

# MISS BURMAH IS BREAKING HER BONDS



Kaw Women Of Burmah

The Pretty Little Yellow Thing Is Just Throwing Off the Shackles of the Centuries and Taking Her Place in Public Life

**L**ITTLE Miss Burmah, brown as a berry and bright as a dollar, is joining the world-wide move for the uplift of woman.

As nearly as she can, she wants to be an American girl. She hasn't yet got to the stage where she can discuss the pros and cons of race suicide, or whether 'tis better to live in single blessedness than to aid some cussed man get rid of his coin.

Nevertheless, she is getting there. She is absorbing education and advancement in chunks. Where but a few years ago it was not considered feasible for a girl to go to school, there are now more than 200 separate institutions devoted solely to the needs of Miss



Burmese Girls of the Better Class.

Burmah. It is no longer bold or forward for her to imbibe knowledge.

When the whole story of the world-wide emancipation of the feminine sex is told there will be no more remarkable chapter than that relating to Miss Burmah. Of a type superior to most oriental women, she has been held down by tradition as much as the lowliest of the yellow race. Though in many cases the manager of a family's business affairs, as well as the household, she has been denied book learning. Now she is coming into her own, and a right aggressive representative of the new woman she is turning out.

**B**URMAH is a place where a bachelor must carry around a chaperon or so when he a-calling goes. Nothing is considered more rude and coarse than for a lovesick swain to go unaccompanied to the home of his pretty brown love.

There are a good many other funny things about Burmah, but that will do for a starter. It makes it quite evident that Miss Burmah has been raised in an atmosphere of which we can have little understanding; that she has been forced to take a strangle-hold on her new-found independence.

Occasionally she goes so far now as to be married by a minister. The strictures of her Buddhist relatives she heeds not, because she is coming more and more under the influence of American missionaries. Three of the latter returned to their native land recently to attend the Baptist World Convention, and they had the most encouraging news imaginable to tell of Miss Burmah. They were certainly qualified to speak, for one of them, Miss Zillah Bunn, has labored in Mandalay for twenty-nine years. Close to her are Miss Ruth Ranney and Miss Harriet Phinney, who have labored together for twenty-six years. In missionary circles they are known as the Burmese twins.

They went out together and have never been separated. Their work has been principally among the girls and young women. They organized a school of higher education and Bible training for women at Rangoon in 1892. This has been transferred to Insein, where they have a beautiful building and an enrollment of more than a hundred students. These include youths from the Shan, Chin, Kachin and Karen tribes. Of all the epoch-making changes that Miss Bunn has seen in her long experience, probably the most notable is that of marriage in America. Not that it robs the yellow clergyman of fees—the Buddhist priests do not perform marriage ceremonies. All that constituted a wedding was for the young people to assemble their friends, have a feast and publicly proclaim that they were married. What would only be considered a "common-law marriage" here has been in vogue in Burmah for centuries.

## TWENTY THE MARRIAGE AGE

Contrary to the rule in other parts of India, where child marriages are in vogue, a Burmese girl is not permitted to marry until she is 20 years old. Yes, there is one way out of it, but a difficult one. If the couple succeed in eloping three different times they are legally married.

It is almost a crime for parents knowingly to allow their daughters to become brides before their twentieth birthday, for they are not considered capable of performing the household duties until that age. But if the fair damsel can disappear three consecutive times with the groom-to-be and call the family together each time, then she is really married. But that is a difficult task, for one can imagine that there are gossips in Burmah as well as anywhere else. A native courtship would be considered a joke by the young folks in this country. To begin with, there are no lovers' lanes or anything of that sort. The courting is all done in the house, within plain view of the girl's parents. Of course pa and ma are in the next room; but the bamboo partitions are very thin.

To some that may sound staid enough; but to make it more formal, the would-be husband must always be accompanied by a friend or two. It is considered very bad form for a youth to call at his fair one's home alone, and he would probably be sent away if he did.

Very often the girl has a companion, too. Kissing is barred; the young couple must wait until the wedding day.

For that matter, there is no marked display of affection shown by either party. There may be some blushing when the question is popped with the friends in plain view and pa and ma perhaps anxiously watching between the bamboo cracks. But the missionaries never investigated that far.

While the courtship rules in Burmah would not be popular here, it is possible that the divorce laws would suit quite a few. But, like the usual novel, it is the custom for the young couples to live happily ever after, so they are little used. If a man has no children, or only daughters, he has, in the Burmese way of thinking, a very good cause to divorce his wife and get another one. Petty quarrels are not considered a

job began to look as if it was being lifted, hastily cast about for some ways or means to hustle along the rest of the work, simply to keep the force from being dispersed.

Perhaps Uncle Sam doesn't love any of his Panama nephews more than he does the rest of the boys up home. But he had a hard job weeding out the gang that was more eager for the fruits of nepotism than the laborers; and now that he has assembled a bunch after his own heart, he is straining his resources to keep them there, where they have proved they can do the most good.

As years go by, however, he will be forced to let one group go after another, because he has made up his mind that the canal is pre-eminently a time and not an eternity job—and that the time is now. All he is trying to do is to find work for them to do and to keep them as willing as ever to do it.

What he has been paying them, and how they have worked to earn it, are pretty well known. But one thing Uncle Sam has done for them—one thing which has been most potent in keeping the married workers especially content with their jobs—has not been heard of at all.

That is the provision the government makes for their stomachs—a department of their anatomy on which they work just as much as if it were the one on which Napoleon's armies traveled.

It helps a lot toward persuading a man to stay on his job when, besides paying him first-class wages, you enable him to eat well at less cost than he could elsewhere.

UNTIL the law took them by the scruff of the neck and shook the avarice out of them, hundreds of coal mining and other companies in the United States proclaimed that immutable truth of industrial economy and used it for the motto of their flint-skinned company stores.

Worthy Uncle Sam would yell in wrath if any one were to intimate that the commissary department which he maintains at Panama for the benefit of his employees is, in effect, a government company store; yet it can't be anything else—except in this: That the private company store takes the money out of the employees' pockets and the United States government tries to keep it in. Maybe that's all the difference between a company store and a commissary department. Anyway, Uncle Sam's commissary works the

better way. Here's the proof of it: The Canal Record, on June 23, printed its list of prices for cold-storage provisions—in effect, the prices for provisions generally as sold by the government to its employees on the isthmus. During that week, class for class, quality for quality, the advantage in prices, as compared with a big eastern city like Philadelphia—where food prices are about the same as those in Duluth, St. Paul, St. Louis and Providence and about 4 per cent lower than New York—was commonly in favor of the hungry and hard-working nephews on the canal.

Take beef. Porterhouse steak, up north, was costing 23 cents per pound; on the isthmus, 20 cents; sirloin, 25 cents here and 22 cents there; rib roast, veal here was 10 to 14 cents, there 10 cents; chops here 22 cents, there 24 cents; cutlets here 30 cents, there 28 cents; shoulder here 15 cents, there 16 cents.

But for roasting only, 12½ cents per pound. Leg of lamb here was 20 cents, there the same; chops here 28 cents, there 24 cents.

Poultry comparisons are less accurately made. But broilers here were selling from 35 to 40 cents per pound, while broilers there, milk fed, went at 60 cents apiece. Squabs here were quoted at 35 cents each, and there from \$2.50 to \$5 per dozen. Spring ducks sold here at 22 to 25 cents per pound; western ducks, 4½ pounds, sold there at \$1 apiece. Ordinary fowl here brought 20 to 23 cents per pound, there from 60 cents to \$1 each. But the Panama fellows were having their chances at partridges and grouse at 50 cents each, which isn't so bad for the season when mouths may water for them in Minneapolis and Duluth.

The fish question does not figure quite so extensively in the isthmian bill of fare—perhaps they don't get so much of variety; yet, while we were paying 15 cents per pound for the toothsome bluefish, they got it for 14 cents; our halibut was costing us 20 cents per pound where theirs was only 15 cents; and as for the alluring shad, by us long ago loved and lost, the swell gold-roll person on the canal need only stroll over to the commissary and take a perfectly fresh one away for 70 cents, or contemplate breakfasting on the roe-a-sh! garnished with bacon—for 25 cents.

They sell their vegetables down there by the pound, a touchstone of honesty which, it is predicted, we will all be up against before many years are over. So only a few items agree in measure. But the cabbage that sold here for 6 to 10 cents per head brought there 3 cents per pound. Celery cost here 8 to 12 cents per stalk; there it was a flat 10 cents per stalk. Our onions were 20 cents per quarter peck; theirs 5 cents per pound. Our tomatoes were still 8 to 15 cents per quart; theirs were retailing at 8 cents per pound. Rhubarb here was 3 bunches for a nickel; there the same coin bought a pound of it.

In fruits we were paying from 15 to 45 cents per dozen for oranges, and they had Jamaicas at 1 cent apiece and Californias at 3 cents. Our lemons were from 15 to 25 cents per dozen; theirs 24 cents. Limes cost us 15 cents per dozen; theirs, sold by the hundred—must use a raft of limes down there for something or other. Oh, well!—were 80 cents for that number. And they were eating watermelons at 40 cents, which is a price that is little more than our best melons bring when the season is well under way.

Our fancy grades of butter cost us 35 to 40 cents per pound; their creamery special was only 32 cents. Eggs here stood at 22 to 24 cents per dozen; theirs, government guarantee of freshness, 24 cents.

And you could treat your wife to ice cream at the rate of 25 cents per quart on the isthmus, where it is generally acknowledged to be good for what ails either of you.

And yet there's an Englishman who's trying to revive the original Garden of Eden.



Burmese Village On a River Bank.

sufficient cause for divorce; but if a couple just can't get along together, they can agree to separate and that is all there is to it—they are divorced.

The man and wife have their individual fortunes; but if there is any joint property, neither can marry until it is divided. If a man deserts his wife she can marry again if she doesn't get any trace of him in three years. If, on the other hand, a woman disappears, her husband can marry again in a year.

There is no law against polygamy, but the people look down upon it. It is seldom, if ever, practiced. And in the whole province of 12,000,000 people, where the marriage and divorce laws might be considered extremely lax, there are very few illegitimate children.

Domestic life in Burmah is calm and there is seldom any trouble. A woman is believed to be honoring a man by marrying him and he considers it folly to quarrel with her. He finds it easier to have a general good time, with frequent family festivals, which include ear-borings and tattooings.

When a girl reaches the age of 13 her ears are pierced to show that she is no longer a child. Relatives and friends gather at her home and there is a jolly time. As a gold needle is rammed into the child's ears a band of music plays to drown her cries. Tubes of colored glass or silver, with filigree ornaments, are worn in the ears afterward. The boys receive their share of torture, mingled with joy, when they are tattooed to show their entrance into man's estate.

The Burmese women, especially the educated ones, are very particular about their dress, though the costumes they prefer would shock many Americans.

center. This garb is wrapped tightly around the hips, being tucked in, and is open in front. To compensate for this peculiar construction, the women have a peculiar mode of walking, by throwing the heels and hips, which prevents the flapping open of the garment. This walk would appear very ugly on our streets, so one doesn't fear that in the crasse for novel styles our modistes will take up with the Burmese mode.

With this half-divided skirt a white jacket is worn and a silk scarf thrown over the shoulder. The Christian natives use this for headgear instead of big bonnets when going to church.

It is more likely, indeed, that Miss Burmah will adopt western styles, as she has ideas. For years back the boys and men of Burmah have been literate and many of them learned. Now the girls are getting jealous. They, too, are thirsting not only for a common schooling but a higher education. When Miss Bunn first went to Burmah there were comparatively few educated women. Today there are to be found everywhere and in a short time will be as numerous as the men.

Already the American customs and ideas of dress have proved interesting to the Burman girls, and some of them have been actually bold enough to don waists and skirts. But our plain clothes do not exactly suit their peculiar styles of beauty.

The people of Burmah in general are not opposing the wishes of their daughters and sisters for better schools, but on the other hand are advocating them. The inhabitants of this section have always prided themselves on the number of educated persons compared to those in other parts of India and other eastern countries.

Statistics a few years ago in India showed that there were ninety-eight literates among every thousand men and only seven women in a thousand who could read and write. In the cities these numbers reached 250 men and 49 women.

## EDUCATION IN BURMAH

In Burmah alone the statistics show that in the province 378 men and 46 women from each thousand were educated, and the city records showed 469 males and 188 females. This proves that practically every other man in the cities can read and write. There is nothing like this proportion in any other eastern country. The percentage of literate Burmese natives runs even higher, for in Rangoon and other cities there are many male immigrants from India.

The missionaries have estimated that there are now about three million educated Burmans out of a population of twelve millions. Caste is not known in Burmah, and every boy has an opportunity of entering the Buddhist monasteries, whether he be a merchant's son or the son of a beggar.

This is why there has been so high a percentage of educated men. Not because the girls did not have the same desires, for they are considered even brighter than the men. Many are the real business heads, particularly in the farming section, where they manage both the farms and the households. But the daughters did not have the same opportunities as the sons.

That, in a nutshell, is the cause for what may be termed a woman's war, or an educational revolution. Co-education, however, is not particularly favored by the Burman mothers and there are 200 schools for girls alone. All told, there are more than 17,000 pupils with an attendance of 400,000 children. These include five of the higher schools. A Mandalay, where Miss Bunn is stationed, there is a high school which has an enrollment of 400 pupils.

## CLOSE TO EUROPEANS

Mandalay is the center of a large European population. The missionaries need to exercise much tact in working among these people, because they are the Europeans and are very sensitive about this point. Many of them exhibit such a slight trace of native blood that they would easily pass for Europeans. They are beginning to learn our language, and in some schools English textbooks are used. The Baptists have a college at Rangoon, which opened in 1872 with twenty-eight pupils, and now has 1113 pupils. The higher the education, the more the missionaries are being recognized. The young people are exceptionally bright and are becoming teachers and helpers in the mission schools.

There are two theological seminaries conducted by Baptists, both at Insein. One is known as the Burman Bible school and the teaching is done through the native language. Several other schools, notably the Shans, Chins, Kachins and Arakanese, are represented. The course of study covers four years. There is now an enrollment of fifty pupils. The Karen Seminary also provides a four-year course and the curriculum includes the Bible, homiletics, moral science and church history, taught in the Karen language.

Good work is also being done in the medical missions, and the ministrations at Haka won many souls to Christianity where all other means failed. The missionaries noted that, especially among the degraded Chins, a feeling of gratitude was aroused from the first time from hearts that had never before known the meaning of love and kindness. The needs of the lepers, who number 4000, are also being attended to.

Altogether, the educational work that is being done is making a whole new Burmah, and it is likely to be but a few years until the old order of things will be pretty well wiped out.

## Fantastic Gardens of Japan

**N**O PEOPLE in the world are greater lovers of nature than the people of Nippon.

Hundreds of Japanese, even among the poorer classes, have as much space as is possible devoted to gardens, in which are often found various forms of dwarfed trees and shrubs which are perfect from root to branch and leaf. Trees that will, under ordinary conditions, reach a height of from thirty to fifty feet are kept down to but two or four feet.

The way in which the Japanese can afford the space, are great for dwarfing many kinds of vegetation. Minute lakes, tiny creeks and rivulets, with miniature waterfalls, surrounded by all that nature provides, are seen in the more expensive gardens.

Another fad among the Japanese is the fantastic in nature. Many trees and shrubs, and, in fact, every type of plant that can be trimmed and trained to represent some form of animal life, are so treated that they form great beasts; huge dragons and reptiles.

It seems to give the Japanese gardener great pleasure if he can cause a tree or vine to grow in some curious or uncommon way. He loves to see what he can make it do that is odd. Upright growths in trees are trained to droop like willows, and weeping branches of the willow and other drooping forms are trained to grow directly opposite to that which nature has provided.

Gardens containing no more than from five to ten square feet of ground are often filled with a variety of fine plants, and these are kept so small they do not crowd each other.