

## Our Foreign Letter.

### LETTER FROM BURMA.

HAVING been occupied close upon two years in a large military Hospital in Burma, I am sending you a short description of some of my experiences there, as I have never yet seen anything hailing from that country in your columns.

Do not imagine that it is an unhealthy country. I know people do talk a great deal about the awful climate, and bemoan the far-offness from civilisation: but it's not half as bad as many people make out. The climate of Upper Burma is, to my mind, almost perfect. Certainly it is hot; the thermometer frequently rises to 109° in one's house, but then there is almost always plenty of air, in which respect it is far superior to India or Lower Burma. Each has its good points and its bad ones. Upper Burma is much hotter at night, but it is more breezy and fresh. Lower Burma has cooler nights, but the days are close and muggy, it is very relaxing and the rains are very trying, continuing as they do for six months. There is more dysentery, enteric fever and liver abscess than in the north, though dysentery and liver abscess are pretty common in all Burma. What particularly struck me was the extremely high temperatures my men reached without becoming unconscious and without much apparent discomfort. It was not at all uncommon to have several temperatures of 106° and over when we took our afternoon temperatures, and the men were quite chatty and pleasant. Often I have been told when I asked if one or another was very hot, "No, Sister, I don't think I've any fever now," yet when I took out my thermometer it would register 104° or 106°. We had several cases of heatstroke with temperatures of 108°, but they all recovered. They were treated in a very summary manner when the fever ran as high as that, simply marched off to a bathroom where they lay on a wooden grating while the bhisti (*i.e.*, water carrier) poured cold water over them until they became cool enough to be put to bed again. The worst of these cases is that even when they are cool one is in terror, for they shoot up again so amazingly quickly and without any rigor or premonitory signs.

There is very little enteric fever in Burma compared with other hot climates, which strikes one as being odd in such a damp place. I only saw four cases during the two years I was there. I think on the whole British troops are healthy there; which is just as well, for when people do get run down they had better clear out of the country as soon as possible, for I never yet knew any climate in which it was so difficult to pick up when once one has run down. Burmese anæmia is too well known for me to need to speak of it—it is very tedious and slow to get rid of. The climate agrees, I think, much better with men than with women, it may be because men lead much more active lives than the general run of ladies in hot climates.

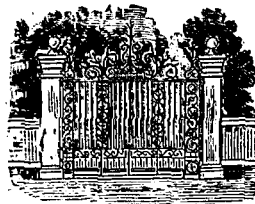
The country is lovely as far as scenery goes, and most interesting. I do not know as much about it as I might, the language is so impossible, and as I need it not at all in my work I never tried to learn it. But people who can speak with the natives of the country say they are very interesting to talk to. Personally I do not like them, but I think I am peculiar in this as

most people I have heard speak of them, say they are very amiable and intelligent.

To my way of thinking the nicest things in Burma are the ponies and the beautiful lotus lilies which abound on all the tanks and waterways with which Burma is intersected; the flower is as big as a breakfast plate, and pale pink with large flat green leaves floating beside it. These leaves are used in the bazaars for packing parcels, and when I bought flowers they were always given me neatly wrapped in a lotus leaf and pinned with a thorn. The breed of ponies is tiny—very willing and strong, never sick or sorry, and charming to make pets of, but they are very pig-headed little animals and like their own way better than most horses. I could write all night about Burma, the most beautiful country I have ever been in, but dinner is ready and I must go. Take my advice and go to Burma if ever you get the chance.

"OWEN."

## Outside the Gates.



THE Transvaal Government has notified its intention of ordering the exhumation of the remains of the Chartered Company's troopers who were killed in the fighting at Doornkop, and their removal to a suitable enclosed cemetery.

It is reported on good authority that the Emperor Menelik has asked Russia to undertake the rôle of mediator between himself and Italy. Although the truth of the report is denied in leading Russian circles it is positively asserted in other quarters that the Russian Government has already dispatched Baron Meyendorff, Councillor of Embassy to Rome, with a reply to Menelik, stating that Russia consents to act as mediator.

It is proposed to spend upwards of £14,000,000 in improving our Naval defences. The way in which the greater part of this expenditure will be used is in the extension of dockyards, deepening of harbours and approaches so as to adapt Naval ports to the present needs of the Fleet, and to providing new magazines. Owing to the new ironclads and extension of the Navy, it is believed that a most prosperous season from a commercial standpoint is about to set in.

The charges which have recently been brought against the conduct and behaviour of Dr. Peters, and several other German officials in Africa, go far to substantiate the assertion, made so frequently, that Britishers are the only people who can colonise new countries in an administrative capacity. Instances have occurred, of course, of tyranny and injustice towards natives by English officials; but on the whole the Britisher, whatever his faults, makes a better administrator than men of any other nationality.

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