



Note:

Original editorial note: Mr. Royal B. Hancock and family left Maulmain on 27 November 1837 and arrived at Mergui December 3rd. On the 26th of December, he was joined by Eugenio Kincaid, as stated in former communications. For several months previous to his departure from Maulmain, he had been engaged partly on the printing office, and partly in evangelical labors in Maulmain and its vicinity.

**Extracts from Royal B. Hancock's Journal at
Mergui**

Royal B. Hancock

December 16, 1837

I have had some very interesting conversations with the natives since our arrival here. Very few set themselves in array against the truth; and all seem to be interested in what we have to communicate; but the Spirit alone can make a permanent impression on their minds, and savingly interest them in the truth. A few evenings since, two young men (Catholics) came in to converse with me on the subject of religion. They asked a great many questions, and, before they left, seemed to have made some new discoveries respecting the procuring cause of man's salvation. They were very anxious to make out something meritorious from confessions, sacraments &c.; but the doctrine of salvation by


grace, which admits of no auxiliaries in the great work of saving the lost, they could not thoroughly comprehend. Last night, two young men, one of whom, I understand, the priests have anathematized, (for what reason I know not,) came in with an apparently sincere desire to understand the principles of the new religion. I explained to them, to the best of my ability, the doctrines of Christ, and they went away convinced that there is, at least, a consistency in the various parts of the Christian system. So far as my experience goes, the pure, unadorned doctrines of the gospel are the only effectual weapons that can be wielded in this warfare with the powers of darkness. To be sure, it is foolishness to some, and a stumbling block to others; but to those who are "called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."



December 19, 1837


Attended a Burman funeral. The occasion, and the circumstances attending it, furnished matter for improvement. On their way to the burning and burying ground, the young men bearing the corpse seemed to be divided into two opposite parties, each striving for preeminence in acts of disrespect towards the remains of their departed fellow creature. At one moment, one party bears off the body, in spite of the other, shouting victory, seemingly unwilling that the remains should be burned; at another, the other party recover their lost ground, and, in their turn, overpowering the opposition, the corpse is thrust with considerable force to the ground. Thus the struggle is continued, until they arrive at the spot assigned for the burning. The occasion seems to be improved solely for the amusement of the spectators. After the tumult had ceased, I commenced remonstrating with them on the impropriety of their proceedings; to which they replied, it was their custom. All seemed to be as indifferent to the fact that a soul, had passed into eternity, as if the cause of their assembling was but the burning of a dog. I however succeeded in securing their attention to the doctrine of a resurrection beyond the grave; a resurrection unto life of all who believe in Jesus, and a resurrection unto death of all who reject him. As is always the case, some gaped, some opposed, and some listened with attention and asked for books. One man rejected the whole system, he said, because I contradicted the fact

asserted in their own writings, that the world was once destroyed by fire. He, however, condescended to reconsider the subject, and requested me to give him a book to examine for himself. He was a man of some respectability.




20 December 1837

In my round, distributing tracts this morning, a young man invited me in, and wished to know something about us and our books. I therefore sat down with him, gave him an outline of the Christian religion, and exhorted him to think of the goodness of that Being who is the origin of all temporal blessings, and by whose grace alone salvation from hell is to be obtained. He listened in silence, but with apparent interest. He is a physician, and seems to be a man of considerable intelligence. I gave him a copy of the Catechism and View, the Account of Creation, and the Life of Christ.



June 19, 1838

A few days since,¹ while conversing with an apparently respectable man, a female, who had been listening with eagerness to what had passed between us, said she wished to ask one or two questions; she wished to know whether she must trample upon idols, as a term of her admittance into this religion, and whether she must remain under water a long time on receiving baptism; for thus she had been told. Some go so far as to say, that, after the subject has been once immersed, the question, "Do you see God," is asked, and if the answer is "No," he is plunged into the water again and again, until he is forced to acknowledge that he sees him. Such are some of the ridiculous stories told to invert the minds of honest inquirers after truth.



¹ Clearly, this refers to an entry not included in the original extracts.

February 6, 1838

Wickedness abounds in this place. Arrack-drinking, and opium-smoking, are the crying sins. I was informed by the governor, that the revenues arising from the sale of spirits and opium is about nine hundred rupees per month.


**April 9, 1838**

Since my last date, I have visited Tavoy and Mata. In Tavoy city, during the dry season, there is very little missionary work done, except what is effected by one or two native assistants. In fact there is no one to do it. Brethren Mason and Wade are devoted to the Karens, and brother Bennett's time is monopolized by the printing-office. That place needs as much the exclusive labors of a Burman missionary as Maulmain or Mergui.

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


The second day after my return from the tour, March seventh, I was again prostrated with "jungle fever." It was more severe than my attack in 1836, though not so protracted. But the Lord again restored me, when all around feared the attack would be fatal; and to Him I desire to dedicate the remainder of my days.

A day or two since, I again visited one of the public zayats in town, in order to preach to anywho might wish to hear; but my strength, which was but partially recruited, would not allow me to tarry long—long enough, however, to communicate saving truth to several apparently attentive listeners, “God giveth the increase.”




May 11, 1838

To-day I again went out, though the heat was extremely oppressive and debilitating, and had but just seated myself in the zayat when several old men came and entered into conversation with me. They appeared interested, and asked several pertinent questions. One of them, not quite relishing what was said, observed, with an air of triumph, “If the eternal God is what you claim for him, let him at once convince us of his ability and willingness to make his creatures happy, by making this poor man rich in our presence.” I replied that God gives like a God and that the happiness he confers is incomparable; and asked if that happiness was worth possessing, which we could not carry with us into the eternal world, since we were daily and hourly exposed to the shafts of *death*. They all acknowledged the force and propriety of the question, and I hope the interview was not altogether in vain.




May 12, 1838

Spent a couple of hours in conversation with the natives to-day. He arguments used in favor of the Christian system, are all acknowledged reasonable, but they do not seem to penetrate the heart: “like unto a man beholding his face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”




May 26, 1838

I sometimes feel almost discouraged from trying to hinder these people from going to hell. In addition to their former sins, they now sneer at the name of Christ, and revile his followers. But what can we do? Must we give them up?

**June 1, 1838**

Perhaps there is no place in the provinces, whose religious interests are so zealously watched as here. Priests of idolatry and of the 'mother church,' receive abundant patronage. Day before yesterday I observed several apparently respectable men assembled in a zayat, collecting money. I enquired their object, and was informed they were about erecting a monastery. I further inquired, if all their priests could not be accommodated in the buildings already erected. They replied that some were expected from Maulmain. There are enough monasteries here to accommodate five hundred priests; but they would probably require a little repairing; and there is very little merit in repairing images, image-houses, or monasteries.²

They seemed to consider me as an intruder, and treated me with very little respect. I could not leave them, however, without bearing witness against them. I told them it was well to contribute to the support of religious teachers, if they taught the truth; and they should consider whether their priests taught them the true law. One of the number, whose soul appeared to be filled with indignation, said, "I know all about this matter, and can anticipate all you will say, and we do not wish to listen to you; you had better go somewhere else." To persist, in such a case, would be "casting pearls before swine;" and I merely exhorted them to consider the fact that we did not ask them to support us, or to contribute in any way to our comfort; we only asked them to think for themselves, and further observed, but "All are seeking happiness; but will all obtain it, seeking, as they are, in different ways?"



² This last sentence has been pulled up from Hancock's note.

July 1, 1838

A few days since, I called upon the government native school instructor. After various inquiries concerning the school, I introduced religious conversation, by asking if he had seen any of our printed books; to which he replied, he had not. I then gave him some account of their contents, which drew forth some apparently candid inquiries. Presently, two writers from the court-house joined us, and they also were very civil and inquisitive. I left them, somewhat pleased with my interview. A day or two afterwards, I sent the schoolmaster a volume of tracts, which he refused to accept; thus evincing *how much* interest *he* felt in the conversation.

In reviewing the course of the last seven months, I see much that calls for gratitude to the Great Disposer of all events. Once my life has been snatched from the jaws of the grave, and with this exception, myself and family have enjoyed a good measure of health. I see, also, much to dishearten and discourage us, as to the probability that these people will bow their stubborn wills to the authority of heaven. All the encouraging appearances mentioned above, have vanished, and all our fondly cherished hopes are dashed. It would indeed encourage our hearts, if we could see but a single individual permanently affected with divine truth. Instead of applications for books at our houses, it is difficult to give them away at any rate. Some pleasing statements might be made in reference to the Karens; but brother Kincaid's journal will make up all deficiencies in this department.

