

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

HINDOSTAN.

Traditions—dress—manners and customs of the people—appearance of the country—movements of elders, &c.

CALCUTTA, Nov 5th, 1854.

President J. M. Grant—Dear Brother:—Seven months have now elapsed since my last communication to our much beloved brother and President Willard Richards, ceased; and as I learn that you have succeeded him in his place, I shall continue my correspondence with you, and will more enter the regions of description, relative to matters in the east. I desired to inform you of the progress of affairs with us some months ago; but the unsettled state of our prospects was such that I could not do so with any certainty. I have now just arrived from Burmah, where I have been for the last two months. Not being able to learn satisfactorily, the situation of matters there, I rather hurriedly came to the conclusion to go and see for myself.

I will say that I am well, and have been so, since I left here: though much exposed by sea and land. The ostensible reasons for my going to Burmah were partially, for the purpose of ascertaining the true situation of the people called "Kerrens," an account of which was forwarded to you by br. Luddington, besides many others coming from the same source, viz: the Missionary Baptists, have induced me to enquire into their situation, and character. And besides, my soul is sick of trying the people of Hindostan, and I felt as though I could ransack the furthest corner of the earth, to find a people that would believe our testimony, and obey the gospel. But when I found the people called "Kerrens," they were in many respects like all other Asiatics; laboring under the accumulated traditions of several thousand years, which are so strongly interwoven with their very existence, that it seems a thing almost impossible to make any inroads upon them, or raise their narrow minds, to the idea that there is a God besides theirs, who is in possession of knowledge and power. They suppose that we know nothing of the God whom we serve, only by fabulous legends, similar to their own.

The Burmahs I must say, as a people are far in advance of the Bengalis; they don't manifest that crouching, crawling, servile spirit, which the Hindoos possess. Besides, they are much fairer in complexion than the large majority of Hindoos; and in their features, they are another mould altogether. There is a slight resemblance to be traced in their out-lines, between them and the Malays; but they more strongly resemble the inhabitants of Siam, Cochinchina, and the Celestial Empire. These three are more or less scattered all through the Burman Empire, and can only be told from them by their dress, and sometimes by the mode of worship, but not always, for I have seen them and the Burmahs both worshipping at the same time and place. From the great similarity in their language, and many of their traditions, I strongly incline to the opinion that they have sprung from the same Tartar origin.

In stature, the Burmahs are not more than five feet eight or nine inches, the tallest of them, and have very peculiar habits prevailing amongst them, one of which is, they will not take animal life, or kill anything for their own use at all; they do however, catch and eat fish; this is the only animal food which they make use of, except the animal should die, when they would have no scruples in eating it, it matters not what the disease might have been; this as a matter of course, makes the most part of their diet vegetable, in which may be included the leaves of trees, and jungle fruit; the latter I am told is very abundant during its season. They also make a free use of narcotics, such as opium; tobacco, and betel-nut; they are the most inveterate smokers I have ever seen; children, before they are weaned from the breast, often commence the use of the cigar.

The Burmahs cultivate the earth but to a limited extent. Their principal production is rice; but I am told in the upper parts of the country, about Ava, that some wheat is raised, of an inferior quality; but it cannot be to any great extent. They live in poor miserable hovels, made of bamboo, and thatched with grass. They are set upon posts a few feet above the ground, and are often set over a stinking pond of water, where all the filth from the house can drop through the floor, which is left open for that purpose, and the foul effluvia which arises from the stinking cesspools is almost beyond endurance to a half civilized nose. Their wearing apparel, and everything which they use, is purely domestic, and there is no such thing as caste among them. You can find a loom in almost every house, and the cloth which they manufacture much resembles French Gingham, or Scotch Plaid, and is very strong and serviceable. There are also large quantities of silk manufactured, but I did not see any of them at work; it is generally of a coarse quality, but very serviceable, and strong. For common apparel, the men wear a single piece of cloth around the loins, and a *pugrah* (cloth) around the head; they wear their hair long, and never shave; they pluck out their eye brows. This is their every-day appearance.

The women are very singular in their costume; their dress consists of a single piece of cloth, which is nearly square, and a little more than reaches round them, with the open part in front; they draw the upper edge tightly around them, and the lower edge is hanging a little below the knees, after it is sufficiently tight, the outside corner is tucked under; this as a natural consequence, leaves the garment nearly all open before, and every time the wind blows, their whole person is exposed. They do not seem to mind anything about it, and can not be prevailed upon to change their mode of dress. The women are much superior to the men, and as a general thing, are much fairer in complexion, and of a fine carriage, and very kind, civil, and courteous. There is none of that shy, sneaking, affected timidity, that characterizes the women of Bengal; they do all of the work in the house, and out of doors as we call it, but it is all out of doors to them, for they have no doors to their houses; they also do all of the buying and selling. The men are a very lazy, idle set. The Burmahs believe in and practice a plurality of wives extensively, and I must say, that there is the least immorality, and licentious habits, practiced amongst them of any people that I have ever seen, except the saints. Adultery is punished by the death of the man, to be executed by the husband or friend of the woman; and they, without any exceptions, far excel any nation in the

east, for morality, and virtue; and such a thing as a public prostitute is not known amongst them; they are only to be found upon the track of Her Majesty's Army. With the march of civilization, and the enlightened etiquette of the Anglo-saxon race, follows crime in all its horrid forms, licentiousness and treachery are in the front rank; and the condition of the natives in this respect, retrogrades with the advance of British rule.

Tradition says concerning the dress of the women, that about 150 years ago, the nation were so sunk in vice and wickedness, that they were about to become extinct, in consequence of a national evil, which prevailed to an alarming degree, which was the crime of Sodomy. The then reigning king and queen, enforced upon the females of the nation by decree, the kind of dress which I have already described, the queen herself setting the pattern first, then enjoined upon all others, with the hope of reclaiming the men, by the exposure of their persons, which it appears has had a salutary effect. The Kerrens are somewhat different from the Burmahs in personal appearance; they are more of a stalwart, hard-fisted race, and have long been oppressed by the Burmahs; many of them are much lighter complexioned than the Burmahs, the women in particular; they also dress different; they have not such uncomely fashions as the Burmahs. Their language is also different, and I think them a very good people for Asiatics. But their traditions, like all the rest, are the predominant and ruling features of the people. From what I heard I felt very anxious to establish the gospel amongst them; my mind was full of hope, and buoyant with anticipations, that the Lord had a people amongst them. Such were my feelings of them, from the best information that I could get.

At Rangoon I saw a few who belonged to the Missionary Station in that place; but this was not satisfactory; I wished to see them in their native villages, where they were untaught, and uncontaminated by the pernicious influences of missionary priestcraft which has money for its end, and beginning, and is incompetent to correct its own errors, much less to enlighten the benighted minds of the so called heathen. Most of the Kerrens speak the Burmese language. Brother Savage also speaks that language well. We accordingly began to make preparations for a trip amongst them. I first tried to obtain some conveyance by land, but I soon learned that in consequence of the incessant rains which prevail here six months in the year, that the road was not passable for anything except an amphibious animal. I am told that the country is filled with deep nullacks (ravines) and broad tracts of low land, which were most likely to be covered with water at this season. We then came to the conclusion to hire a boat, which we did, for four English shillings per day; after providing ourselves with the needful for the trip, we set off. The first day found us far beyond the reach of any except natives, who looked like the inhabitants of Neptune, that had just emerged from the watery element, a strange sight to American eyes! a whole village setting upon posts, from eight to ten feet above the surface of the water, with a countless number of hogs, dogs, and fowls, living upon the same platform. It brought to my mind in full force, the old adage, "that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives." The only means of conveyance from one house to another is by boats which every family is in possession of. The entire face of the country as far as the eye can reach is submerged in water, ranging from two to five feet in depth. There is a kind of water weed, and a coarse cane grass, which grows up from the earth, and floats upon the surface of the water, and forms a kind of a floating surface some six or eight inches thick, and upon this grows a short kind of grass, which makes its general appearance that of a continuous plain. All through this floating surface are channels, from six to ten feet in width, where they travel with the boats, and are to the natives what a public high road is to us, and afford thorough-fares to and from the various market places. This district of country is chiefly settled by the Kerrens, who have come down from the hills for the purpose of raising rice, to which this country is particularly adapted. There are from fifteen to thirty houses in a village, and the villages occupy every few miles. There are often two and three families in a house; they are a very hospitable and kind people, but have no literary attainments.

As to their religious views, I did not find them as represented by the missionaries. They do not worship the "Great Spirit," as it has been stated; very many of them are "Buddhists," and those that are not do not worship anything. Br. Savage told them who we were, and the nature of our message, but they could not understand it at all; they have no correct idea of God, and the whole affair was a new train of thought, and such a burst of new ideas upon their contracted minds that they had not the slightest conception of what we were talking about. They are governed by tradition, and instinct. All one generation knows of another is by tradition, and it is more firmly riveted upon the minds of this people than of those in any other country. We visited them from village to village, for some days, and what we saw in the first we saw in the last; they were all alike. We visited in one village, some who had been converted to Christianity by the American Baptists. We asked them if they believed in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost; to which they answered yes. The fruits of their profession were not to be seen; I could not discern any change in them more than in those that made no profession; and I could not see that their condition was in the slightest manner bettered. It is true, they acknowledged that they believed in God, but that is all there was of it. It is far worse than it is with the Utah Indians; ask them if they believe in God, and they will say yes, every time, and have some very good traditions.

Let I should be tedious in my details, I will say in a word, that to me there appears no chance for the old stock ever being brought to a knowledge of the truth. To commence with the young ones is the only hope, and that is like beginning with the raw material, or acting upon the native element, which perhaps may be brought into subjection in another generation, provided they are emigrated, which they are averse to. I do not think it can be done effectually in this country, at least not until the reign of righteousness is fully entered in, then perhaps will be their day of grace.

I found in Rangoon a small branch of the Church in a flourishing condition, under the guidance of elders Willis and McNamee, which now numbers about 22. I stopped a short time with them, during which time I delivered two

courses of lectures nightly; there were four added to the Church during my stay. Br. Levi Savage Jr. will remain at this place, and labor with the Burmahs, and if possible obtain a footing amongst them; he has already spent about one year amongst them; but he has not been able to make any converts yet. I frankly confess that I have no faith in their obeying the gospel, until a different spirit prevails from the one which they are in possession of at present. Br. Willis embarked for the valley, via Panang and Singapore, on the 9th of Sept. He arrived safely at Singapore on the 8th of Oct, and found br. Luddington who had returned from Siam some three weeks previous, and was then lecturing in Singapore, but expected to leave in a day or two, for Malacca. There being no opportunity of shipping for America for some months to come, br. Willis concluded to ship for England, which he did about the 15th of Oct., on the Gazelle, Capt Leslie, bound for Liverpool.

In Calcutta matters remain much as they were six months ago; br. Woolley has been here for some months past. Br. Potheringham is near Cuttack, and br. Meik is at Cuttack; he says, there is some hopes of adding a few in that place. The prospects for our emigration this cold weather are not very flattering at present; I however shall do my best to accomplish something in that way; I trust in the Lord that I may be able to gather a few. Brother Woolley had embarked for the United States; he sailed on the first of Nov., on board the John Gilpin bound for Boston. I am now alone in this place, and expect to be for some time yet to come.

Brothers Woolley and Potheringham have faithfully warned the inhabitants of the north western provinces of India, and in every place the people have manifested the most perfect indifference, and there has not been for some time past enough to occupy the attention of one elder.—Bro. Robert Owens sailed for the valley via Australia, in July last. Br. Ballantyne sailed for England the last of the same month. Br. Skelton remains at Madras, still trying to do them some good; no accessions to our numbers. Br. Hugh Finley at Belgium, has baptized a few during the summer, amidst much opposition. The military authorities of India, will have much to answer for; they have opposed our elders in every station where they have attempted to preach the gospel, and in some instances, when we had found those that were favorably inclined towards us, as soon as the officers heard of it, they would commence a regular system of oppression against them, until they would break their spirit, and make them cower before them, for their prosperity depends upon the approval of their superior.

Br. Leonard and Musser are in the Scinde country where they have been since last March; they have baptized two; prospects dull. I cannot tell when I shall be able to leave here. Remember me kindly to Prests. Young and Kimball, and may they live long to bless the people of God, and build up Zion, in my prayer in the name of Jesus; and may His choicest blessings rest upon you, in connection with them. I wish to be remembered to all who "express a wish or a thought after me," especially to br. Carrington, and those that have sent me the Deseret News.

With much love to yourself and family, I remain your affectionate bro. in the gospel,

N. V. JONES.

SCOTLAND.

41 Charlotte St., Glasgow, Scotland, }
November 28, 1854. }

DEAR BR. J. M. GRANT:—

I take pleasure at this time in giving you a short account of my present feeling in the work of the Lord, and what my desires are. I can say of a truth that I never felt better than I do at present, my faith is strong in the Lord, and I know, by the way I am blessed from time to time, that God is with me by his Holy Spirit, and gives me strength and joy all the day long.

I often wish, in my ministering to the people, that I had more ability, but when I consider and see how God acknowledges me I am forced to admit that it is the humble man of God who will stand, and whom the Lord delighteth to honor.

I have felt well in my labors in Scotland. The saints uphold me by their faith, prayers, and confidence, and I have the greatest confidence in the brethren who are over me. Elders Franklin D. Richards and Daniel Spencer are faithful servants of God; they study the interests of the church, and use their influence continually for that object. I love, esteem, and respect them, and know that the Lord delights to bless them.

I frequently have letters from Wm. H. Kimball, Joseph A. Young, James Ferguson, and other Elders from Deseret; they all feel as I do, and are doing a good work. We are all learning lessons which will be profitable to us in a future day.

I am appointed to the pastoral charge of the Liverpool, Manchester, and Preston Conferences, and enter upon its duties, at the New Year. I feel the weight of the responsibility which devolves upon me in this sphere, and am satisfied that without the aid of the Spirit of the Great Jehovah I would not be qualified for this position. I feel to lean upon the Lord all the day long, and to cry unto him for aid continually, that my labors may be blessed and crowned with success, that having finished my mission I may creditably return home and in the assemblies of Zion receive the rewarding mandate of God's servants, "well done br. George, the Lord is pleased with your labors." It is for this I live, and this is what I wish to accomplish, to do good to the honest sons of men, to show them the road to exaltation in the kingdom of God, and be exalted with them.

Please remember me to Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. I oft remember them, and pray that God may shield and preserve them continually. Remember me to all inquiring friends in Zion; tell them I am well and feel well. May God bless you br. Jedediah, and qualify you continually for the holy responsibility that is placed upon you in connection with the First Presidency, and for every other duty in life, is the constant prayer of your affectionate brother in the bonds of the covenant.

GEORGE D. GRANT.

[From the Millennial Star.]

AUSTRALIA.

Renewed Interest in the Work—Opposition—Anticipated Emigration of Saints.

103, PARAMATTA STREET, Sydney, }
Sept. 18, 1854. }

F. D. RICHARDS:

Dear Brother:—I embrace the opportunity offered me to congratulate you upon your safe arrival among the British

Saints, and I sincerely pray that the Lord may eminently bless you, in your two-fold capacity of President of the British Mission, and editor of the Star.

It gives me pleasure to inform you, that the work of the Lord in these colonies is progressing. We are not baptizing our hundreds or fifties at one time, the work is moving along slowly but surely, more so in the interior than in this city. The principles are winning their widening way into every class of society. In fact, "Mormonism" has made quite an excitement among the people recently, the clergy have awakened in the opposition with renewed zeal and energy, and no course is too mean or despicable for them to pursue, so that they can but prevail upon the people not to listen to the elders, nor to read our books. The usual ebullitions of calumny and slander, with their concomitants of falsehood, blasphemy, ignorance, &c., are poured forth in a manner alike creditable to intelligence and honor. At this we are not astonished, for what other weapons could they bring forth against truth and righteousness.

All this does not discourage us in the least, for we know whose we are, and that the work we are engaged in is the work of the Great God. And we feel grateful to our Father in heaven, who has in our weakness made us strong, giving us light, knowledge, and power in the things of his kingdom, so that we have been enabled at all times to rebuke the scorner, silence the gainsayer, and instruct and counsel the Saints.

It is true, the people of these lands are a peculiar people, being generally dead to the interests of religion, caring but little what the true principles of the Gospel are; it may, indeed, be said of them, that their faith is a mere tradition, their worship an empty form, the impression being transitory, ending with the service, when they again devote themselves to gold and pleasure. But withal, there are some as good and honest people in these lands, as can be found on the earth. These must be hunted and fished out and gathered. To accomplish this we are encouraged to labor, but the apathy of the people, and their scattered condition, together with the great opposition manifested by the priests, tend much to embarrass our movements, and to retard the progress of the work.

Still the Lord has blessed us and our labors, and we feel assured that he will continue to do so.

The desire to leave the confines of Babylon pervades the mass of the Saints here, and they are striving with all their power to gather, so that it is expected that another company will leave here about April or May next.

May God the eternal Father bless you, and prosper his work in your hands, is the earnest desire of

Your brother in the Gospel,

AUGUSTUS FARNHAM.

[New York Herald.]

The Mesquite Tree and its Gum.

NEW YORK, Dec. 20, 1854.

GENTLEMEN—Your note of the 14th inst., in which you request information concerning the mesquite tree and its gum, was duly received, and I with pleasure avail myself of the first leisure moment to reply to your interrogatories.

The tree commonly known in this country as the 'merquite,' was first discovered by Dr. Edwin James, formerly assistant surgeon in the United States army, while attached to Col. Long's exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains, thirty-six years ago. It is a variety of the acacia, which is found so abundantly in India, Africa, and other parts of the East, and possesses many properties in common with other species of that group of plants.

What the exact geographical range of this tree is, we are as yet unable (with a great portion of our territory unexplored) to define; my own observations however, warrant me in asserting confidently that it is only indigenous to the great plains of the West and South, extending far beyond the limits of most other varieties of trees, and it would seem from its locality to have been planted by an All-wise Providence with special reference to the wants of the occupants of a section of country suited to the growth of no other tree.

Between the twenty-sixth and thirty-sixth parallels of north latitude, within the ninety-seventh and one hundred and third meridians of longitude, it is found everywhere, often constituting vast tracts of woodland, and is, indeed, almost the only *sylva* of the section. It is also found in very many places between the Rocky Mountain range and the Pacific ocean; but it appears to flourish better and to obtain greater dimensions in the vicinity of the Gila river than in any other locality I have heard of west of the Rio del Norte.

In going north from the parallel of thirty-three degrees, (in the direction I have traveled) the trees gradually become smaller and smaller, until at last they are mere bushes, and finally, arriving near the latitude of thirty-six degrees, they entirely disappear.

The vast geographical range of the mesquite tree, covering as it does an area of more than 500,000 square miles, and its many useful properties, some of which will be enumerated in the sequel, renders it available, and I have no doubt it is destined to become highly important to the future occupants of a large section of our new territory.

It is a tree of short, scrubby growth, the stock averaging from four to fifteen inches in diameter, and seldom attaining a height, including its top, of more than twenty feet. The limbs are short, crooked and thickly studded with long sharp thorns; the leaves pinnated, and the leaflets are long and elliptical; the bark a dark gray, resembling that of the peach tree; the wood coarse grained, very brittle, and the heart, which constitutes nearly the entire tree, somewhat like the darker varieties of mahogany.

It burns readily, even when green, with a bright, cheerful flame, leaving a residue of coals almost as perfect in form as the original wood, making a very hot fire, and is, indeed, the best fuel I have ever seen, hickory not excepted.

It possesses durability in an eminent degree, and is, in consequence, much used for building and fencing, in Southern Texas and Mexico. As an evidence of its lasting qualities, I have seen pieces of the wood, in a perfect state of preservation, embedded in the stones of an old ruin upon the Nueces river, in Texas, which must have been exposed to the weather for scores of years, as many of the stones had become disintegrated, and crumbled away with age, while the wood remained sound.

The mesquite is often found upon very elevated and arid