground, and where European houses are built, there is nothing of the kind. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that where any one, upon entering the country, is enervated by organic disease, the heat and humidity of some parts of Burma produce loss of appetite and consequent emaciation and distress. But for those in good health I am satisfied that it is as fairly salubrious as any tropical country can be. At any rate, I am bound to say of myself, that after eighteen months' residence in Rangoon, after travelling through different stations in the province, and sleeping in the open air at nights, I not only never suffered from the slightest ailment, but never even lost my elasticity of spirits, until beaten down by that heavy domestic affliction which drove me back to England.

On his arrival at Rangoon, Dr. Titcomb's first action was to assemble the clergy (two Chaplains and two Missionaries) in private, to consult concerning the work. He took this opportunity of explaining his "own Church principles, expressing a fervent hope that they should work together in love and harmony," all of which was most kindly received. The result has been, it appears, cordial co-operation. The religious condition of Rangoon viewed from a Missionary stand-point, is full of

promise.<sup>1</sup> Up to the present time, however, there is no Burmese church in the city in connection with the Church of England, a matter much to be regretted. In the way of direct evangelistic work in fact, comparatively little was being done before the Bishop's arrival. In a suburban village, however, a Missionary, assisted by two Burmese catechists, is labouring with signal devotion. Among the Chinese settlers in Rangoon an earnest work was begun, a Burmese Christian lady paying for the service of a Chinese catechist; and forty-two Chinamen have been baptized. A Tamil catechist and sub-deacon, Samuel Abishekanathan<sup>2</sup> was ordained; and there are, as a rule, about thirty communicants at the Tamil service.

Distant from Rangoon about 130 miles is Maulmain. A Government Chaplain being no longer provided, the duty here was served fortnightly by one of the Rangoon chaplains, or the Bishop went over himself. A fast-going paddle-wheel steamer, built for the Maulmain service, now accomplishes the journey in one day. Often called the queen of British Burma, Maulmain, about twenty miles from the sea, is beautifully situated on the Salween, with hill ranges and jungle forests. Its trade was injured by the transfer of the seat of Government to Rangoon in 1862, but wharfs and saw mills still speak of successful labours. A Burmese Mission here has been abandoned, and the Tamil Mission is extremely feeble; but the Orphanage for Eurasian children is doing a good work. In the absence of an officiating clergyman, Mr. Macleod, the Judge, an M.A. of Cambridge, was in the habit of putting on his University

<sup>1</sup> St. John's College, presided over by the Rev. Dr. Marks, aided by ten vernacular teachers, seems to be doing a remarkably good work. There are over 500 pupils on the books. "The delight with which I first walked into its spacious hall and class rooms," writes the Bishop, "and beheld this mass of youth under *Christian instruction*, may be well imagined, especially in view of the fact that it has had to compete with our magnificent Rangoon High School; which, though built and conducted by Government at an enormous cost, upon the avowed principle of *non-religious instruction*, has nevertheless been fairly beaten in numbers by this Missionary institution." Work is daily commenced by the reading of the Bible in English and Burmese, by the singing of a hymn also, and by prayers in both languages. The Christian boys alone are permitted to kneel while prayers are read. The Burmese, in fact, have no objection to Christian teaching. In St. Mary's school one hundred girls of different races are instructed in like manner.

<sup>2</sup> "It is impossible," says the Bishop, "to describe the delight of the Tamil Christians in their receiving a clergyman of their own race to minister among them. Nor was my own pleasure less. For I am persuaded that it is only through the development of a native Pastorate we shall ever be able to extend Mission work upon any sound and proper basis, or to raise up native Christians into habits of self-reliance and strength."

hood and surplice and taking duty both in the church and cemetery.<sup>1</sup>

It should be added [says the Bishop] that both the Roman Catholic and American Baptist Missionaries have large and flourishing establishments here, each putting our own work to the blush, in consequence of their much longer occupation of the field. I need scarcely remark that I entertained no idea of interfering with these workers, still less of assuming hostility towards them . . . I left my own country filled with polemical strife, and I arrived among Christians where religious strife seemed unknown.

The Bishop's visit to Maulmain was followed by one to the Andaman Islands, where there is a Government chaplaincy and a large penal settlement for Indian convicts, together with a corresponding force of military. Steam communication between Rangoon and Port Blair is only monthly. The Chaplain had been living here ten years, and seemed rooted to it with a home-affection. In the church—"the model of a well-appointed sanctuary"—the Bishop preached twice; he held a confirmation also in the little Tamil church close at hand. He had a conference, moreover, with the Church council (of which General Barwell, the governor, was one) in which he endeavoured to see what could be done for the benefit of the native Andamanese.<sup>2</sup> At present, it appears, an Andamanese Home is supported by the Government, in which a few of these poor creatures are clothed, fed, and instructed.

Prome, afterwards visited by Bishop Titcomb, was taken by the British forces in 1825, in what is called our first Burmese war. Prome possesses a good Mission establishment belonging to the American Baptists; an excellent boys' school belonging to the Government, and a very efficient girls' school belonging to the Ladies' (S.P.G.) Association. The Bishop started by rail for this journey, the Irrawaddy Valley State Railway, 165 miles long, having been opened a year previously. The Chief Commissioner, Mr Aitcheson, "like his predecessor, a noble and enlightened Christian," joined the Bishop in laying the foundation-stone of a church.

To Toungoo, where a Mission church had to be consecrated,

<sup>1</sup> On the subdivision of the diocese of Calcutta, the Metropolitan assigned to the diocese of Rangoon five Chaplains out of the Bengal establishment; of whom the city of Rangoon required two, one was called to Thayetmyo, one in Toungoo, and one at Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands.

<sup>2</sup> A good foundation for Mission work has been laid by the indefatigable labours of Mr. Man (son of General Man, formerly Governor of the settlement), who has reduced the Andamanese language into Roman characters, and has published a grammar and vocabulary.

and four Karen teachers ordained,<sup>1</sup> the Bishop accomplished the journey, in a friend's steam launch, in four days. Ordinarily the journey, 300 miles, taken in a native boat, is very tedious, requiring fifteen days. The Sittang river, not so vast as the Irrawaddy, is more varied, and has more pleasing scenery :—

We saw herds of buffaloes [writes the Bishop] standing up to their chins in soft mud as a protection from the tormenting mosquitoes ; blue and silver spangled kingfishers, darting from the bushes into the water ; huge grass, well named “ elephant grass,” fifteen feet high ; gardens of plantain trees covering two miles or more of river frontage ; while, at every village which we passed, men, women, and children came crowding down to the water's edge to indulge their looks of curiosity. Besides which, we were deeply interested in the large number of teak logs, formed into rafts (with bamboo huts on them) which were floating down the river on their way to the timber yards of Rangoon.

At Toungoo, elephants, it seems, are quite an institution. The military authorities employ from sixty to seventy, not only for commissariat purposes, but for serving what is called a “ mountain battery.” It is a splendid sight, says the Bishop, to see the way in which these noble animals move the guns, and obey military orders. He gives two anecdotes illustrating their strength and sagacity. He says :—

On one occasion in Toungoo, after a hard day's labour, during which an elephant had been moving logs of timber, the yard bell rang for ceasing work. It happened, however, that one immense log of timber remained, and it being thought advisable to have all cleared away before morning, this elephant was set to remove it. The animal offered no resistance, yet found, alas, that with all his pulling and straining, the weight was too much for him. Seeing this, the manager of the yard brought a second elephant to assist in the work ; yet strange to say, the two unitedly could do nothing ; their trunks twisted and their limbs strained, but all in vain ! Thus the work ended for the night. What was the surprise next morning when, upon the ringing for work, the first elephant moved the log by himself as easily as a child would have moved a stool ! So clear was it that these sagacious brutes had determined the night before, by some sort of secret and mutual compact, that they would do no work for their masters after work hours were over !

I am not sure, however, that my next story is not a better one. It has to do with a Rangoon elephant employed at Delhi. The owners of this fine brute desired on one occasion to get him upon a raft, that he might be transferred to the Rangoon side of the river. But his

<sup>1</sup> A full translation of the Prayer Book into Karenese had at this time been accomplished, and was being printed in Rangoon at the expense of the S.P.C.K. The publication of this work, says the Bishop, reflects great credit on Mr. Windley, the Missionary. The Karens, next to the Burmese, are the chief people in our British territory.

quadruped lordship did not seem to be quite in the mood for that sort of thing, and totally refused to have anything to do with the raft. Efforts of every kind were in vain. At length some one wiser than the rest proposed that the raft should be removed and the elephant secured to a steam launch by means of a strong cable, in order that he might be made to swim after the vessel to the side of the river designed for him. His majesty had no objection to the swimming part of the business, and therefore willingly allowed himself to be drawn into the water. But, to the infinite surprise and merriment of all the spectators, he had no sooner got fairly into the water, after tamely following the steam launch a little way, then he suddenly turned round, and swimming in the opposite direction, had strength enough to drag the vessel back with him, landing the whole party just where they had been at first, the "monarch of all he surveyed."

Of the Bishop's journey to Akyab, distant from Rangoon 500 miles, and of other events described in the closing chapters of this volume, we are unable from lack of space to give any account. The Bishop did not visit Mandalay, but he gives some interesting information concerning that city from one of the Missionaries who had laboured there. Prince Theebau was educated in an English School; and, at one time, Missionary prospects in Upper Burma seemed bright.



#### ART. IV.—THE VENI CREATOR.

AT the close of one of Canon Liddon's University Sermons occurs the following paragraph:—

"If you make it a rule to say sincerely the first verse of the Ordination Hymn every morning without failing, it will in time do more for you than any other prayer I know, except the Lord's Prayer," were the words of one who had a right to speak from experience and who has now gone to his rest.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
Mentes Tuorum visita :  
Imple supernâ gratiâ  
Quæ Tu creasti pectora.

Certainly this prayer does not take long to say; and perhaps fifty years hence in another state of existence some of us will be glad to have acted on the advice.

This almost unequalled Latin hymn, "was probably introduced into the Service late in the eleventh century, when it occurs in the Pontifical of Soisson. Dean Comber observes that the composition of this hymn was ascribed to St. Ambrose: it is not, however, claimed by his Benedictine editors."<sup>1</sup> Even in this

<sup>1</sup> See *Annotated Prayer-Book*, page 560.