

Editor's note:

Present in 1878 and early 1879 and then returning again to Mandalay in 1885 with British forces, James Alfred Colbeck, mission priest for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and latterly military chaplain, provides a unique look at the beginning and end of Thibaw's reign (1878-1885). The letters included were originally selected and edited by George H. Colbeck, mission priest at Mandalay and were published under the title of *Letters from Mandalay, A Series of Letters For the Most Part Written From the Royal City of Mandalay During the Troublous Years of 1878-79; Together with Letters Written During the Last Burmese Campaign of 1885-88* (Knavesborough: Alfred W. Lowe, 1892). The natural division and balance of the letters included warrants their division into two separate groupings, with the 1878-1879 letters included here and the 1885-1888 letters included in the forthcoming issue of SBBR. According to George H. Colbeck, the senior Colbeck died four days after his correspondence of 27th February 1888, the last letter in the published collection. Unfortunately, the original editor included few details on the circumstances of the correspondence, with some exceptions, beyond date and general point of origin (in most cases Mandalay). We are not told, for example, to whom the letters were written. Aside from these limitations, however, these letters offer valuable information not available in other source materials on Mandalay during the Kon-baung dynasty's last, and arguably most troubled reign.

M.W.C.

**Mandalay in 1878-1879: The Letters of James Alfred Colbeck,
Originally Selected and Edited by George H. Colbeck in 1892**

JAMES ALFRED COLBECK

Rangoon, July 16th, 1878.

I am on the move again, Bishop has given orders for me to proceed to Mandalay. I am no coward, but yet do not at all like the idea of going to Mandalay.

There are few Christians of any sort. The English can be counted on the fingers very easily. There are next to no Tamils, and altogether the "Minister of Mandalay" has to endure a kind of banishment. Add to this the possibilities of the King giving trouble, and the continual rebellions which take place. . . . Mandalay is a good centre for a Mission, but not yet. The Bishop fears I shall get obnoxious to the Burmese Government and be put into prison the first month. I don't know why exactly, but if I were put in prison for Christ's sake, both you and I ought to feel it an honour. Of course we know Mandalay has been hanging over me for long enough, and now the word is given there should be no great surprise.

The more I think about it, the more resigned I am, and the less difficulty I have in looking calmly at the situation and finding hope and cheerfulness. A further complication is owing to the fact that the British Government of India assumes some control over the "Minister of Mandalay," and thus you see there is S.P.G. and the Bishop on one side, the King of Burmah on the other, and Her Imperial Majesty between the two. By rule the Minister of Mandalay must visit Bhamo, the frontier town between China and Upper Burmah. There is a political agency of the Indian Government here, so I should naturally visit it occasionally, at least. It will please you to hear that the latest accounts from Mandalay represent the King and Court as more favourably disposed towards the Mission.

July 30th, 1878

On the 18th off I went, at 6-30 a.m. started from Kemmendine, and after a long journey reached Prome the same day at 7-30 p.m. We stopped for the night at the Traveller's Bungalow, and next day, Friday, went on board and rapidly steamed up past Thayetmyo, and then left the territory of the Empress of India, and entered that of the Empire of Burmah. My thoughts and feelings were much the same as when I first crossed the frontier, in 1874, but deeper and more earnest. It felt to be a more real duty than ever to pray for the King of Burmah. This we do now every day according to the ancient custom of the Church, and more ancient command of S. Paul: "I exhort first of all &c. . . . for Kings." Of course he did not then speak of Christian Kings for there were none.

After being two days within Upper Burmah, during a squall of rain and wind, the steamer got aground on a sand-bank, and there we stuck helpless; another steamer fortunately came up next morning, and after a whole day tugging, hauling, twisting and twining, discharging into a flat we were towing, 500 bags of rice; blowing off by steam pressure the water from our boilers, 30 tens, we managed to get off. We reached Mandalay, the Royal Golden City, on Saturday evening, at 7, but it was some time before I could land.

I am now well pleased that I have been sent here, and believe I shall be happy. It seems quite natural for me to be here again, and there are numbers of faces which I remember. I won't lead you into Mandalay politics because I know so little about them yet, and I am ordered to beware of politics. As for seeing the King, I do not yet know. It is very ungracious to take possession of the splendid Clergy House, Church, &c., and not to be ready and willing to pay respects to the Monarch who built it. I am ready and willing to pay my respects to the King, but there are obstacles in the way of free action. I find myself becoming quite grateful to the King of Burmah for doing in past time all he has done, and heartily use a special prayer for him in our services. You see up here we are not under the authority of the Queen, and to tell you the honest truth, it felt quite wrong to use all the State prayers for the Queen of England, and leave the Monarch of the country quite out.

Aug. 7th, 1878

If it be so ordered that I see the King soon, much may depend upon our first interview. It can be no harm to tell you that one of my instructions is "not to seek an interview with the King and Court."—It is a test of my obedience for I am strongly of opinion that it would be the best thing possible to see the King at once.

Mandalay is just as ever a place of plots and counter-plots. I do not think there is as much good feeling towards foreigners as there used to be. Cholera is bad here, in fact, in all parts of Burmah more or less. Rain was wanted much, but during the last week, beautiful refreshing showers have fallen, so we ought to be thankful.

September 18th, 1878

When I last wrote, I was expecting and watching for the arrival of refugee Princes escaping from an expected massacre; we did not know whether the King was alive or dead, and expected to hear a wild outburst of confusion every moment. I stayed up till the next morning at 3, and then turned in till 6 o'clock,—nothing happened. Next day, according to secret information received, a "Lady of the Palace" came dressed as a bazaar woman, and shortly after came about a dozen others; they were more than I had bargained for, but I had to take them in and secrete them as well as possible. A few minutes after them came in a common coolie, as I thought. I got up and said, "Who are you?" .He said, "I am Prince Nyoung Yan,"—"save me." He was terribly agitated, had escaped from a house in which he was confined, and his Uncle—had been cut down—not killed—in opening a way for the Prince to escape. This made me a party of 12:—The Prince and his wife, two daughters (Princesses), one son (Prince), Foster Mother and her daughter and attendants.

Do not blame me for risking my own safety, for *after* all it is something to be an Englishman, and more to be a priest. My house is even by Buddhists regarded as, sacred, and not lightly to be disturbed. We knew search was being made for the fugitives, and so as soon as dusk came, we dressed up our Prince, Nyoung Yan, as a Tamil servant, and as it fortunately came on to rain I smuggled him into the Residency Compound, right under the noses .of the Burmese guard at the gate. He carried a lamp and held an umbrella over me, as it was raining, and I treated him in character *i.e.*, spoke to him as a servant &c., until the coast was clear. We did it capitally, and even cheated the Indian servants of the Doctor into whose house we first went. Prince Nyoung Yan, alias Ramasawmy, did his part well, and we could afford to laugh at it were it not that he is still in some danger. He might be proclaimed King to-morrow, or if one of his half-brothers was proclaimed he would know that Upper Burmah is no longer safe for him.

I could not take any more in that night, and next day the guards were doubled. Every moment we expected a visit from the sergeant of the guard, and when I got back home at 11-30, I was quite a little bit alarmed to hear that one of our servants had been arrested. It turned out afterwards that it was only because he was travelling about after 9 o'clock at night without a light, so our head master and I went out, and actually had the cheek to take with us our great enemy the sergeant of the guard at the Residency gate, to help us to get the servant out of another guard house; we were perfectly successful, we had to bully the soldiers a good deal, and they grumbled and growled when we at last took him away.

"What do you mean by arresting the servant of the English Priest?"

—"If you don't look out we'll report the whole affair to the authorities, and you'll get it finely."

—"Let him go at once, and don't talk such bosh and nonsense."—That was the style.

Next evening I went to dinner with the British Resident. This was a *bona fide* engagement; as it was dark of course I needed a light, so one of the Prince's servants became my servant, and a sweet but sad little Princess of ten years, dressed as a boy, followed me, carrying books for me. This is just in Burmese style Priests get boys to carry books &c. for them, so we got through the guard again; I thought they were going to stop us long before we got to the gate, but walked boldly on, and the guard cleared out of my way, so Princess Tay Tain Lat got in safely to her father. Shortly after I got home, at about 11 o'clock, two of the guard strolled into our compound with drawn swords.

I heard their footsteps but did not know who they were, so I challenged them, "Who's there?"

—Answer, "Guard."

—"What do you want?"

—Answer, "Things are very unquiet, we have come to see that all is quiet here."

—I replied, "Very good, the best place to watch is at the gate."

They went, and then I breathed freely again, I thought they must have got some idea of my little family. Next morning I sent Princess Tay Tain Gye to the Post Office, which is inside the Residency Compound, dressed up as a boy. One of my own Christian boys from Kemmendine went with her and brought back a note from Mr. Shaw, the British Resident, saying she had got in safely. The Postmaster came to breakfast with me, and as he was going back to office, I said he might as well take a boy with a box of books &c. He said, "all right," and got safely in by another gate, also guarded. This "boy," dressed as such, was the foster sister of the Prince, and a brave little woman she was. It was she who had come first of all to prepare the way for the whole family. If she had been apprehended she would have been beaten to death very likely. When the Prince's Uncle was cut down, his son was near him and had his fingers cut off; he was afterwards beaten in order to make him divulge secrets, and with one thing and another the poor man died. The Prince's wife was got in as a jewel broker. The lady made a very nice young man, but her shape betrayed her. The old sergeant suspected something wrong and seized a China boy and Burmese boy who had gone in with her; but they knew nothing of their companion, except that I had sent him in with them, and the old sergeant had not wit enough to seize her at once; he pondered till she was quite safe within the Residency, and only knew she was a woman and did not come out again.

I have not time to tell how the rest got in, but at night I went again to dinner, and needing a light took the old grandmother, (i.e.) Prince's mother-in-law, as my old man

and lantern bearer, and the little Princelet followed me as a shadow. We were nearly discovered because my old man, though she looked very nice, was only an old woman after all, and had poor eyes. I Stumbled over her and nearly tumbled on the top of three of the guard, who were sitting down by the side of the road. Perhaps this incident got us off, the light dazzled me and them too, and the old man mended his ways so that at last we too got safely in. I can tell you I was very thankful when the last got into a place of safety, for the Burmese Officers will not dare to take them out of the Residency by force. I fancy there must have been some of the Prince's men in the guard, or they would hardly have allowed so many to slip through. Once or twice the fellows seemed on the point of rushing at us as they paced up and down before the gate, but they had received no orders to stop Europeans, and of course Europeans generally have a servant to carry the lamp so that the servant goes where his master goes. Next day the old Dine Goung (the sergeant), in conversation with the headmaster said he was afraid all was not right in the English Hpoongyee's House, and he wanted to search. "You are quite at liberty to do so," was the reply, for all the birds had flown. He did not come to do it. I got better sleep that night, six hours instead of three, and did not trouble my head to look narrowly at everybody that came near the gate.

The Prince and all his people are very grateful. If he becomes King and remembers his peril, no one knows what may result. There is another Prince who is spoken of as the future King; but so many rumours are spread abroad that we can believe nothing.

The Prince says, "the life that I got from my father and mother, I lost on—such a day—and now I am living the life that you gave me."

I said, "I am not accustomed to use the Burmese of the Court, therefore pardon my blunders in addressing you."

He said, "Do not say that, if you swear at, or abuse me, it is good for me to hear."

If the other Prince really becomes King, I must make the best of my case, and shall of course plead on the score of humanity and pity. This Prince was formerly in the batch sent by the King to school. There are a dozen or so unfortunate Princes in chains in the Palace.

The Burmese Authorities do not seem to have made their choice yet, and so no one has yet lost his head. It may be that after all the Princes will be sent away to British Burmah; anyhow it is a good thing for the rest that there are two safe in the British Residency. The Resident tells the Burmese Ministers, "If you take these Princes away by force, you declare war with the British." They are afraid of losing all their Kingdom. It would be foolish to say we are not troubled, because we really are. However, the more days get over the better it is for prospects of peace and quiet. The whole is not over yet, it is only a week ago since I sat expecting the refugees. They have spoiled my sleep and my appetite, and made me as watchful as a cat. I heard yesterday, that all the Princes in the Palace except two, Prince Thibau and Prince Mine Tone, were to be starved to death. This is not confirmed to-day, but they are under close confinement and being badly treated.

September 28th, 1878

We are still kept in annoying suspense and do not really know for certain whether the old King is alive or dead; we believe he is dead, but the Burmese Ministers declare he is still alive and improving, and will give a Royal Reception at the end of the Burmese Lent, that is, in about fourteen days more.

Meanwhile Prince Thibau has been appointed Heir Apparent, but rumour says this is all a farce. We know now that a very large part of the people are in favour of the Nyoung Yan Prince—and it is also said that many of the officials favour him too; but they have been persuaded by the Head Queen, either to agree to receive her nominee, Thibau, or at all events to wait awhile.

Between 60 and 70 Princes and their relatives are now in chains, badly treated and in terror of their lives. It has been reported that several have been put to death but I hardly think that is true. There was a scuffle the other day which had a serious ending. The Ministers, to keep up appearances, said the King had called the Princes, and was going to make presents of money and send each to his own Principality. Chains were knocked off, escorts provided, money carried into a big hall into which several Princes were led. They went in at one door, but when they went out at the other, they were again seized and fettered. Three Princes, feeling themselves free, made a run for life and liberty, but were all captured again.—One of them was the Mine Ton, Prince, a favourite pupil in the S.P.G. school, in old days.

The Palace is surrounded by high walls and palisades, and he got on to the top of one of these, but fell down inside again. One of the others received a sword cut on his head which brought him down, and we have since heard he has been put to death. He was a desperate fellow and a great hater of the English, so that if dead, the country will not suffer much loss in consequence.

The Nyoung Yan is profuse in his gratitude to me, and declares as before, that he is now living the life I gave him. He has really a very good prospect of becoming King, as the people say the Thibau Prince is too young, only 19 years, and that he will be guided entirely by the Hpoongyees, with whom, as a Hpoongyee, he has been living for some years.

I had another batch of refugees here yesterday, but managed to get them all safely into the British Residency Compound. One other batch is expected, and then I shall have done, I hope. In the event of Thibau becoming King, if he suspected me of having aided these people to escape, I do not think there would be much difficulty, as Hpoongyee Kyongs or Monasteries are allowed to shield such persons at times, and I could make a good defence. The various reports of the manner in which the two Princes, Nyoung Yan and his younger brother Nyoung Oke, got into the Residency, are very amusing to those who know exactly how it all happened, and their multitude is a great safeguard to us.

There are people living in our Compound who know nothing of our having had so many people here. It was good our house is so large.

There is no trade going on now; people crowd out of Mandalay by every steamer. The British Government have sent up a steamer to be ready to take us down if need be,

and there is a gunboat ready to start from Prome or Thayetmyo for Mandalay, with a party of Sailors and Marines, at an hour's notice. The preparations are known to the Burmese officials, so they have become more careful. The worst of it is many people in British Burmah want a war with Upper Burmah, and then hope the country will be annexed to the British Empire. Of course if war was declared we should be seized at once. The Resident says he intends writing to the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah, telling him to hang the Editors of the Rangoon Newspapers for their inflammatory articles. Reports have been spread that the Burmese authorities intended to take the refugee Princes by force from beneath the British Flag; and lots of people believe they will do so yet; but it is not at all likely unless all the Burmese authorities go mad and the soldiers get drunk.

The Nyoung Yan Prince gave me a number of thirty plates of gold, pure and unmanufactured—to provide for sending down some of his people to Rangoon, in case he should have gone away himself; but almost all have turned up already, so I shall have no more, and must hand the gold leaves back again.

October 12th, 1878

We have had considerable excitement of late, and as the telegraphic communication was interrupted, the Chief Commissioner sent up a Despatch Boat from Rangoon to see how we all were; we are quite well, and only on the look out for the next surprise. After all, the old King was not dead when the sons were seized. He did not die till October 1st. I would have believed no one who had not seen the body, but as I saw the Lying in State myself, my belief in the death having taken place three weeks ago was completely shaken.

I wonder whether I can tell you about the Lying in State.—Let me try. I had heard of the official notification of the death of the King to the British Resident, and also that foreigners would be allowed to pay their respects to the old King's memory; but no invitation had been sent to the British. However, at midnight, on Thursday, I received a note from the Residency, saying that English British subjects would be admitted on Friday morning, from 6 to 9 a.m. I went at 8 o'clock, and having dismounted and left my umbrella at the outer gate of the Palace, was taken to the Supreme Court and received by the City Magistrate, or as he is called in Burmese the Myo-tha-woon-douk. I had to take my shoes off at the stairs leading up to the Court, but was kindly received, and we sat on the floor for a while talking, until we were joined by Dr. W——., who is an English Merchant, and Mr. C——., the Italian Consul. I cannot attempt to describe the various buildings now, so you must imagine fine buildings of wood, completely gilded, and with huge pillars of red lacquered wood, of various sorts, sizes, and shapes. We passed by the Throne, which is in the centre of the Palace, under a splendid canopy of glittering roofs tapering up like a card house, and having on its top a golden umbrella very elegantly wrought. After passing through gate after gate, we came to the Presence Chamber, a large, lofty, darkened room, in which the King's body was lying on a kind of couch. Two Princesses knelt near the body fanning it, and at the foot of the couch were a large number of Queens, Princesses, and Maids of Honour; all were kneeling and very quiet, and dressed completely in white, as also was the body. The body was quite natural and fresh, so that death could not have taken place more than two days before. After sitting about three minutes we retired. When we got to the bottom of the steps we could not find our boots, they had sent them away to the steps of the High Court about 100 yards away, and purposely made us walk in our stockings to that place.

The Italian was angry enough, I was more amused than angry; all the more as the ground was not dry, and we were as nice as cats as to where we planted our feet. We were the only Europeans allowed to see the King's face, as immediately afterwards it was covered with a veil, I was glad to pay this visit, as the old King was at least a benefactor to us—witness Church, Clergy-House, &c.

There were heaps of soldiers on guard, but few of them seemed able to do much, their arms are very old, discarded Indian Army Rifles, and many still older, flint locks. There were a few pieces of artillery here and there within the Palace, but as the law forbids them to be fired within the Palace, and they are never taken out for practice, it is doubtful whether it would be safe to fire them. The largest pieces were 24 pounders, and I only saw two of them.

Our friend the Nyong Yan Min-Tha has not been appointed King, but Thibau Min-Tha has, so that we must keep quiet here, and not blaze abroad our doings of the past month. The two Princes and their families are still safe in the British Residency, and since I last wrote I have introduced five other people. It is risky, but I cannot get out of it when the people come to me. It is, in fact, easier to get them within the Resident's Compound, than to send them away and keep them out of mine.

The other Princes are still in prison, quite a black hole. If sickness does not carry off a number of them, I shall be much surprised. Jestings at people's misery is not nice or proper, but the accounts we hear of the behaviour of the various kinds and ages of Princes are rather amusing, *e.g.*, Attendant bringing food (which is inserted into the den through a small aperture):

"Prince, are you there, are you well?"

Young Prince completely cowed by hunger and fear, "Yes, my Lord, by your Lordship's favour."

—That is No. 1.

No. 2.—Attendant (to Princes 19 to 25 years of age):

"Prince, are you there, are you well?"

Prince (laconic): "Yes thank you, I am here."

No. 3.—Attendant to oldest Prince (30, or about that age): "Prince, are you there, &c."

Prince immediately begins cursing and swearing at the fellow, and only asks for a sword "to assassinate my own life" as our reporter has it.

The place is by no means settled. Less business than ever. People afraid to talk of what is going on; but I do not think an outbreak will take place. News has been brought of a big Dacoity or robbery, five days' march from Mandalay. A town of 2,000 houses has been plundered and fired. Troops have been sent after the robbers, as if not quickly dispersed they may raise a rebellion for one of the captive or escaped Princes. The truth is that we hear so many rumours, that we do not know what to believe.

The Royal Funeral has taken place, and Prince Thibau declared King. I went with the British Resident and party, but must put off giving the account to another time.

November 1st, 1878

The air is still full of startling rumours, and young King Thibau has taken a fancy to throwing spears about at those who offend him. If he goes on with that little game, his reign will not be very long—of that we are sure. We have several refugees in the Clergy-House now. Two cousins of the Prince whom I helped to escape, are with me, and to avoid suspicion, I have made them turn coolies, working in our garden and making fencing. This they are quite willing to do. It occupies their minds and hands, and they quite see the reason why I prefer them thus to work rather than hiding away in one of the rooms of the house.

They also earn their food by this means. The father of one of these men was Governor of Rangoon years and years ago, and is said to have brought on the war with the British, which ended in our taking Rangoon and the whole Province of Pegu, which we have since retained.

This was in 1852 and 1853. He, i.e., the father above spoken of, and his son, both put on the robes of Hpoongyees and went into a Monastery, but they were hunted out. The son escaped and is now with me. The father was caught and after being examined by torture, was put into prison. Some say he has been beaten to death; the reason for all this is that they are relations of the Nyoung Yan Prince, and supposed, truly or falsely, to be intriguing to get up a plot in his favour. Two nights ago, a poor woman with her little daughter threw herself on my mercy. She had been to other places, but had been turned out as she was the wife of one of the sons of the old Governor of Rangoon before mentioned. I could not turn her out, and so she is still here. One has to be very cautious in sending them away. I have tried to find a way for her into the Residency Compound where some of her relations are with the Nyoung Yan; but it seemed safer for her to remain here a day or two, and if her child would not cry there would be no fear; but children will cry you know, they are very unreasonable creatures, as I daresay you know.

Have I told you of my little adventure? I think not. The other day, having been invited to see one of the head Hpoongyees, I started off early, but missed the guide who was to have been sent for me. I did not know exactly where the Monastery was, and was riding about here and there trying to find it. At last I came to a Burmese guard house, but instead of quietly waiting to hear my civil enquiry, one of the guard said rudely

"Who are you, and where do you come from."

This, I am sorry to say, put me on my mettle, and I pitched into him rather forcibly and then rode away. He, however, followed me, and thinking it best to avoid a scene, I rode back to him, which softened him a little. He told me to get off my pony, which I declined to do and said he had orders to prevent the English Priest, or any Englishman, from holding any communication with the head Hpoongyees. The Burmese Government, you see, is dreadfully afraid of us.

Then he said, "Come with me to the officer commanding my division."

As he said it was quite close, I consented, but said, "I want to see the Hpoongyee, not your 'Officer'."

When we got to the officer's quarters, he wished me to dismount at the outer gate, and go in, which I refused, and told him to go in, and that I would stay till he returned. The officer was not in, but another man came, and as I declined to tell him my business with the big Hpoongyee, the two of them went with me, shewing the way. It so happened that the Hpoongyee had been suddenly called away by one of the Ministers of the Court that morning, and was not at home, so that, though one of the guard followed up all over the place, and listened to all I said to the other Hpoongyees, he learned nothing of my business. I did not know then, but the next day a messenger came to me from the Head Hpoongyee, to ask whether in case of a big row, I would receive and shelter the said Head Hpoongyee for a few days. I said "Yes." After my visit, it seems the guard tried to get out of the Hpoongyees everything about the whole affair. Since then, heaps of Hpoongyees have been arrested, including two or three big ones—like our Bishops—and several have been put into prison and beaten. I hope my old friend is not among them. I have told the affair to the Resident, and he has informed the Burmese Government that I was rudely stopped, so that it will not be likely to occur again if things keep quiet.

Over 1000 Hpoongyees have left for Lower Burmah since the troubles began here. The new King, though he has only just left a Monastery, will not do half as much for them as his father did.

November 2nd, 1878

Let me try to redeem my promise to describe the King's Funeral. On Monday, October 7th, at 9 o'clock, I went to the British Residency, where a procession formed. The Resident in full political and diplomatic uniform, sword and all, first mounted on a big elephant, sent by the Burmese Government; then the Assistant Resident on another elephant then the English Hpoongyee on a pony, who rather objected to follow a great hulking elephant, and tried to bolt twice. After us came a lot of followers, without arms, for strange to say, the Residency guard have no arms, they are mere watchmen and Lascars. When we got to the East gate of the Palace enclosure, we were met by the Burmese officials, who greeted us warmly and shook hands, then led us to a tent specially arranged for us. No foreign sword had ever been allowed inside the Palace before, so there was one concession. We passed between long rows of Burmese soldiers, most of whom wore ordinary dress, and had old Brown Bess Muskets, some even flint locks, such as may have been used at the battle of Waterloo. Not a single breech loader did I see. In the tent we found a raised Daïs, and at the end of the Daïs a raised step covered with fine carpets, upon which we sat, hats and shoes on, though the Woon Douk, or official, who had come to bring us in, took off his sandals.

We had a capital view of the whole proceedings, and rather to our surprise, saw that everybody else besides ourselves and an English Doctor had to take their shoes off, before going into the tents or booths prepared for them. Troops began to multiply, and dignitaries to arrive, each with an escort. Everybody was in white, the mourning colour. At last the funeral procession came, the body of the late King, surrounded by Queens, and shaded by seven white umbrellas, was preceded by 40 or 50 Princesses, who had

in their hands a white cord, as though they were dragging the Royal Bier. After this came a Royal Waw or Palankin—a kind of Throne, carried by about 50 men. The Throne was vacant, but at each of the four corners there was a young girl, bowing down with hands upraised, as in the attitude of worship or reverence. After this came a sham funeral pyre and catafalque, supposed to contain the King's body, with everything ready for burning, as had been usually the custom. Behind it were carried the robes, sword, betel box, &c., of the late King, and two ponies fully caparisoned were also led behind.

After a considerable interval came the new King, sitting in a Waw as before; this carriage was a splendid affair, and all its surroundings were grand. Four handsome girls as before, were in the car. They are supposed never to move hand or eye, but ever to be in reverential awe. The sun blazed down upon them, but they stood that bravely. The King was surrounded by Ministers and troops, dressed in scarlet coats to their knees, but with green fancy cord bodices, and green helmets with ear flaps. As the Royal Car came along, everybody went down in silence to the ground. We stood up with hats off. The young King hardly moved his face at all, but we could see his eyes roll to our side trying to make out who we were. A Royal herald crawled forward on hands and knees, to read a petition, humbly begging that the new King would graciously order the funeral ceremonies of his deceased father to be proceeded with. "Let it be done duly and well" was the answer, and then the King's procession went back to the Palace. According to custom the body should have been burned, but the old King had asked that his body might be buried. Everything ready for the burning, the wood, two furnaces, &c., was prepared in dumb show, but the body was really placed in a Pagoda and bricked up as in a tomb. We went round to see everything, but as the chief queen was still at the tomb watching the workmen, we did not go close, up to it. Everything was perfectly orderly and the people quiet. Sometime after the British party had got in without being questioned, the Italian Consul arrived at the outer gate, he was stopped as he had his sword, but when a messenger came to the official who had brought us in, permission was given for his' admission with his sword. This is a great departure from Burmese customs: they are wonderfully conservative, but you see are now giving way. Everybody was very kind to us, bringing us sweetmeats, tea, biscuits &c. One of the minor officials, Chief Clerk of the High Court of Justice, had been in England sometime, but you may imagine my amusement as well as astonishment, to be asked by a Burman, in the Royal City and Palace, whether I was not a "High Churchman." In our conversation he said, "The day for the Burmese Hpoongyees is over, they will never again have the power they have had." We were taken back in State to the Palace gate, and mounted our beasts. It was a very hot day, and we had been three or four hours in the tent, so that I saw no fun in walking slowly behind the elephants, and so cantered quickly home. I went into the Residency, and was welcomed most heartily by the refugee Princes. They had got into a regular fright at our long absence, and imagined we had been seized and would be obliged to promise to deliver them up before we would be set free. My arrival was worth a lac of rupees to them, they said.

The King was grandly dressed, Cloth of Gold, and splendid Crown something like a Papal Tiara. It seemed so heavy that he could hardly move. There were muslin curtains about him, and once the curtain got entangled in the gold work on the top of the crown, which gave him much trouble. He looked anything but comfortable or pleased, as a rebellion was anticipated at the time, and he might get polished off at once, and that was why he so quickly went back. Many of the Queens of the late King have been turned out of the Palace, and their jewels, which constitute their riches, taken from them. It is the custom for the King to marry several of his half-sisters, and the question is now

which of them. Two of the most influential and eligible decline to marry him,—one of them shaved her head and became a nun to avoid it. I don't know how he and they will settle the whole matter, but things are by no means peaceful yet. The Ministers have the chief power in their own hands still, so that the young King can do nothing startling just now. A plot has been found out during the last few days, and probably a good many people will suffer in one way or another. There will be continual plots until our two refugee Princes get away to India or elsewhere, and until it is known what is to be done with the poor chained captive Princes. No trade is being done, and people still crowd out of Mandalay.

November 9th, 1878

There was a very exciting affair last week, one of the river steamers was boarded by 200 Burmese soldiers and their superior officer, at a place called Mingyon, about 80 miles below Mandalay. He asked the captain to give up some refugees, slaves of the King, but refused to give the captain any warrant. The captain, like a true Britisher, said he would not surrender, nor allow his ship to be searched; so they had a scuffle, the end of which was, that 30 people were- carried away by force. The boarding took place at three o'clock in the morning. I expect the Indian Government will come down hot upon the Burmese, but I hope they won't come down hotter upon us. As I write, the British Resident is holding a Conference with the Chief Ministers of the Burman Court, about this and the two refugee Princes. You see we are kept rather lively just now. The Burmese are looking out for the result of the war with Afghanistan; they think we- shall have enough to do to maintain our own there, and that they will be able to have their own way here. Probably they will find out they are mistaken, especially if the British insist upon immediate satisfaction for the above affair and one or two others like it which have taken place lately. I do not think there will be war yet between India and Burmah, but there is no telling how foolish the Burmese may become. The Ministers have plenty of volunteers who said they would bring the refugee Princes by force from the protection of the British flag.

I

f I were in British Burmah, I should say, "*Burma divisa est in partres tres.*" But we will not joke about it.

November 16th, 1878

The two refugee Princes have now got safely away from Mandalay, on board a British steamer, so that we may fairly say they are safe from molestation. There was a great struggle before everything was settled; and time after time, as I have already told, there were alarms of a forcible capture, which would have meant war between the Indian Government and Burmah, to result perhaps in the annexation of the latter—a thing which I do not wish to happen just now—I do want a little corner in the East to be independent. I think I told you about a violent seizure of thirty persons on board one of the river steamers—British, The Indian Government was very angry about it, and insisted on the officer who had so insulted the British flag being punished. This was a serious affair, so that the Burmese Government perhaps thought they might as well ask us to take away the refugees, and give them a house somewhere in British territory. Anyhow, it was decided that they should be sent down; and so last Wednesday evening, the Princes took formal leave of us, thanking all very heartily for what each had done.

The Nyoung Yan was very good. His wife and children dressed up as Princes and Princesses should be. The ladies, with splendid diamonds &c., and looking very nice indeed, said "Good bye." Of course I had seen them often enough, but never "In State." One or two of them were nearly inclined to cry at parting from us.

The Prince made me promise to give him my photo and promised his own, and that of his wife and children in return.

At day-break on Thursday, the 14th, I went over to the Residency, and quietly smuggled in the last of the refugees with me. The Burmese Government was evidently angry to be thus balked of its prey, and sent neither elephants, carts, nor umbrellas, for the two Princes and their families; and in addition to the surliness, the officials appointed to see the Princes safely away were two hours late. At last the procession formed. First went the Chief Officer and armed guard, then came various carts containing the Prince's library, which he was delighted to receive in safety through me; then the Nyoung Yan and his family in one bullock cart;—he ought to have had an elephant all to himself, with three golden umbrellas, and about a hundred followers; then the younger Prince and family; then the Assistant Resident, the Doctor and myself, on horse-back; then two English Court officials; the whole of us having a Burmese guard on each side lining the road.

Last of all came 13 other carts containing the Prince's attendants, followers, &c. There were a good number of people to see the procession, and they have an idea that the British Government will yet place the Nyoung Yan upon the throne of Burmah. When the steamer was reached, all got quickly on board, and after saying good-bye to all once more, they left, followed closely by a Burmese Government steamer with a large number of troops on board. The Nyoung Yan was sad, for of course he is leaving his own country, and it is not settled where he shall go to. I am sad, too, for his children, if they go to India, and become like Bengal Baboos I shall indeed be sorry. Oo Zun and Tay Tin Ma Galay,—a young Prince and Princess, ages about 10 and 12, declare they love me very much. Little Oo Zun is about as mischievous as can well be; when he was in the Clergy House, I had to tell him I would beat him if he did not make less noise. He had begun to tumble about the place with the little dog Min-Gyan.

However, they have gone now, and we feel queer just for the moment, but there are yet clouds ahead. No one is allowed to see the young King; he is a prisoner really in the hands of his Ministers. Rangoon papers are urging the despatch of an "Ultimatum" to the King, in fact, trying to foment disturbances between the two countries. I have not been to see the young King, and don't know what the real feeling of the Ministers towards me and Missionaries in general is. I saw the Roman Bishop, and some of the Priests the other day.

They complained much of the evil lives of their country-men, and Europeans in general, and said they were almost hopeless about Burmans. I said, I was not, though of course I acknowledged we had very few here yet. They are gathering their Priests for an annual retreat, and will number over a dozen altogether, i.e., in Upper Burmah alone. Compare with this my solitariness, but I am hoping for better things; at all events, there is here plenty of room for prayer and study to fit one for future work, here or elsewhere, and indeed more battles are won by prayer than the world dreams of.

I shall rejoice to see the way made clearer for the advance of the kingdom of our dear Lord. Sometimes, I long for hard trials that I might shew my love to Him but this is

wrong, "In your patience possess ye your souls." The trial now is to be patient, but my fear is that we are after all only cowards in sitting still while hundreds and thousands perish without Light, the Light of Life.

February 24th, 1879

We have had a terrible time here, but thanks be to God all Europeans are safe and untouched, at least for the present.

The King has turned mad with rage, vexation, and fury as it were, and has put to death as many members of the old Royal Family as he could lay hold of. Thirty persons of Royal blood have been thus sacrificed, and many others connected with them. I cannot give you particulars now. The murders are estimated at, from 60 to 250, the former being nearer the mark. I believe we were in a very critical position for some time, but the guard—only 30 men however—has arrived now, and gives a possibility of our making some defence if attacked. The Church will probably become the fort.

March 29th, 1878

We are all safe up to the present, but the clang of arms does not seem far off. Troops are being collected in Lower Burmah, and some detachments have been pushed forward close to the frontier. I hear, but do not know whether it is true, that an Embassy is coming up with an ultimatum to the King. I should not wonder if this were so, as it would bring up a fair escort, and so we should be able to leave Mandalay with it in case negotiations ended unfavourably. I perhaps have a chance of martyrdom now, but it is a political martyrdom, and for that I have no ambition. It would be impossible for me to stay behind after the British Residency goes, as I should be looked upon as a spy, and probably be at once seized and put into prison, if nothing worse. You will be able to tell how affairs in general are proceeding by the telegrams in the London papers, so that my letters will probably only reach you after your fears are over.

For the time it is rather anxious work, e.g., when the last mail arrived, the papers contained the articles of the ultimatum which is to be presented to the King. They may be all nonsense, but they are severe enough, and I should not think the King would give way. These papers, of course, find their way into the Palace, and we heard that that very hour an order was given to march upon us and seize us all. If the King were in one of his drunken bouts he may have given the order, but the Ministers did not carry it out. They are clothing, drilling, and arming their troops, and so it is possible some mad officers who have never seen a British regiment, may think they are quite a match for us. The older Ministers of State know better than this, but their power is very little. The King gives all his ear to his youthful companions and fortune tellers, who are bound to say good concerning him, under penalty of finding themselves locked up and otherwise punished.

You will hardly expect to hear much Missionary news in this letter, but we are not dead in this work either; we were hoping to baptise eight or ten adults at Easter, besides five or six children, but they have become scattered here and there, and no one can come into our Compound now without fear of punishment, nor will any stranger be at all pleased if I attempt to enter his house, as it would bring suspicion upon him. This state of things is of course hardly what one expected, when we first heard that one of our school-boys, No. 27, was to become King.

Supposing the present madcap does fight the English, and we get away safely, I quite expect he will burn all our Compound and the Residency down. This would not matter much if we were not in it; and the British Government would probably help largely in restoring things as they were before, for one reason, because a regiment of troops would probably be stationed here, and would want a Church to go to.

Another reason why I must go if the British flag is hauled down, is, that some mischievous person has published in the Rangoon papers, that I gave shelter and means of escape to several relations of those *who* were murdered the other day. It is quite true, but most inconsiderate and prejudicial to my safety. I have not done wrong, and I trust in God: our danger is not without its effect upon people disposed to become Christians.

Before this reaches you most likely things will be fairly settled again, as this present high pressure cannot remain for long; once let off steam and things will rapidly resume their more ordinary condition.

April 28th, 1879

Things at the present time are very uncertain, none of us know what will happen. The British Government has got 5,000 additional troops into Burmah, and is sending to India for more, while the Burmese Government is drilling and arming as many men as possible. We are the difficulty, *i.e.*, we Europeans in Mandalay,—for of course no decent government can any longer hold friendly intercourse with such a King as Thibau.

It is very odd that everything conspires to assure the King that his reign will be a short one. His Astrologers actually tell him that by November he will be no longer King, and that he is the last King of Burmah. Of course there are numbers of similar predictions, and it would be wonderful indeed if some of them did not approach near being fulfilled. I have now in the Clergy House the Special War Correspondent of the *Daily News*, and the Special of the *Standard* is in the Residency. They both thought war would have been declared long before this, and are accordingly not a little disappointed.

The exodus from Mandalay still continues; to-day about twenty Armenians and their old Priest leave.

The loss to all kinds of people, especially traders and merchants, is very great, and such is the uncertainty, that in some parts the people are unwilling to cultivate their land, in the doubt as to whether they or others will reap the crops. It would be very singular if the end of this uncertainty were a famine in the land, and this is by no means improbable. We are having very bad days and nights, but a few days thunder and lightning like we have just had, will reduce the temperature considerably and enable us to be a little less than streaming sponges.

May 4th, 1879

We are all safe so far, but have continual alarms and rumours. It is odd to live in the midst of alarms so long. We hear wolf, wolf, so often, that when the wolf comes we shall suspect he is a sheep got up in wolf's clothing. You may expect to see more about Mandalay in the *Daily News* about the time this reaches you. The special war correspondent is here, and also the special of the *Standard* (Mr. McPherson), who accompanied the camp of General Roberts in Afghanistan; so if the British public will take the trouble, it will be better informed about Burmah than it has been. I am very much astonished to find the *Church Times* quite at sea as to the political geography of Burmah. But it does not concern them very much, though it might possibly interest the editor to know that the paper gets so far up here. As a precautionary measure, I fancy, the political agent of Bhamo has been brought down here to Mandalay, and we are to have two steamers ready to provide for our decamping, should it be necessary, at any moment of day or night. A further reason for apprehension just now is the sickness of the chief minister,—the man who has kept peace between the two countries till now. I hope he is better now. He was reported to have cholera two days ago, and, being not a very strong man, we feared he might rapidly succumb. He is the Kin-woon-min-gyee.

May 11th, 1879

Now about Burmah war, fever—what is to happen I do not know, but expect it will be war, and if we can get behind the advance guard of the British troops we must be thankful. If the Afghan war and Zulu campaign had not tied the hands of Government I suppose we should have had to move before this. The last few days have been more uncomfortable, politically speaking, and it is an undoubted fact that trade and agriculture have received a most effective check in Lower Burmah. As usual, our delay and policy is declared to indicate cowardice, and many Burmans here are not backward in saying that we are afraid of the king and his new troops. If you were here you would think it queer to count up four revolvers in the Church Compound, and none of them belong to me; but it is the custom in Mandalay to sleep with a revolver under the pillow now, and my visitors have brought their revolvers up with them. Now that war seems so imminent I wish it less than ever, for it is at any time an awful thing.

I have just got another small batch of refugees. It is a terrible time for people attached to the Court—great, to-day; to-morrow, nobodies.

Our good brother George Smith has shown well in Zululand.

June 5th, 1879

I have just been writing a letter to the Nyoung Yan Prince in Calcutta, to tell him of the state of his poor old mother and sister here. They have been once at least ordered out to execution, but have been spared hitherto. They are now closely confined, and have two chains on each foot. The Princess is only about 16 years of age, and is a poor writer, but she wrote yesterday almost broken hearted, because I had doubts whether a former letter which asked for money had really come from her. I was able to reassure her the same evening by sending her substantial help, and she then wrote saying she had two chains on each foot and that the irons had chafed the flesh raw. We pity those who have

been put to death, but surely in some respects greater pity is due to those who are still in such wretched suspense and so closely confined. Of course I do not go to the Palace myself, and it is amusing to hear the devices of the women who manage to convey our messages. To-day the Princess sent out a letter written in pencil upon a strip of cotton cloth, which was wrapped up with some sewing work supposed to be for a jacket. Often enough the small notes come out wrapped up in a Burmese cheroot or cigar. We know nothing yet as to the settlement of the affairs between the two countries, and most certainly the Burmese are making every preparation, as you may see from the correspondence in the *Daily News* and *Standard*.

The Correspondent of the former stayed a month with me in the Clergy House, and we went out a great deal together, until our ponies were stolen. He, however, being a determined man, still went out on foot, but unfortunately not knowing Burmese, except a few words, he got into one or two serious rows, which might have ended awkwardly for him and us. One day he was accosted by a Hpoongyee, and talked a little while as well as he could, till thinking the Hpoongyee was speaking rudely to him, he turned round and using the only word of abuse he knew, walked away. He seems to have wanted to call the Hpoongyee "son of a dog,"¹ but what he did say, was, "a dog's funeral." This was very nasty and stupid, I was intensely surprised, and a good deal annoyed, but what of the Hpoongyee's feelings? Unless he laughed at the ludicrous mistake, he will hate the sight of a white face for long enough.

Things are so close in the Palace now that it is hard to hear anything and prove its truth, so whether more executions have taken place or not is quite uncertain.

It is true, however, that the young king is drinking heavily, and his wives, mother, and mother-in-law are not happy together.

His young favourites lord it over everybody, so that things are ripening for a regular burst up sooner or later. Perhaps if the young drunkard drank himself mad or dead he would do the best for his kingdom and make room for a better man,—our friend Nyoung Yan, now in Calcutta. I hear he is inclined to make over our Church, schools, &c., to his own Hpoongyee. If so, and he dares to try to turn me out by force, I expect the delay will come to an end, and the British Residency quit Mandalay. Sometimes I feel as though, after all, there will be no war, and that if we are left alone all will favourably settle down to the benefit of our work. So may the good Lord grant.

June 11th, 1879

Health and spirits are all that can be desired, but the troubled atmosphere is not yet dissipated, and only yesterday a poor woman sought refuge here with her little child of six months old sick with smallpox. She had been kept in prison and chains for ten months, and this child was born during that time; pity or fear at last moved the authorities to let her out, and so she came here for shelter. We have had eight small-pox cases in our Compound, and no one is left to get it, I think, so that we fear the less to receive the poor little stranger. The brother and sister of the Nyoung Yan Prince are being still barbarously treated; though their ankles are raw with the chafing of the irons, they are to be more heavily ironed, and to-day a messenger comes to say that they were put into a close dungeon last night, which has only one narrow door for entrance, and only one

¹ "Son of a dog"- (quaymähä); "A dog's funeral"—(quaymathä)

little aperture through which to pass food. Happily I sent in Rs. 100 just before this closer confinement, which may help them to live on till they can be released. The King's order is that henceforth they are not to be allowed to receive food from strangers. He and his Queens will feed them from the Royal Table! Poor mother and daughter!

There has been, and is, a plague of smallpox amongst the children of Mandalay. Few are vaccinated, and the weather is too hot to allow of its being properly done now, so that death after death occurs. What a terribly loathsome disease it is; it looks as though every part of the body were rotten and corrupt, and could never be sound again. I think English anti-vaccinationists need only step over to Burmah to be convinced of the general utility of vaccination.

I cannot tell you any more about the probabilities of war. Sullenness seems to have come over the Burmese Court, and they will do nothing to become friendly with us. Now that the Afghan War is so far settled, perhaps the Indian Government will pay more attention to this part of the world, for sooner or later a settlement must be arrived at to avoid constant sources of irritation.

Our opportunities of Missionary Work are considerably curtailed just now, but for all that there are several persons whom I hope ere long to receive into the Holy Church. I do really think that when once affairs are settled down, we shall be able to go forward far more freely than ever. I myself have an increased knowledge of Burmese, and the present difficulties have given me unexpected opportunities of exercising my knowledge and so learning the more.

As I write now, a Burmese Hpoongyee named Oo-wa-ya-ma, is leaning over my elbow admiring the rapidity of the pen and words formed. He wants to come here and learn, but I tell him he is too old, and I cannot spend my time vainly endeavouring to flog big boys so as to master them. He is 24 years of age. He is talking away in Burmese close to me, expecting sensible answers, and as I kicked his shoes out of the house, scolding him for rudeness, I must make amends for it by smoothing him down now. He would not have walked into his own Kyoung with his shoes on, and I require them to give the same respect to the English Hpoongyee Kyoung.

June 12th, 1879

I dare say you would like to hear that the poor old Queens have been set at liberty, but this is far from being the case. I don't suppose they can live long under such hardships and confinement. I am writing again to the Nyoung Yan Prince by this mail, to tell him, and to convey two other letters, but he can do nothing, and any earnest remonstrance on the part of the British Government would also be too likely to ensure the death of the prisoners.

The King has been re-crowned, and ought, according to custom, to have released a number of people, but he did not, and really I should not wonder if his continual cruelty at last roused even the stolid Burman. Of course we keep quiet and don't go out over much into places where the King's men muster largely, they have grown so bold that any stupid act might cause a row. Mr. Scott, Special of the *Daily News*, got into a fearful row in one of the Monasteries. He was going where he ought not to go, with his shoes on I suppose, and when spoken to he did not understand, so

instead of turning back he went on, being at length pursued 'by boys who threw stones. Coming to a barricade he retreated, but was captured by a few Hpoongyees, and had a squad of boys in the rear, still pelting, regardless of friend or foe.

Turning round to chastise the boys, he was actually collared by a Hpoongyee, but swinging round he made a cut at him with a stick and cut his cheek. Scott is a powerful little man and put some half dozen or so *hors de combat*, knocking one poor fellow head over heels down some steps. He himself did not come off without marks of the fight, but I was quite prepared to hear a shouting mob arrive at the Clergy House immediately after he returned. None came, however.

July 3rd, 1879

We do not get far from our troubles here yet, and still hang on most uncertainly. Another Resident has come, but he intends to let things go on just as they are, as he is only here for a few weeks or months, till some one is sent to be the permanent Resident. Executions go on privately, and I am told the Burmese are very busy searching for several whom I have got down to Rangoon, and for one who is still here waiting for a good opportunity.

If the young King would die, kill himself, or be otherwise got rid of, it might be easy for the country to recover itself and so to get a better King; but if the present young tyrant increases in cruelty and cunning as he does in years, there is anything but a happy look forward.

D.V., we shall baptize three adults next Sunday, one woman, Burman, one youth of 16, Burman, and one man, 26, a Mussulman, whose friends are very angry, and threaten to petition the King against it. I hope they will. They are now threatening the young man, and the friends of the Burman lad say they will disinherit him. So you see there are still things to be suffered and borne for the sake of Jesus Christ. I am thankful for it.

July 17th, 1879

I don't know whether we see the beginning of the end or not, but two, rebellions have broken out in the country, one at Bhamo, a place about 200 miles to the North of Mandalay, and the other about as far to the South West. In the former case the people refused to pay the terrible taxes laid upon them, and give the quota of one man from a house for the King's army, and when force was put upon them they killed twenty of the Governor's troops. Since then they have surrounded an officer sent to subdue them, and have killed him. In the other case 300 Burman soldiers are said to have been killed, and the revolt not quelled. Here in the Royal City nothing goes on but drilling troops, and State Lotteries, which are of course fearfully demoralizing to the people.

The baptisms I spoke of in my last letter, took place last Sunday week, without disturbance. The friends of the Mussulman petitioned the Burmese authorities, but without effect, and none of them came to interrupt the baptism of Peter; we hope he will be stedfast as a rock.

The others were Edward, a very lovable lad of 16, as tender-eyed as a girl, and seemingly most happy in being a Christian; Martha, and her son Joseph.

The New Resident knows Burmese and Burmans well; so that he does more direct work. He is a firm man, and is being more attended to by both Governments, Burmese and British. He declares he will either have things on a better footing, or go away and take the British away with him. As this would mean breaking off all official communication between the two countries, and the cessation of traffic and commerce, and most probably war in a very short time, I think the Burmese Government will give in when he declared positively the time when he will go. We shall probably all go down together if we do go, and they will not attempt to stop us.

Of course we shall lose much of our property if the embarkation is at short notice, such as 24 hours, which it may be, and unless our return is immediately behind our troops. I have asked the Bishop to attach me to the army for a time. Shall we come back only to find our Church in ruins? But poor Nyoung Yan's mother, what will she do if I go? I fear to say, and if you could read a letter she sent me this morning, you would not wonder that I begin really almost to love the poor lady.

She maintains her dignity even in prison, and though I know she is greatly in want, yet she will not ask for money, as she thinks I have already sent her so much. Her eldest son, our Prince Nyoung Yan, now in Calcutta, however, sent me a fresh supply some time ago, so that the captives need not let honour keep them from asking for what is at their disposal, whenever the prison doors can be opened. A silver key opens even a Burmese gaol.

The young King Thibau has found a match, his wife.

According to custom the kings take four wives, and four secondary wives, but she forbids him to take more than one altogether, and declares she will kill anyone who "steals" her husband. Are they not a nice pair?

Now that the Afghan war is over and South Africa in a fair way of becoming so, perhaps Burmah will have more attention shown. It seems better to have an end to present uncertainty, even if that be a short war—no more. Several thousand troops are collected at Thayetmyo, a station just inside our frontier, and I am sorry to hear that cholera has broken out among them, of which disease two doctors have died. Thus as many may die of cholera as would have died in the campaign if it had begun before the unhealthy season came on, and surely the provocation after the massacres was a sufficient reason for demanding a change in the order of things.

Owing to the death of Mr. Shaw and the removal of other officers, I am almost the only one who has seen the whole crisis up to this point, and now I am more deeply implicated than ever, so far as getting news is concerned. Several times I have been able to give the Resident news, which, with all his means, he could not get.

And to tell you the real truth, I don't quite like to become such a political man, it may be used against me some time or other, though up to the present I have the hearty good will of my Bishop and provincial Government.

I don't know whether a telegram got into the English papers that the sister of the Nyoung Yan had fled to me for protection, and on refusal of Mr. Shaw to protect her I had put her in the sanctuary of the English Church, If you saw it [,] it may have alarmed you, but it is not true, though at one time it was very near happening, but the brave little Princess, of 16, said though she could get away herself her mother could not, and so she chose to stay at her mother's side to share her fate. The old Queen says: "I pray to the Blessed God every day and every hour for you," i.e., for me.

I do pray that the Blessed God may be our Good God, but I fear she is yet bound by her idolatrous faith. Her servants, or rather Ladies of Honour here have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I will not doubt that some good fruit will be seen "in that day." Adversity opens the heart oftentimes, so may it be in this case.

We have got all our small pox over for the year, I think. There was a rumour that the King had died of smallpox, but it is false.

August 21st, 1879

I hope you have not felt over anxious during the past two or three weeks. One thing or another prevented me from writing, though I had good news to tell. You remember, perhaps, my telling of various refugees coming to us here. Altogether, about 70 have passed through our hands, and have been sent away safely to Rangoon and elsewhere; some by steamer, some by land. I have been the instrument, and in consequence have received grateful thanks. What is better, as some of them lived in our Church Compound for weeks of months, it gave us a grand opportunity of gradually and quietly; teaching them our Holy Religion, and already the fruits have been reaped. Two old ladies, on the eve of going down to Rangoon, gave up the Burmese Prayer Beads as witness that they would no longer worship idols, Hpoongyees, or follow the worship of Buddhism, and made a promise to learn more about Christianity, which they wished to embrace. We continually pray for them, and have heard of their safe arrival in Rangoon, from which place they write, asking our prayers that they may become Christians. These two were grand ladies in more prosperous times, one being chief stewardess of the Nyoung Yan Prince's mother, the other being his sister's foster mother. They have both been to S. John's Chapel in Rangoon, so I hope to hear of their baptism (D.V.) shortly.

Another small party of two or three have given in their names as desiring Holy Baptism, and have made public profession of their desire. But now comes what rejoices me greatly. Two of the Maids of Honour who were last with the Nyoung Yan Prince's mother and sister, before the imprisonment became so strict as it is now, were delivered for safe custody to two officers noted for their brutality and cruelty during the late massacres. They both managed to escape, and came to us for refuge, where they have since remained. They made public profession, (i.e., before our small congregation) of faith, and were baptized on August 3rd, receiving the names Mary and Elizabeth. They are the first-fruits of the Palace, and the thought comes: Supposing the Nyoung Yan Prince should return to be King. He is under great obligations to me, and so are all his family; his mother and sister almost depend on me for their daily food, *i.e.*, I am the channel through which it is supplied. Their closest attendants, stewardess, and nurse, have confessed faith, and two faithful Maids of Honour who stood by them as long as possible, are now Christian women. Who can tell what might be the result of all these

influences in the future? Pray earnestly for us all, and especially for the young servants of God who have thus in the midst of trouble found the Pearl of Great Price.

Things are much quieter, but whether likely to continue so or not for more than a few days we cannot tell. Only to-day I hear the young King has sent 2,000 troops to the frontier, and will mount the Red War Flag soon. Continual drill goes on in the Palace enclosure, which foreigners are forbidden to enter, so you see our position is but insecure and uncertain. We have had thieves again, this time they attacked the house in which the four Palace ladies were. It is a little house detached from the Clergy House. Lawrence, I, and another man heard the noise, so we went to the rescue, and the thieves—or would-be murderers, for it is possible that this was the intention—cleared off.

September 11th, 1879

I fear you have had some anxiety about me for the last two or three weeks, and had you known the reason of my silence you would have been more than anxious. I have been very near death, and have become very much reduced by loss of blood and inability to eat food, but now "Thanks to God," I am quickly recovering health and strength. It has been a strange sickness. For two or three days I felt unwell, then a boil or something like it came in the lower part of my body. I bore up for the Sunday Services on the 24th August, but in the evening dismissed the congregation without a sermon, and walked over to the Doctor, who was quite startled to find my pulse at about 180, and said he wondered how I could walk. He gave me medicine, and came next morning to find that mortification had already begun. I need not follow on cutting, cutting, cutting, and of a good number of days I have no recollection at all. On Sunday, the 31st, the native Christians especially made supplication for me. On Monday, I was thought to be at the worst, and dying, and I gave myself up entirely and completely into God's hands, wishing neither to live nor to die, but only that His will might be done. However, I recovered, and two days ago I shuffled or staggered to Church, but now I can walk quite well, and carry my stick. I am thankful.

I have news to fill sheet after sheet about things here just now, but you must wait till I get stronger.

We have just heard by secret cipher code, of the destruction of the Residency at Cabul, but hope it will not get to the Burman ears for a week or so, that together with the sad news, the punishment determined upon may be heard also, for of course the upstart King and young Courtiers would like to rid their country of the British Residency also.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." I have some wonderful love tales to tell when it is fitting, only they are serious just now, and I am so perplexed among them; at another time I could be amused, but at present I don't know whether all will settle amicably.

It will be one year to-morrow since the Prince Nyoung Yan came here, and since then we have never been free from guests; to-day we had made all preparations for sending our Mary and Elizabeth down to Rangoon and so finally closing our list, but something has happened to stop them from leaving us, so we must still go on.

October 11th, 1879

Written on board S.S. Panthay, Prome, British Burmah.

You will, I am sure. Be delighted to hear that I am again in British territory. We have rather ignominiously run away from Mandalay. Left last Tuesday morning, the 7th, crossed the frontier yesterday about noon, nearly having a fight for it. Slept at Thayetmyo last night, and are now here in Prome. We have lost a great deal of property, and all but came away with nothing. It has been very exciting, and everyone expected a fight for it, but the fighting has still to come. Our Christians have mostly come away, and what is to be done with us all I don't know. I expect to be attached to the field force if troops are sent up soon; they may be sent in a month. Next mail I will send you a big letter with full particulars of our late adventure. I am gaining wonderfully in health and strength. The excitement, and river air, and exposure, are doing me a great deal of good, and turning me quite brown; people say I look better than ever. I weigh 110 lbs. if that is any guide. When I first came here I weighed 126, and last year 115. We have brought our last refugees with us.

October 18th, 1879

Written at S. John's College, Rangoon

From the address above you will be assured of our safety. We got here on Thursday evening last, after a voyage of ten days. I am longing to get back to Mandalay and its quietness, for I don't feel half so good or composed here as in the Clergy House just left, in spite of the anxiety. I must again beg your forbearance for another week; I cannot write a long letter in diary form yet. I have been to the chief Ecclesiastical and Civil authorities here, and am pretty sure of being appointed Chaplain to the Forces as soon as a forward movement of troops is made, and of being reinstated at Mandalay again if anyone is to go there. I suppose we shall take the matter in hand during the next six months. It would have been done six months ago but for the Cabul and Zulu affairs. We have all lost much valuable property and have very little hope of recovering any compensation, either from British or Burmese Governments.

The two Maids of Honour are safely put in S. Mary's School here, and the rest of the Christians have dispersed themselves here and there among friends, or to make their own livelihood. Before we went home, on landing, we went together to Church, and offered praise and thanksgiving for our safe preservation.

Now, what do you think of this?—When we had anchored, a man came on board to tell Mary and Elizabeth that they were to go to Calcutta to the younger of the two Refugee Princes there. This would mean destruction of their morals and religion, and I was glad to hear them refuse to go, though quaking with fear at the idea of refusing to obey a Prince. This younger Prince is, as I think I told you before, a very worthless fellow, unlike his brother. I should have put every obstacle in their way, had they wished to go, and feel that as their mistress, the Queen-mother of the two Refugees, gave them into my hands, I have power over them. Judge then my indignation and horror to find that it is probably, after all, only another ruse to get back the two girls to Mandalay—a clever trick on the part of some of King Thibau's creatures. One's Christian feelings scarcely prevail to keep the lips from uttering the direst maledictions on the heads of such miserable wretches as can attempt to work so cruelly and falsely.

I have already seen many of the poor creatures whom I helped to get down to Rangoon. One woman whose baby had smallpox in prison—perhaps you remember this—met me in the road ; she had her baby—now grown fat and strong—in her arms, and fell down before me and burst into tears. Several of them had heard that I was dead.

October 26th, 1879

My letters, though very short, must have given you much relief of mind, and perhaps you may have seen in the London papers some account of our exodus from Mandalay. I do not think it would be possible to give you a very detailed account of the last few days of my residence in Mandalay—unless your patience and my own were very great—mine especially; and if I confess to an impatient frame of mind just now, do not be too hard upon me.

I am just like a fish out of water, and having a few dependants, boys, servants, and Christians, who left Mandalay when I did, hanging about me, I am all the more anxious to get a settlement.

Now let me give you a brief account of what took place at Mandalay.

After the Cabul Massacre, the Indian Government got more anxious about our position in Mandalay, and when Colonel Brown left us, he wrote strongly to the Viceroy, representing the extreme danger we were in, should any sudden freak of madness seize either the King or the mob, as we were utterly defenceless, timber and mat houses, only a small guard of 20 Sepoys, and living two miles or so from the steamers' landing place.

This seems to have decided the Viceroy, and not wishing to be wise after the event, he determined to remove us all beforehand. It required some clever manipulation to get Court Records and Ammunition away without observation, and no one was allowed to pack up furniture lest open alarm should be given to the Burmese.

At last all was determined, and on Sunday, 5th of October, I was rather surprised on my return from Evensong, at finding Mr. St. Barbe, the acting Resident, and Mr. Austin, the Correspondent of the *Times*, sitting in my house. I asked Mr. St. Barbe why he had not been to Church, and then he began to tell me what was the matter. We were all to march down to the steamer, quietly, next morning, at six o'clock, but that on no account was I to tell anyone about it that night. I did not wish to leave, but he expressed himself very strongly, that if I stayed, having been so-mixed up in the troubles, I should probably bring on immediately what the Indian Government were not yet prepared for and of course the Burmese Government bare me but little love for what I had done.

I thought it over carefully and sought direction; then there seemed to be but one course open, and now that I have left, my conscience does not in the least upbraid me. Only three or four of our Christians stayed behind, so that I did not desert the flock committed to me. It would not have done to tell even trusty Lawrence what was about to take place, so I sent him off to the steamer the same evening with Mary and Elizabeth, the two Maids of Honour, not telling him I should so soon follow. I did not pack up much, but did not go to bed for fear of over-sleeping myself, and also because I wished as early as was safe, to give notice to Mr. Mackertoom, our worthy schoolmaster. I gathered some of my few treasures, clothing, and books, and about 3-30 on Monday morning went into Church, dismantled the Altar, took away Cross and Candlesticks, Altar Cloth,

Service Books, Registers, &c. I put the Altar slab under the floor of the Church, and then with some sadness left it, praying soon to be permitted to come back. At 4-20 I woke up Mr. Mackertoom, and then the boys who slept in the house. They opened their eyes in some astonishment when I said we were off for Rangoon that very day, but were not afraid, and helped me to get together more books and such like. I was ready in full time, but Mr. and Mrs. Markertoom were rather late, so that the Residency party marched down without us,—Sepoys with fixed bayonets and loaded rifles. After somewhat impatiently waiting, I got off the schoolmaster and his wife, the others had gone ahead, and then left the Church Compound last of all, promising a good reward to the Burmese sergeant of the guard, if I found all well on return. The house was left exactly as it stood, books, furniture, pictures, &c., with the exception of what we had in the hour or so previous packed together.

We got to the steamer all right, and then waited, expecting every moment to be attacked or boarded by the Burmese Authorities. It was for a long time doubtful whether they would do it or not, but at last: things assumed a more peaceful aspect, and we were actually allowed to send servants to get things from our houses. We had done this before, but they had been turned out, and some people beaten by the Burman guard, who had been helping themselves. I tried to get more of the Church things, and at last succeeded in getting down the harmonium, two large brass standards, and brass lights; but heavy things, such as tables, desks, &c., had all to be left behind. Personally I was not very anxious about things, but I thought possibly the Burmese Government might search the ship, and carry off any of their subjects from on board. During the night there was one alarm, a Burmese steamer tried her best to run foul of us, but got the worst of it, she was crowded with people, who might have been troops, for anything we knew.

October 7th, 1879

We were up very early, and sent for our goods, the Resident had promised RS. 100 to the sergeant of the Burmese guard, if he would get our things safely on board. The Residency flag was hoisted on the steamer's mast. We got-nearly all the valuable Church fixtures, but no house furniture, and lots of books were left behind, there was not time to bring them. It seems that the Burmese guards had been helping themselves, for they were seen carrying out a big bundle of something from the Clergy House.

The property of the lot of us was pitched indiscriminately into the hold, the hurry was so great, and at 12 o'clock we were quite ready for starting, as was also the other steamer. At last we got off, and bid farewell to

Mandalay, that "sink of iniquity," as some one on board called it, reached Mingyan same night at dark, anchored out in stream, met mail steamer coming up, but she prefers to follow us down.

October 8th, 1879

Left at 5-30. The people of the place have been greatly excited, and have been very busy getting their valuables on board. It is very hard for them. One man came on board saying, "I have Rs. 25,000 due to me in the Bazaar here, and I cannot possibly collect it under one month, what am I to do?" He is a British subject, and must go down with us if

he wishes to be safe. Three steamers, towing nine flats, make quite a fine show in the river.

October 9th, 1879

As we go down, take on board all the pilots at the various stations,—they are afraid to remain, as are also the agents of the various trading companies. Met another steamer with mails,—the captains had a consultation, and the end of it is to add another steamer and two flats to our flotilla.

Our party more or less scattered. I did not go among them much in daytime, but in evening had prayers on deck with them, somewhat to the surprise of the heathen about. We did not wish to attract attention to our refugees as we are still in Upper Burman waters.

To-morrow if all be well, we shall pass Minhlah, the frontier fortress, if such it may be called. Captain Sevenoaks is prepared to run the gauntlet of the forts if they attempt to stop us.

November 7th, 1879

People, especially the Burmese Christians, are very glad to see me again, what with rumours of Thibau's malice, and the severe illness, they have been continually expecting the worst.

Nothing seems to be settled about our relations with Upper Burmah, but an Embassy which was half way down to Rangoon, has been refused permission to come to Rangoon to the Chief Commissioner here. Our Government decline any political relationship whatever.

"I am no longer at the mercy of King Thibau."