

missionary heroes
The Three Mrs. Judsons
Helpmeets to the Missionary to Burma
by Julia H. Johnston



Miss Ann Hasseltine. There was a pleasant stir in the little village of Bradford, Massachusetts, [United States] one day, in the year 1810. It was the occasion of a meeting of the Missionary Society, or General Association of Massachusetts, and the delegates were entertained with great hospitality. A number of these worthies, older and younger, were gathered at the table of a Mr. Hasseltine for dinner, and among them young Mr. Adoniram Judson, who had just signified his great desire to go as a missionary. Pretty Ann Hasseltine waited on the table. A gifted and sprightly girl she was, as well as beautiful and good. She looked with curious interest upon the young man whose bold missionary projects had made a stir in the meeting, but to her mind, he was wholly absorbed in his plate. How could she guess that he was that very moment engaged in composing a graceful bit of verse in her praise? Yet so it was, and he must have found courage to tell her this, and other things, by and by, for she afterwards went to Burma as the wife of the bold missionary. At that time it was India that was the chosen field.

Ann Hasseltine was born in Bradford, Mass., in 1789. She was a restless, merry, vivacious girl, richly gifted. At sixteen she entered the service of her Saviour with all her heart, and her brightness and beauty became His. She taught school for some time after leaving Bradford Academy, which gave her added fitness for the life of a missionary, which she entered, in 1812, on her marriage to Mr. Judson afterwards Dr. Judson. She was one of the very first lady-missionaries. The *first* from America was Mrs. Kaske, going with her husband in 1746 to South America.

The two missionaries had a serious time reaching their field. The East India Company decided that missionaries were not desirable, and ordered them back to America, but finally allowed them to go to the Isle of France. They then planned to go to Madras, but the East India Company had jurisdiction there, and finally, the only way that opened was to Rangoon, Burma, a place always held in great dread. But they embarked for Rangoon in a crazy old vessel, and were tossed about so violently that Mrs. Judson was dangerously ill. She recovered after landing. Everything was forlorn and gloomy enough, but they took courage and set about their work.

Mrs. Judson learned the language very quickly, and used it to advantage. Four years after setting out upon the voyage to Burma, little Roger Williams, who had for eight months been the joy of the missionary home, was taken from them.

Twice Mrs. Judson had to return to America, once for two whole years, to recover her broken health. She was a great help in the mission field, having a school for girls, and busying herself in many ways.

In a time of war with England, Americans were not always distinguished from Englishmen, and Dr. Judson, then at Ava, was thrown into prison. It was a wretched building of boards, with no ventilation but through the cracks, and had never been cleaned since it was built. It was to this dreadful place that Mrs. Judson brought the tiny baby Maria for her father's first sight of her. Through all the imprisonment, the loving and courageous wife visited her husband in the midst of all sorts of dangers, as she was the only white woman in Ava. She brought him clean linen as she could, and food, day by day.

One day, having a little more time than usual, she thought she would surprise Dr. Judson by making him a mince pie, as he used to be fond of the dainty at home. She contrived to make it out of buffalo meat and plantains, sending it to him by the one faithful servant. But alas! The poor prisoner was moved to tears at the sight of it and at the thought of his wife's devotion, and could not eat the pie. A fellow-prisoner ate it instead.

After a few months, a lion who had been presented to the king was placed in a cage near, and made night and day hideous with his roaring's till he died. His cage was so much better than the prison that Mrs. Judson by dint of much begging at last got permission to move her husband into it. The months wore on, and Dr. Judson was secretly removed to another place to a death-prison. When Mrs. Judson heard it, she set forth, with little Maria in her arms, and partly by boat, partly in a jolting cart, reached the wretched prison. "Why did you come?" her husband cried. "I hoped you would not, for you cannot live here."

The keepers, cruel as they were, yielded at last, and gave her a little room near, which was half full of grain, and there she spent the next six months.

By and by Dr. Judson was sent as an interpreter on a trip, and at last, after many delays and dangers, was released. Coming back to Ava, he hurried to find his wife. He was startled to see a fat half-dressed Burman woman holding a baby too dirty to be recognized as his own child. On the bed lay his wife, worn and pale, her glossy hair gone, her fine head covered with a cotton cap. But she recovered, and the family left the scene of so much misery.

The Judson's began mission work in a new station, and Mrs. Judson was planning a girls' school, and many activities, when Dr. Judson was summoned to Ava on very

important business. She urged him to go. While he was absent, she was stricken with fever. With no missionary friend at hand, only the weeping Burmans bewailing "the White Mamma," she passed away. Her husband received the tidings, and hastened home to find the grave under a hopia (hope) tree, surrounded by a rude railing. Little Maria lingered six months, then she was laid beside her mother.

Mrs. Sarah Hall Boardman. Reinforcements were not lacking through all the years of Dr. Judson's service. There came out to Calcutta to join the Burman Mission, as soon as might be, Rev. George Dana Boardman, and his wife, who was pronounced by some English friends in Calcutta to be "the most finished and faultless specimen of an American woman that they had ever known." In 1827 these friends reached Burma. Mr. Boardman died after a few years of very fruitful ministry, and for three years his wife stayed on, making long journeys through drenching rains, "through wild mountain passes, over swollen streams, deceitful marshes, craggy rocks, tangled shrubs and jungles." In 1834 she was married to Dr. Judson. She had a very fine knowledge of the Burmese tongue, and could speak and write fluently. She had great power in conversation, and translated also very accurately. She held meetings with the women for prayer and Bible study. After his eight years of loneliness, Dr. Judson found the home ties sweet, and the help he received in his work very great. Mrs. Judson translated part of "Pilgrim's Progress," several tracts, twenty hymns for the Burmese hymn-book, and four volumes of a Scripture Catechism, besides writing cards with short hymns. She learned the language of the Peguans, another tribe, so that she might help them by translating, which she did by superintending the translation of the New Testament and tracts into their strange tongue. Little children came to bless the home, and joy and love reigned there.

But after her twenty years upon the field, Mrs. Judson's health failed. Her husband started home to America with her, but, when reaching the Isle of France, she became so much better that she urged Dr. Judson to return to the work that needed him so much. He expected to do this, but there came a sudden change for the worse. As the vessel neared St. Helena, Mrs. Judson died, and the worn body was laid away in mission ground upon the island, where a stone afterwards marked the spot.



Miss Emily Chubbuck. There is a volume of attractive little sketches which some people used to read before any of you younger readers were born, which bears the name of "Fannie Forester" as the writer. Her real name was Emily Chubbuck. But when she wrote "Alderbrook," and another book of lighter sketches called "Trippings," she used a nom de plume. This young lady was born in Eaton, N.Y., but taught school in Utica in that state, besides writing sketches, poems, and Sunday-school books, so that she was a busy person, as you can see. And a lovely young person she was, too, by all accounts.

When Dr. Judson was at home the last time in America, after his long absence upon the mission field, he traveled about a good deal, and on one of his journeys he read the book called "Trippings," which some one had given him to beguile the way. He thought it a very bright book, and asked his friend about the writer. He said that one who could write as well as that could write better, and he would like to see some of her work on greater themes. His friend told him that he would have the pleasure of meeting "Fannie Forester" before long, as she was a guest in his home at present. When Dr. Judson first saw the attractive and gifted writer, she was undergoing the interesting operation of vaccination. After this was over, he led her to a sofa, saying that he wished to talk with her.

Miss Chubbuck said that she would be delighted to have him do so, and then he spoke about using her talents upon the most worthy subjects. She told him that she had been obliged to write because she was poor and must make a living, and the light and trifling subjects seemed to be most popular. Dr. Judson was full of sympathy for her. He had it in his mind to find some one to write the story of Mrs. Sarah Boardman, Judson's life, and offered the opportunity to Miss Chubbuck.

After some time the intercourse thus brought about resulted in marriage, and the cultured and talented, dauntless spirit, schooled in poverty, went back with the missionary, to prove a great help to him in finishing his wonderful work. She soon acquired a good knowledge of the language and prepared Scripture questions for use in the schools.

When her little Emily Frances came, the poet mother wrote the sweet verses so many have read, called "My Bird."

After Dr. Judson's death and burial at sea, on his way home to regain his health, Mrs. Judson came home, much broken herself, to care for her parents and her children. She died at Hamilton, N.Y., in 1854.

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