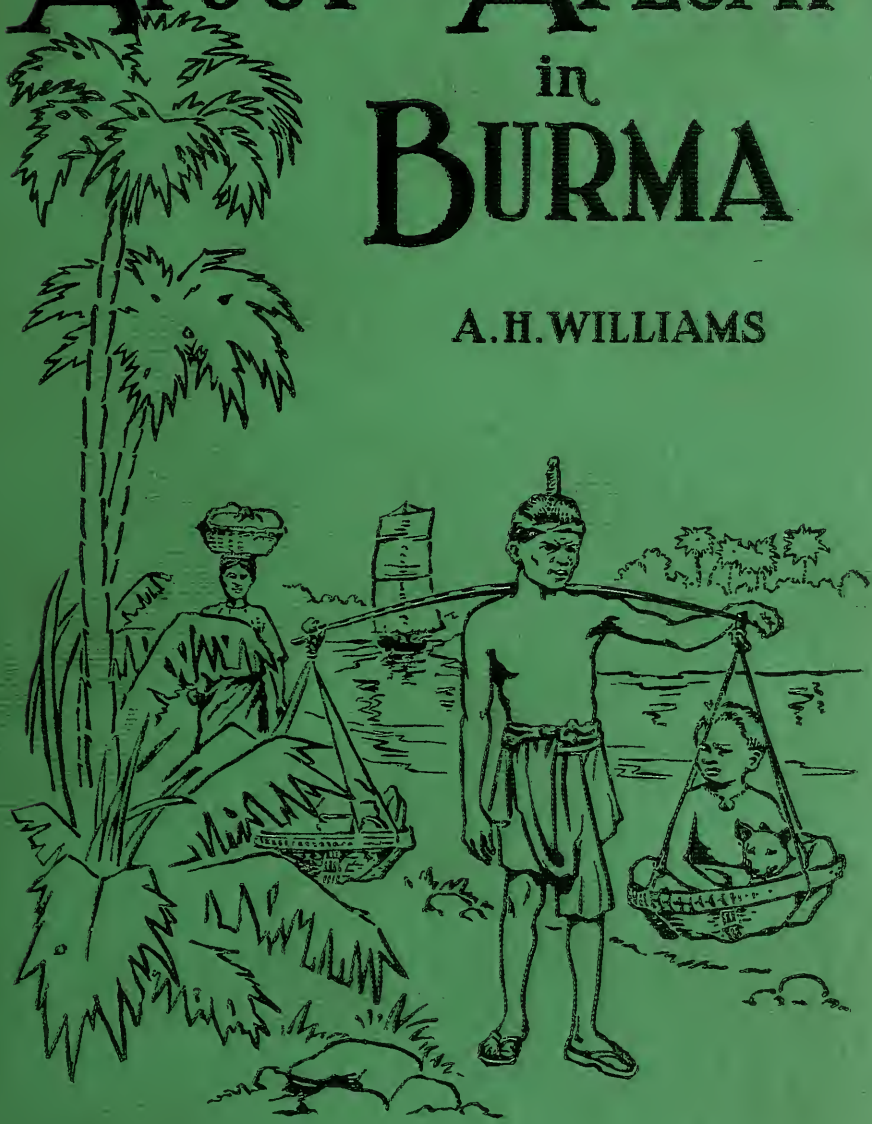
AFOOT and AFLOAT in BURMA

A. H. WILLIAMS



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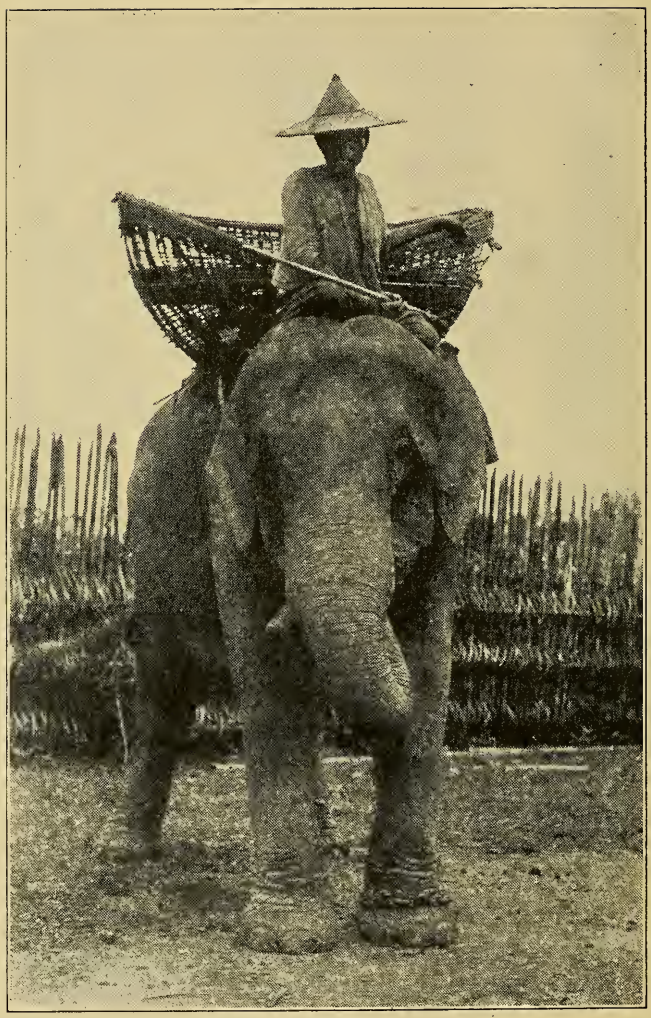

Posing for the Camera

He does whatever the driver tells him to do. He knows the words of command, like a soldier.

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Afoot and Afloat in Burma

By A. H. Williams

REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.
PEEKSKILL, N. Y. SOUTH BEND, IND.

Printed in U. S. A.

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The men had hard work paddling the canoe along.

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Ahuja, Rangoon

Burmese River Craft

These boats vary in size from a small canoe to a large boat intended for carrying rice to the mills.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO BURMA

JUST across the Bay of Bengal in India, its next-door neighbor, is Burma. It is very different from India, not only as to the general appearance of the country itself, but also as regards the people, their manner of living, and the language spoken. That this should be so is really not hard to understand.

Though joined by land to India in the north, Burma is separated from that country by mountain ranges which are difficult to cross. This has left the country shut in and isolated from earliest times. The pages of Indian history are scarred by the records of Alexander the Great and other invaders, and the country and people have been influenced greatly by these various conquerors, yet Burma has been sheltered.

In later times these same protecting mountains have stood in the way of more peaceful invaders, so that Burma is still without railway connection with the outside

world. The only practical way of reaching it at present is by sea.

But Burma's history is by no means a record of centuries of peace; for although there are also mountains between it and its eastern neighbors, China and Siam, these are in parts less forbidding than the barrier which separates it from India.

So we find mention of expeditions against Siam which were very successful; but it is also recorded that the conflicts with the Chinese were less happy in their outcome, this big neighbor having exacted tribute from Burma on more than one occasion. Today, these past associations with the East are shown by similarities between the peoples of Burma and their neighbors across the Salwin.

Visitors from India, however, frequently did come by way of the sea; and it was in this way that the present-day religion of the people—Buddhism—was received. Today there are but few believers in that faith in India, despite the fact that the founder of it was an Indian prince; but Burma is strongly Buddhist.

By the same road, too, European merchants and others came, even as early as the time of Christ; and from them we learn a little of the conditions existing in Burma in the olden days.

There is abundant evidence that the people within Burma itself, whoever they may have been and wherever they may have come from (both of which facts are apparently hard to find out exactly), seemed unable to live at peace among themselves. So today, scattered about here and there over the country, are to be found the ruins of ancient capitals, reminders of bygone days of splendor, and mute witnesses of many a fierce struggle between sections and tribes.

It seems to have been a custom with some of these warring bands to transport their vanquished foes to strange parts of the country; or perhaps some of the marauders settled in new parts, abandoning their old homes; for at the present time we find the peoples and languages of the different tribes scattered and mixed all over the country. Thus the Burmese, who of themselves include the remnants of formerly separate king-

doms; the Karens, with their differing dialects; the Talaings, Taungthus, Shans, Chins, Kachins, and what-not else, are to be found here and there, one in with the other. As may well be imagined, this condition of affairs by no means simplifies the task of the missionary, who, in his endeavor to uplift the people, seeks to acquaint himself thoroughly with their speech and customs. Incidentally it means that the descriptions given in these pages, of people and things as they are in one part of the country, do not necessarily apply to all other parts of the same land.

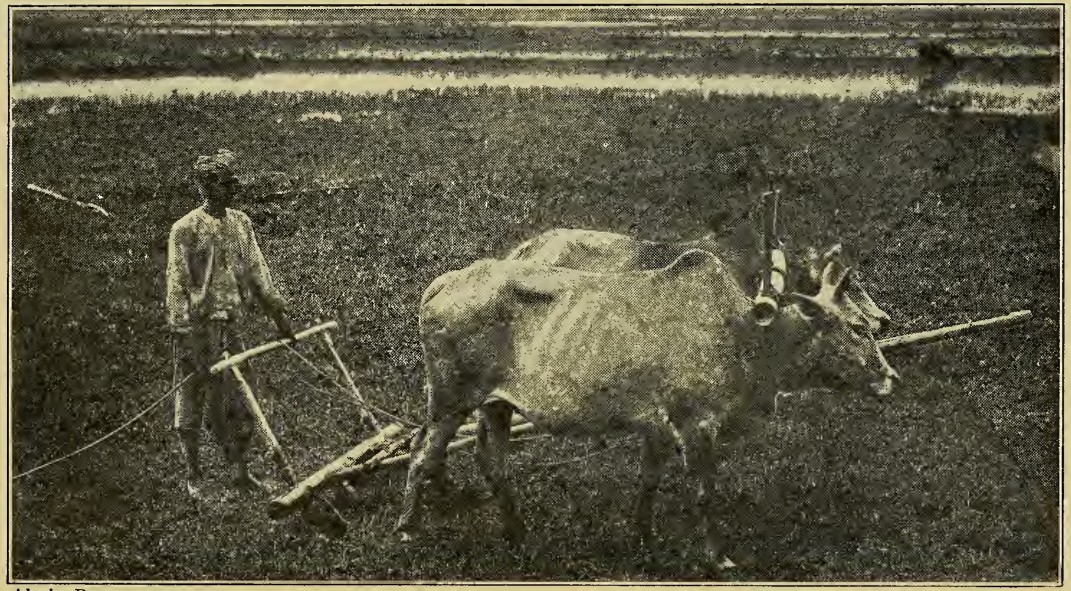
The people of Burma are principally farmers, and large towns are few and far between. Such as there are show the foreign impress in an ever-increasing degree. Rangoon, the capital city, seems to provide lodgment for people from nearly every nation under the sun; which is not surprising when one considers the wealth of the country, and the general willingness of the Burman to employ another to do the hard work.

In the first place, the mighty Irrawaddy, with its hundreds of miles of navigable wa-

ters, reaching right up through the very center of the country, secured for Rangoon its pre-eminence; then the railway crowned the natural advantages of the capital by focusing on it all other routes of Burma's trade; and later a well-developed harbor has invited the shipping of the world to come and receive the treasures of the province; and the combination of these influences has resulted in the city's being a cosmopolitan place.

It seems but natural, then, that in endeavoring to convey a little idea of what the real people of Burma are like, one should turn his attention almost entirely to the village people rather than to those in the towns.

This little book makes no particular pretense of treating Burma as a whole, but rather is it just a small collection of stories — odds and ends that I have noticed in my varied wanderings. An endeavor has been made to write them in a style and language suited to Juniors. If this book serves to arouse or increase the interest of any in this pleasant land, its purpose will have been accomplished.



Ahuja, Rangoon

Water Buffaloes and a Native Plow

Aung Baw has the two animals yoked together, and the yoke lies on their necks, just in front of the hump.

WHERE AUNG BAW LIVES AND HOW HE WORKS

Plowing Under Water — Buffaloes for Horses — A House Tied in a Tree — A Bamboo Water Pail

HERE comes Aung Baw, driving a pair of oxen before him and carrying his plow on his shoulder. It looks more like a rough, bent piece of wood, pointed at one end, than a plow; but he has not enough money to buy a better one, and this one serves his purpose. The end of the wood is shod with an iron plow point, which is always kept sharp. Aung Baw must be on his way to his field to get the ground ready for transplanting the rice; so we will follow him and see how he works.

Notice the oxen. They are different from those seen in other parts of the world. Do you see that hump on their backs, just over the shoulders? All Indian cattle have that, and it is peculiar to them.

Aung Baw has the two animals already yoked together, and the yoke lies on their

necks, just in front of the hump. When they begin their work and are pulling at the plow, this hump serves as a strong pad against which they can push. Each ox has a rope passed through from one side of his nose to the other, and the reins are tied to this nose rope, instead of to a bit, as is done with a horse.

Here we are at Aung Baw's field. How can he tell where his field begins or ends, as there are no fences or hedges, and no boundary stones either? Everywhere the land is flat, and is divided into odd-shaped sections with only very low ridges of earth between them; and even these are broken down in many places, where the carts have been driven over them during the past dry season.

Aung Baw farms several of these little pieces of ground, and somehow he knows just which are his. He does not own the land, but rents it, paying his rent every harvest time by giving the owner a certain number of baskets of rice for each acre. The oxen too have probably been hired for the plowing.

How can he plow such muddy soil? Well, in Lower Burma they always wait until the ground is soft with the early rains before they start to work it. Sometimes you might see a man plowing a field which looks like nothing else than a big puddle. Of course, farmers in America would not think this the best way to do the work; but the soil here is very rich, and with even this scant attention, it yields a good crop; so the people are satisfied.

Occasionally all the breaking up the ground gets is done by sending a boy out to drive the oxen or the buffaloes up and down the field; and the cattle tramp through the soft mud, and so break the surface in readiness for the rice shoots.

Buffaloes are not such fierce fellows as used to roam about in America, but are quite tame, although most of them seem much afraid of white people. When they are startled they might do some harm, for they are very heavy and strong, and have long horns. In the villages, little boys and girls four or five years old drive them along or ride on their backs.

These Indian water buffaloes usually have a black or dark-gray hide. They like nothing so much as lying in a pond, their huge bodies completely covered, and just the

Aung Baw and His Family

tip of their noses poking up above the water. In the hot weather they spend much of their time in this way; and if there is not enough water for them to lie in, then the next best thing they seem to like is to roll in the mud. Often they are completely covered with brown, slimy mud, but they look perfectly contented.

Buffalo milk is very rich in cream, and quite a number of the cows are kept for the good milk they give. The buffalo calves are ugly little fellows, and go tumbling along after their mother, making a great deal of noise.

Aung Baw's crude plowing easily breaks the soft earth, but does not go very deep. It is a good thing that he is barefooted, or he would have a hard task cleaning the mud off after the day's work is over. A little water will soon wash his feet and legs clean when he gets home in the evening.

After he has finished his plowing, Aung Baw levels the ground again by hitching some sort of rough wooden roller to the oxen, which drag it up and down the fields. This is very necessary, as the rain must be kept from draining away, for rice grows best when standing in water.

Where the land is especially low lying, and is flooded several feet deep during the rains, the rice is transplanted late in the season, after the water has begun to go down. But in most places the work is done while the rains are still falling, the extra water

being drained away by little ditches dug for that purpose.

It will yet be some days before Aung Baw will put in his rice plants. He is very

A Karen Village

fortunate in that his field is quite near his house. Many of these village people farm land miles from their homes; so during the rice season they build a rough shanty near the field, where the men and boys can stay till the plowing and planting are finished. Perhaps after that the boys will take turns in staying there till the crop is ready to

harvest, when all must again busy themselves in gathering in the grain.

Aung Baw's house is in a small village called Kaw-ma-ra, which means "in front of the hill." Over there about a mile away, you can see the hill rising abruptly from the fields. Look carefully, and you will see a pagoda upon the top. One wonders how the men ever carried up the materials to build it; but there it is, just like thousands of others in Burma. It reminds us of the Bible passage about the heathen places of worship being on every high hill and under every green tree.

There are many little villages like Kaw-ma-ra scattered about over this country. Wherever you see a clump of trees, except, perhaps, close to the foot of the hills, you may be sure there is a village, though possibly it may have only eight or ten houses. In between are the fields, quite bare of trees. During the rains they are a beautiful sea of green, with the flourishing rice crops; in the dry weather, just a bare brown stretch, the low ridges between the little plots being all there is to break the monotony.

Here and there a bullock cart may be seen, perhaps laden with merrymakers going to a feast. As it bumps along over the fields, it raises a cloud of dust, for there are no regular roads here, and they do not seem to need them in this land of the simple life.

Aung Baw has been settled in this place for several years, so his house is inclosed in a high bamboo hedge, so thick that one can hardly see the building from the outside. The gateway is a narrow gap in the hedge, which can be closed by just sliding some thin bamboos through two gateposts, which have holes in them for the purpose.

In these villages the people do not seem to fear that any one will interfere much with their property. I once saw what will seem to you like a very strange sight. As I was walking over the fields, I noticed a number of planks tied high up in the fork of a tree. Evidently some man had had to leave his home for a time, so had pulled it down; and to keep the materials together, he had tied them up in the tree. There the wood was, with nobody at all to watch it, a mile or more from any village or other house, but

apparently quite safe. Just fancy pulling your house down when you wanted to go away, and then leaving the wood tied up in a tree for months until you came back! Of course, their houses are often poor little structures, that do not require much time to build.

Inside Aung Baw's hedge you can see the cocoanut palms and banana plants he has growing. In these parts the villagers plant a few cocoanuts as soon as they settle in a place; so, in a way, one can tell by the palms if a village is old, or only recently built. These of Aung Baw's must be about twenty years old, as they have been bearing nuts for some time. The banana plants grow much more quickly, and once a plant has borne a bunch of fruit, it is cut down, five or six others springing up to take its place. These bear fruit better if they are separated and transplanted; but if left alone, they make quite a thick clump of plants.

Like most houses in this part, Aung Baw's is built of wood and high up on posts, the floor being six or seven feet above the ground. This makes a place underneath for

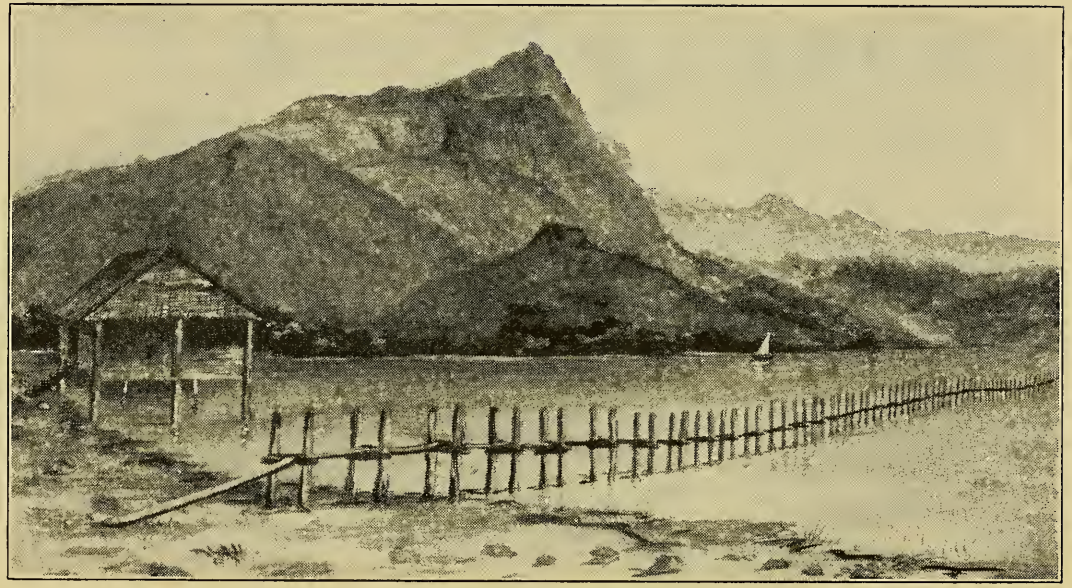
the rice mill and the hand loom, as well as for the ducks. If chickens are kept, they usually roost up in the bamboo and other trees. Often the big basket for storing the household supply of rice and cocoanuts is under the house, too; but Aung Baw has built himself quite a strong house, and has his storeroom upstairs. The well is just a square hole, perhaps twenty feet deep, with the edge lined with heavy logs, sunken level with the ground, to prevent any caving in around the top.

They have a clever arrangement for drawing the water. These village people do not have much money, and cannot afford to buy iron pails and ropes, so the wonderful bamboo is brought into use.

While many bamboos are slender, others grow to be seven or eight inches thick and are hollow. About every fifteen inches along the length, the bamboo has a notch showing on the outside; and at these points it is solid right through. So by cutting across the bamboo just below two notches, a nice pail about six inches across and twelve inches deep, inside, is made. Aung Baw

has sawed off a piece of one of these large bamboos, and there is his pail all ready for use!

Across the mouth of the pail is a string of cocoanut fiber. Now it is lowered into the well. For this purpose a long, thin bamboo, perhaps less than one inch thick, is chosen; and you will see that all the side branches have been carefully trimmed off, except about two inches of one right at the thick end. This makes a very fine natural hook on which the pail is swung; and away it goes down into the well. If you should try to fill the pail, you would probably let it slip off the hook; but then, you have not had so much practice as Aung Baw and his people.



A Burmese Footbridge

Walk straight ahead, and you will soon get used to it.

ON THE ROAD THROUGH THE FIELDS

A Half-Mile Footbridge — Betel-Nut Chewing — The Foolish Taungthu — Mud Kettles

COME along, let us go right through Myaingalay village, climb the stile at the beginning of the village street, and on past the headman's house. The Burmese call the headman the *thugyi,* or "big person," for he has a good deal of authority in the community. At the monastery the road winds somewhat. Over on the left there is a wide stretch of rice fields, with the cocoanut palms of another village in the background.

Look at that bridge; it must be nearly half a mile long. The village people have all worked together to build it, so as to provide a footpath for everybody during the rainy season; and the government has helped by allowing them to cut the trees they needed, without paying any tax. When we come to talk about the sawyers, I will tell you more about that tax.

This village on the other side of the monastery looks different, because the people at one end are Taungthus and Talaings, and at the other end they are mostly Pwo Karens. These two tribes build their houses differently.

The houses that we first saw were mostly built quite low down, with the floor in the front part just about eighteen inches above the ground, while the back part of the house, which is the bedroom, is a good deal higher and is reached by climbing a few steps. This is the regular Burmese style. But the Karen houses are generally high up, with the whole floor six or seven feet from the ground, like Aung Baw's.

Here we are at the little stream crossed by a village bridge. Two or three tree trunks have been laid down, one after the other, and supported by rough posts driven into the bed of the stream. This bridge has a hand-rail, although many of the longer ones do not have any railing at all.

Now we are out on the government cart road. The villagers are used to walking in their bare feet, and so do not mind a little

mud. The little footpath through the wood at this end is not very well kept up, except that the brushwood is not allowed to overgrow it. Burma does not have very good roads. After about a mile this one seems to run right into the river. That is because it was made so that the people might reach the ferrying place from the town on the other side of the Salwin.

Down at the water's edge we can sit in the little tea shop. It is roughly built, made of bamboo, with a roof of cocoanut leaves. There is not much use of making it better, for the river rises during the rainy season and sweeps it away. So a new house is built every year.

While we are waiting for the canoe, we can watch the people as they go by. Here comes an old Karen. His *loongyee,* or shirt, is tucked up, his sturdy thighs are bare, so that you can see the tattoo marks. In Burma it is the general custom for the men to be tattooed from the waist down to the knees. The pattern is so close that the whole skin looks blue. When a young man is being tattooed, he is given something to drink

which deadens the pain, for it is a most painful process. Some of the tribes in Burma tattoo the faces of all the women. They say they do this because the women are so good-looking, and they don't want the neighboring tribes to steal their women.

The old man has the usual Karen bag slung over his shoulder. It looks like a schoolboy's bag. These bags are very convenient for carrying the odds and ends bought at the market. The villagers carry their betel boxes and tobacco pipes in them, too.

Over his head he has a paper umbrella, which is really very good indeed. The paper has been treated with a certain oil, and keeps out the rain quite well. In some parts of Burma they make very dainty parasols, the paper being painted in pretty designs, and the other parts finished off neatly.

As soon as he sits down, the old Karen brings out his betel box. It is made of lacquer ware; that is, of bamboo strips plaited closely together into the required shape. This is plastered over to fill up all the cracks, varnished, and colored in neat designs.

The betel, or areca, nut grows in bunches on a tall palm. When the outer skin is peeled off, it looks like a nutmeg. It is pared into thin slices with a pair of nippers, and these parings are placed on a small green leaf, together with some lime and tobacco and spices. Then it is all folded up and popped into the mouth and chewed.

Betel-nut chewing makes their mouths very unsightly, staining them a nasty red, and turning the teeth black. It also encourages the very dirty habit of spitting. That old woman's mouth looks disgraceful. One old stump of a tooth and blackened gums are all that she has in place of the thirty-two pearly white teeth.

These people offer the betel nut to their friends just to show their hospitality, much as some tobacco smokers offer cigarettes and cigars to each other.

Here is a Taungthu. Burmese folks look down on this tribe, and think them very ignorant. There is a story in a schoolbook which shows how foolish a Taungthu can be. The story says one of them was sitting in his boat washing a tray, when it slipped from

Betel-Nut Chewing — a Native Habit

One old stump of a tooth and blackened gums are all that she has in place of thirty-two pearly white teeth.

his hands and sank in the river. The man dived for it, but could not find it. Again and again he tried. Being still very anxious to get it, he cut a notch on the side of his boat to show where the tray had slipped over; and then, ever after that, when he was in his boat and had the time, he would dive in opposite the notch, no matter where the boat was. The Burmese say that he thought to find the tray at the bottom of the river in that place.

Sitting on the floor of the tea house we can chat with the keeper. He doesn't worry at all, even though we do not buy anything. He knows that we will ask for what we want. See the kettle made of baked mud. The village folks know how to make almost any object out of just such simple things as mud!

The ferry is a long time coming, so we shout across the river, "*Hai, kadoe!*" Here he comes with his canoe. We'll have to be careful going down the bank, for the muddy steps are only roughly made, and very slippery.

Look out as you step into the canoe, or you will topple over. I did one day, for the

boat started to wabble as soon as I stepped into it, and over I went into the water! There are a number of the paddles lying ready, one for you to use to help the ferryman across. Some one would better bail the water out of this canoe, else our boots will get full. Here is the dipper, made out of bamboo.

When we reach the other side, the ferryman collects his fares of one anna apiece. (One anna equals two cents.) The fare varies according to the width of the river, for in some places where the stream is a narrow one, the fare is only a quarter of an anna.

We take the road up past the blacksmiths' quarter. It is the usual thing in Burmese towns for the people of the same trade to live close together. Part of the town is called after the particular trade followed there. There is the umbrella quarter, blacksmith quarter, and so on. These blacksmiths are busy making *dahs,* which are the long knives the Burmese make so much use of. When we see some men building a house, we shall know how useful these dahs are.

Suppose we stop at the post office to see if there are any letters for us. In our village we have only one delivery a week, so our letters stay here in the post office until our day comes round, or we call for them.

Now we must hurry, for it is quite a long walk to Aung Baw's house.

The first time I went this way I had an interesting time finding my way around. I had been asked to go and visit a man who lives a mile or so farther on than Aung Baw, but nobody seemed just sure of the way to get there. I decided to ask the postmaster as to when the mail runner would be going out that way, so that I might go with him and thus find my friend. When I was walking through the town to the post office, I happened to meet a man with whom I had made friends the day before, and as everybody does in these parts, he greeted me with the question, *"Beh thwa m'lay, saya?"* (Where are you going?)

I told him as best I could; and then he asked if I knew the way. I had to confess that I did not. To my great surprise and relief he told me the man I was seeking was

his uncle, and that if I would come over to his house, I should find a man there who was going out to that very village that morning, and I could go with him. Of course, I needed no second invitation. It might have been some days before the postman would have been going, and he might not have been sure of my friend's house.

Many times as I have thought over this incident, it has seemed to me to be like the way the two disciples found the upper room to which Jesus had sent them, to prepare it for the last supper; for when they came to the city, they met a man carrying a pitcher of water, who took them to the very house to which the Master had told them to go. And so this man, whom I had never before seen, took me just where I wanted to go; and as this story proceeds, you will surely agree that without a guide like that, I should have had a most difficult time to find the way to the house of my friend.

We go out past the burying ground. That shelter over there is for the convenience of funeral parties, for often they invite a number of monks to the burying, and give them

presents. The monks sit on the floor of this place, while the gifts are being offered.

Out through the rice fields we go, through the mud and water, following the ridges as best we can. We slide and slop along through the mud, and when we reach the village we find that the path is not much better; for under the overhanging bamboos it does not get a chance to dry, from the beginning of the rains to the end.

It is now beginning to rain quite heavily, so if you like we will just step into this house and take shelter till the worst is over. The people are desirous that we come in for a rest and sit down and make ourselves at home. Their houses generally are poor and often not very clean, but their friendliness makes up for everything else. Somewhere in this village I met a poor old blind man, who was made very happy by the gospel story of the new earth where the blind shall have their sight restored.

This is the long bridge I told you we should have to cross. It is about two thirds of a mile long. It is always marshy here, so even in the dry season we should have to go

some miles around if the bridge were not provided. Walk straight ahead, and you will soon get used to it. Most of the way there is a good stout plank about eight inches wide.

Some one is coming from the other end, so we will wait here at the trestle upon which the planks rest. The man will easily pass us, even though he is carrying two big baskets slung on a pole.

Near the end of the bridge we shall have to be very careful. A few of the planks have evidently given way, and somebody has replaced them with stout bamboos; but they are round and slippery. We'll put our feet on sideways and walk slowly, until we are over. In some places whole bridges are like that.

Just before reaching Aung Baw's, we find ourselves right below a pagoda which is perched up on the summit of a hill. In the dry season there is a festival there. At that time some thousands of people visit it. They dance in groups on these very fields.

One time I saw another interesting thing at this place. Men were casting a great bell for use on some religious building. They had made the mold in the ground, and had

built a furnace near by, so that they could melt the brass and run it straight into the mold without difficulty.

On the pagoda there are large brass bells which have been cast in this crude way. It may be that a large number of people will club together and each give so much weight of metal for such a purpose, as the children of Israel did for the making of the golden calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai; and then all are supposed to share in the merit which comes from doing this pious act.

After our long and muddy walk, Aung Baw's hedge looks quite cheerful; and now that we can see it, it will not be long until we are comfortably settled in his house for the night.

Planting Rice

With a bunch of rice plants in the left hand, and a short, light stick in the right, the workers go along rapidly.

THE WAY BURMESE GROW PADDY

Making Thanaka — Names of Burmese Letters — In a Burmese School — Planting and Guarding Rice Fields

"*Tek like bah, saya,*" is the way Aung Baw's folks tell us to climb to the veranda of their house. Up the bamboo ladder we go, and settle ourselves on the floor, scaring away the dog. He walks off down the ladder just as easily as can be. These village dogs are not very bold, and can do little but bark, and that generally from a safe distance. While our friends are busy preparing us something to eat, we can look around.

Here is a crossbow, quite a heavy affair in its way. It is stretched by turning a handle, so that it can be pulled very tight indeed; and then to release the arrow, a little trigger is pulled, very much like that of a gun. The Burmese use these very skilfully. With a smaller crossbow they shoot mud balls that have been baked hard in the sun. In place of a thong or string, these bows have slender bamboo strips. In just the right

place a small square patch is woven, on which the mud ball is held.

I tried to shoot with one of these bows one time, but succeeded only in hitting my own thumb nail. The village boys are very clever in their use, and can hit targets at a good distance.

That thing over in the corner which looks like a toy water wheel is what Aung Baw's wife and daughters use when spinning thread. The loom is downstairs, and perhaps later on we shall see some of the sheets that have been woven on it. Nowadays, with foreign cotton goods so cheap, there is not so much weaving done in the villages as there used to be.

Up in the rafters you can see the big bamboo fish trap, four or five feet long, and about eighteen inches across at one end, the other tapering to a point. Sometime we may see one of these in use.

That flat, round stone, about a foot across, is where the women grind the face paste, or *thanaka*. A small piece of sandalwood is taken, and after the surface of the stone has been wet with water, the wood is rubbed on

it, so that gradually a fine paste is made. This has something of the fragrance of the sandalwood, and is quite soothing to the skin when prickly heat bothers. Burmese ladies smear their faces with it. This is their face powder. They usually have a small supply of it with them as they travel. Just before reaching their destination, they will use it for beauty purposes.

On the outer veranda are the waterpots. Frequently people keep two or three right on the roadside, so that passers-by may quench their thirst. The dipper is made from a cocoanut shell, the wooden handle being passed through from one side to the other.

This is called in Burmese a *yay hmote;* and one of the letters in the Burmese alphabet is shaped like it. The Burmese schoolboys call it the *dah yay hmote.* Nearly all their letters have names like that, one being called "horse-bridle *z;*" another, "crooked breasted *d;*" while still another is called "*p* with a hat."

The vowels also have names which make it easy to remember what they look like.

One is called "the big circle placed on," which is the same as our letter "e;" it consists of a circle written on top of the letter after which it has to be sounded.

Burmese Letters and Their Peculiar Names

 Water-dipper "D"

 Horse bridle "Z"

 Crooked breasted "D"

 "P" with a hat

 The big circle placed on (the letter "K")

When the Burmese boys are learning to read, they have to pronounce each consonant with every vowel in turn, and in this way go through all the thirty-two consonants they have. In school we could hear thirty or more lusty lungs crying out:

"Kah gyee, eh . . . . ka
Kah gyee, eh, chah . . . . kah (drawn out a little long)
Kah gyee, eh, long gyee tin . . . . ke
Kah gyee, eh, long gyee tin san kat . . . . kee,"

and so on, *kah gyee* being their letter "k;" the *eh* just a sound thrown in to complete the rhythm of the lesson; then the name of the vowel, if there is one; and last of all, the sound of the consonant with the vowel joined on.

Here comes the bowl of steaming rice, with a dish of eggs, for supper. This is different from the kind you generally see at home, but the taste is much the same. It has a slightly reddish tint. Aung Baw will not eat with us, because he would regard that as disrespectful on his part.

There is no caste in Burma as there is in many parts of India. There, many people refuse to eat with others who are not of the same caste, that is, who belong to a different class of people. In India, should the host offer us milk to drink, it would not be proper to hand the cups back after drinking.

Instead we are to throw them out of the window. It would be defiling for the host to touch cups used by those outside his caste. Inasmuch as the cups are plain earthenware, there is usually no great loss in throwing them away.

After supper we have a Bible reading with the household. Aung Baw reads Pwo Karen, but not Burmese, although he can understand some of the latter language. He will read in his language, and then we will read the same verses in Burmese, and afterward talk over the subject. All together, we crouch down on the floor, for the lamp is just a rough little tin affair with a tiny round wick, and having no chimney, it smokes and flickers in the breeze.

"Early to bed, early to rise;" that is the rule here. Very soon we make ourselves comfortable for the night on the nice, cool veranda. In this warm country all we need is two hand-woven bed covers.

The ladder is drawn up so that the village dogs cannot annoy us. But mosquitoes hum around, so we are glad for the mosquito curtains in our knapsacks.

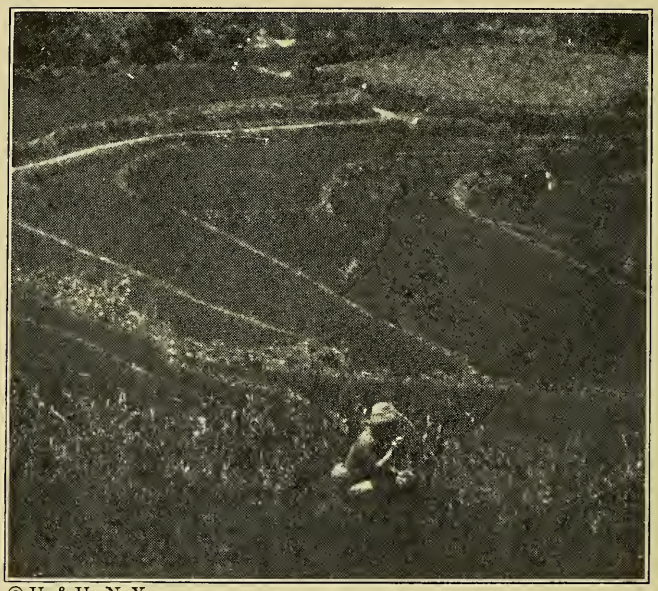
Over in the hedge the fireflies are like so many flashing diamonds. Perhaps early in the morning we may hear a deer barking over at the foot of the hill. It is delightfully still and quiet. We shall have a good night's rest, when we get used to sleeping on the board floor.

With the first streaks of dawn all are awake and up. A wash at the well, and all are ready for another bowl of rice; and then away to the fields to watch the work.

About a month ago Aung Baw sowed his rice seed in what is often called the nursery, a field where the soil is extra good, and there is not too much water. He had soaked the seed in water for two days before sowing, so it soon sprang up; and by now it has reached a height of about a foot. Yesterday he pulled up the young plants, and trimmed the tops off; and today he and his wife and daughters are going to replant them.

The soil in the fields is now just so much soft mud, which is just right. Each one takes a short, light stick in hand. At the farther end of these sticks there is a fork where a small branch leaves the main stem.

Three or four of the rice plants are put in this, and the stick poked down into the mud, and then pulled out again, leaving the plants



An Oriental Rice Farm

stuck fast in the ground. With a bunch of rice plants in the left hand, and the stick in the right, the workers go along rapidly, putting in a tuft every ten or twelve inches in regular rows.

When the rice is well settled after the transplanting, the fields make a very pretty sight indeed, with the wide stretches of unbroken green. I shall never forget how beautiful the valley of the Yonzalin River appeared, near the town of Papun, when we reached it after a long and somewhat trying journey. On either hand the hillsides rose, terraced after years of patient labor, now all clad in brilliant green, while down between, the stream rushed by, just like a thread of silver.

It will take three to five months before the rice will be ready to harvest, the time depending on the kind of seed and the time of year when it is planted. In the meantime the men will busy themselves with fishing and other such work, apart from the general watching of their fields. They do not worry much about keeping the weeds cleared away, for the water standing in the fields does that. The ridges around each little plot must be kept in order, though, else the water might drain away and the crop suffer.

After the ears of rice are formed, and while they are filling, the fields must be

watched continuously, or the birds will steal a good deal of grain. Here and there a small shelter is roughly built, from which ropes are stretched out in all directions over the rice. A boy sitting in the shelter every now and then pulls the ropes. On the ropes hang bamboo clappers or bits of rag, and the noise and movement scares the birds away.

At night there is not much danger, for the birds are asleep and the cattle safely in their pens, and the mangy-looking dog, which sleeps on the ground, will scare the deer away with his barking, should they come along for a feed of rice. The crows and other birds come early in the morning, so somebody must sleep out in the fields to be ready to watch as soon as it is light. During the heat of the day, too, there is not much trouble, so the watchers have what is for them a very happy time — they can spend most of their hours just dozing.

Parrots, too, are very destructive to the rice crops, for they seem to delight in picking a little here and a little there, thus spoiling a great deal more than they actually eat,

and they come in big flocks, too. The little bows and hard mud balls come in very nicely for this work of watching the fields, for the guards can sit quietly in their shelters and scare the birds a long way off.

When the time comes for the paddy to be reaped, all the family must get to work and gather in the crop. Many farmers hire Indian coolies to do most of the reaping for them, as they much prefer to watch others do such back-breaking work.

Out they go with their little sickles, the girls with their big palm-leaf hats on and their cheeks protected by a cloth, so that they do not get sunburned. It will be noticed that they cut so as to leave quite a length of rice stalk in the ground. After the crop has been entirely cleared away, this stubble is fired, and the ashes form about the only fertilizer the soil ever gets, unless the river happens to overflow and leave a fresh layer of mud on the surface.

The rice is generally threshed out in the fields, before being carted away. A suitable spot is cleared and leveled off; or maybe there is a general village threshing floor

which all use in turn. On this the stalks of paddy are heaped high in a circle. Then the oxen or buffaloes are driven slowly round and round, till the ears have all been trodden out.

A platform about ten feet high is built. Squatting on this, a man takes the baskets of threshed rice which are passed up to him by another standing on a platform halfway up, and pours it out, so that the wind may carry off the chaff and dust, while the grain falls to the ground below.

Some of the rice must be stored for the next year. Some must be kept as seed. The balance is sent off to the town to be sold to the agents of the rice mills or other merchants, the sale of which brings in practically the only money many a family sees for the whole year. Sometimes an advance is made on the crop by a rice merchant. In that case the crop must be sold to him, regardless of the price that others would pay.

The Burmese sometimes earn a little cash by keeping fowls. Men, with great baskets slung on poles carried over the shoulder, make regular trips through the country,

buying the hens and chickens and eggs. They sell them in the larger towns. Some, too, may have an orchard which brings in some money. With the boys and girls going to school in town, some ready money must be on hand to pay their fees and other expenses.

With the threshing finished, the straw is collected to be used as cattle feed. A platform about a foot high may be built, with a pole some ten or more feet long placed upright in the middle; the straw will be roughly piled on the platform and the top finished off into a loose thatch. Throughout the year the cattle are allowed to eat at the bottom of this stack, which slowly slides down the central pole, till all has been used.

If we could follow the rice on its journey after the farmers have sold it, we should find it going by boat or train down to the big seaports, where great rice mills line the river; from these, during the busy season, there flows a constant stream of rice to all parts of the world. Day and night the work goes on, now that electric lights turn night into day.

After the paddy has been measured in the mill, it is bought at so much a hundred baskets, this being a standard measure. Next it is cleaned and then milled, to remove the husk. Finally it is sewed up in sacks. All is bustle and business around the mills. Out in the river are rows and rows of boats in which the paddy has come, and long lines of coolies are working steadily unloading the grain, and then reloading the filled sacks. The water for some distance round is brown with floating husks. Some of this is used as fuel for the working of the machinery. Even the dust which is swept up inside is used as pig feed.

Rice forms by far the greater part of the exports of Burma, perhaps two thirds of the total. In earlier days the river in Rangoon was filled with sailing ships waiting for their annual cargoes of rice, afterward setting out on their long journeys to different parts of the globe. It used to take four or five months, and sometimes even longer, to reach England from Burma by sailing ship. Now large, ocean-going steamers have replaced the old styles of boat.

In Upper Burma a good deal of cotton is now grown. Different fibers for rope making and like purposes are also cultivated. Up in the Shan Hills one sees potatoes, and the fields here are worked in a very peculiar way. After the plowing has been completed, the loose soil on the surface is raked up into little heaps, one every foot or so across the field. In these heaps are mixed leaves, grass, or stable waste. Afterward each one is set afire, the ash remaining to enrich the soil.

In some of the more out-of-the-way parts of the country the people do not steadily farm the same land year after year, but they wander around, burning and clearing a small patch of forest here and there, often on a steep hillside, and after a few crops have been taken off, leave it for a new place.

Rubber is now being grown in Lower Burma, the heavy rainfall there being suited to this tree; but much of this work is in the hands of large companies, which work perhaps thousands of acres; so we do not find the Burmese interesting themselves in it to any great extent.

A Land of Elephants, Palms, and Pagodas

Elephants are used in parades and processions. On such occasions the harness is ornamented with gold and silver fittings, and costly saddle cloths made of velvet and richly embroidered.

(See page 69)

PALM TREES FOR EVERY PURPOSE

Chauk-chaw Candy — Ice Fruit and Toddy Palm — Travelers' Palm, with Its Cool Drink

YOU remember the cocoanut palms around Aung Baw's house? The nuts as they grow on these palms look very large, for outside of what is usually called the shell there is a coarse, fibrous husk, which is about two inches thick all round. The valuable coir fiber, from which ropes and matting are made, is obtained from this husk.

If a nut is picked before it is fully formed, it is found to be soft and jelly-like inside, and filled with a sweetish water which makes a very pleasant drink on a hot day. But as the nuts grow older, the meat becomes firmer, and the water dries up until it is all gone. In its place there grows up inside what is called the flower. This is really the new plant which is slowly being formed.

When a native wants to plant some cocoanuts, he takes a number of nuts, with the

outer husk on, just as they are picked from the palm. He leaves these standing in a corner of his house for several weeks. In due time the leaves begin to sprout out of the top, and when these have reached the height of one foot, or perhaps two feet, the nuts are put in the ground, half buried, and they take root.

It takes from seven to twelve years for a new palm to bear its first crop of nuts, some varieties being much slower than others. From that time on there is a steady supply for many years. All goes well, without any further trouble of cultivation, unless perchance some pest, as for instance a certain form of beetle, attacks the palm, in which case there is every danger that the whole crown of the tree will drop off, and the palm die.

Cocoanuts grow to best advantage where there is plenty of rain, so one often sees them fringing the seacoast in tropical countries; but farther inland, say at a place like Meiktila, where we have our school, they are not commonly seen. It is sometimes said that salt water is necessary for their growth, this idea

perhaps arising from the fact that they are common near the seacoasts; but they can be found growing very well indeed a hundred miles from the sea, provided there is ample rainfall.

Besides furnishing the coir fiber, the cocoanut is an important article of food; for when the nut has been shredded, a rich oil can be washed out with water; and this "milk" is added to curries, or even used instead of water in which to boil rice. Very nice candies can also be made with cocoanut milk. The Burmese have a candy called *chauk-chaw,* which is a stiff jelly made of cocoanut milk and gelatin from seaweed.

In order to get the fiber from the husk, this has to be soaked in water and then pounded, either with a hammer or in some form of machine; and the short lengths of brown fiber so obtained are then spun into yarn, from which the familiar rope and other articles are made.

A very large number of cocoanuts are split open, and the meat dried in the sun. In this form they are exported to other countries, where the oil is extracted for soap

making and various other purposes. This form of the nut is what is called "copra," and has a rather rancid and sickly smell when drying. Sometimes steam launches carry nothing but cocoanut shells for the firing of the boilers.

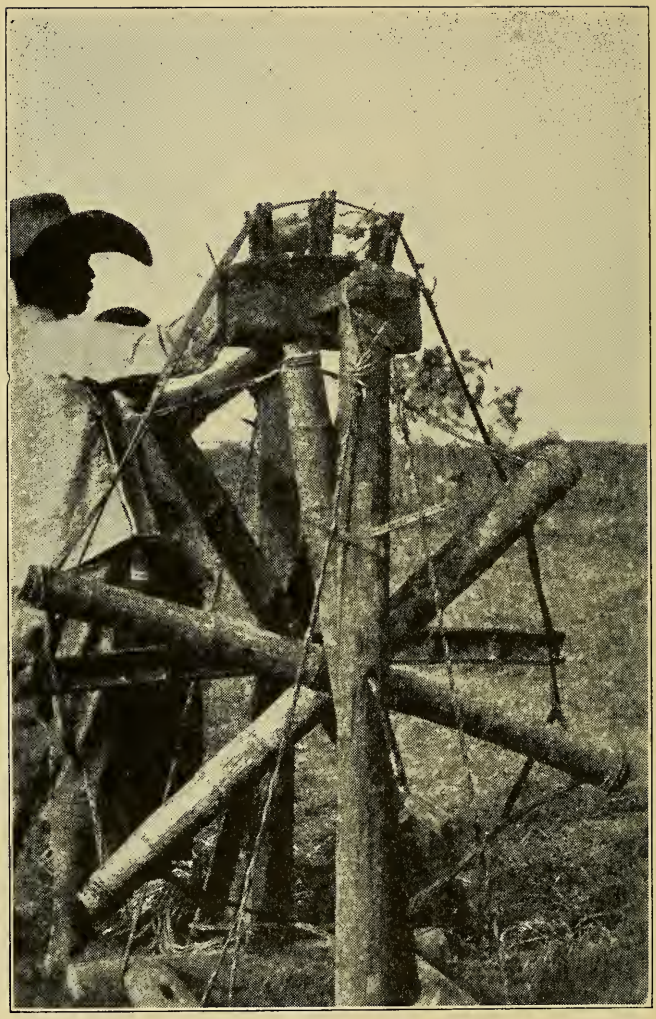
The wood of the cocoanut palm is not of much use, being very coarse, and not very lasting. Often, too, the trunks of the palms are greatly bent; for as all the branches and nuts grow up at the top,— perhaps twenty-five or thirty feet from the ground, — if there is a high wind there is a very great strain on the tree, so much so that whole plantations can be seen with the trunks all bent in one direction.

The leaves of these trees are valuable to the villagers, who use them for the roofing of their houses. The branches grow eight or ten feet long, with long, narrow leaves shooting out from both sides along the whole length. Perhaps it might be more correct to regard the whole branch with the side leaves as one huge leaf, like a fern. The people strip the leaves off and fold the ends over on long, thin strips of bamboo, and

press and dry them as they do *eng* leaves.

It is a very interesting sight to watch the men climbing the cocoanut palms in order to get the nuts. As there are no branches until the top is reached, it is not easy, you see. A very common way of reaching the top is to use a strong belt of rope or leather, which is passed round the tree trunk and the climber's body; and as he steadily works his way up by the strength of his arms and legs, he draws the belt up with him, and, leaning his weight against it, has his arms free for getting a fresh hold higher up for another pull.

There is another way, too, which I have seen used in tree climbing. This consists in driving a number of short pegs, one after the other, up opposite sides of the tree, like the spikes in a telegraph pole, making a series of small steps. In time the bark grows over them, so that all that is seen is a chain of convenient little bumps, which make it easier for the climber. This method seems to be used more particularly with a certain tall, smooth tree to which bees much resort, and which men, of course, are anxious



Making Rope from Cocoanut Fiber

Aung Baw's wife and daughters use a contrivance like this when spinning thread.

(See page 42)

to climb in order to secure the honey and the wax.

Another fruit-bearing palm is the palmyra, which bears clusters of round nuts about four or five inches across, and in which are three or four pods of colorless jelly. They are rather tasteless, but being juicy and cold, even on the hottest day, they are quite refreshing. A common name for this fruit is "ice fruit."

Perhaps more valuable than the fruit is the juice which is tapped off from the top of the palmyra tree, and from which a very pleasant sugar can be made. But a good deal of this juice is allowed to ferment, and the drinking of it in this condition causes much harm. This is what is commonly known as "toddy," the palm being often called the "toddy palm." Toddy is also obtained from the date palm.

While the cocoanuts and palmyra palms flourish in districts where there is plenty of rain, they also grow well in much drier parts. Unlike the cocoanut, the palmyra wood is quite hard and durable, although coarse, and so is much used for posts and

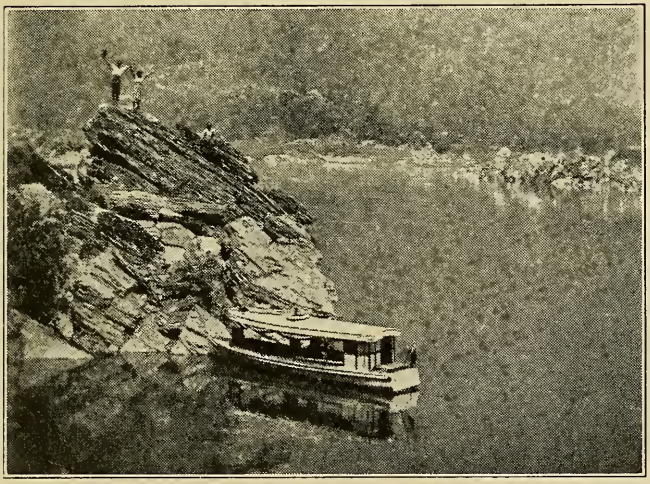
rafters. This is very fortunate for the village people, as in dry sections of the country ordinary trees do not grow well; so without the palmyra palm, there would not be any cheap wood available for house-building purposes.

In parts of India, too, the trunks of the palms are split down lengthwise and hollowed out, making rough little canoes, which the villagers use in the season of the year when their country is flooded.

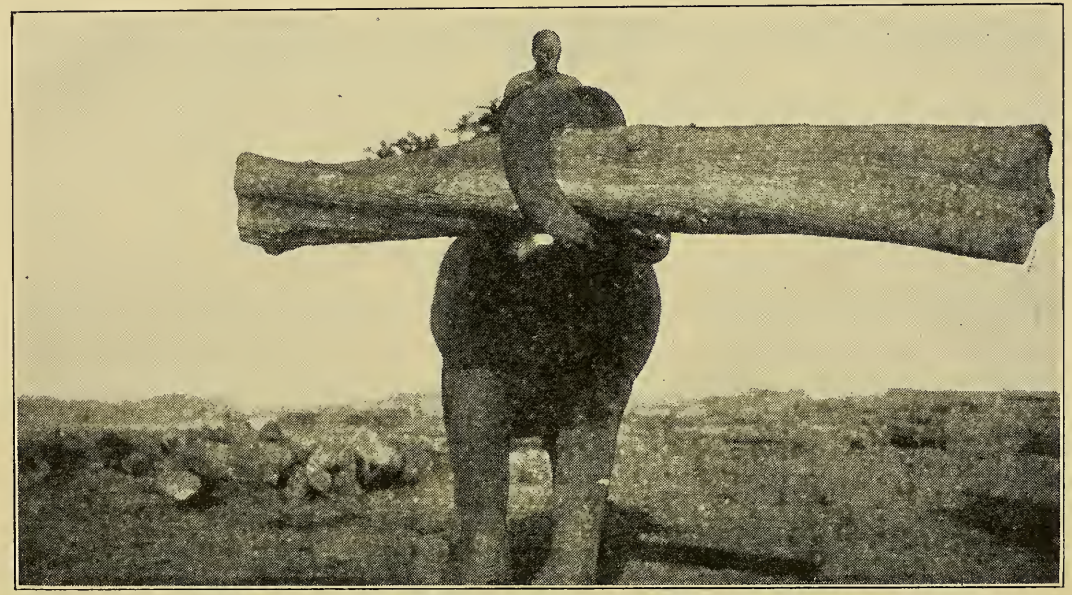
In climbing the palmyra tree, a ladder is used, as where the old branches have been broken or cut off, a stout stump is left, making ordinary climbing out of the question.

There is still a third form of palm tree, and that is the one called the traveler's palm. This has large green leaves, very similar to those of the banana, which grow out from the top of the trunk in the form of a fan. If you should cut off a leaf from a healthy tree, even on a hot day, a large quantity of clear, cold water would flow out, giving you a cold drink. This comes as a great blessing to the thirsty traveler. It is from this fact that the name of the tree is derived.

So you see that in the hot countries, where we do not have many of the trees and pleasant fruits of the colder countries, the Creator has provided other things which are just suited to the climate. These, when rightly used, are a great blessing to mankind.



Kamamaung Mission Launch, Salwin River



Elephant Moving Saw Logs

The elephant brings the big teak logs into the sawmill.

MAKING GOOD ELEPHANTS OF WILD ONES

Elephants Go to School, Drag and Carry Logs, and Play in the River — How They Are Trapped

POOR old elephant! He seems to be stuck fast in the mud, for he has sunk in it almost up to his body. But no, he drags his feet up and slowly makes his way forward. What was his driver thinking about to let the elephant get into such a muddy place? The driver is perched up there on the elephant's back.

The tide in the river has gone down, and left the big teak logs lying in the mud. The elephant brings them one by one to the sawmill.

Look! He has reached one now. He curls his trunk around it and perches it upon his tusks. He does whatever the driver tells him to do. He knows the words of command, like a soldier. It is a big log, and must be very heavy indeed; but the elephant is strong, and can pick it up without any help.

When he has brought it up into the yard, his driver tells him to put it on the pile of other logs. And he obeys. He lays the log down in line with the others, butts the end of it with his big old head, so that the pile shall all be even, one log with all the others.

The elephant has been taught in a school. I saw a young elephant, about ten years old, having his lesson one day. He was not strong enough to work with full-sized logs; so they had a small one for him to practise on. There was the pupil elephant doing just what his teacher told him to do. Sometimes he would butt the log, and sometimes he would kick it with his foot; and then sometimes he would pick it up with his trunk. Before he could leave school he would have to learn to kneel down when told to. That is part of every well-trained elephant's lesson. It is when they kneel that people climb on their backs. Some will help lift the driver up with their trunks. Like a horse, they learn the words that mean "go ahead," or "stop," or anything else that elephants are expected to do. The driver does not con-

trol them with a bit and bridle and reins; he just sits up on the animal's back and tells him what to do, or pokes him with his heels or with a driving hook.

Oftentimes, instead of picking the logs up and carrying them, the elephant drags them along the ground. They do this in the forests, where there would not always be room for them to carry logs on their trunks. The men fix strong chains to the end of the log, and these are hooked to the elephant's harness. In this way he drags the logs to the river, where they can be floated downstream to the mills.

In different parts of India and Burma elephants are used to ride on. When the roads are bad and the country rough, this is a very pleasant way to travel. They are also used in parades and processions. On such occasions the elephant's harness is ornamented with gold and silver fittings, costly saddle cloths (*jhools,* they call them in India) made of velvet and richly embroidered. Wealthy men sometimes hire elephants to march in their family wedding processions, while others use them for hunting.

You may think the elephant has a very hard life, plunging through the mud, or dragging big trees through the forest, and doing other heavy work. But he has his playtime too. In the evening, down at the river bank, he plays. The big old elephants like to get into the river for their evening bath. They roll and splash around like schoolboys out for a romp. They fill their trunks with water, and, holding them up high, blow the water out, making a big shower bath for themselves. After playing like that for a while, they solemnly march off to their stables, and enjoy their supper.

But not all elephants are so tame and obedient as these. There are great numbers of wild elephants roaming about in the forests of India and Burma. Sometimes they do considerable damage to crops in the fields, and occasionally even trample village people to death.

To catch the wild ones, men will place somewhere in the forest where the elephants roam, a very strong fence or palisade, making an inclosure through which the elephants cannot break. After the wild herd has

been located, a number of trained elephants are used as decoys, to entice the wild ones toward the palisade. Men mounted on other animals gradually drive the wild ones in the desired direction. So before long the big fellows find themselves in the inclosure. They are then driven into a smaller yard, the gate of which is closed. Men go among them, mounted on tame elephants, and tie them one by one with ropes or chains. They are then dragged away and gradually trained for useful service. But there is great rushing and crashing and yelling and bellowing during the process of training. This is dangerous work, and only experienced men try it.

You can easily understand that if it were not for the tame elephants, it would be very difficult to catch and train the wild ones. The older fellows set a good example to the others, and in this way teach them their lessons.

Elephants cost a great deal of money, often three or four thousand dollars each. In the forests in Burma, village men frequently join together and buy one or more elephants in partnership. Then they earn

money hiring their animals out to timber traders who have logs to be dragged down to the river, or to travelers who have journeys to make. Some big timber-trading companies keep five hundred or more elephants.

These big fellows do not all have the same color of skin. Some are lighter than others. These are spoken of as white elephants. They are very rare, and generally regarded as sacred. A few years ago they had one at the big Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon, and people came from miles around to see him. He was only a young fellow, and at best but a dirty white in color.

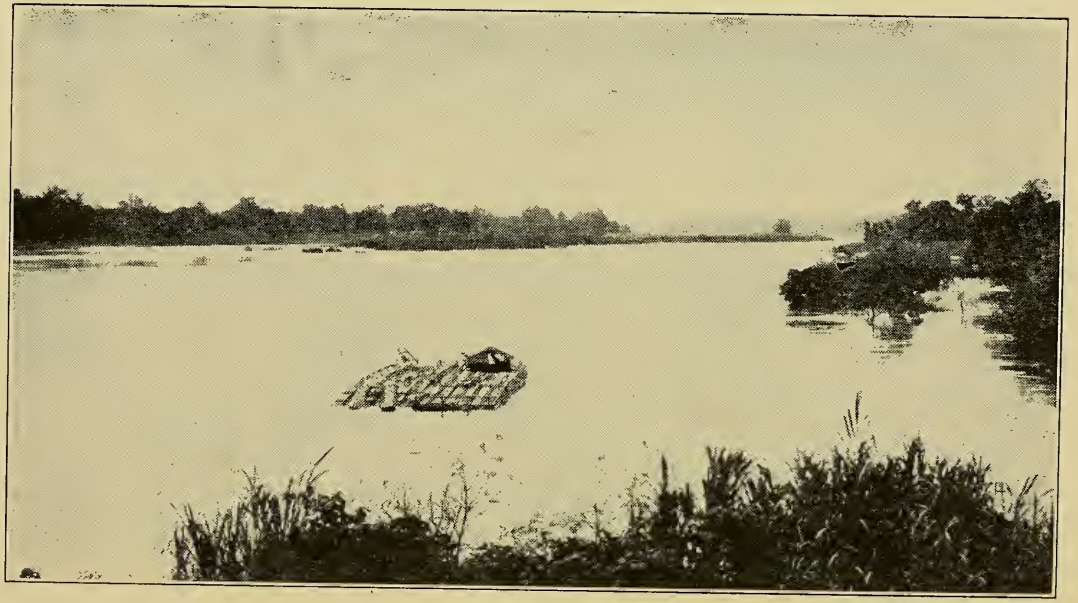
The harness for elephants has one part that is just like a thick mattress. It is intended to protect the animal's skin from injury. Perhaps the elephants you have seen at the zoo look as if they had skin very thick and tough, and as if nothing could possibly hurt it; but really, the elephant drivers have to take very great care, for if their charges should be sick with sore backs, it would take one or two years for their thick skin to heal. This, of course, would

mean much loss to the owners, for elephants eat great quantities of food, whether they work or not.

Do you wonder what elephants eat? Well, they are very fond of hay and such food. There are stories told of some of the army elephants with which the Indian government used to drag heavy guns. These fellows were very fond of *chupatties,* or Indian unleavened bread. This was served out to them every day for food. When each animal received his pile of flat cakes, he carefully balanced it on the end of his trunk, and could tell at once if he had been slighted.

Wild elephants roam about the jungle, feeding on the grasses. The tame ones are often allowed to graze in the same way, although they generally have a long and heavy chain fixed to their hind legs to keep them from wandering away too far.

The next time you see some teak furniture, you will remember the big old elephants in the forests of India and Burma, who do so much to get the wood for it.



Log Raft on the Salwin River

The distance to the mills is perhaps eighty miles, sometimes more.

FLOATING LOGS DOWN THE RIVER

A Boom — Grass Ropes — Rafts — Ironwood, Padauk, and Thabye — The Log That Was Not a Log

AFTER the teak and other kinds of logs have been taken to the river, they are branded with the owner's name at the end, and left to drift down the stream until they are stopped by a boom that is stretched across from one bank to the other. At the boom, the men sort the logs and make them into rafts. Then they are ready to go on farther down to the mills.

To make a boom the men choose a place where on both sides of the river large rocks stand up high, like big posts. The boom is made of a number of stout cane vines.

These canes are generally at least an inch thick, and often a good deal more; and they grow to a height of two or three hundred feet, overhanging high rocks and similar places. When this cane dries, it is quite hard and stiff; but after it has been soaked

in water, it can be bent enough to permit of its being tied in knots where necessary. So you see the cane vines are just like great natural ropes, and are very strong.

The men take perhaps ten or twelve lengths of cane and bind them roughly together, and by joining others to the ends of these they make a sort of net to stretch across the river. They tie the ends to the two postlike rocks, and leave the whole boom slack enough to permit of its lying on the surface of the water. This allows for the gradual falling of the river as the season progresses. Then the part of the boom actually in the water is strengthened by logs tied to it all along its length.

Anything that floats down the stream is stopped by the boom. The little canoes the village people use, slip by at the end under the cane, as it arches down from the rock to the water. Our mission launch rides over the boom without difficulty, a log being removed to let us pass in that way. Of course, the engine is stopped, else the blades of the propeller would be broken. Nothing else can drift through here, for the space is closed by

floating logs which are shifted aside like a gateway when necessary.

As logs are collected against the boom, the men make them into rafts, tying the logs together with either ropes or canes. When a number, perhaps five or six rafts, are ready, they go on their journey downstream. Sometimes little bamboo houses are built on the rafts. They make a very pretty sight as they float peacefully on, tying up near shore at night and resuming their journey next day.

The distance to the mills is perhaps eighty miles, and sometimes more. When the rafts near the town, they are taken in tow by tugs, which tow them to the special mills where they belong.

In Burma there is a kind of timber called *pyengadu,* or ironwood, which is too heavy to float in water; so a number of bamboos are tied to each log. In this way it is possible to send them down the river in rafts. The bamboos are not wasted, but are sold separately in the towns, where they are useful for many purposes.

Pyengadu is a very strong wood, as its common name (ironwood) implies. It is

much used for posts and heavy framework in houses, but as it is rather coarse, it is not much used for doors or windows, or for furniture. Teak, although it is more costly, is generally used for such purposes in Burma. The reason why these two kinds of wood are preferred is that they are not damaged by white ants, which quickly destroy many other varieties.

Another kind of wood found in Burma is *padauk,* which comes from the tree called in English the gum kino tree. Burmese people say that when the padauk tree has flowered three times, the yearly rainy season will start. This wood is hard and smooth, something like mahogany in appearance and usefulness.

Besides this there is the *ingyin,* or Shorea, tree, which is the sal tree of East India. The wood of it is not so good as teak. It is liable to be eaten by white ants, so it cannot be used with safety in house building; and as it twists and shrinks greatly when dry, it is not suitable for furniture. The Indian varieties, though, are better for this purpose than those found in Burma.

The leaves of this tree are valuable, being used for the roofing of houses. While green, the leaves are folded over and skewered onto thin laths of bamboo about six feet long; a number of these laths are then tied tightly together, so that the leaves may dry out quite flat. These are laid on the roof much as you have seen carpenters lay shingles, row after row, each higher row overlapping the one just below.

The villagers say that if a spark of fire should fall onto a roof of this leaf, it would just smolder a hole through; but with a roof of grass or cocoanut or other palm leaf (the nipa palm leaf, which the Burmese call *dani,* is much used), there would be great danger of a spark's setting the whole thing on fire very quickly.

Buddhists say that Buddha was under a sal tree when he died.

Another tree often seen in Burma is the Eugenia, a sort of myrtle, which the Burmese call *thabye.* The leaves of this are used in religious offerings, and are worn by soldiers as victors' garlands. There was a tree of this kind near one house we lived in, and

from the branches swung two or three birds' nests shaped like bottles.

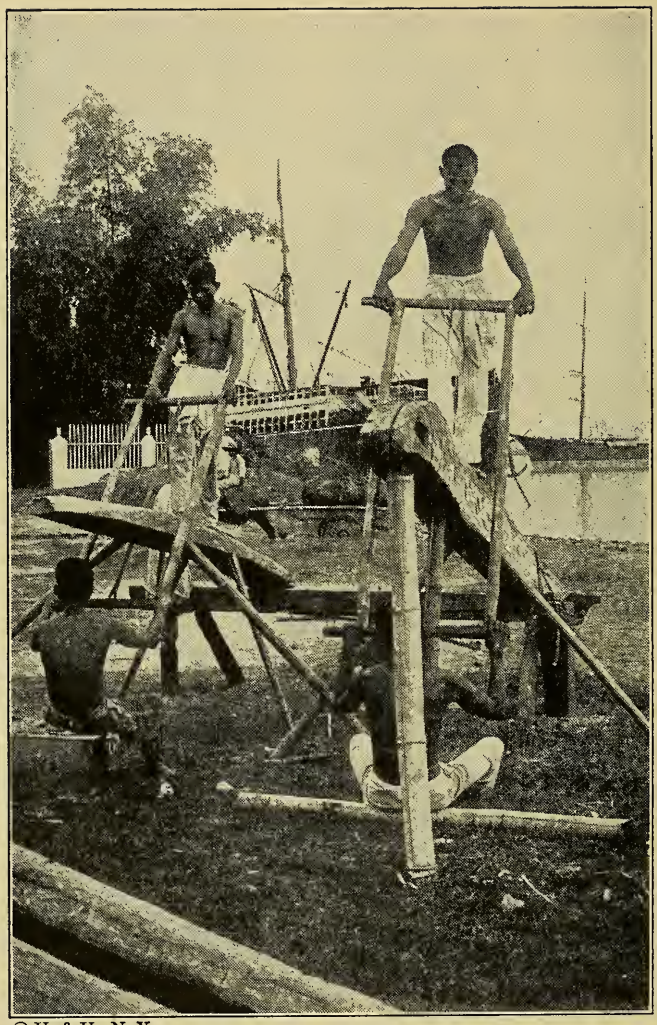
All these logs are sent down the river and must be handled by the men. They become very expert in walking and running about on the rolling, turning, slipping logs. Generally the weight of a man walking on it pushes a log under the water, but that does not seem to worry the men at all. Most of them are barefooted. The men catch the single logs in midstream. When one is seen approaching, two men will go out in a canoe and paddle alongside, and when they reach it, one of them will step onto it, and guide it to the shore with his paddle. All the time the log is rolling and twisting under him; but he is quite used to that, and keeps his balance without any trouble.

Sometimes I have had to cross a narrow stream on a bridge which was nothing more than a heavy log floating on the water, and loosely tied at either end to the banks. As I sank knee-deep in water when the log went down under my weight, it was no easy task to keep from tumbling off. What would it be on a log drifting free on a swift stream?

So the work goes on, year in, year out, bringing the valuable logs from the forests down to the sawmills, where they are cut up into useful sizes and shipped all over the world.

The mission dispensary here helps the people who work on the logs and rafts. One evening two men were out bringing in logs, and saw what they thought was another log drifting down toward them. They paddled their canoe toward it. Suddenly they discovered that it was not a log at all, but a huge tiger swimming the stream.

The brute gave chase, and as they came to a shallow part of the river, the tiger gained its footing and attacked the men in the canoe. With its forepaws it grabbed at the thigh of one of them, and badly tore it with its claws. The man had the presence of mind to jam a paddle down its throat, and so frightened it off. The injured man was brought to the mission dispensary, where the workers attended to his wounds.



A Native Sawmill

"Zhip — zhup! Zhip — zhup!" Up and down goes the big saw.

THE WAY YOUR HOUSE WOULD BE BUILT

A Native Sawmill — Strange Methods in Carpentry — Using Toes for Fingers

"ZHIP — zhup! Zhip — zhup!" Up and down goes the big saw, slowly ripping up the tree trunk, while the sawdust (or saw food, as the Burmese call it) spurts out at each stroke.

The men have erected what is called a saw pit, and in it they are cutting up wood for the house building. If there is a place with a convenient hole in the ground already, then there will be something that looks like an actual pit; but if not, the sawyers will probably get along with everything above ground level. The pit saves them the labor of lifting the logs up on the sawing platform. Burmese are not very ambitious, so it does not seem to matter how much trouble is caused later on. They consider that they have saved themselves the work of digging a pit.

It takes two men to work the saw, one being on the ground and the other on the platform which supports the tree trunk. Naturally the work done in such a way is not so regular as that done at the sawmill; but it is really surprising how accurately these men can work. Generally they are paid for making so many cuts, each twelve cubits (eighteen feet) long and a span wide; so the more boards one orders to be cut out of a log, the more he must pay for the work of cutting it up.

These men are working for Ah Ku, who, after saving up for some years, now has enough money on hand to enable him to start building himself a better house. Some little while ago he came to me with a request that I go to the government office and secure him a permit to cut the trees he needed; and that is how I learned that he planned to build a house. You see, in order to stop the waste of valuable trees, the government permits villagers to cut down without permission, only trees fit for nothing but firewood. This permission is supposed to be granted free, except in the case of specially

valuable woods, like teak, which are taxed unless required for a public purpose, such as a village bridge or school; but actually, the villagers fear much that their countryman, who may happen to be the petty government official whose duty it is to give the necessary license, will demand some gift for himself.

Once the license has been granted, arrangements are made for the selected trees to be stamped with the government mark. Then a license must be secured to make a saw pit. Each of these occasions seems to demand a little gift. So the missionary is not infrequently called upon to protect the interests of his friends in such matters.

The taxes that the government collects on teak and other valuable woods, pay for the expense of guarding the forests from wastage or damage, and, too, some considerable amount is left over for other useful enterprises, such as schools, road building, and the like.

Ah Ku has his trees felled now, and the men are busy cutting out the big square posts, seven or eight inches thick, and the other

pieces required for the joists and rafters. Then the planking for the walls and flooring must be cut. For the roof, tiles will be brought a good many miles across country by bullock cart.

Watch the carpenter. He does not have a bench at which to work, but sits astride the piece he is planing. If it happens to be the edge of a plank that he is working on, then he will drive two pegs into the ground, one on each side of the board; and these serve to keep the work steady. If he should be cutting a joint with a chisel, he may use his feet to help hold the wood firm.

We have worn shoes so much of our lives that we do not realize how much can be done with our toes and feet in the way of holding objects. These people are able to pick up small articles with their toes almost as readily as with their fingers. The carpenter is not the only one who holds his work steady with his feet; the shoemaker also does the same thing, thus leaving his hands free for his tools. This, of course, suits their habit of squatting on the ground to work. It is all very interesting to the foreigner.

When a number of posts and joists are ready, Ah Ku will begin the building. First of all he must dig the holes in the ground into which the posts are to fit. But he does not use a shovel for this work.

There is one of his sons at work digging a hole. We should find it hard to do much, crouching in such a position, for he is squatting there on his haunches, with his knees under his chin, poking away with a blunt tool that brings the earth up very slowly. It is a convenient position though, for when the *hlwa thamah* or the *let thamah* (the sawyer or the carpenter) feels inclined to chat, why, one is already comfortably seated, and so can carry on the conversation without the least inconvenience.

One by one the posts are slipped into the holes dug for them; and until the joists are fastened on, they will be held upright by laths nailed on and arranged like a tripod. For a plumb line with which to see if each post is standing properly upright, Ah Ku has an old bottle tied to the end of a thin rope; and although it is rough-and-ready, as we should say, it serves the purpose to his satis-

Burmese Natives at Home

Notice the thatched roof, the matting wall, and the swinging window, also of matting. The high foundation posts keep the floor dry in the rainy season.

faction. He has not money enough to buy more elaborate tools.

Once the frame and the floor of the house are in place, the family will probably "move in" to their new quarters, and build the walls round themselves little by little afterward, finishing the roof in the same way. For the time being, some rough matting will serve to partition off a part, and a thatch will make a roof, so they can get along.

They must wait until after the next rice crop has been gathered in and sold before they will have money enough to buy all the materials needed; and as far as the work of building is concerned, Ah Ku and his sons will do most of it when they are not busy in the fields.

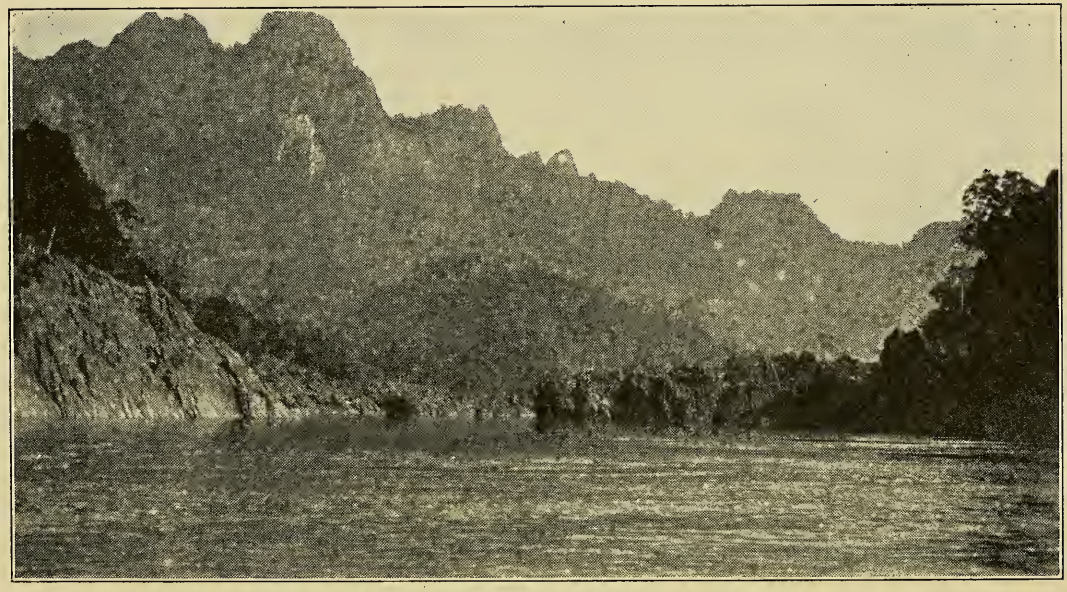
Then, too, by moving into the new house, they can pull down the old one, and use whatever material in it is still good.

When all is finished, they will have a really substantial house. Everything will be on the one floor, about six feet above the ground, with a large veranda outside, part of it roofed and part uncovered. Inside there will be just the main living-room, about

twenty feet square, with a smaller room off from it. For a cooking place a heavy wooden frame is filled with clay, making a cheap hearthstone; on this some bricks or stones will be placed as supports for the cooking pots.

Cooking over a wood fire on such an open fireplace, and inside the living-room too, will mean that there will be a good deal of smoke, and it will not be long before the nice, fresh, reddish tint of the newly planed wood (much of which is what is called *pyinma*) will disappear, and the whole place will be smoked and grimy. Up in the rafters a medley of fish traps, yokes for the oxen, spinning wheels, and a variety of other gear will in time accumulate, all to catch their share of smoke and grime. Yet, while we should probably find them a poor sort of place to call our home, these wooden houses, with their floors well up from the ground, and the ceilings of the room quite lofty, are much healthier for the people than the poor mud huts in which so many live, across the Bay of Bengal in India. Every country has its own kind of house, adapted to its special conditions.

Little by little the seeds of Christian education are sown among the people, and their houses, as well as their lives, are purified and brightened. Home becomes to them what it is to us, a foretaste of the mansions which Jesus is preparing for those who look for His appearing.



Bluffs Along the Salwin River

Let us come out and watch the stream for a little while.

GETTING FOOD FROM THE RIVERS

Wading in High Water — Aung Baw's Fish Trap — Catching Fish Wholesale — Strange Nets

RAIN, rain, rain! It seems as if it will never stop. For days past it has poured down with hardly a break. Out in front of the house the river has steadily risen, and now is creeping over the banks, till we can see it shining through the grass. Farther down the river, where the ground is somewhat lower, the water is a foot or more deep over the bank; so, were we on the launch, which lands its passengers at that point, we should have to wade to dry land with the water up to our knees.

Ah, the sun is struggling to shine through the clouds, so let us come out and watch the stream for a little while. We put on shoes that have a few eyelets fixed in the uppers, just above the sole near the instep, so that when the shoes get filled with water, the water will drain away without difficulty. If we stopped to take them off every time they

filled with water, we should not make much progress.

There is a fish trap such as Aung Baw keeps under his roof. It is a strong basket made of split bamboo, and is about four feet long and a foot or more across. One end is pointed like a torpedo, while the other has a funnel-shaped collar fitted into it, with an opening left in the center. This wider end is fixed toward the direction from which the current flows.

Above, there is a door all ready to slide down and completely close the opening. Whenever a fish swims in and starts eating the bait, it releases the door. The owner of the trap can go about his other work, coming now and then to see if he has caught anything.

There is another way of catching fish, which is much used in the rainy season, but is useful only for very narrow streams.

At some convenient place where the stream is about ten or twelve feet wide, a close fence is made of bamboo and other sticks, which are driven into the mud at the bottom. As far as possible all the little holes in the

fence are filled up. It must be high enough so that the stream cannot flow over it except at one place in the center, which is about two feet wide. Leading from this gap in the top of the fence, a sort of platform is built, which stretches on the surface of the water perhaps six or eight feet down the stream. The bottom of it is of closely plaited bamboo, through which the water, but not the fish, can pass. It also has sides to prevent them from wriggling off over the edges. This platform slopes up slightly; so as the water comes rushing along and cannot get past the fence, except through the gap in the middle, it is all strained through the platform, leaving the fish, big and little, squirming and wriggling behind.

Even the tiny little fellows just hatched out of their eggs are caught in this way; and it makes one wonder how a fish ever escapes to grow big. The "catch" of fish is taken home and cleaned, and packed with salt, so as to keep for the larger part of the year. This forms one of the principal "relishes" that the people have to eat with their rice. The salted fish is cooked into a sort of thin stew.

Where there is a stretch of low, marshy country, still another method of fishing is employed. This time the bamboo is split into thin strips about a third of an inch thick and four or five feet long. These are laid side by side and fastened together by strings passed under and over, so as to make up lengths of screening which can be rolled up and easily carried about. Often one sees similar screening used in hot countries, as sun blinds; but here it has a different use.

Across a corner of the marsh a number of stout stakes are driven into the mud, and to these the lengths of screening are tied, so as to form a light fence inclosing the corner from the rest of the marsh, except for a gateway which is left open at times.

When the gate is closed, the fishermen go within the inclosure and wade about with nets fixed on handles, like butterfly or shrimping nets. In this way they catch all the fish which may have been unfortunate enough to swim inside. When the "catch" has been made, the gateway is opened again and left so, until it is thought that there are enough fish inside to make it worth while wading

up and down again; and then once more the process is repeated.

In the dry season, when the big rivers are neither so swift nor so muddy as they are in the rainy weather, the fishing is done with nets. Sometimes a long net, eight or ten feet broad, is used, light wooden floats being fixed to one edge, and small stone or metal weights to the other. This net is swiftly passed out over the side of a moving canoe, and floats in the water upright like a wall, the weights causing the one edge to sink, and the floats keeping the other on the surface.

After being left in this way for a while, with each end secured in a canoe, the force of the stream naturally pulls the net into the form of a crescent; and then the canoes at the end gradually row to the shore, drawing together as they go, and often inclosing within the net a good number of fish.

Other nets are made up into a circular shape, about twenty feet or so across, and having small weights fastened to the edge. This net is held in the center by a man wading in the shallow water, who throws it

so that it may fall like a bell on the water, gradually sinking and drawing in as it goes. Quite large fish are caught in this way.

The people make their own nets. This provides them with something to do during the dry season, when it is not possible to cultivate the fields according to their usual methods.

According to the Buddhist teaching, it is held to be very wrong indeed to take life in any form; so fishing is not thought to be a nice occupation; but the fishermen console themselves by saying that, after all, they do not kill the fish, but the fish just die of themselves when they are taken out of the water. In the same way, many of the people excuse themselves for eating meat, by saying that the butcher had killed the animals before they went to buy, so it was not their fault that the poor things' lives were taken. They also eat the flesh of animals which have died naturally; but this, while it certainly clears their religious scruples about taking life, is very unhealthful.

As I have watched the fisher folk at their work, I have many times thought of those

humble fishermen of old, who, having received the Lord into their hearts for themselves, under His blessing became fishers of men, and the foundation of His church. So I have been encouraged to believe that some of these simple folk of Burma would become faithful workers in the gospel cause — and some have.

High Water

Rain, rain, rain! It seems as if it will never stop.

Ahuja, Rangoon

Monks with Their Begging Bowls

All must go out and beg the day's food.

BUDDHIST BOYS IN THE MONASTERIES

Entering the Kyaung — Begging for Food — A Sad Belief — A Young Heart Touched

SHWE THA was on his way home from the monastery. A bright, intelligent-looking boy about fifteen years old, he was bowing down before a Buddhist monk when I first noticed him. This is not an uncommon sight in Burma, and is typical of the respect shown by people in Eastern countries to their religious teachers.

We were going up the river Salwin by steam launch. When the monk reached his village, I made friends with the boy.

"Why do you worship the *pongyi* (monk)?" I asked, as I sat down on the deck beside him.

"*Thakin* (sir), that is what I was taught to do in the *kyaung* (monastery)."

"Oh, so you have been to the monastery, have you?" From the answer to this question I learned that Shwe Tha had left the

monastery only a short time before, and was now on his way to his village.

It is the rule for every Buddhist boy in Burma to go to the monastery for a short period, if only for a few days. This is apart from any time he may spend there learning the ordinary lessons of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although he may attend some other school for that purpose, he will pass a short time in the monastery, wearing the yellow robe like a regular monk, and receiving special teaching in his religious duties.

When a boy is about to enter the *kyaung* in this way, his friends make a feast in his honor, and presents are given to the monks who are to take the boy under their charge.

Certain monasteries become famous all over the country, just like some of our colleges; and boys will come from great distances to be received into them, although practically every village has its own monastery, with one or two monks in it. Perhaps a number of other boys in the village are to go in at the same time; and if this should be the case, maybe they will all go in procession through the streets, their friends following

after them. It is said that this procession is to remind people that the founder of the Buddhist religion, who was a prince, gave up his earthly friends in order to become a monk. It serves a real purpose, the same as wedding and other processions in the East, in giving notice to the whole village that a special event has taken place.

After the feast is over, the boy goes to the monastery, where his head is shaved (he usually wears his hair long like a girl's), and he prays that he may be admitted as a *shin-byu,* that is, as a beginner in the order of monks. He is then robed in the usual yellow garments, the begging bowl is hung round his neck, and he is left to spend some time as a pupil of the *pongyis.* Perhaps he will stay as long as three or four months; but very often about a week is all the time that is so spent.

Now he must live just like a monk. Early next morning he is roused up with the others by the tones of the wooden bell, which is sounded just before daylight. So many times I have heard it, — klonk, klonk, — not altogether unmusical either, sounding out in

the chill, damp morning air. In the monastery this means that all must get up, from the gray-haired seniors to the boys just admitted; and then after all have tidied themselves, the morning prayers are said.

Now comes the part of the daily round that most impresses us who are strangers; for all must go out and beg the day's food. In a single file the yellow-robed, barefooted figures walk slowly down the village street, the hands of each clasped round the begging bowl as it hangs in front of him. No word or look of thanks may be given as the devout heap in their gifts; for it is their belief that the giver has been favored by this opportunity of doing a good work. Perhaps the bowls are filled before the round of the village is completed, but that does not matter, for the extra food can be given to the birds and dogs, who are equally needy of food.

Strictly, the monks should eat no food other than that which has been thus begged; but in many cases another meal is cooked, the offerings received along the village streets being all given to the birds and dogs. Although all of them must go out and beg food

in this way, many of the *pongyis* are quite wealthy, for a great deal is given to them as presents on the occasion of various ceremonies and feasts. They are not supposed to handle gold and silver; so if they are at all rigid in their efforts to obey their law, they find it a little difficult to be faultless nowadays. For instance, when they travel, like every one else they must purchase the necessary tickets. Sometimes they will have a boy or other servant with them who carries the money, so that they themselves do not have to touch it.

It is quite a common sight, though, to see a *pongyi* traveling alone on a street car, carrying his money wrapped in paper; and he hands this to the conductor, who takes out the amount required for the fare, rewraps the change, and hands it back; and thus the monk himself does not actually touch the money, but only the paper in which it is wrapped.

During the daytime the younger members of the monastery are required to study the sacred books, committing much to memory. These books are frequently written on pages

made from the leaves of a certain tree, which have been pressed out quite flat and cut into pieces about twelve or fifteen inches by three, tied together by strings and laced through holes in one of the shorter sides.

While the juniors are so engaged, the older monks spend a good deal of time just quietly sitting and thinking, for they believe that this is very helpful to the living of a good life and the gaining of deliverance. No food is taken after midday, so the second and last meal of the day is eaten just before the sun reaches its highest point in the heavens, and the shadows begin to slope toward the east for the dying of the day.

Evening time sees all gathered together once more for prayers; and after the recitation by the younger ones of all the lessons they have ever learned, and the chanting of the praises of Gautama Buddha by all, the day closes with worshiping before his image. Solemnly they retire to rest; and it is this quiet routine of monastery life coming in the experience of nearly every young man in Burma, which so deeply roots Buddhism in him.

Sometimes a man will leave his regular work and his family for a while, in order to spend a few months in the monastery in a similar way.

While this religion of the people of Burma sets before them some good laws, according to which they are expected to live, yet it has much in it that must make us sad. It teaches that there is no God at all, so that the Buddhist receives no help from any higher being in his endeavor to live aright; nor does he enjoy the peace which comes from faith in a God of love and mercy, and of infinite power. Moreover, the world, according to his belief, always was and always will be sinful and a place of sorrow; and there can be no real happiness whatever in life.

The healthiest man may fall a victim to any and every disease; the very strongest of all must die; and after death the wealthiest man in the world has no more than the meanest beggar. The more healthy a man is, the more terrible for him the thought of the helplessness of the sick; the stronger he is, the more dreadful for him the knowledge

that some day he must lie cold in death; and the richer he may be, the more unwilling he will be to leave his wealth behind. So all longing for what this world has, and for life, only gives rise to added sorrow; and the only way to true happiness is to try to overcome all desire for life and the things it brings.

Some of their books say the man who started this religion — his name was Gautama, and he lived many hundreds of years ago — was so anxious to be quite free from everything that might make him want to continue life, that he actually gave away his wife and his own little child, to a man who wanted them as slaves. However that may be, we do know that he forsook his family, leaving them to care for themselves, desiring only to try to find some way by which he might free himself from anything and everything that might bring him sorrow.

How different all this is from the record of Jesus, who, though He was surrounded by perfect happiness and peace, of His own free will came to this earth that He might bear our sorrows, and so help us escape from

them. As for ourselves, instead of doing things just to be free from sorrow and care, we should, like Jesus and Moses, be ready to bear the sorrows of all. We should even be ready to endure eternal separation from God, if that would help our fellow men to obtain forgiveness of their sins.

Well, now, I have told you so much about the life my young friend Shwe Tha lived while in the monastery, that you will have almost forgotten him; but now you will understand how he came to go there at all, and a little of what he was taught to believe.

After leaving the steam launch, he had some eighteen or twenty miles more to travel; and Shwe Tha was expecting to have to walk all that way, carrying his parcel of clothing with him. How happy he was when we gave him an invitation to travel in the little mission launch, which was waiting for me at the place where the steamer stopped. It did not take him long to accept, and away we started.

At that time I had been away from Burma for some little while, having been transferred to India, where they speak a dif-

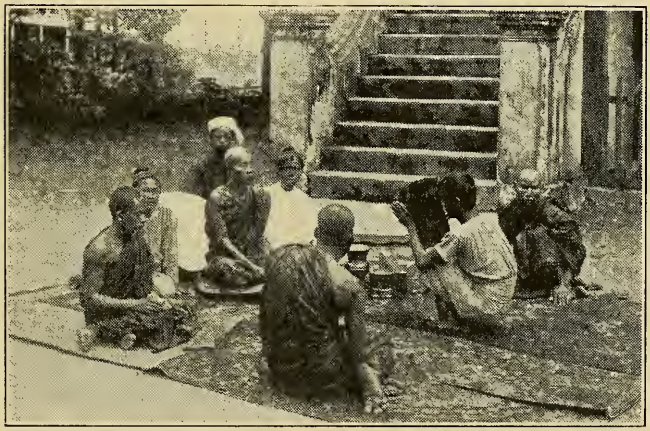
ferent language; so I thought this would be a good chance to revive my knowledge of Burmese, and meanwhile benefit Shwe Tha.

Out came my Burmese Testament,— for our good Bible is to be had in many of these strange languages,— and I told the boy that I wanted him to correct my reading, and talk with me about the story I was going to read to him. In this way the two or three hours we had together passed pleasantly and quickly, and of course he was much interested in what I read to him.

It is quite common in some Eastern countries for religious teachers to have one or more disciples living and traveling with them, and this boy wanted to be my disciple. I had to tell him that I was sorry that this could not be arranged, as I was in his country only for a very short visit, and would soon be returning to the "foreign country," which is a name by which Burmans often refer to India. I am hoping to meet him again some day.

In our traveling round the country we meet different friends, and learn from them

something of the way in which they live; and in return, we try to impart to all some knowledge of the way of life, wherein is perfect peace.



Bowing Down to a Monk

Ahuja, Rangoon

Burmese Festivity

Some wealthy persons who are desirous of acquiring "merit" for their good works, will give lavish entertainments.

HOW YOUNG BURMANS MAKE MERRY

A Water Festival — Attack on a Boat — The Light Feast — Buddha's Tooth — Funeral Fireworks

"LOOK out!"

I jumped aside just in time to avoid being drenched with a pail of water thrown at the street car by a young scamp.

You see it was the Burmese water festival, and young Burma was out to have a good time. There were long squirts, tin cans, and pails — anything that would hold water was being used. Every one was joining in the merrymaking.

A strange way of making merry, you may think, soaking other people and getting soaked oneself; but on a hot day — and this water festival comes in the hot season — it must be good fun, provided one is dressed for the occasion.

Just what the reason for the festival is, it is hard to say, for explanations differ; but the great majority of the people do not con-

cern themselves with that question; and for them it is simply a fact that everybody has a holiday and makes merry.

The celebration is naturally restricted in a city like Rangoon, where there are many foreign residents who hardly appreciate the fun from the Burmese viewpoint. But out of town the old-time spirit goes on unabated.

One time we were traveling up the Salwin by launch on this particular festival. As we drew into the village of Nat Hmaw, we espied a crowd awaiting us. Hardly had the nose of the launch run into the bank when the battle began. Each of the waiting villagers had a pail or a can, and rushing into the river waist-deep, they began to deluge the lower deck of the launch. The passengers and crew returned the "attack," even the launch's pump being pressed into service. What laughing and shouting there was!

There are a number of annual festivals. These are made the occasion of much fun. Even when there is no holiday, some one is all the time arranging entertainments.

They have such amusements at all times of the year except during the Buddhist Lent. This lasts about three months. As practically every Burmese entertainment, or *pway,* as most of them are called, is held in the open air, and the Lenten period comes during the rainy season, one cannot help thinking that perhaps the refraining from festivities is as much the natural result of the unsettled and rainy weather as of any pious feeling of restraint.

In the autumn of the year a very great festival is held. It is known to foreigners as the "light feast." In India the Hindus and Mohammedans each have a somewhat similar celebration.

On this occasion practically every house is decorated with little lights placed along its main outlines. Hundreds of thousands of little candles, and tiny dishes of oil with floating wicks, are lighted up, and it all looks very pretty indeed.

In the big cities like Rangoon the inhabitants of certain streets band themselves together to provide a common fund for decorations. So whole streets will be decked

out with Chinese lanterns and colored paper screens and scenery. Sometimes a theatrical party will be engaged to give a public entertainment.

In the large monastery compounds some wealthy persons who are desirous of acquiring "merit" for their good works, will give entertainments to which will go vast crowds. The whole place, instead of its usual quiet air of religious meditation, will have the appearance of an all-night fair, with side shows, dramatic performances, and eating shops; and till early dawn the sounds of Burmese bands rend the air, making sleep impossible for those who chance to live near by. No Burman, though, would want to sleep; all who can, go to see the shows, snatching a little nap during the intervals of the performance or while the musicians have a rest.

At such a national shrine as the big Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon, the crowds are enormous. Some few years ago a relic of Gautama Buddha, claimed to be one of his teeth, was discovered in India, and was presented to the people of Burma. With great

pomp it arrived in the country, and was conveyed to the platform of the pagoda. It was in a magnificently wrought casket.

Up the long flight of stairs leading from the road, thousands upon thousands toiled, not so much to make obeisance to the tooth as to have a part in the fun that went on above. Along this staircase, and upon the platform itself, are a number of buildings used as reception-rooms; and on festival occasions these are occupied by wealthy people who entertain their friends lavishly. On such nights these places are ablaze with lights and thronged by crowds.

In a building down on the main road, refreshments are available for all who care to partake of them, there being regular meals for the poor, and even European refreshments for foreign visitors.

The huge pagoda itself is lighted by strings of electric lamps; and here and there on the great marble platform surrounding it, different shows are in progress.

What a strange scene it is, to be sure! The crowds seem bent on merrymaking; but here and there a pious group can be seen

kneeling before a candle-lighted shrine, muttering unknown prayers, intent only on their own devotions and oblivious of the surging throngs that stumble past them.

On the rivers the light feasts acquire an added point of beauty; for little rafts of lamps are released, to float away on the stream till some bend of the river hides them from sight. Also, at times boat races are held in big canoes holding twelve or fifteen persons, men and women taking part. In some parts of the country the paddlers are assisted by men who stand up and use their feet as paddles.

Not all the festivals take place at night, but some are held during the day, as for instance the Zwegobin festival, which is held on the plain below the big hill near which Aung Baw lives. One year I happened to go through that section while this festival was in progress. Large bands of people had collected there. Formed into groups, they were going through a kind of dancing, very much like bands of trained gymnasts. I suppose their pilgrimage included a visit to the pagoda up on top of the hill, which

must be two thousand feet or more high. A large part of the way up is said to resemble a rough staircase, making the ascent very difficult.

Another occasion for great merrymaking is the cremation of some famous monk. It seems strange to talk of a cremation as an occasion of merrymaking; but such is actually the case. When the monk dies, it is customary to preserve the body, perhaps for a year, in some way or other, rumor having it that this is often done by packing it in honey; for which reason the newcomer to Burma is not infrequently warned never to eat Burmese honey, lest it should be "second-hand." However that may be, the reason for preserving the corpse and thus delaying the final cremation is to enable those interested to collect the funds necessary for a great display.

Meanwhile the body lies in state in the monastery until the time arrives. Then a great pyre of sandalwood is built, theatrical parties and bands are engaged, and free refreshments are provided. After several days of merriment, and probably the giving of

presents to a number of monks, the actual cremation takes place, the body being removed from its temporary elaborate coffin and placed on the sandalwood pyre. Perhaps a display of fireworks will bring the ceremonies to a close, and all will depart feeling that they have had a good time.

One cannot help comparing the so-called religious beliefs of the Burmese with the actual practice of their lives; for there is a great difference between the two. In his endeavor to obtain the peace he sought, Gautama Buddha turned his back on the pleasures of this world, and urged all men to follow him in this. The Burman, though, seeks to make of every circumstance of life an occasion for fun. Births, naming ceremonies, the entering of the monastery by young boys, marriage, and even death itself, provide him with fresh excuses for an entertainment; while the regular round of pagoda festivals insures a steady series of jollifications should the other events be too few and far between.

Gautama Buddha was right in warning men to avoid the allurements of this world's

pleasures; but he was wrong in teaching that humankind always was sinful and doomed to sorrow, and that we exist apart from any god; for thereby he has robbed his followers of all belief in the wisdom and power of God, who, having worked to create His perfect universe, is still working to uphold it, and to re-create man and this world free from sin and sorrow. So the Burman seeks his solace in a life of pleasure; but the only hope for him lies in the gospel of Christ.

By Bullock Cart in Burma

Ox-carts are terribly slow conveyances, according to our Western notions.

BY CANOE AND BULLOCK CART THROUGH THE FLOODS

Making a Canoe — Water Spirits — Getting Wet — Orchids and Ferns — Dak Bungalows

SUNSHINE or rain — which are we going to have?

Our interest in the weather was not unnatural, for it was the rainy season, and we had ahead of us a three days' journey in a canoe. When we left Rangoon on this trip to find a place along the banks of the Salwin for a Karen mission station, we had intended to take a large covered boat from Shwegon, the point at which the steam launch stopped; but we found that no such boat was available just then, and that we would either have to go back, or make the best of it in a small open canoe. So when the sky looked clear as we were ready to start, we felt much relieved.

The canoe that we hired was manned by three Burmans, including the steersman; and by the time our bedding and food sup-

plies and our two selves were loaded in, it was quite full. Each of us had a narrow seat to himself, and barely enough room in front to crowd his legs into.

Burmese canoes are hollowed out of tree trunks. After being felled and carefully chosen, the trunks are allowed to dry for several months before further work is done. The work of scooping out the hollow is slow, for it is done partly by burning out the wood, and partly by chipping; but in due course the desired shape is finished, and the outside is smoothed down and rubbed over with oil. A narrow planking is added to the sides to make them higher, and seats are built in across the canoe.

The hollowing out stops some little distance from each of the two ends, both of which are shaped into a flat seat for a steersman, so the canoe can be paddled along in either direction without much difficulty. The back end usually has a longer seat than the front.

These boats may vary in size from a small canoe in which only one or two persons can ride, to a large boat intended for

carrying rice to the mills, which will hold several hundred baskets of grain and require six or eight men to row it. A large boat of this description has a kind of cabin built at one end. For this purpose a roof of matting, oiled to make it water-tight, is arched over from one side to the other. The ends are closed in with board walls, each having a door in the middle.

For the steersman there is an armchair, sometimes elaborately carved, perched high up at one end. In this he can look out over the cabin and direct the rowers in the front part of the boat. Sails are used when the wind is right; and if the boat is traveling near the shore, it is usually poled along. In small boats, leafy branches of trees are frequently used as a sail, they being held up to catch the wind while the people in the canoe have a rest from paddling. It is really surprising how rapidly a boat will go with this crude device.

One time I saw a man who had no canoe at all, but who had made himself a little raft on which to travel downstream; this was nothing but a few plantain tree stems, two

laid one way and two the other, on which the man sat happily under his umbrella, drifting swiftly down the flooded stream. Probably he had some sort of paddle with him so that at his destination he could draw in shore; and there he must have left his frail raft to drift away.

The boat we had hired had no sort of cabin or covering overhead at all, so we were out in the weather, whatever might come.

Before starting out on a trip with the annual rice crop, or for other important purposes, it is usual for the boatmen to make offerings to the spirits of the water, fearing that if this were not done, all sorts of mishaps might befall them.

Everything unpleasant that could occur on a river journey is said to be the fault of the mischievous spirits. If the men should run into a rock, though it might be because they themselves were careless, they would say it was the fault of some spirit who had unkindly put the rock in their way. The boatmen might forget to fasten the boat or an oar securely; and should any accident

happen as a result, that too would be the fault of the spirits, but never of themselves.

So they think it just as well to try to make the spirits happy, in the hope that no trouble will arise. I am sure they would do better if they were more careful, and so kept freer from accidents; but that is not their way.

It does not cost much to make an offering to the spirits; for although a quantity of fruit and cocoanuts and other good things are piled up on a tray and offered, the spirit beings do not actually eat them, but seem satisfied that all these are brought together; and then after the ceremony is over, Mr. Boat Owner and his crew of men sit down and feast on the offerings.

This is what some Hindu shoemakers I knew, used to do. Once a year they would arrange their knives and other tools in a row, and offer a quantity of cocoanuts and fruit to them, so that the implements would work well for the next year, and not slip and cut them, or otherwise cause mischief; and then the men would divide all the offerings and eat them themselves.

It being some weeks after the commencement of the annual rainy season, the river was flooded. The men had hard work paddling the canoe along. To avoid the full force of the current, they kept close to the bank wherever possible. This meant that sometimes we passed right in among the trees, for the lower bank had been overflowed. Advantage was taken of this to give the rowers a little relief, by the steersman often pushing against the trees with a long, spiked pole, to send the boat along.

Our hopes of a fine day were soon ended, for the clouds gathered and the rain poured down; and there we sat in that little canoe the whole day long, with the rain beating down on us. We tried umbrellas, but the water leaked through them. We endeavored to remedy this by rubbing a candle along the seams and around the hole where the stick comes through; but after all, we had to put the umbrellas down because of the canoe passing through trees with low-hanging boughs.

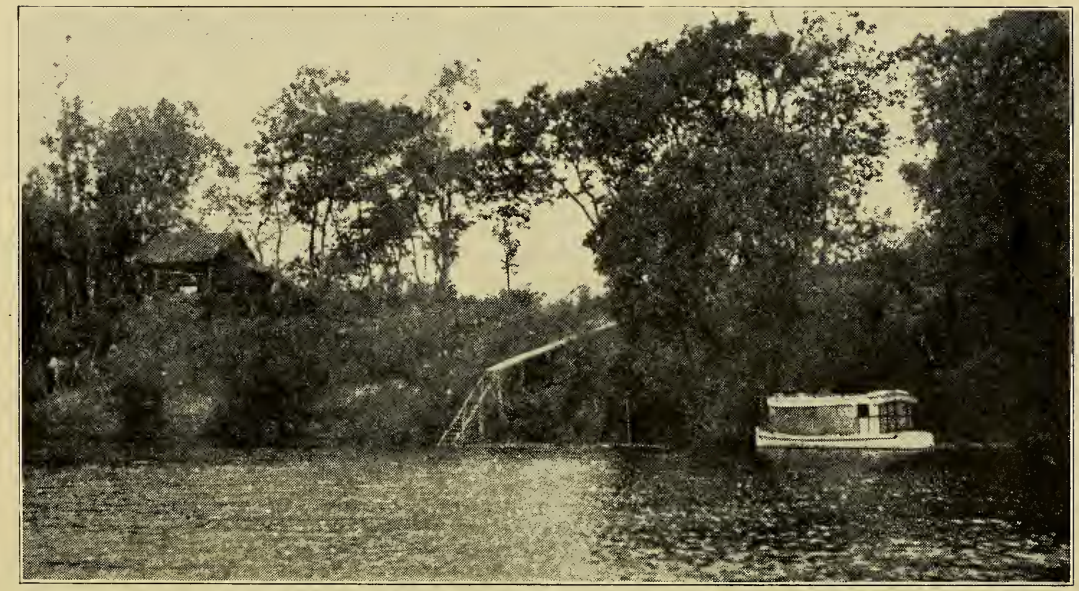
At last we decided that there was nothing else to do but sit still and get wet; and get

wet we did. It was in July, and therefore quite warm weather, yet by afternoon we felt chilled through from having to sit still in that canoe all day, soaked to the skin.

To our delight we came alongside a timber-rafting station; in one of the huts on a raft there was a good fire, so we sat down on the hearth and warmed and dried ourselves. This was not the end of the day's journey, however, for we still had a mile or more to complete; but in an hour or so we were able to camp for the night. In all that day's journey we had covered only about eighteen miles; so canoe traveling, against a strong current, is not very fast.

Our camping place was quite comfortable, at least it seemed so after having been cramped up in the little canoe all day. We had reached the village of Kawkayet, which is about a mile above where the mission station was finally built at Kamamaung; there we found a fine *zayat,* or rest house, in the monastery inclosure.

These zayats are usually built by pious persons for the benefit of the monks, as well as for visitors and travelers; we were glad



Launch and Landing Place, Kamamaung Mission, Salwin River

indeed for the kindness of those who had built this particular one. True enough, it was only a floor and a roof, with a wall along one side, but that was enough to keep the wind and rain out; and down underneath there was space for us to make a fire over which to dry our clothes and bedding and to do our cooking.

For the fireplace we soon found three fair-sized stones on which to rest our earthen cooking pot, and firewood was available in great abundance. It was my task to cook, while my companion, Elder G. A. Hamilton, looked after the wet things, which must be dried before we could start out again. We had to do this before getting any sleep, for everything we had was soaked.

Camp cooking is apt to be a little rough-and-ready; but our keen appetites make up for a good deal. I fear the hungry-looking dogs which had been attracted by the smell of what was going on, did not get many pieces by the time we had finished. We had the same bill of fare twice every day for about three weeks, with the exception of one day when supplies ran out, and we had to

content ourselves with ship biscuit and condensed milk.

It was Friday afternoon when we reached Kawkayet, so we spent the Sabbath there, starting out again on Sunday morning. With our camp cots fixed up in the zayat, we were as happy as could be.

This village stands at the junction of the Yonsalin tributary with the main Salwin River; and it was along the former that we started out early on Sunday morning, to continue our journey upstream. It is not possible to travel much farther along the Salwin from this point, for a few miles upstream there are very big rapids over which boats cannot travel, and one must go a long distance across country in order to avoid them, if he wishes to travel on the river farther up. Timber rafts can come down over the rapids when the river is at its highest point; but even then it is a dangerous place.

I wish all could see the beautiful ferns and orchids and other plants that we saw as we journeyed along. Here and there the whole river bank was overgrown with lovely maidenhair ferns. Farther along there were

masses of bright-green, velvety leaves, each with five jet-black spots on it, much like the impress of one's finger tips. All along stretched a fringe of forest, and it seemed as if every tree trunk was festooned with orchids and creepers. Occasionally a troop of monkeys swung through the branches; here and there a flock of peafowl, brilliant of plumage, strutted about in search of their morning meal.

Very few dwelling-houses were to be seen, for the villagers seem to prefer to screen themselves from the view of passers-by on the river, and do not generally cut the trees right on the bank. This may be a reminder of the old days when the country was unsettled, and the different tribes were continually warring one against another.

Slowly we journeyed on, the current growing swifter the farther we went, and our progress slower as a result. About ten or twelve miles was all we covered in the whole day's rowing. The journey could hardly be called tedious, however, so beautiful was everything around us. Each new bend in the river brought to view a fresh stretch of

cloud-capped hills, for the river runs down a very narrow valley; and on every hand were giant trees and palms and plants in the greatest profusion. Sometimes a lone duck would be startled into flight by our coming, or now and then a small cloud of bright-hued butterflies winging by would delight our eyes.

Riding in the canoe was not devoid of excitement either. Continually we came to places where a snag of rock standing out from the bank, or a fallen tree behind which the floating rubbish had accumulated, was holding up the progress of the water, causing miniature rapids. Our boatmen would have hard work to round these awkward corners.

At times we almost seemed to be slipping backward, so swift would the eddy be; but with their shouts of "*Tek! tek! tek!*" (Row! row! row!) the men would ply their paddles the harder, and slowly but surely we would get past the obstruction.

About midday we pulled into a sand bank and got out to stretch our cramped limbs and eat our lunch, for the canoe was too nar-

row to permit of our turning about and undoing our packages as we went along.

Evening saw us at the village where we were to pass the night, and this time we were fortunate enough to have a dak bungalow to shelter us. These houses are built by the government, mainly for the use of the officials who must travel over the country, but they can be used also by other respectable travelers; being supplied with chairs, beds, tables, and other like conveniences, they are very comfortable places in which to spend the night. Each house, except a few which have no furniture in them and which are intended only for halting places during a day's march, is in charge of a watchman, who sees that the place is kept clean, and keeps lamp oil on hand for sale to visitors.

The next morning we had a look around the place near the bungalow, and found only a few poor huts, one being a little shop in which such village necessaries as candles, coir string, and similar articles were for sale. One time the watchman from this particular bungalow was carried off by a tiger, which

will give you some idea of how lonely a place it is.

Still another day's journey in the canoe lay ahead of us; and the end of this brought us to a point from which a good cart road stretches across country, considerably shortening the distance; so we paid off our canoe men, and arranged for a bullock cart to take us on at daybreak next morning.

Before the first streaks of dawn we were up, breakfast was cooked and eaten, our bedding was packed, and a start made; but we were not to get very far that day. The first hindrance came about a quarter of a mile from the bungalow, where the ruts were so deeply cut in the road that the hub on one wheel jammed on the road surface.

Being at a place where we were going uphill, the oxen seemed unable to move at all, and there was nothing else to be done but to roughly repair the rut and bodily lift that side of the cart out of it. Once past this difficulty, everything seemed to go well until about four miles had been covered; and then we came to an obstacle which made it impossible to go any farther that day. For

days it had been raining steadily, with scarcely any break at all, as we had found to our discomfort in the canoe; and as a result the forest streams were rushing torrents. The one we had now reached was bridged over, to be sure; but so swollen was the stream that the water was four feet deep on top of the bridge, and that was altogether too much for the oxen to pass through.

Reluctantly we turned back, for the four miles covered had meant two or three hours of trudging behind the dawdling bullock cart, and now it was all in vain; and who could tell when the rain would stop, or what trouble we might have next time getting the cart over the bad place in the road that had already held us up that morning? However, the delay was inevitable, so back we went and once more settled ourselves in the bungalow, hoping that the rain would slacken enough to give us hope of getting off in the morning; but we were to spend three whole days in this house, waiting for the weather to change.

The bungalow was certainly in a beautiful place, for just here the river swung

Chapel, Kamamaung Mission

around a sharp bend; and years of torrential rains had worn away the banks till it was a broad stream. All around were hills; while scattered rocks divide the water into swirls and eddies, making the crossing by the canoe ferry an exciting journey. I must confess, though, that in time the beauty of the scenery and the excitement furnished by the rushing of the flood seemed insufficient to make up for the monotony of staying in that bungalow while outside the rain poured down incessantly. Moreover, provisions were running low, and a diet of plain boiled rice for an indefinite period did not seem any too inviting; so it was a great relief when the downpour abated enough so that by Friday morning we could once more make a start.

This time, too, we stuck in that rut; but having conquered it once, we did not let that dismay us; and glad we were when the bridge which had been our undoing earlier in the week, came in sight, and we found that the water had gone down so as to be no more than knee-deep.

On we trudged, mile after mile, finding new beauties in the foliage and in the bright

colors of the butterflies and birds. Presently we came across the fresh tracks of a deer which had passed for a mile or more down the road. Poor thing! there were other tracks there too. Evidently a tiger had followed it. Both trails turned off into the jungle, and we saw no more of either; but this was just a little sign of the daily tragedies that take place in the depths of the forest.

Ten miles or so along we made our first halt, an unfurnished bungalow being here for the convenience of travelers,— just a little clearing in the forest and a tiny mat-walled house, with a gurgling brook near by, but it seemed more beautiful to us than the finest hotel could have been.

As fifteen miles still remained before we could camp for the night, we had not long to spend over breakfast, but hurried on. Ox-carts are terribly slow conveyances, according to our Western notions, making about two miles an hour on an average, and a total of ten miles a day on a long trip. This trip we were making was just twenty-five miles in all, and it is usual to make this distance

all in one day; but if we had tried to overhurry the bullocks, they would have been too tired to make such a long run.

Kway Thee Kyaung (Dead Dog Creek) was the name of one stream we had to pass, and a name not very suggestive of civilization either. In fact, the road was deserted; for apart from a cluster of houses belonging to the men whose business it is to repair the road, we passed hardly half a dozen huts in the twenty-five miles. For a companion we had a Chinaman, who was very glad of permission to walk with us, as he had the journey to make, but because of the reputation the district has for tigers, was afraid to go alone.

The tiger reputation is not unmerited either, for one was shot within a mile or so of the mission bungalow at Kamamaung, and another mauled the man who was getting logs not far away.

The village people catch such animals in traps, or in pits at the bottom of which sharp palings are fixed. Leopards also are handled in this way. Only once do I remember receiving definite news that a man had been

killed and eaten by one of these animals; and that was some ten miles from a village where I was canvassing, and on a road over which I had once been. Not infrequently calves and other small animals are carried off.

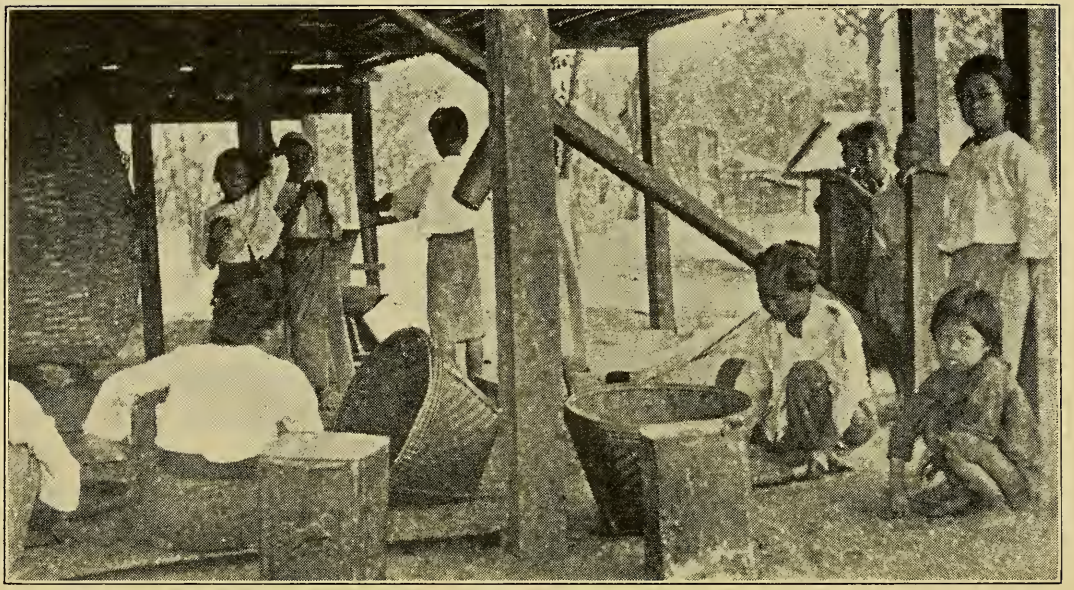
The approach of dusk saw us at the end of the road; and here, having paid off our cartmen, we took the canoe ferry across the stream, to camp again in a dak bungalow for the night. Only nine miles remained to be completed before our destination should be reached; and this short distance was covered in a morning's ride in another cart. Thus it had taken us about nine days to cover some seventy miles since we had left the steam launch. In the dry season the journey can be made in two or two and a half days by cart; but the boat journey is slow for a good part of the year, either because the river is in flood and the current swift, or because the river is low and progress is hindered by rocks and gravel banks.

Our return journey was made much more quickly and conveniently, for we were fortunate enough to secure passage in a boat that was carrying wolfram ore down to the

town, and in this way we easily covered in two days what had taken us nine days to accomplish going up.

This ore had come over the hills on the backs of elephants, the caravan route coming in at this point from Siam. It was just another illustration to us of how men have reached out to the lonely places of the earth in search of the riches that perish. Should we not then be ready to travel to the same parts, and even farther, that men may receive from us the imperishable riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Our visit at that time was not without results, for through it was secured ultimately a grant of considerable land on which, with some adjacent land that was purchased, the Kamamaung station is now built; and in "the little brown church in the woods," built close by an old ruined pagoda, a happy throng of boys and girls meet daily to praise their Saviour and to learn more of His ways.



Hulling Rice at Kamamaung Mission

Thump, thump, thump, goes the heavy beam with which the paddy (rice) is first beaten.

WITH MA DWA AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Pa Khay — Eating Rice Balls — Cooking in Mud Pots — Juicy Mangoes — The Sensitive Plant

MA DWA, as she sits on the ground with the bamboo tray in her hands, is very busy preparing the rice for the school children's breakfast; but I am sure she will be glad to stop and tell us something about her work.

Thump, thump, thump, goes the heavy beam with which the paddy is first beaten in order to make it easier to remove the husk. You can see it all ready to fall with another heavy thump. There it is, behind the post of the house, with the round wooden pin which falls on the rice in the hole below, half hidden.

I think it is little Pa Khay, standing there smiling, with his hands resting on the two uprights, who is working the beam this morning. When he steps onto his end of it, up comes the other end quite high in the air; and then he steps off again, and down comes

the pin, right into the hole, crushing the grain that has been thrown into it. Pa Khay has been in the school at Kamamaung for about a year, and is getting on very well indeed.

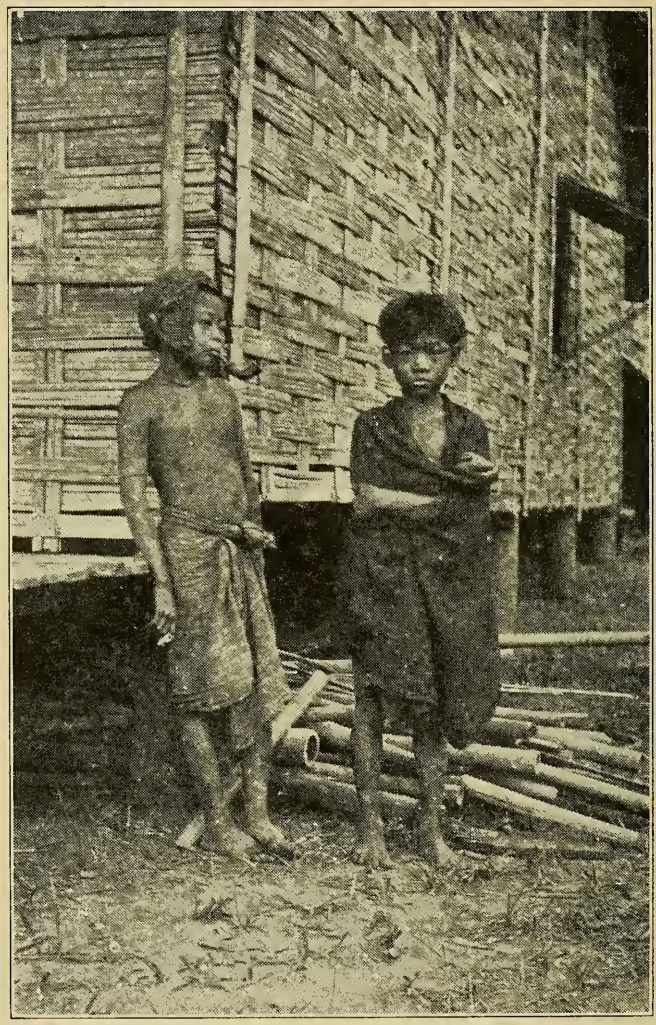
His parents and relatives had taught him to fear and worship evil spirits; and when he first came to school, he was smoking a nasty tobacco pipe. Think of a boy as small as Pa Khay smoking! Yet probably his mother taught him to smoke when he was just a tiny baby in her arms. He has learned better now, and does not smoke any more. And instead of wanting to make offerings to the evil spirits, he likes to go to Sabbath school, and has his memory verse all ready to recite to the teacher, and knows his lesson well.

But there, I am not telling you much about the breakfast rice, am I? Before the husk is removed we usually call the grain paddy; and Ma Kai keeps it stored in a big basket. That is a Burmese granary. It is made of stout strips of bamboo strongly woven together and then roughly plastered over to fill up the cracks. Sometimes these

granaries are six feet or more high, and just as much across; so they hold a great deal of paddy; and they must needs be big too, because many of the people in Burma use rice as their principal food, making relishes to eat with it.

You see those two baskets on the ground in front? The one to the right of Ma Kai is lying on its side. Well, a village man once told me that when they are putting aside the year's supply of rice for the household use, they measure out twelve basketfuls as each person's share. Isn't that a lot of rice to keep for one person? You would think they would get tired of eating so much of it; but they do not seem to. They cook it without salt, or sugar, or anything but just water.

I have seen little Karen children sitting on the floor around a bowl of steaming hot rice, and with their tiny fingers they would first work the rice into round balls, so large that you would wonder how they could ever eat them; then, laughing and chatting, they would pop those rice balls into their mouths, eating with as much relish as we would the



His First Day in School

When Pa Khay first came to school, he was smoking a nasty tobacco pipe. He has learned better now, and does not smoke any more.

nicest cake you can think of. Alongside sat the baby brother, too small to feed himself; so sister would give him a nice little rice ball occasionally, and he was as happy as the rest of them.

Pa Khay and the other boys standing near have a great deal of paddy to beat, as there are about forty hungry little mouths to fill at Kamamaung school. As soon as Pa Khay has finished one lot, it is put into the mill to have the husks removed, while he goes on and beats another lot. When he is tired, another boy takes his place. A boy is working the mill. He is standing with his back toward us, just behind the big pin in the beam that Pa Khay is working up and down. In his hand the boy is holding a long handle which he is pulling back and forth. That makes one of the flat stones in the mill rub over the other, removing the husk from the paddy which passes slowly between the two.

If you look carefully, you will see leaning against the bottom of the mill on the right-hand side, the square tin in which the rice is caught as it falls. Then Ma Dwa

takes it and cleans it. She puts it on her flat tray and deftly throws it up into the air, catching it again as it comes down in a little shower, only to throw it up again and again until the breeze has carried off the bran, leaving the white rice all ready for Ma Kai. She looks it over for the last time for any grains not yet husked, and then puts it into the big pot over the brightly crackling fire.

Have you ever seen any one cook in a pot made of mud? Yet that is what many people do in Burma. The potter, after shaping the vessel, hardens the mud by baking it as tiles are made; and then this makes a very fine cooking vessel. There is a nicely fitting lid, which does not get as hot as a metal lid would, so Ma Kai can easily lift it when she wants to stir the rice with her wooden stick. The fireplace is a very simple one, for just a few large stones or bricks have been arranged to close in three sides of a square; and the pot rests on these while the wood fire burns merrily below.

It is a happy family of boys and girls who bow reverently while a blessing is asked

upon the morning meal. Ma Kai knows just how to make all sorts of little relishes that Karen boys and girls delight in.

Sometimes the children gather herbs; for they all seem to know which leaves may be eaten and which are poisonous. Sometimes the relish is nice, tender, young bamboo shoots; or perhaps some clean fish caught fresh from the mighty Salwin River; or grated cocoanuts, or plantains, or green jack fruit. How good they taste!

I wish all of you could sample some of the dishes that these people make. Of course, it would not be nice for us to eat all the dishes they eat in the villages; for in their own homes these boys and girls have eaten frogs and monkeys and snakes, and other like things. I have heard of their even eating wild cat, which was cooked with the fur and all; but the boys and girls in our school have learned to try to keep their bodies clean and healthy, as an honor to the God who created them.

There, I almost forgot to tell you about the mangoes. What a feast the boys and girls do have at Kamamaung in the mango

season! All around the little schoolhouse are the trees, and the breeze keeps shaking the fruit down. Pat, pat, pat, they fall on the ground; and Pa Khay and Nau See and the other boys and girls find it hard to sit still till lesson time is over, for Oo, the little brown monkey, is out there having all the good fruit to himself.

Presently the bell rings and the classes break up, and away down the steps go forty pair of little feet, scurrying to see who can get to the mango trees first. There are enough mangoes for all, though. Oo takes his share and scampers up the tree, and the boys and girls run here and there after the big juicy fruit which comes tumbling down as the monkey shakes the branches in his hurried flight.

In the morning, while some of the boys and girls are helping prepare breakfast, others are out sweeping the schoolhouse and the compound, or cutting down the weeds which grow up so rapidly; so in one way or another all help.

The weeds remind me of a peculiar plant. All along the sides of the paths we shall find

patches of it. Did you see that? As soon as I touched the leaf with my foot, it began to close up, and now all the leaves on the stem are doing the same. Whenever it is touched, even ever so lightly, the leaves close up; so English people call it the sensitive plant. Another name for it is "mimosa." Burmese call it *hti ka-yon;* for I think the closing up of the leaves reminds them of an umbrella, which is called *hti* in their language.

This plant is quite common in Burma and grows wild, but in some parts of the world people regard it as very strange, and keep small plants as a curiosity. There are some kinds of flowers which close up when they are touched; it seems that they do this in order to catch insects which have come to them for the honey. The petals of the flower close over the insect, and the plant actually feeds on the little prisoners it makes in this way.

Ma Dwa wants us to see her little family before we go. Here is the eldest, Nau Bley, which means Miss Smooth. Next to her is Nau Too, or Miss Gold; while number three

is Nau See, or Miss Little. Nau Sey is the fourth, and her name means Miss Silver; while the smallest little girl has the quaint name of Nau Obwe, or Miss Sabbath; for

Ma Dwa's Family

she was born after Ma Dwa and her husband, Tha Myaing, had accepted the Sabbath truth. Baby brother rejoices in the name of Enoch.

It is not usual in Burma for all to bear the father's name as a family name, as we do; but for each one a separate name is chosen, generally with some definite mean-

ing, like those mentioned above. Among the Buddhist Burmese the first letters of the names are settled according to the day of the week on which the child was born.

If you meet a Burman whose name begins with a vowel, then you can know that he was born on a Sunday; while if it starts with L or W, then he must have been a Wednesday baby, and born in the morning too; for had it been the afternoon of that day, his name must begin with either an R or a Y.

In Karen, Sau and Nau correspond to our Mr. and Mrs., while in Burmese they say Maung and Ma instead. Many Karens use Burmese names.

Well, we must not take any more of Ma Dwa's and Ma Kai's time this morning with our questions, else breakfast will be late; but we will go on to some others of our friends, and see what they can tell us about things the Juniors in Burma do and see.

Ready for the Meeting

Villagers, with their children, gathered to hear the missionary.

STRANGE BURMESE WAYS OF HELPING THE SICK

Black Tortoise Tied to Post — Charms — Strange Medicines — Pa Khay and the Pictures

"SHWAY AIN, why have you tied that there?"

I had climbed up the ladder onto the veranda of the house of a Pwo Karen friend; and sitting on the floor to chat with him, I had caught sight of a small black tortoise with one leg tied to a post of the house. Of course I was curious to know the reason for this; for, as I have told you, in the villages in parts of Burma, people eat such animals as frogs, and perhaps he might be keeping this tortoise in readiness for dinner; but that did not prove to be the case.

"*Saya*" (teacher), replied the old man, "as long as we have that tied there, our baby will not get sick."

I really hope the baby never fell sick; for with its friends depending on such a useless remedy, the poor little thing would have

had a very unhappy time; but this idea that Shway Ain had about the tortoise is just like many other ideas village people have.

If you had been there, you would certainly have wanted to know more about these strange beliefs; so you will not be surprised when I tell you that I asked Shway Ain if there was anything else which he thought the tortoise could do. This further question led to my being told about many kinds of medicines, which I am sure none of you would ever like to take.

I think all of you know that when people have smallpox, generally their skin is left badly scarred by the disease; but I was told that this would not happen if the sick person would be careful to bathe in water in which just such a little tortoise was swimming about. Then, too, there is one kind of fever which these village people think can be cured by eating soup made from a black monkey with a white face. I had often seen these little fellows playing about in the trees in the woods, and climbing over rocks; but I had never thought that they could be so valuable!

As a remedy for sore throat, Shway Ain told me I should take some gall from a python, which is a very large snake. He did not tell me, though, how I might first catch the snake.

I must confess that I have never tested any of these strange medicines on myself; but unfortunately for themselves, the village people often try their own methods before bringing the sick or injured to the mission dispensaries, or other places where proper help can be given; so it is much harder to assist them than it would be if they would come as soon as they fall sick or get hurt.

Cuts and other wounds are often covered with a filthy plaster of some sort, in order to stop the bleeding; but often this treatment does much harm, as the wounds are made dirty, and so fester and cause much trouble and suffering. Some people have great faith in charms. A young man once came to me with a badly cut arm, and to help heal the place, he had tied a charm above the wound.

This thing in which he put so much faith was just a small piece of dirty paper on which some letters were written, and in

which a few cloves were wrapped; and it was tied to the arm with sewing thread. I tried hard to get him to give it to me as a curio; but while he told me that he himself was ready to give it, he excused himself by saying that he feared his mother would be angry if he did so; so I did not get it.

Other people have charms tattooed on different parts of their bodies; or the charm may be written on small pieces of metal which are put in under the skin through slits cut for the purpose. The skin grows over the charm in time, so all that is to be seen is a small, hard lump where the metal has been put in in this way. Some believe that such things can protect them even from bullets fired from a gun. There are those, too, who, because they believe that sickness is caused by evil spirits, make offerings to them, in the hope of pleasing them so that they will take away the illness.

Perhaps an altar of bamboo is built in the house, at which fruit or meat or nuts are offered; or maybe a tiny boat is made, on which the offerings are placed; and then after prayers to the evil spirits have been

said, the boat is left to float down the river.

In the villages one often meets the native medicine sellers with their supplies of oils and powders. Instead of bottles for the oils they have small skin bladders taken from animals, while leaves take the place of paper for wrapping up the powders.

The same so-called medicines are given for all sorts of widely differing complaints; and a great deal seems to depend on the care with which the patient uses the stuff that has been given him. Perhaps it is that he must not tell anybody he has got it; or he must take it when nobody is watching, or when the moon is in the proper place; and if it should be that it fails to cure the disease, then it can be nothing else than that the proper directions have not been followed, but never that the medicine was not good.

Many, many people are helped by the little mission dispensaries. The work done in those places, and by missionaries as they go through the villages, wins many friends for them. Such kindnesses are rarely forgotten; and in their own way, perhaps with a present of cocoanuts or vegetables, or by do-

Superstitious Burmese

"Saya, as long as we have that charm tied there, our baby will not get sick."

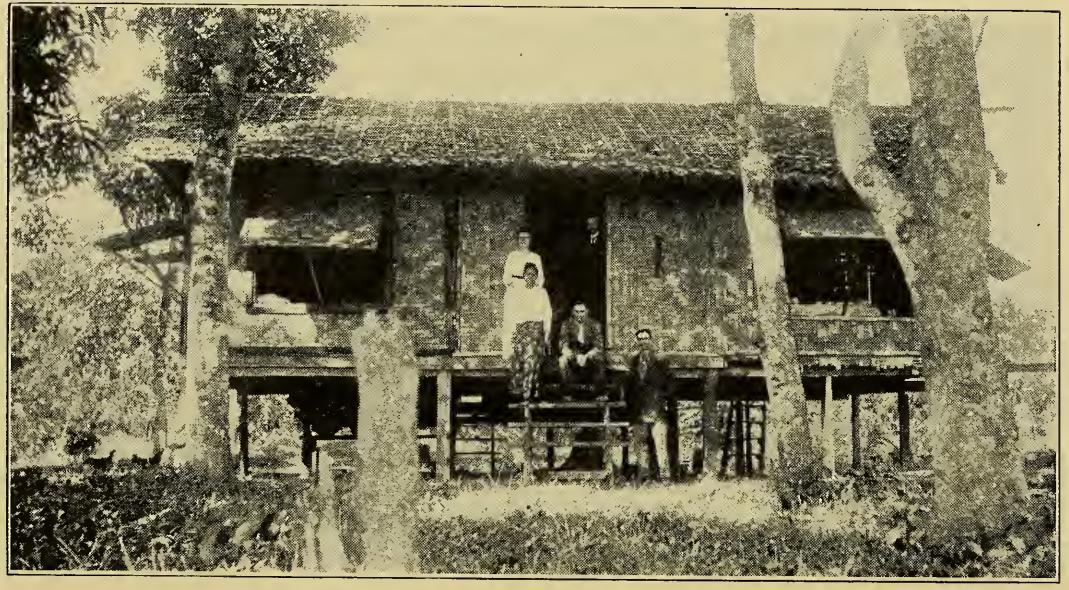
ing some little service, the people try to show their gratitude.

I often think of one home that I used to visit. The first time I went there the wife was sick with fever; but a little simple treatment soon brought her relief. Ever afterward there was always a warm welcome awaiting me, and the simple village hospitality would be shown. They were poor people who had not much of this world's goods, but just a drink of cool water is a great blessing when one has tramped for miles across the rice fields. "Will you drink water, saya?" the woman would always ask me; and receiving assent, away she would go and get the fancy glass decanter, reserved for special occasions; and after thoroughly rinsing it, she would fill it with water, carefully straining it through a handkerchief. The handkerchief was always brought from the inside room, folded up, so one was encouraged to hope that it was kept for this special use; but I am not sure that it was. At any rate, my humble friend was doing the best for me that she knew how, and I appreciated her willingness.

It was through the dispensary work that Pa Khay first came to the school at Kamamaung. He had been sick for some time, so his mother brought him to the dispensary to see what could be done for him. While he was waiting his turn to be attended to, he lay down on the floor to pass the time studying the gospel pictures hanging on the walls. Somehow he did not seem satisfied with what he found; and when he was asked what he wanted, he said he wanted to see Adam and Eve.

We were surprised, for none of the mission workers remembered having seen the boy before; but Pa Khay soon told them all about himself. He lived in a village in which a lecture had been given one night a year or more before, and at which a Sabbath school picture roll was shown and explained. Although he was just a little heathen village boy, he remembered what had been said and shown concerning the garden of Eden; and how, because they had disobeyed God, Adam and Eve had been driven out, the gate being guarded by the angel with the flaming sword.

Of course, the pictures of Adam and Eve were again shown to him, as also many others; and he was told that if he came to school he would learn much more about them, and see still other pictures. Pa Khay wanted to start in school at once, but his mother was not willing; for little village boys are expected to look after the oxen and the buffaloes, and to scare the birds off the rice crops, and do many other chores. After some time he fell sick again, and his mother thought that it would be a good thing to leave him in school, so that he could be near the dispensary; and there he is now, studying hard, and learning of the new earth, where, if he trusts in Jesus as his Saviour, he will meet the real Adam and Eve, and many others of whom he first learned from the lecture and the pictures.



Burmese House Thatched with Leaves

Sometimes the whole house is made of bamboo.

BUILDING A BAMBOO HOUSE

Giant Bamboos — Tying a House Together — Dislike of Hard Work — Fighting Fire — One-Story Houses

SAW OHN BUINT had been in the school at Kamamaung for about a year. When he returned home during the holidays, he told his friends that he intended to become a Christian. This made them quite angry, for they were animists, and thought that some great evil would happen to them if he should cease to make offerings to the spirits. They told him that if he did not change his mind, they would not help him to go to school any more.

The young man was quite determined, however, to stay on and study more about the way of salvation, so he went to Elder Hare, who was in charge at Kamamaung, and told him of his difficulty. Could anything be done to help him continue his education? Yes, a way seemed open.

Somebody has to go down to the river and carry the water needed in the school and

at the missionaries' house, and a man was being employed to do this work, as well as to chop the firewood. Ohn Buint was told that he could have this work if he would do it, and that his wages would be enough to keep him in school.

Now, I should not like to say that the village people are lazy, for they do sometimes work very hard indeed; but many times it is only because they know that they would stay hungry if they remained idle all the time, that they do any work at all; but any idea of doing work just to get an education would be quite out of the question. Generally they do just about enough work to provide themselves with rice and a few other necessities, and then enjoy themselves taking life easy the rest of the time. They can drop off to sleep on a hard floor, and with just a large stone or a piece of bamboo for a pillow, quicker than any one else I have ever seen. Our young friend, though, was inspired with the ambition to study, and gladly took up the offered work; and he is there now, working hard to keep himself in school.

The time came for the next holidays, and the question arose as to whether he should go home to his friends again; but something else suggested itself. Ohn Buint must have new clothes and other supplies, and so he was offered work on the new building which was to be erected; and this offer too was quickly accepted.

Building work in Burma is often very different from what is seen in many other countries. They split up bamboos in order to make the matting for the walls. Sometimes the whole house is made of bamboo; for there are various kinds of this valuable plant, which are used for different parts of the building. Bamboo is just like a giant grass plant.

As I told you in the story about Aung Baw's house, some bamboos grow to be seven or eight inches thick. These make very good posts and beams for houses. Smaller ones are put up to make the walls, as also the flooring. Shingles for the roof can be made by crushing short lengths of bamboo flat.

Even nails are not necessary when building a bamboo house, for short lengths of the

green bamboo are pared down into thin strips about a third of an inch wide; and when these are dampened they can be used for tying the joints where the different bamboos cross in the framework, or have been fitted one into the other, and also for tying the shingles or leaves to the roof.

Perhaps, too, the only tool that will be used is a Burmese dah, or long knife. With it the holes for the posts are dug in the ground. It also serves for all the cutting and jointing of the bamboos, and even for the paring of the strips with which the joints are tied. So you see it is possible to build a complete house with nothing but bamboos for material.

"How about the windows, though?" you will be almost sure to ask. Well, the village people do not have any glass windows; but they are content to have a little door in the wall which they can open, if desired, to let in light and air. Then, too, the whole of the front of a bamboo house is made like a big flap, so that it can be lifted up and held open with two stout sticks. In fact, this is frequently all there is in the way

of a door; and at night the flap is let down and fastened on the inside, so as to keep out animals.

The school building at Kamamaung which Ohn Buint helped to erect has a wooden frame and floor. This was secured by buying an old house somewhere across the river. After it was purchased it was pulled down, and the wood carted to the river, where it was tied together to form a rough raft; and then the whole was towed across the stream behind the little mission launch.

After building the house, a well was also dug, and a good brick lining put in. Now in the rainy season when the river is muddy, there is no trouble about getting good water for household use. The bricks for this work were all sorted out from a broken-down building which was on the land before the mission bought it. Thus the well cost very little money.

If you had to live in a bamboo house in a cold country, I fear you would find it very drafty; but in a warm country it is really an advantage to have the walls of

bamboo, for they let in plenty of air, and so keep the house cool. In the middle of the dry season, though, that is, during December, January, and February, it is frequently quite cool in the early hours of the morning, and one feels glad to nestle down into a good blanket.

The villagers do not usually have much of that kind of comfort, however, so they huddle up in what they do have until the raw morning air makes them feel too cold to sleep. Perhaps they will then go out and build a fire of bamboo leaves and other rubbish of that sort, and sit around it till daylight. Often a whole tree trunk will be dragged to the place where the fire is wanted, and this is set afire each time warmth is required, until it is all burned away. It is not the easiest way to light a fire; but then, it would mean much work at the beginning to chop it up into sticks. It seems just born in a Burmese villager to try to avoid hard work, even though this may mean a great deal more trouble for him in the end.

Talking about a fire and houses reminds me of the arrangements the people often

make in case a house should catch fire. Where so many houses are built of material like bamboo, which burns very readily, you can see how a fire might soon spread and destroy a whole village, if it were not promptly checked.

In front of each house two long bamboos are kept, one with a hook at the end of it, and the other with a fairly broad sheet of tin, perhaps cut from an old kerosene oil can, fixed to it, making it look very much like a long-handled paddle. If a roof takes fire, the paddle-like affair is used to beat the flames out; but if the fire has gone too far, then the long-handled hook is used to tear down the roof rapidly, or the whole house if that is deemed necessary.

Once there was a fire not far from where we were living. A large house and timber yard were in flames. Near by was a big group of bamboo houses, which it was feared would soon catch. In order to avoid this, the two or three places nearest the fire were pulled down; and being of such flimsy material, it was only a few minutes before they were all down and bundled away, leaving a

broad gap over which the fire could not pass.

Sometimes there is a big packing case on round wooden wheels, standing on the front veranda of a Burmese house. This is intended to be ready to wheel away the household possessions, should a fire make it necessary.

An old-time Burmese house had always just the one floor, for the people thought it would not be at all right to have somebody walking over their heads, as would be the case if there were two or more stories in a house. Even when traveling on the railway, some of them regard the upper sleeping berths as the more honorable; and I have had my fellow travelers urge me to take the upper bed, as they thought it disrespectful to sleep over me, as they must do if I had the lower berth.

In most of the houses there is not much in the way of furniture, for the people sit and sleep on the floor. At mealtimes they sit around a bowl of rice, with smaller dishes of curry or some other relishes standing by, and then each helps himself to rice, perhaps

with his hand, putting it into his own small dish, and spooning the curry over it. The food is put into the mouth with the fingers.

Hanging up in many houses is to be seen a cocoanut, which is there in honor of a certain spirit whom a king in ancient times once ordered to be reverenced in this way. There is a little shrine too, in front of which flowers and leaves are offered. All this is not right according to Buddhist teachings; but it is just one of the customs which show us that the people are not really Buddhists at all, but animists, or worshipers of spirits which are supposed to live in trees and animals and other things.

River Launches on the Salwin

"As soon as the launch has started and the man has checked over the passengers' tickets, we start our canvassing."

CANVASSING ON THE RIVER LAUNCHES

River Steamers — Getting Subscriptions — Government Dredges — Various Ways of Cooking Rice

WE are to go out canvassing this morning. Down at the jetty the launches are ready to start out to their various destinations. Farther upstream are the larger steamers that make the journey to Mandalay, a week's trip; and then from that point onward still other boats continue the service, going far up into the interior of Burma, along the Chindwin River or on the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy.

Three large boats carry hundreds of passengers, besides much cargo. Some of them are like floating markets; for when they stop at the various towns along the river, a great deal of trading is carried on between the villagers and the passengers. This morning we are to travel by one of the smaller launches, which make shorter day trips to near-by towns.

We have brought a supply of food and drinking water with us, also our bedding and cots, so are ready for a trip lasting some days. Maung Nge is used to it, you see, for he takes our packages straight up to a comfortable corner of the deck, where we shall not have other passengers climbing over us.

Except in the little cabin up in front of the launch, where chairs are provided, the passengers make themselves comfortable on the deck. For two pice a little bamboo mat can be hired from the refreshment seller, and this is all the average Burman needs in the way of equipment for a good sleep. Perhaps he may have a small bundle with him which will serve as a pillow; but if not, he will get along very well without it.

As soon as the launch has started and the man has checked over the passengers' tickets, we start our canvassing. Nearly every one can read, yet nobody seems to have thought to bring along anything to read, so we do not have any difficulty in finding customers.

"See, friend, here is a good paper that has much interesting news in it. If you give me your name and address, I will send it

to you every time it is printed, and it will cost you only six annas a year. It is printed in Rangoon four times a year."

This is the way we talk to a Burman sitting alongside.

"O my mother!" he exclaims to his friend next him; "here is a European selling newspapers to us." The very novelty of the idea appeals to him, and the paper is attractive in its appearance; so after a little conversation with us, he purchases a copy.

Thus we go around the boat, Maung Nge doing his share too, and it is not long before a number of papers have been disposed of; for with passengers getting on and off all the while, there are always some new ones to canvass, and we really do not have time to find the day's journey tiring. One and another, after having read through the paper, come and chat with us, so that we make many friends.

Of course, at the different villages along the river there are views of interest all the while. Just now we are traveling through a canal which the government is widening so as to shorten the distance to Mandalay for

the large steamers. Great dredges suck up the mud and pump it out behind the banks which have been built up, where it settles down and enriches the soil. Here are some of the rice mills I have already told you about.

For a long distance the water is covered with floating paddy husk, which mixes with the masses of water hyacinth that drift about.

Everywhere the village people seem to have something in the way of eatables for sale. Sometimes it is bananas, or pieces of jack fruit; or it may be they have various kinds of curry for sale, little packages of it being folded up in fresh leaves. Then there is rice cooked in a variety of ways. One method is to mix the raw rice with grated cocoanut, and pour it into a twelve-inch length of thin bamboo, in which it is cooked and sold. The buyer then splits off the bamboo casing, and finds the rice inside with a skin of pitch over it, much like a long, thin sausage.

This delicacy may suit the Burman very well; but you no doubt would find it very hard to digest, perhaps because it has been

cooked with insufficient water. Its flavor, though, is quite agreeable.

Rice may be "popped;" or it may be boiled and afterward made up into thin, flat cakes, held together with thin treacle, and perhaps ornamented on the top with stiff sugar.

Another delicacy is sugar made from the juice of the palmyra tree. When this is fresh, it is really very nice.

Some cattle are waiting on the bank, ready to come on the launch. The loading of them is generally done with much shouting. There is no proper landing place, the nose of the launch being pushed against the muddy bank and kept there till all is ready for starting again; but for the benefit of the animals an extra wide gangplank is run out to the shore. Even so, the oxen seem to object to walking up quietly; so the lookers-on must come and lend their aid by pushing and pulling each beast up in turn.

Sometimes one will suddenly decide to hurry on board, with the result that the man who has been tugging at its nose rope, in his anxiety to get out of the way, topples

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Cover of Our Burmese Paper

over backward into the water with a splash, amid the jeers and laughter of the crowd. Meanwhile the *serang,* or native captain, of the launch, is growing excited at the delay, and begins to add to the general uproar by shouting and urging everybody to hurry up.

When it comes to landing the cattle, there is far less trouble; for the man in charge of them just gives each one an encouraging push, with a twist of the tail if the push does not suffice, and splash they go into the river, swimming ashore as best they can.

Now we have arrived at the place where the launch stops for the night. We are to travel on to another town tomorrow, so will transfer our baggage to a different launch, and there make ourselves comfortable for the night. After having our supper, we can go ashore for a short walk before retiring to sleep.

All down the streets of this little town there are stalls set up by night. It almost seems as if each person in the place has a stall of some kind, trying to get his neighbors to buy something, if only a few roasted peanuts or some short lengths of sugar cane.

Over on that little mound the outlines of the pagoda can be easily seen, for some pious persons have provided an electric-light outfit, so that the building is decorated with strings of brilliant lights. This seems to be the very latest "fashion" in Burmese religious customs.

Judging by the sounds of music, there must be a performance going on. Such amusements are almost always given in the open air and at nighttime.

Ah, I see that this is a puppet show. A rough staging about two or three feet high has been built, with a low background of matting. Behind this screen the operators are moving about, the upper parts of their bodies being more or less hidden by a curtain which hangs over the front edge of the stage, but stops short of the floor by some four feet. Each operator is holding a gaudily dressed doll suspended from a number of strings, by pulling which the puppet is made to dance and skip about, as if it were an actor going through his part in a dramatic performance.

The dolls are supposed to represent figures in well-known stories, which are acted

out in this simple way time and time again. The audience sits on the ground in front. The people doze when they feel tired, carry on conversations with their friends, and occasionally take notice of what is going on for their amusement. The band sits somewhere near the stage, playing music appropriate to the part of the story that is being acted. The young man with the long bamboo clapper seems to enjoy making a noise, and works his tool, for we cannot call it an instrument, with great vigor. A high-pitched flute sets the real tune, which is filled out by gongs and drums tuned to a kind of scale. One has to acquire a taste for this kind of music, for I do not think it comes naturally to any foreigner.

We must get back to the launch now, for our night's rest will be very short. Early in the morning the men will begin firing the boilers ready for the day's run, and then there will be too much noise for further sleep.

Mosquito curtains are a necessity here, for in such a damp place as this Irrawaddy delta, these troublesome little insects fly

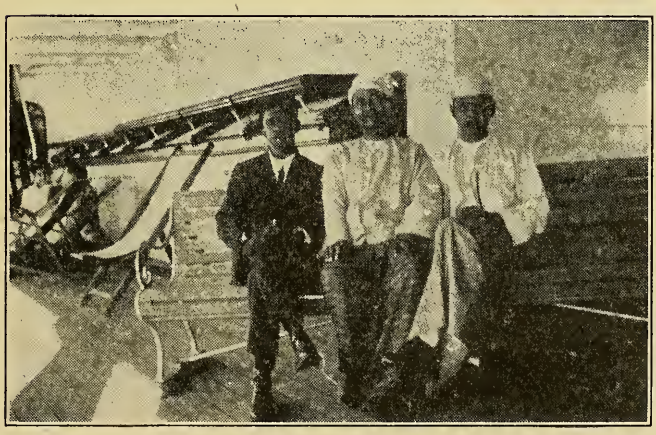
around in great numbers. Once I was in a town where they were particularly bad, even ponies being sheltered by nets at night.

Traveling around in this way one meets many friends, for it never seems hard to make the acquaintance of a Burman or a Karen fellow passenger. Different ones have invited us to visit them at their homes, where we were very kindly entertained. Of course, to the missionary "making acquaintance" means the gaining of opportunities for telling others of the gospel message.

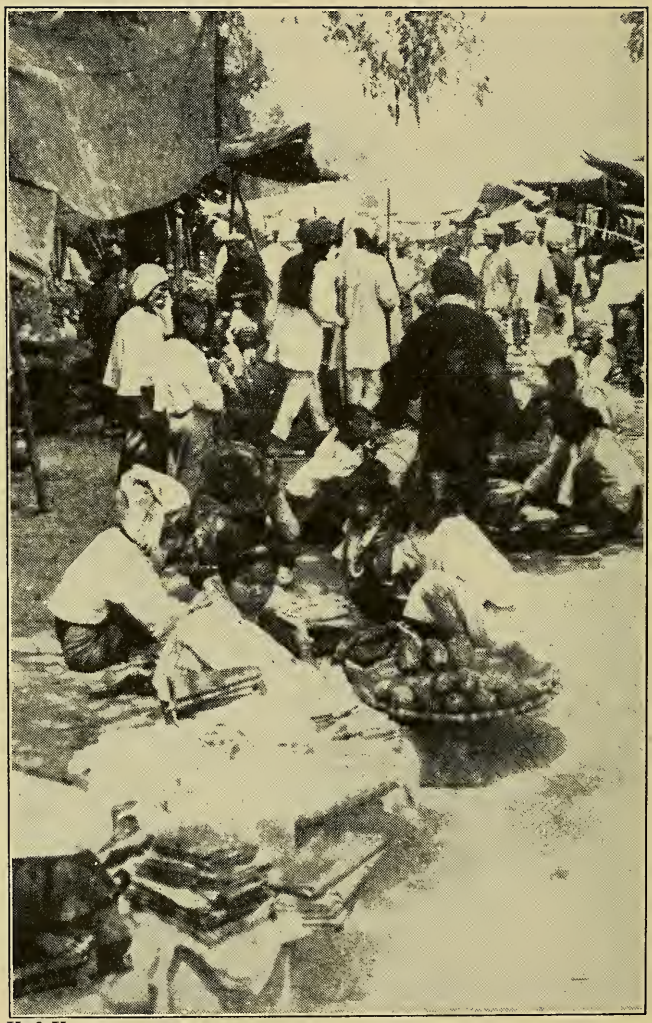
When we reach our destination, we must carefully canvass the whole town. This will take us two or three days; so for the time of our stay we will live at the dak bungalow, unless we meet some friend who invites us to his house. Up and down each street we go, calling at every house with our papers, and by the time the day is over we find that many have been disposed of. Even the Chinese pawnbrokers and liquor sellers readily buy the Chinese papers we have, while men from different parts of India come to us for the papers in their various languages. Although it is not possible for us to do more than

carry on a casual conversation with many of those we meet, yet we leave with all a silent messenger giving them the story in their mother tongue.

Up and down the railway and steamer routes, and in the parts where these facilities do not exist, our canvassers have gone and still go; and in this way the work is reaching out all over the country.



Burmese Aboard a Launch



U. & U.

Market Day in Burma

In Upper Burma it is customary for each town to hold a market, or *zaygyi*, every five days.

MARKET DAY

Buying Food, Dresses, and Flowers — Brass Wire Coils as Ornaments — Ngapi — Lacquer Ware — Beggars

"SAYA, tomorrow will be *zay gyi;* what am I to buy?" The boarding master had come for his instructions as to the supplies he was to purchase for the feeding of the school. Early in the morning he would have to go down to the market in the bullock cart, and bring back the rice, the onions, the garlic, the spices, and all the other odds and ends that go to make up a Burman bill of fare.

In Upper Burma it is customary for each large town to hold a market, or *zay gyi,* as it is called, every five days. From all over the country the farmers come in with their produce; and from a very early hour the sound of creaking carts reminds us that today we must lay in supplies sufficient for the week. In between these special days the market places are almost, if not quite, empty and deserted.

The market is a great place to see the people. Everybody seems to find some business to bring him to the fair.

Come along to the Taung-gyi bazaar and see the sights. The man who has just gone by in a motor car is the *sawbwa,* or native ruler, of a near-by state. With his broad-brimmed straw hat flapping over his head, and his none too tidy clothes, one would hardly credit him with being a prince; but nevertheless he has extensive power in his own state, and is a wealthy man. His *haw,* or palace, might seem to us to be a fairly substantial and somewhat elaborate barn; but compared with the surrounding houses it is imposing enough in its way.

Some sawbwas have very fine palaces on quite modern lines. There are a number of these chiefs in the Shan States, each with his own realm; and many of them are very enlightened men, keen to develop the resources of their domains and to improve the lot of their people. Although they are under the general control of the British government, within their own states the sawbwas administer justice, often in more of a fatherly way

than one finds in British Burma to the south. The petty offender, instead of being shut up in prison for a few weeks, may find himself triced up in the market place to receive in public a good sound beating with a substantial cane.

Well, now, here is the market in this fenced-in inclosure. What cartloads of cabbages and potatoes, what sacks of chilies, and baskets of onions and garlic! Here are some eggs, perhaps of doubtful age. In some markets one does not have to worry about the freshness of the eggs, as the shopman is careful to see to that, since he can sell the stale ones for more than the fresh, his Chinese customers preferring those that we would call "bad." Many of the village people do not often eat the eggs themselves, but leave them for the birds to hatch out. If ever any of our friends bring us a gift of eggs, we take this into account, and are prepared to find eight out of ten beyond all hope of our using them. Our Karen servant girl was quite surprised one time when, after trying hard to secure some eggs, and a dozen having unexpectedly been brought to

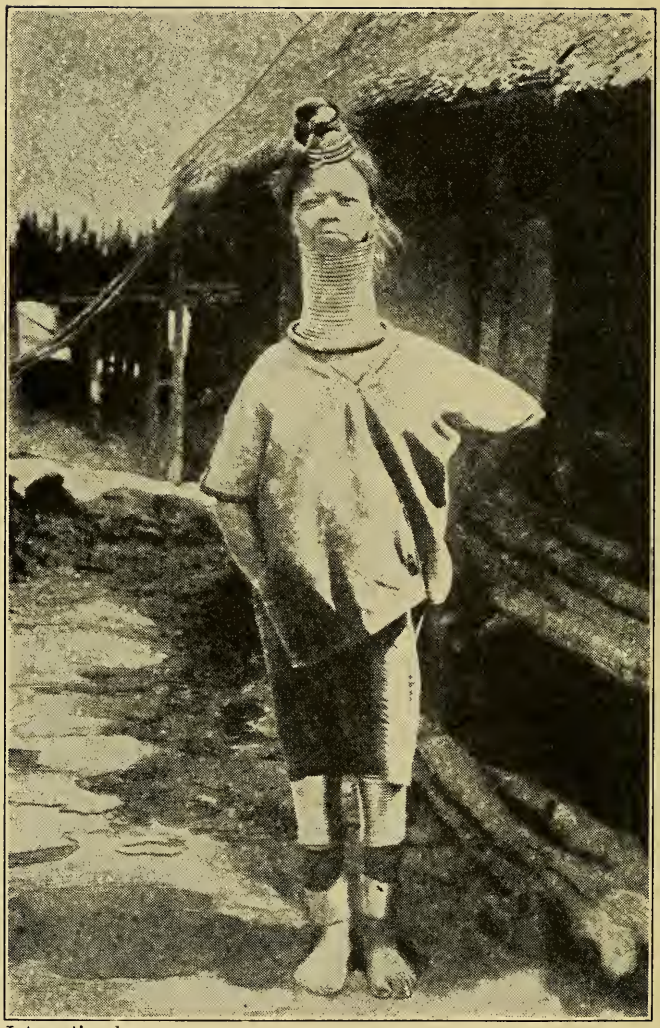
us, we refused to eat nine of them, just because they were black and evil-smelling inside!

It is of no use trying to bargain with these rustics for their produce, for they have a fixed price from which they refuse to vary. A friend of mine once had an amusing experience with one of them. She was not very well versed in Burmese, and so found it hard to catch what the toothless old vegetable woman, with her mouth full of betel nut, was mumbling in response to her query as to the price of the wares. In despair she offered four annas for what she wanted, thinking that a fair price. The old woman refused, so the offer was raised to five annas; but even this was positively refused, the old dame continuing to splutter out her own price. Eventually it turned out that the real price asked was three and a half annas; and having left her home that day determined to sell her wares at that price, nothing could induce the old woman to accept anything else, even though she was offered more.

By evening all the produce will have been sold out, and in its place the farmers

will have bought the things they need. Perhaps it is a new dah, or a fresh plow point; or maybe the time has come to buy some new clothes. What bargaining there will be at the cloth stall, with its piles of bright-colored cotton prints! What solemn discussions and careful deliberation, as if the fate of nations hung on the spending of four or five rupees!

Old grandfather will tell stories of how his mother used to weave all the cloth they needed; and the father will have his tale to tell of the wonderfully cheap silks he used to buy in Mandalay when he was the *boh's* (foreign gentleman's) servant. The pert young woman will toss her head and tell the *kullah* (Indian) shopkeeper that she saw far finer cloth at the last pagoda festival; and so they will go on till mother, who is the real business head of the group, makes up her mind what she thinks is right, and buys it. Still, it was very pleasant to have had the *kullah* bring down piece after piece so that one could admire the pretty colors; for the pleasure of shopping seems the same the world over.



International

Karen Woman Wearing Brass Ornaments

Some women wear coils of brass wire on their arms and legs; others have the wire coiled around their necks, resulting in a very uncomfortable stretching.

As a nation the Burmans have wonderful taste in colors, and a crowd of holiday makers in their best clothes make a most pleasing picture. When Madame Fashionable goes out for the day, she usually wears an old skirt under her bright new one, so that when she comes to ride in the canoes or the bullock cart, the best one can be slipped off and folded up till the journey's end is reached, when once again she will array herself in all her glory, recombing her long black tresses, adjusting her switch of false hair, and touching up her complexion with a little sandalwood paste; and all in full view of the public.

The cloth merchants in the market will sell yards and yards of the pretty prints, and the tailors with their machines will be kept busy all day long sewing up the cloth that the farmers have bought.

As a rule, Burmese clothing does not take much making, for both men and women commonly wear a skirt which is little more than a yard and a half of cloth with the two ends sewed together. The usual coat, or *aingyee,* is of very simple design too. Here

in the Shan States different styles of dress are to be seen, for many men wear a loose, baggy type of trousers, while some of the women too wear trousers. In contrast to the brilliant colors of the Burmese styles, these trousered women wear black, the loose shirt as well as the trousers being of that somber hue.

There! do you notice that woman over there dressed in that style? She is also wearing the adornment many of her tribe affect, which consists of a coil of stout brass wire wound round and round each leg just below the knee. In some places the women wear similar coils on their arms; while still others have the wire coiled around their necks, this latter style resulting in what seems to a stranger as being a very uncomfortable stretching of the neck. Earrings and nose rings find their wearers too, while finger rings, necklaces, and collar buttons afford other means of personal adornment. Women in Burma do not seem to favor the cumbersome silver foot and toe ornaments so commonly seen in parts of India; but in both countries the decking out of the women in jewelry seems to be a way of storing up

wealth; for village people have not learned to have full confidence in banks.

The market would not be complete without a plentiful supply of eating shops; and sure enough, here they are. Some are mere baskets set down by the roadside, around which the customers squat and eat their purchases; while others have a little modern spirit about them, being fixed up with some sort of table, furnished with bowls and spoons, and drinking glasses of thick green glass. Perhaps by way of decoration there are bottles of highly colored fruit sirups set out in orderly array.

Such strange-looking foods, you will say. Meat curries with an ominous tint suggestive of many chilies; fish curries of a strangely uninviting odor; these vie with hard-boiled eggs as undertaking to form the backbone of your next meal. Vegetables and green fruits shredded and served with spices to make the various kinds of *letho,* a form of salad; peanuts, sugar cane, boiled rice, puffed rice, jellies of uncertain constituency and uninviting appearance, pancakes, unleavened bread, biscuits, all are in demand.

European bread has its devotees too, and is a great delicacy to some, judging by the eagerness with which these children are eating it with salt. Once I gave medicine to a villager's little girl, and by way of payment he offered me a loaf brought from the market two days previously. I found some excuse for refusing it, for the sight of his bringing it in his grimy hands, soiled and unwashed after helping me with my "patient," and of his knocking the loaf on his dirty coat sleeve in an endeavor to induce the ants to surrender their possession of the bread, convinced me that should I take it, the bread would only be wasted, for I never could have found an appetite to eat it.

It is no wonder there is such a variety of foods for sale, for there are so many different national palates to cater to. If we stand and watch, we shall see Burmans, Shans, Karens, Taungthus, and Chinamen, besides Indians of various races; and all of them seem to have their peculiar delicacies. For instance, one authority assures us that there are well-marked differences between the various kinds of dogs that different tribes

will eat. One tribe is satisfied with any dog so long as it has a black palate, while another insists on its coat being black too. Others, however, are more easily satisfied, and will eat any kind they can get, just so it is dog.

So far as Burmans go, the foreigner always sums up the national taste in food by the one word, *"ngapi,"* that evil-smelling fish preparation, the name for which is so hard to pronounce, but the taste for which is still harder to acquire. We have heard that there are various sorts of this article. Personally we can testify that it is all as putrid-smelling as anything could possibly be. In general it consists of fish packed with salt and allowed to ferment, the result being a mass or a stiff paste, according to the method of preparation.

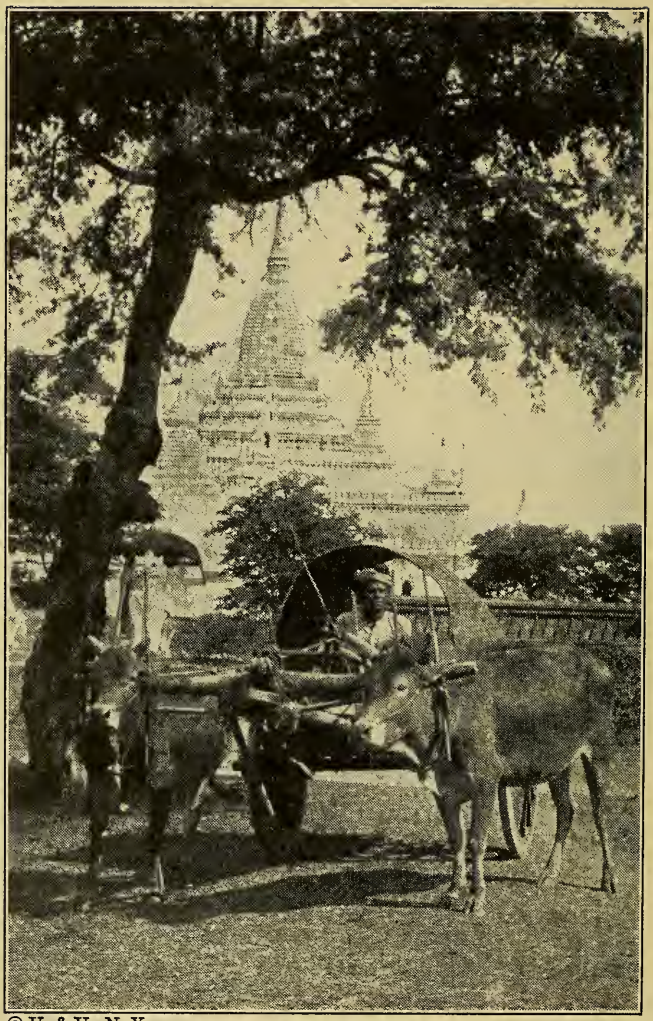
Yet, however obnoxious it may be to our foreign taste, both by reason of the none too hygienic modes of preparation and of its vile smell, there is no doubt whatever that to the Burman it is a real delicacy, ranking with pumpkin pie and plum pudding in the lists of national dishes.

We must hurry around and see the flower sellers with their sweet-smelling wares. In most markets there are piles of jasmine and roses, picked off without any stalks, the former being in great demand for making chains for decorating the women's hair, while all flowers are used for offerings at the shrines and pagodas. Here are sellers of lacquer ware, with their trays and cups and betel boxes, decorated with conventional designs in red and green. There are the umbrella sellers, and there the shops where are earpicks and nosepicks and nail cleaners, and the nippers for cutting betel nut, as also the small metal boxes for the lime and spices which are mixed with each quid of the nut.

Here are little tweezers for pulling out one's beard, for Burmans do not shave their chins, not having enough growth of hair to make that worth the effort; but any stray hairs that may appear are plucked out root and branch. One time on the train I did see a fashionable town Burman who was stroking his face with a brand-new safety razor; but he reminded me of the old story of the barber who told the new young cus-

tomer that he had no time to spend shaving egg shells!

The beggars are here also to share in the spoils,— beggars with sham sores and beggars with real ones. We must get used to the revolting sight of lepers and cripples and deformities, for it seems as if people here do not mind exposing their misfortunes if that will bring in a steady income. One grows rather deaf to the cries of many of the beggars, since coming across an actual instance of a beggar who brought a police court case against a man for stealing fifteen hundred rupees, " takings " intrusted to him to remit to the beggar's home.



A Common Sight in Burma

One sees long and winding trails of creaking bullock carts.

INTO THE SHAN HILLS BY TRAIN AND CARAVAN

Floating Islands — Wealth Buried with the Dead in the Lake — Pickled Tea — The Gospel in the Hills

SUDDENLY the sound of tinkling bells was heard, and away the children ran to see what was passing by. Presently they came back, all breathless from the race, and with little Naomi, who had outrun the others, crying out, "It's all right, mamma. Nobody's married."

You see she was used to the Indian wedding processions with the bands of musicians, and had thought something of that sort must be the cause of the sounds she had just heard; but she was now up in the Shan States, to the north of Burma, where there are many things different from what she was accustomed to in our home in Lucknow. The music of the tinkling bells really came from a string of patient pack oxen which were slowly plodding past us along the dusty road.

From the big port of Rangoon down near the seacoast, the railway runs north and stretches out its iron arms in many directions, gathering some of the wealth of Burma to carry away for the use of the world, and bringing in exchange the many things that other countries make and Burmans need.

Beyond the railway, the old, old times and ways have hardly changed; one still sees the long and winding trails of creaking bullock carts, massive elephants swinging along in their great strength, the slow-moving strings of patient pack oxen, with the cheery tinkle, tinkle, of their bells. There are the sturdy human carriers, each with his yoke across his shoulder, or perhaps his load slung on his back or from his forehead, and on the rivers, great canoes that are rowed, poled, or sailed, as the chance may be, and even rafts that lend their aid in bringing from the far interior the things that men have learned to need.

The railway into the southern Shan States has been slowly pushing on for years, and now reaches to Heho, across the valley from Taung-gyi. Fussy, noisy, greasy motor cars

snatch up the passengers and the mails as they leave the train, and jostle the bullocks and the ponies and the carts for the first few miles; but on beyond, day in, day out, the caravans press on, linking up the far-off borders of China with the outside world.

Another branch of the railway runs to Martaban, across the river from Moulmein, and from that point launches and country boats take up their burdens and carry them on to where the pack animals start away for the trying journeys over the hills into the interior of Siam. So in other directions, too, the ways are opened up for the traveler whom duty or pleasure calls to these far-off countries.

As we travel along the road, we pass the camping places, where at night the loads are laid aside, and the tired animals rest their weary limbs and browse in peace. A bright fire is all the light that is needed, serving both to cook the drivers' meal and to scare away any prowling beasts of prey.

With the early morning light the camp is astir, and in due time the big panniers are loaded onto the cattle, or the animals are

yoked to the carts, and another day's march is started. The bells of the pack oxen begin their tinkling once again, as they swing from the frames fixed over the pack saddles.

How the wheels of the carts do creak! To our foreign ears the sound, at first especially, is anything but pleasant; but to the drowsy driver dozing on his load, it seems to be a lullaby, singing to him that all is well and moving. All at once the noise dies down, and his sleep is disturbed. Raising one heavy eyelid, he sees the cause. Another cart has come from the opposite direction, its driver also is sleeping; and as both are in the center of the road, the oxen in each cart have stopped, and now stand blinking at each other, as if in anticipation of the torrent of threats and yells that is soon to descend upon them.

Each man seizes a stick and with it jabs and pokes his animals, the guiding of which consists of little more than poking them. With heads thrown high to avoid the painful strain on the nose ropes, and with tongues lolling out, the oxen pull and tug under the yokes, as if determined to go the wrong way

after all. In due time, though, the drivers' yelling and beating produce the desired result, and the carts creak past each other, one going down the bank on the lower side of the road, and the other into the drain on the upper. Soon all is steady creaking again, and the driver can settle down for another good nap.

Perhaps the motor car carrying the mails disturbs him next; and he must be careful this time lest the shrieking horn which warns him of its approach, and the noise of the machinery, frighten his oxen, sending them scampering over the side of the road, maybe upsetting the cart, and delaying him with a broken axle or some other mishap of that description. If any accident like this should occur, then he and his friends will have to draw in by the side of the road, and between them repair the damage.

Little more than ten miles is covered in a day; so the coming of the railway means that a journey that formerly took a week, can now be completed in a few hours. On beyond, the road stretches for some hundreds of miles, not so well made as nearer in, but

Ahuja, Rangoon

Burmese Racing Boats

well enough for the heavy carts and the cattle to pick their way over; and we learn that it is some twenty-four or more "halts," or days' journeys, to one far-off town, which even then is a long way from the borderline.

Off to the south of the caravan road in the southern Shan States, not far from where the railway now reaches, is a great lake, which is very interesting by reason of what are called the floating islands. These seem to be great masses of vegetation all matted and twisted together, that drift about on the surface of the water. Local legends have it that much wealth lies hidden in these places, protected by the spirits of the air, which would instantly pounce on any mortal who might make bold enough to search for the treasure.

It is said to have been a custom here to bury half of a man's wealth with his body, and as the method of burying consists in fastening the dead bodies to the bottom of the lake with stakes, it is at once easy to understand the origin of the legends of buried wealth, and why a superstitious people should be afraid to search for it.

Very probably, if an attempt should be made in daylight to recover any of it, the supposed spirit guardians would not exert themselves, as the villagers would show their resentment of the interference with their dead by driving off the intruders. As for hunting for the wealth under cover of darkness, far from venturing out in such a lonely place for any reward whatever, the average Burman is almost too scared to walk down a village street after dark, and must needs sing aloud and clap his hands to scare away the powers of evil.

It would seem that some bold spirits have got the better of their fears, for one hears tales of families which have suddenly become wealthy in some mysterious way. One such family that I heard of explains its good fortune in this way:

It happened that one dark night a poor villager was crossing the lake in his boat, when all of a sudden another canoe came alongside his, shooting out from behind one of the floating islands, an old withered-up woman being the only occupant of it. She earnestly begged the man, as an act of char-

ity, to bring her a packet of pickled tea from the village; and although he had only a few copper coins in the world, he promised to do so. Returning home, he was as good as his word, bringing the desired delicacy with him, and giving it to the old woman when he met her at the appointed place.

In return for his kindness she gave him a basket, and when he arrived home, he found to his joy that this basket contained money; and though he, and his family after him, have been taking money out of it ever since, it has never emptied, but still continues to supply their needs.

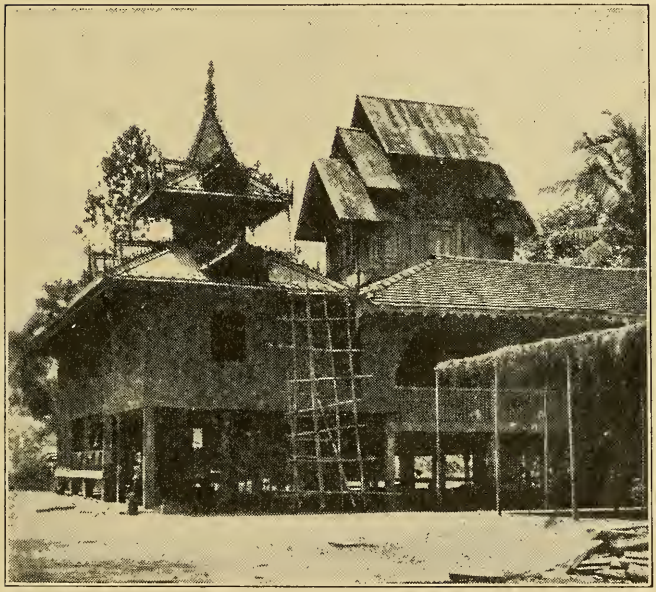
Well, this is the story as it has come to me; but the only thing about it that I know to be true is, that this particular family is certainly very wealthy. The story they tell of the source of their wealth is possibly only their way of covering the fact that some of their ancestors ventured out onto the lake and robbed the dead of the riches buried with them.

Pickled tea will seem to you such a strange delicacy that I must tell you some-

thing about it before I close. The green tea leaves are taken and dried in the sun for a few days, after which they are steamed, this last process removing some of the tannin from them. After this the leaves are pressed down into small brick-lined pits and left to ferment. Mixed with salt, this preparation is considered a great delicacy by the people of Burma. It is also used in a formal way, as for instance, a small package of pickled tea, dressed with oil and spices (*lipet,* the Burmese call it), is sent to one whom it is desired to invite to some ceremony. The eating together of pickled tea by the parents of the young couple, is the national way of ratifying the marriage contract, the similar chewing of betel nut being part of the same ceremony.

The region of the Shan Hills of Burma is one of the " corners of the earth " to which the gospel message is to be taken, and from which redeemed ones will be gathered in the day of the harvest. Even here our canvassers are pressing forward, taking with them the literature which warns men of the impending crisis. Too, students are brought

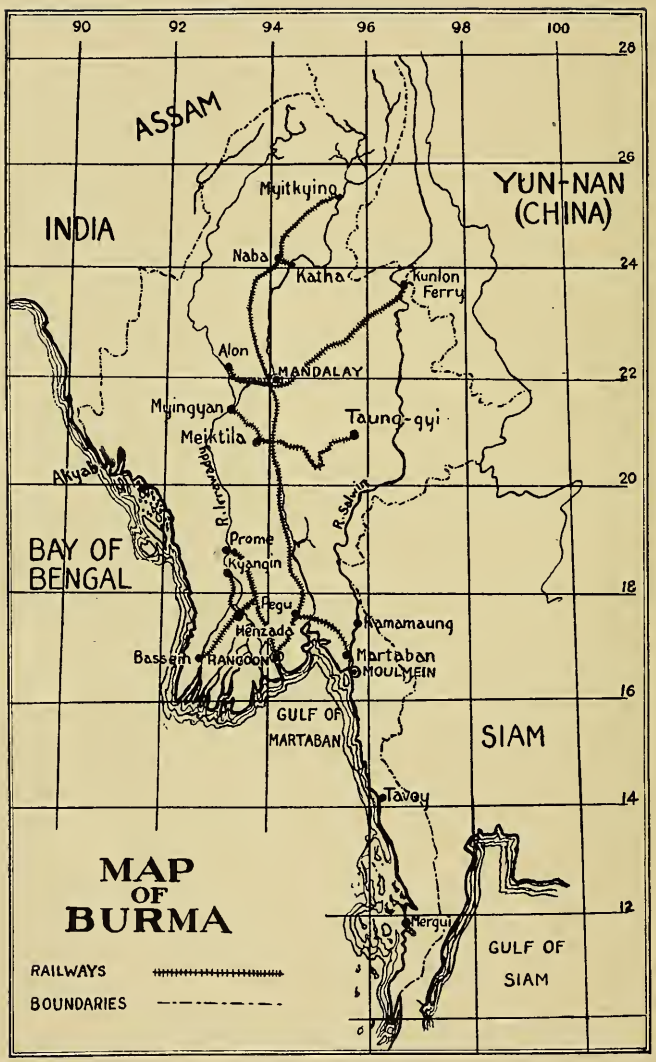
into our schools, that they, having learned for themselves, may carry the good news back to their own people.



A Monastery in Burma

It is the rule for every Buddhist boy in Burma to pass a short time in the monastery, wearing the yellow robe, and receiving special teaching in his religious duties.

(See page 102)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Taung-gyi
Akyab
R. Irrawaddy
R. Salwin
BAY OF
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RANGOON
Martaban
MOULMEIN
GULF OF
MARTABAN
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Tavoy
Mergui
GULF OF
SIAM
MAP
OF
BURMA
RAILWAYS
BOUNDARIES

IN CONCLUSION

A Map Study — Rangoon — Burmans' Dislike of Heavy Work — Modern Conveniences in Rangoon — Schools

Now that we have taken a peep at some of the people of Burma and their lives and homes, let us remember something of the country in which they live. It is often true that the country itself has had much to do in making the people what they are.

Just look at the map of Burma, and you will see that in the north and west it is joined to India by land, while on the east it touches China and Siam. Although that is the case, it is much easier to enter Burma from the sea, since high mountains shut it off almost entirely on every other side. Because of this, it is not possible to go to Burma by railway from any other country, and nearly everybody who goes there enters Rangoon, the big port near the sea on one of the many mouths of the Irrawaddy. One can enter at Bassein and Moulmein also; but not many people go that way, because Rangoon is so

many times larger than the other places. Ocean steamers also call at such ports as Tavoy, Mergui, and Akyab; but each of these places is so shut off from the rest of the country by rough land that nobody would think of them as gates into Burma.

You can look on the map for all the ports I have mentioned; and then you must try to picture in your mind the great cargoes of rice that the steamers receive at Bassein, Akyab, and Moulmein, and also the valuable wood which is sent out from the latter place. Tavoy and Mergui are the places where tin and wolfram and other valuable metals are shipped; while Rangoon, the greatest port of them all, sends away vast stores of rice, wood, and oil, and other kinds of merchandise too numerous to mention.

In a few places, there are tracks over the mountains from Siam and China, along which the caravans slowly wend their way; and they are important, too, in that they seem to have provided the way into Burma for the different tribes who now live there. Even today there are bands of people constantly pressing over the borders from China.

It is far more difficult to cross the mountains which separate Burma from India; and so we find that the peoples of Burma are more like their neighbors across the Salwin, that is, the Siamese and Chinese, than the Indian races; and the general appearance of the people, as well as their languages, differs much from those we find in India, although Burma and India are parts of the same government known as the Indian Empire.

I want you to take careful notice of the city of Rangoon. Even before the railway was built, Rangoon had begun to be the most important place in Burma; for the mighty Irrawaddy River stretches for hundreds of miles north, right up through the center of the country; and on its broad and quiet waters are borne numberless craft, both large and small, bringing to the port at its mouth the treasures of the province. Now the railway has come, it has added to the ease with which one can reach Rangoon from any location inland; and see how it has stolen in behind both Moulmein and Bassein, taking away much of the produce that used to be floated down to these ports and shipped from

them. Some day it may serve Akyab the same way.

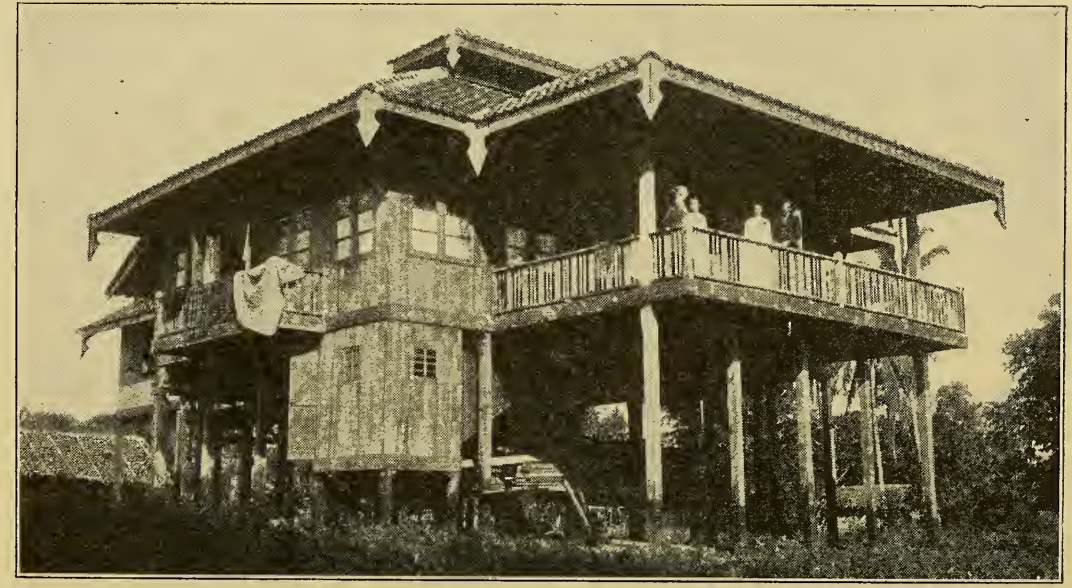
If you could come with me from the sea, up the river to Rangoon, I think you might be just a little disappointed. After all I have told you about the forests and the caravans, and the people in their little villages, you would be expecting to see something of them right away; but at first you would see nothing but a very low-lying, muddy shore, with a few cocoanut palms.

Soon the tall chimneys and the big steel reservoirs of the oil works would be seen; and then still farther up, over and above everything else would be seen shining the great golden pagoda, the Shwe Dagon. A large amount of money has been spent to cover the top of this building with real gold plates; and as it is often cleaned, it shines brilliantly in the sunlight. Other famous pagodas are frequently gilded over, like the one at Moulmein. At that place the pagoda is high up on the summit of the ridge of hills which rise sharply behind the town. At certain times of the year there is generally a dense white morning mist which

completely hides the town; and then as the sun gets higher and higher, and shines on the golden building on the hilltop, the pagoda seems like a great golden bell floating in the clouds.

All the way up the river to Rangoon you would have been looking out for some Burmese people, to see what they look like; but you might get right up to the steamer wharf, and even have been landed there for some time, before you would have seen a single Burman, although there might be crowds of people about all the time. There would be Indians, and Chinamen, and Europeans, but perhaps not a Burman.

Of course, there are really thousands of Burmans in Rangoon; but they do not generally like such work as is done by the porters on the wharves, or even by the boatmen; and the sturdy coolies from South India have come over by the hundreds of thousands to Burma to do the heavy manual work, while Mohammedans from Chittagong in India seem to do nearly all the river work, even running many of the little ferries across the rivers for miles inland.



Missionaries' Home, Kamamaung Mission

Landed in Rangoon, we should find a well-built and clean city; and more and more it is becoming like the cities of Western lands, with substantial buildings, electric lights, and street cars, and all those conveniences we are used to in our own countries. Out in the western end of the town many Burmans would be found, some even in bamboo houses; but because of the danger of fire from having such flimsy structures in a crowded city, they are gradually becoming less and less. If a fire does break out in a group of these houses, perhaps hundreds will be burned before it can be put out; and then slowly the more substantial brick buildings will take the place of those the fire has destroyed.

Rangoon has a number of fine, large schools, as well as two colleges; so the Burmese boys who live in the town can go to school, as many of them do. Not only do they learn the regular lessons, but they also notice how other people live and dress; gradually their own national customs give way, and it is not always easy to recognize Burmans in the smartly attired young men who

are to be seen riding their motor cycles, wearing helmets, or topees, as we call them, to protect their heads from the sun, and with all the other things we usually associate with Europeans. In their homes, too, these young people will be found to have discarded many of their old ways of living; and even though the easy-chairs and rockers we are accustomed to are called "foreign seats" in Burmese, they have learned to prefer them to their own style of squatting on the floor, although, of course, many do still sit down in that way.

So you see that in Rangoon it is not easy to find a picture of true Burmese life; and that is why we have looked into the homes of our friends in the villages, and have seen how it is that they work and live; for they represent the great majority of the native peoples of Burma.

It should not be thought that the people of Burma are all of one race; for there are many different tribes scattered about all over the country. In olden times these tribes used to war one against another nearly all the time; and many are the heaps of ruins which

are pointed out to us here and there as being all that remains of some former capital.

These various tribes often have peculiar customs which differ from those of other peoples of Burma; so you would not find things in every part of Burma just as I have told you. This makes the country more interesting to the foreigner, no matter how long he may have lived in it; for all the time he can be seeing something new. It does make the work of the missionary harder, though; for in order to be able to carry on his work properly, he must learn the language and the customs of the people among whom he is to live. And perhaps after studying a language for years, he will still find thousands of people living near him who can hardly understand what he says, for they themselves have a still different mother tongue.

There is, however, a language which all can understand and in which every servant of Christ should continually seek to improve, and that is the language of kindly actions. Without this no missionary can have much hope of success; for simple though the vil-

lagers may be, experience has taught them that a man's works are of more value than his words. So as we come in contact with them, we must try to learn their way of doing things, and their way of thinking, so that while we teach them the way of life, we may not hurt their feelings and drive from us those whom we seek to win.

This little tour through Burma has perhaps been all too short; but nevertheless our hope is that it may serve, not only to arouse in some an interest in that pleasant land, but also to increase in others the interest they already have, that they themselves may come to its shores, and in turn strive to win some of its people for the Master.