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THE CONSERVATION OF A RACE AS A MISSIONARY BY-PRODUCT

THE REVEREND EDWARD NORMAN HARRIS
TOUNGOO, BURMA

COMING across a copy of the last Government census report of Burma not long since, I was greatly and happily surprised by what I learned. Formerly I had supposed that the Karens were a decadent race, or at least that they were losing their language and their distinguishing racial characteristics. I think most other missionaries to these people were, and probably still are, of the same opinion. We feared that the Karens were becoming rapidly Burmanized. Many of them speak the Burmese language as fluently as their own, and there are some who use nothing else, having quite forgotten their mother tongue. This tendency seemed so strong that we expected the Karen language to disappear entirely in the course of a few generations, if not within a few decades. I remember to have heard Dr. Smith, our senior missionary, the president of the Karen Theological Seminary, lament that the literature with which he has so laboriously and so splendidly enriched the Karen language would soon pass out of use with the waning of the Karen people. But the figures given in the census prove that so far from being a decadent race the Karens are showing signs of marked virility. Not so very long since,— in fact I think it was less than thirty years ago, but I have not the figures at hand,— they stood fourth among the races of Burma in numerical importance, not only the Burmese, but also the Talaings and Shans taking precedence over them. Now, on the other hand, they stand second, the Talaings and Shans having been outdistanced. During the ten-year period covered by the census, while the population of the province as a whole increased from 10,490,624 to 12,115,217, or fifteen per cent, and the Burmese population from 7,437,363 to 8,317,842, or about twelve per cent, the number of persons actually

speaking the different dialects of the Karen language rose from 881,290 to 1,067,363, an advance of over twenty-one per cent. Part of this increase has been due to the inclusion of dialects or tribes which were not formerly comprised in the census areas. But if we turn to the statistics of the Sgaw and Pro Karen tribes alone, which were not affected by changes in the census, we find that they show practically the same rate of increase, the number of those actually speaking these dialects having risen during the period named from 704,835 to 850,756.

But what most attracted my attention was the comment of the superintendent of the census, Mr. C. Morgan Webb. Referring to the Karens as a whole, he says:—

“In the midst of communities who have readily amalgamated with whatever tribes and races happened to be in their immediate vicinity, the Karens alone have remained isolated and self-contained. The ready reception they have given to the teachings of Christianity has tended to strengthen their individuality as a racial group, and to widen the differences existing between them and the remaining indigenous races of the province. While the Talaings, at one time supreme over the whole deltaic portion of Burma, are being absorbed by the Burmese, there is no suggestion that any such absorption, or even that any amalgamation between the Burmese and the Karen races is within the range of possibility.”

We have here then the phenomenon of a race which a hundred years ago, under the heel of oppression, was probably no more than holding its own, if indeed it was not in danger of actual extinction, now steadily advancing in numbers until it has outdistanced all the other races of Burma except the Burmese themselves. And this increase is ascribed by so impartial an observer as the superintendent of the census to the influence of Christianity.

The case is even stronger than Mr. Webb puts it. For in another place, writing of the Sgaws and the Pwos, the two leading Karen tribes, he says, “There is a tendency for the Pwo dialect to give place to the Sgaw, but the figures recorded do not enable the strength of this tendency to

be measured." One might perhaps infer from this language that the Sgaw is supplanting the Pwo in the sense that those formerly speaking Pwo are now speaking Sgaw. But such is not the fact. Those who are familiar with the situation know full well that the Pwos are not becoming Sgaws. They are rather being Burmanized, and so lost to the Karen race altogether. The tendency for the Pwos to give place to the Sgaws must therefore mean an absolute increase on the part of the Sgaws over and above the rate of increase of the Karens as a whole. This is the more significant because it is among the Sgaws that our missions have been chiefly successful.

For a full appreciation of these statements the racial conditions existing in Burma need to be borne in mind. Burma is situated near the head of those spurs and lesser ranges which, beginning in the eastern part of the Himalayas, extend, fanlike, in a southeasterly direction, to the borders of the continent of Asia at Singapore and other points, and crop up beyond, in the partly submerged mountain islands of the Andamans and the East Indian Archipelago. Three of these ranges pass through Burma itself, the Eastern, Middle, and Western Yomas. In the northern part of the country other ranges cross and intersect in such a way as to divide the face of the land into numerous little valleys. There have been several invasions of Burma by immigrants from China on the north, but these have not been like the early migrations of barbarian hordes into Europe, when the oncoming hosts surged in like a great flood. The mountain barriers have prevented that. Rather these invasions have been like a mere spill, the dashing of spray, a trickle over the passes of the mountains at numerous periods and at various intervals. Many of these waters lodged in little valleys here and there, and formed so many separate communities, sometimes only half a dozen small villages constituting a tribe, all with its own peculiar dialect. It is only those tribes which in some way push on or are thrust on to the more open country to the south that can ever become numerically important. No

fewer than sixty-five indigenous languages and dialects are named in the Government census, and the list is by no means exhaustive. In olden times, these races and tribes were comparatively stable, but recently, with a strong government over the whole country, improved communications, and increased trade, nearly all of these races and dialects are in a state of flux. The tendency is for the smaller tribes to be swallowed up in the larger. The census indicates that of the sixty-five languages and dialects listed, no fewer than seventeen showed a decrease in number, three of these actually becoming extinct. Of the rest, fifteen have increased chiefly because they have only recently been brought into the area covered by the census operations, and eight are so small as to be negligible. A few on the outskirts of the country are being strengthened by immigration from China. There are also the natives of India who come by sea and are for the most part mere transients, earning a small competency and returning to their own country. The Karens alone, although living alongside of the Burmans in the deltaic portions of the country, where it would seem that they ought most certainly to become amalgamated with the latter, are successfully resisting that tendency and maintaining their independent, separate racial existence.

Is Mr. Webb correct in ascribing this rather remarkable phenomenon to the ready reception which the Karens have given to the teachings of Christianity? Yes, and no. It should be observed that he does not have in mind the increase of the Karens in numbers. That is undoubtedly due to the protection accorded to them by the British Government. Formerly, under the Burmese king, they were subjected to all manner of abuse and oppression. I have been told by some who still remembered those days that there were times when the Karens would not build even their poor little huts, but lived in caves in the thickest parts of the jungles or among the fastnesses of the mountains. They dared not leave their wretched abodes and return by the same route lest a path be formed and their

whereabouts be traced. Often they were obliged to subsist on roots and herbs. The Karens are naturally lighter of skin than the Burmans, and it is said that most of the latter who are of fairer complexion than their fellows are descendants of Karen women who had been captured in some raid and held as slaves. But with the advent of the British all this was of course changed at once. Since then, the Karens have been protected in their pursuits, have enjoyed perfect liberty to go and come at their pleasure without fear of others, and have experienced such prosperity and ease as they had never known before. To these benign influences the growth of the Karen race in numbers is undoubtedly due. But the Talaings and Shans and the many other races of Burma have had precisely the same protection as the Karens. They have been under the same laws, and enjoyed the same immunities. There is no reason to suppose that they, as compared with the latter, are lacking in physical stamina. Why, then, do they all tend to amalgamate, to flow together, while the Karens alone are maintaining their racial independence? It is this which Mr. Webb ascribes to the influence of the missionaries, and I think he is undoubtedly right, if, with this influence, be included all that made it possible.

Just here the question may very naturally be asked, whether this persistent differentiation of the Karen race is desirable. Would it not be better for them to amalgamate with the Burmans and lose their identity? Why maintain separate language and customs? If this is the effect of missions, ought not those who are responsible for it to change their policy? To answer such questions as these is aside from the purpose of this article, which is rather to present the fact of differentiation as it exists and endeavor to arrive at the causes of it. Nevertheless, I may point out here that any race which has the virility to assert itself and maintain its integrity in the face of disintegrating influences such as surround the Karens, may be supposed, in the very nature of the case, to be a worth-while race. The presumption is strongly in their favor at the

outset. As to the Karens in particular, they are, far and away, the most virtuous people of the East. Although externally uncouth and much lower in the scale of civilization than some of their neighbors, morally they are the idealists of the Orient. Every one has heard of the remarkable body of traditions which they have received from their forefathers, traditions of the creation and fall very closely resembling the accounts given in the Hebrew scriptures and so superior to the much-vaunted Babylonian record that the two ought not to be mentioned in the same breath. Few are aware that these traditions are but part of a body of sayings and instructions which, notwithstanding some cruder conceptions, mark out the Karens as a really notable people. To this day, some among the elders declare that they are not the real Karen stock. They say:—

“Children and grandchildren, we are but the offscourings of our race. The real Karens, the original stock, still exist far to the north, over many ranges of mountains. They are mighty by reason of their righteousness. We were cast out and driven away because we were not worthy to remain among them.”

Many races have boasted that their progenitors were mighty in physical prowess. Does any one know of another that claims for its ancestry that they were mighty by reason of righteousness? If, then, something aside from brute force is worth while in the world, if virtue and idealism and integrity are real assets and not mere liabilities, it would seem that the conservation of the Karen race, with its language and customs, is not a mistake, but is something to be desired; for with its language and customs would undoubtedly go everything else that makes it unique among the peoples of the East. As to mission policy, while it is not my purpose to defend it, but simply to trace out as far as I may its part in bringing about the effects mentioned, yet I think it will appear later that those who were charged with it could not have done other than they did.

Returning now to Mr. Webb's surmise that the tendency to racial differentiation on the part of the Karens is due to the influence of missionaries, what have they done to bring about this result, and what forces have coöperated with them to make it possible? I think it should be conceded, to start with, that, however great the zeal and faithfulness of the missionaries, their efforts would, so far as one can judge, have met with comparatively meager success had it not been for a certain remarkable preparedness on the part of the Karens themselves for the reception of Christianity. It seems probable also that this state of preparedness, together with the coming of the missionary and the introduction of Christianity, accounts very largely for that phenomenon which is commented on by Mr. Webb.

Although the Karens had no literature when the missionaries came to them, not even an alphabet, they nevertheless had a saying among themselves that they had once had a book which taught them the way of life, that through their carelessness they had lost it, but that their younger brother, the white foreigner, would come to them from beyond the setting sun and bring them their long-missing treasure. How the book was lost did not clearly appear. Some said they left it under the eaves of the house, and the fowls scratching about dislodged it so that it fell to the ground, and there the pigs rooting around tore it to pieces or buried it. Others said that the book was placed on the stump of a tree where it became soaked up and softened by the action of the water during the rainy season, and the hungry dogs finding it ate it up. That book was of leather, they said, but the book which the younger brother should bring to them would be of silver and of gold. "If he comes by land, fear him. If he comes by sea, receive him." And so when the missionary came bringing the Bible, many recognized him as the younger brother, and the Bible as the long-expected book. The news spread like wildfire through all the wide jungle, and Karens came trooping in to see the missionary and his wonderful book. This at the beginning was undoubtedly the secret of the remark-

able success which attended missionary effort. It may be in part the explanation of the extraordinary cohesion of the Karen race to the present day.

I have already mentioned the Karen traditions of the creation and fall which correspond closely with the accounts contained in Genesis. I believe these to be very ancient. They tell of the wonderful garden full of varied fruits and of the deceiver through whose evil counsels the first pair lost the favor of their God and were driven out. These traditions have served to keep alive among the Karen people the knowledge of the Creator. They have conceptions of the Divine Being truly sublime. They ascribe to him omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. They say he can make things narrow or make things broad,—as if he could open out or close up the universe like a telescope. One of their sayings is that it is because men are not righteous that they do not see God. But, although the Karens had this knowledge of God, they did not worship him. Strange to say, they confessed that in their religious ceremonies they were simply following Satan, who deceived them at the beginning. These traditions were universally known and accepted among them, and so in the Christian religion many of them recognized a call to return to their original faith and worship. To this day our converts seem rarely to have much understanding of Christ until after they have had much instruction. They think only for the most part of forsaking Satan and turning again to their God. And this is undoubtedly an added element in those forces of cohesion which I am considering.

Other prophecies which were current among the Karens foretold that the younger white brother would bring them material prosperity. I have already referred to the crude conceptions entertained by the Karens, together with the high ideals set forth above. One story current among them is that once on a time Father God was seized with a mortal illness and sent for his three sons. The white brother dropped his work at once, and went to Father God, who showed him all his wisdom. The Burmese brother

tarried for a time, and Father God was able to impart to him part of his wisdom only. The Karen brother was busy in the field, and did not go until Father God had died and they had had the burning. There remained only a fragment of the bamboo matting in which the body of Father God had been wrapped. The consequence is that to this day the Karens have no skill except to weave mats, while the Burmese are much cleverer, and the white man has wisdom like that of Father God himself.

I tell this legend as illustrative. It presents a conception of God less exalted than that contained in the traditions previously cited, to be sure, and is probably of much later origin, but I may add that none of the stories which I have heard represent him as gross or immoral, but all as benignant and fatherly. In fact the people excuse themselves for not worshiping him by saying he is good any way, they need not be afraid of him, but there are any number of evil spirits around and there is no knowing how much harm they may do if they are not placated.

All this is aside. What I wish chiefly to say here is that in connection with this and numerous other stories of the white brother there is nearly always the promise that, when the white brother comes, he will bring them the benefits of his wisdom. When or how these prophecies came into existence, I cannot attempt to say, but, improbable as it may seem, there is reason to believe that, although of much more recent origin than the traditions, they yet long antedated the coming of the missionary. I have been assured of this by members of my own mission who told me that their own ancestors were priests and uttered these prophecies from time to time with solemn ceremony. Certain it is that among Karens universally, heathen as well as Christian, a kindly and expectant attitude towards the white man prevails as towards a younger brother, and at the beginning of missionary work among them the sight of the wonderful inventions of the white man and his remarkable achievements along many lines had a potent influence, a mighty pull, in drawing the

Karens towards the missionaries. Indeed, there was a time when it seemed likely that the entire race would be Christianized at once. Converts were gathered in by the hundred and by the thousand.

It was not long, however, before other influences came in to dampen the ardor of the people. The new religion made demands on the life which were not easily met. For a period of twenty years or more the Christian community had little or no growth; there were few accessions from the ranks of the heathen. It was a time of testing; many went back. Gains had to be consolidated. At length there began again a forward movement, and for thirty years or more there has now been a steady and accelerating increase.

What, now, has been the work of the missionaries since that early reaction set in? It has necessarily been largely confined to the gathering and training of a Christian community. Little outside of that has been possible. The heathen population as such has not been accessible, for instance, to what is known as social service. Whatever influence has been exercised upon the race as a whole along these lines has been achieved through the medium of the Christian community and on the side of the religious approach alone. It is commonly said that Peter Parker opened China at the point of the lancet. I am ventilating no theories. I am simply presenting facts when I say that, whatever may have been true in the past, the lancet does not open the way for the acceptance of Christianity among the Karens to-day. The process is quite the reverse,—the Christian religion sometimes opens the way for the lancet, the preacher has introduced the doctor, and it is still true that only after the doctor has been recognized as a man of God have his medicines been accepted. A Karen vaccinator, holding a government license, went to a heathen Karen village not long since to vaccinate the people against an epidemic of smallpox which was raging in the vicinity. But the villagers refused to receive him until one of my own preachers had vouched for him, be-

cause, they said, they were afraid he would inoculate them with the real disease in the manner of some Burmese practitioners. After the preacher had assured them of the man's entire trustworthiness, they consented to be vaccinated. I have known of government doctors of real zeal and devotion to their tasks who mourned that they had so little access to the people of the country,—and yet no such obstacle stands in their way as that of caste in India. The reason these government doctors are not able to reach the people more effectively is that they lack the religious appeal.

I am not sure that even if the heathen had been open to the social approach, we could have done much for them. When the missionaries began their work among the Karens, they were as enthusiastic as could be desired for giving them the benefits of our civilization as well as of our religion. We Westerners, especially perhaps we who are of Anglo-Saxon extraction, are so obsessed with the absolute superiority of our civilization, that we are likely to think the people of the East ought to accept it as a matter of course. And such is the benignity of our attitude towards these less favored peoples that, if they do not adopt at once what we have to give them, we are disposed to force it upon them willy-nilly, and any resistance to our ideas on their part we are likely to ascribe to their intense conservatism, never once reflecting that the trouble may lie exclusively in the unsuitability of our methods to their conditions and surroundings. I was once talking with Sir Harvey Adamson, the Lieutenant Governor, when he told me of an experience he had had when holding a subordinate office. He got out an American reaping machine and announced that on such a day he would reap the field of a certain village headman. At the appointed time people came from miles around to witness the unusual event. The machine was turned into the field, and men, women, and children gazed in open-eyed astonishment as it reaped in a few hours what it would have taken them days to harvest with their little hand sickles. When that field was reaped,

the young officer turned to another headman, and proposed to him to reap his field. "Oh, no," said the man, "I do not want you to reap my field." This incident was related as an evidence of hopeless conservatism on the part of the second headman, and by inference of the people of Burma in general. But in reality it proved nothing of the kind. It only showed the inadaptability of our methods to Eastern conditions. There rice fields are divided up by means of little earthen ridges a foot or two in height into plots averaging not more than half an acre in extent. I am not quite sure of the reason of this, but my understanding is that, if the plots were made larger, the wind would set up currents in them which would interfere with the best growth of the plants. By harvest time the water has of course disappeared, but turn an American reaper into one of these little plots, and more grain would be trodden down than reaped. Our methods are not suited to Eastern conditions. The old-fashioned cradle might be useful if made small enough. The natives are so slight of stature that they could hardly swing our cradles. But really there, where labor is so cheap, it is difficult to find methods of agriculture which are an improvement on their own, and the American reaper is as little suited for their needs as the leg of an elephant to the body of a cat.

My observation leads me to believe that the Oriental is really no more conservative than the Occidental. The marvelous changes which have been voluntarily adopted in China and Japan within recent years is convincing evidence. But the Westerner, when trying to instruct the inhabitant of the East, is quite as likely to make himself ridiculous as helpful. The missionaries tried introducing American plows. The Karens are agriculturists, and it seemed that it ought to be the easiest thing in the world to find a plow that would be an improvement on the native implement, which is simply a forked stick with an iron shoe on the end of it. But various plows were tried and speedily discarded. Not one of them proved to be really practical. American plows are too heavy for the small native

cattle to draw, and in any case a draft of only three or four inches is required, as the rice sprouts cannot stand up well in deeply plowed soil. I think that now the time has come when we missionaries, if we were set free from other work, and had the financial backing which would enable us to do it, might accomplish something along the line of agricultural experimentation which would be really worth while. After three quarters of a century of intimate contact with the people, we have learned humility and realize that we would have to begin from the standpoint of their conditions, not ours. Problems in plenty present themselves. Many of the Karens, who were originally a hill tribe, came down to the plains when the country was first opened up by the British, and took up lands which have since become valuable. But, with repeated cultivation of the same crop, these lands are losing their fertility, while the hills, which are capable of supporting a vast population and are still the natural habitat of the Karens, a region where their sturdy physiques have their best development, remain for the most part uncultivated. The task before us would not be an easy one. Probably not less than five years of sympathetic study on the spot by a trained expert would be required before we could even think of making a beginning. Government is already trying to do something. It has a Director of Agriculture with two or three assistants who have been trained in English or Canadian schools. But Government cannot get into intimate touch with the people, especially not with Karens. We missionaries are specialists at that and recognized as such. Personally I think, too, that we Americans are naturally more practical than the British, have rather more talent for making things go, and I have great confidence that in time the problems I mention would find their solution at our hands. This might mean much for the betterment and prosperity of the entire Karen race. But, truth to tell, up to the present we have been able to do little along these lines even for the Christian community, let alone the great body of heathen.

Nor am I by any means sure that, even if we had all along been in a position to render aid to the heathen community and they had been open to our approach, they would have profited by it. Not that which is from without, but that which is from within, defiles the man, and equally true is it that not that which is imposed from without, but that which is implanted within, benefits a man. I have not the slightest doubt that our Christian converts would adopt with avidity any suggestions which they found really practicable. They have the new spirit which would prompt them to it. But as to the heathen the case is different. My father was a missionary before me. We have both been asked many times by heathen to do them some favor. Neither of us has ever refused. We have been able at various times to secure for them substantial benefits such as grants of land, reduced taxation, exemption from onerous impressment, and so forth. We have always been glad to help, but, so far as I know, none of the recipients of our kindnesses has ever been really profited. Not only have they not been more forward to accept our religion, but they have gotten no real good from what we did for them. They simply had more money to spend for drink, or more leisure for carousing, or something of the sort. It was not in them to turn what we had done for them to good account, but only to evil.

But what of our work among the Christian community? Have we indeed been able to accomplish so little along social lines? Here I am glad to say that what we have attempted to do has met with most cordial response, yet not perhaps altogether in the way one would expect. One of the first things the missionaries did was to reduce the language to writing and produce a literature, for the Karens, as I have said, had no books whatever. Dr. Wade devised an alphabet before he himself had learned to speak Karen. Those who are familiar with its ear-teasing consonants and its complicated system of vowel tones wonder how he did it. It stands to-day as a monument to his genius. He adapted the Burmese alphabet to the expres-

sion of Karen sounds, and produced a system of writing which is purely phonetic. Some have wondered that he did not adapt the Roman alphabet instead. On my way out to Burma the first time after my appointment, one of the passengers expressed regret at this, but patronizingly added that he supposed the poor missionaries had no one to advise them better. I soon found out the reason, however. Some Karen sounds defy expression with Roman letters to begin with, and a Karen who had already learned to read the Burmese could readily pass from that to the Karen, while on the other hand if he learned first to read his own language, he could easily pick up the Burmese; and to the average Karen Burmese must for many generations be of much more value than English.

The language vehicle having been determined upon, the next thing in order was to produce a literature. Among the first books to be translated was of course the Bible. This great task was undertaken by Dr. Mason, and an excellent version from the original tongues was produced. An anthology worthy to grace any literature was prepared, over two hundred hymns remarkably true to the idiom of the language and to the genius of the Karen people issuing from the pen of the first Mrs. Vinton alone. A Karen who seems to have had an extraordinarily comprehensive knowledge of his own language, people, and customs, was found, and, although the Karen is thought of as having a rather meager vocabulary, yet with his assistance and at his dictation a compendium of Karen terms and ideas was compiled in five thick volumes, called "The Karen Thesaurus," which has not been surpassed to this day and deserves to rank almost as an encyclopedia. Spelling books were prepared, and arithmetics, geographies, astronomies, and other books in great number. Schools were almost from the beginning a necessity, demanded by the people themselves, for as soon as a Karen adopts the Christian religion he wants two things: first, to acquire knowledge; second, to improve his physical surroundings. Children and adults sat on the same forms and studied out of the same books unashamed.

To this day they seem almost to think that to be able to read is part of being a Christian, for seldom does a Karen turn to the Christian religion but in some way he manages to acquire a knowledge of the alphabet.

Churches were organized, and native pastors placed in charge. These pastors were chosen from among the natural leaders of the people. The step seems to have been most wise. Many of these men were possessed of initiative and combined good executive ability with their pastoral functions. They led their people in matters temporal as well as spiritual. They were men of foresight. With the advent of British rule bringing the entire country under orderly government, they saw their opportunity and seized it. Our churches are all practically self-supporting, but I have heard some raise the objection that we ought not to speak of them as self-supporting churches, but rather as having self-supporting pastors. The criticism is in a measure true. Comparatively few of our native churches give their pastors an adequate support, although the number of those which do so is steadily increasing. In the majority of cases the pastors support themselves in large part, and this custom comes down from the time when those veterans whose names are held to-day as a precious memory, not only supported themselves but in many cases their churches as well, by making it possible for the members of those churches to live and prosper. Some of them took up large tracts of land, rallied their people about them, and had them bring the land under cultivation, thus establishing flourishing settlements. Some of them dug extensive systems of irrigating ditches for the cultivation of the betel nut, and thus laid the basis for later prosperity, enriching not only themselves but also their people. I still marvel as I see what Thra Pah Maw, a pastor in my own field, did. Karens have told me that when my father first went among them, few owned so much as a buffalo, and when they needed a cart, the householders in a whole village would have to club together to buy one. Now herds of buffaloes are seen grazing about all their villages and a

cart under every house, while some of the people have incomes which would enable a white man to live in comfort, — all very largely the result of native sagacity and leadership.

Meanwhile progress was made in other directions. Karens have risen to positions of distinction and honor. A good many are forest officers, inspectors of schools, commanders of military police, judges of the courts. A few have become barristers, some doctors, while many are teachers. Recently a Karen has been appointed a member of the Lieutenant Governor's council, the highest honor within the power of the local government to confer on a native of the country. And all of our people are making progress along the lines of general culture and enlightenment. Given an opportunity the once despised Karen is rendering a good account of himself.

But this progress of which I speak is confined almost exclusively to the Christian community. So far as I know, not one heathen Karen has ever risen to even a moderate degree of distinction. Some have acquired wealth in one way or another, but not one has attained to even a subordinate position of honor or trust in the service of the Government or anywhere else. The Government has been thoroughly cordial and would gladly recognize ability wherever found. Other positions are also open. But the heathen Karen simply does not possess the power. He is intellectually as good as dead.

What then is the present situation? The number of Christian Karens, as reported in the census, is 130,271, less than twelve per cent of the entire Karen population. Of course this includes not simply actual members of churches, but the entire Christian constituency, men, women, and children, those who are Christians by conviction and life, and those, not very numerous to be sure, who are Christians because they do not care to subscribe themselves as belonging to any other faith. This small community has made remarkable progress along all lines. The same would undoubtedly have been true of the entire Karen

nation had all been Christianized, as at one time seemed likely. The pull is still strong upon them. They have not forgotten their ancient traditions. The tide which at one time began to ebb is now in flow again. The Karen is essentially religious. His instincts are ethical, more strongly so than are those of perhaps any other Eastern race. Among others clannishness or custom may be a uniting force. Among the Karens it is religion, the prophetic hope, sometimes obscured but never obliterated, actualized in Christianity though not always recognized, that unites. Here is the solution of the problem that called forth the remark of Mr. Webb. Through this has resulted the conservation of the Karen race.