

Zenana Mission Work in India.

BY MRS. WEITBRECHT.

With the Hindu women, whether wife or widow, hope has no brightening future, faith no object to inspire it, affection no noble or hallowed exercise, to raise it above maternal instinct. Even memory, which peoples every other captive's life, with the present shadows of the once real past, yields no background to vivid retrospect, to relieve the monotony of changeless years for them. They cannot be way-side hearers to words that tell of One born of woman, who came to save their souls, for their feet are fettered. In silent apathy, busy only with their fallen imagination, they sit pleading without words for the visits of their Western sisters. Hear one of themselves who gives expression to those silent pleadings more vividly and touchingly than I am able to do:—

Listen, listen, Christian sisters, Show ye have a Christ-like heart: Hear us sadly, sadly mourning, 'Neath our load of sorrow groaning, Writhing 'neath its bitter smart, With no hope of rest above, Knowing not a Father's love; Your true sympathy we crave, You can help us, you can save.

Listen, listen, Christian sisters. Hark, they call and call again; Can ye pass them by unheeding All their eager, earnest pleading? Hear yet not their plaintive strain? Let your tender hearts be moved, Let your love to Christ be proved Not by idle tears alone, But by noble actions shown.

This is no romantic story, Not an idle empty tale; Not a vain far-fetched ideal, No, your sisters' woes are real, Let their pleading tones prevail, As ye prize a Father's love, As ye hope for rest above, As your sins are all forgiven, As ye have a home in heaven.

Blessed be God these pleadings have not been in vain, and many a Christian worker now shines like a fixed star in the dark night of heathenism, enlightening hearts around her by the tender radiance of Divine truth. The winter of ages has now given way to the day-spring of hope, to be followed, we trust, by summer fruits and autumnal sheaves for the Master's garner.

Shall I here stop to describe a zenana, the prison-house of these caged birds? The word (meaning the "place of the women") has been adopted from the Mohammedans, but, though otherwise expressed by the Hindus, the thing is the same. I have referred to the lordly mansions of the wealthy, one of which we will enter, and admire the handsome apartments with appointments suited to the climate. We look in vain for the work-table or other indications of a lady inhabitant, for none such occupy these rooms. They are appropriated to the gentlemen of the house exclusively, and we are conducted up some unseemly stairs, and along some curious passages, till we emerge into a set of one or more small apartments, on one side of the central court of the mansion. Here we find the ladies, in rooms usually without a window, or in the gallery which runs round their side of the court. In some out-house attached we hear of one of their number, who, after giving birth to an infant in that miserable hole, is stricken with fever, and will in all probability die for want of medical help and good air and nursing—their cruel domestic customs forbidding such alleviations to the sufferer. Some zenanas are superior, others far inferior to the one described but in every Hindu dwelling we may be sure of one thing, that the worst and most ill furnished apartments are those set apart for the women. In some there is no accommodation for sitting but a mat on the ground, in others a wooden bedstead, and perhaps a broken chair or two, expelled from the gentlemen's room. Anything more dreary than their homes one can scarcely imagine, and they are but too true a picture of their sad and dreary lives.

A sketch from the pen of a lady missionary will convey the best idea that can be given of the reality of our description of a zenana:—"I have," she writes, "lately gained access to a house in which there are twelve ladies who learn. I have to pass through court after court to find my way to their corner, and to peep into one room after another, catching one asleep, another, dressing, a third reading her lesson, and others gossiping (a most favorite pastime). As soon as they see me, they all jump up and are soon assembled around

me, as I sit on a mat in their midst. One holds my hand, another my feet, and I begin to tell them of Jesus. 'Tell us more,' is the interesting cry. This zenana is at the end of a long and narrow lane with an offensive drain-course running down its centre. One day I heard a voice from above calling to me to come in. I ran up the very narrowest staircase I ever saw, through various little verandahs and rooms, till I got into a group of seven or eight women, all trying to catch hold of me at once. They had heard of me through a servant, and watched till they could hail me and get me to come in. A few days later I heard another voice, and saw through an opening a company of women on a housetop, beckoning me to ascend. I did so, and from thence had to clamber over the roof to another house, where a warm welcome awaited me, and I now teach in seven houses in that lane."

India cannot long remain as it is. An up-heaving must come, the incorruptible seed so widely and perseveringly sown must not only spring but grow and become a tree so spreading, that many of the birds now caged in the zenanas will come forth and lodge in the branches thereof. Meantime let Christian men and women in Europe and America cry unceasingly for that power from on high to descend on India, which the Lord has promised to pour out in these latter days, and under the influence of that power the children of God who are scattered abroad among her vast myriads will be gathered in.—Miss. Herald.

THE BAPTIST MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA.—The London Freeman says:—By advices received from the Congo Mission we learn that Messrs. Crudginton and Bentley, the advance party of the Congo Mission, have safely reached San Salvador. They have had a most gratifying interview with the king, who had sent down seventy carriers to meet them. His Majesty placed two pigs at their disposal, fired off fifty guns, and otherwise manifested his pleasure at their visit. We also learn that Mr. and Mrs. Comber and Hartland, together with the native evangelists of Victoria and Comeroons and the rest of the mission party, were within four days of San Salvador, and all enjoying perfect health.

At a crowded meeting of Roman Catholics held in Paris lately, a protest was presented against the substitution of lay ecclesiastical teachers in the municipal elementary schools of that city. The municipality of Paris, strange to say contains only 2 or 3 per cent. of Roman Catholics.

In a few days, seventeen missionaries, including wives and single women, just appointed by the Missionary Union, will set forth to re-inforce the missions in India, Burmah, China, and Japan. This fresh supply of workers for the foreign fields makes an immediate and heavy draft upon the treasury of the union.—(Baptist Weekly, Oct. 2d.)

It is estimated that the baptisms last year, that is, up to January, 1879, will reach near seventeen thousand in the whole foreign field under the care of our Missionary Union.

A telephone has recently been placed in a Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, O., the wires leading to the house of several aged and invalid persons. The telephone, we are told surmounts a flower-piece on the table in front of the platform, in a very unnoticeable position. The speaker pays no attention to it, yet every word he utters in the auditorium is easily heard with entire distinctness in the rooms of the dwelling which the wires reach.

The Sandwich Island Friend contains an account of the organization of the first Chinese Church on the Hawaiian islands. The Rev. M. Kuaea, pastor of the Kaunakapili Church, having led in prayer, the hymn, "Nearer My God to Thee," was sung in Chinese and English.

Among the colored refugees in Kansas is an entire Baptist Church of 300 persons, from Delta, La., led by the pastor and deacons.

A VENERABLE ASSEMBLY.—A very interesting meeting has been held at Chatham, showing remarkable longevity. Seventeen of the oldest members of the Zion Baptist Chapel met to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of one of the members. The united ages of the party amounted to 1,232 years, giving an average of seventy-eight years to each. All the party were in good health and in full enjoyment of all their faculties.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. From Mrs. Armstrong.

Dear Messenger,—

I have no doubt many of your readers still feel a deep interest in the Karens. I have translated for you an article from the Karen Star for August last, which has just come to me. It is contributed by a valued friend of mine, one of the old native preachers in Bassein; a man of sterling character, good as gold. He has often come and sat with me by the hour, telling me of old times when Christianity was new among them, and Satan fought hard that it should not enter. I send it to you because I hear from my native land but one echo—"Times are hard, funds are low, you must spend as little as possible in your mission work."

It may be well for you to see, not how the denomination, but how one small church in the Karen jungle retrenched when trouble came. I know from personal acquaintance with them that it is a sample of what all its sister churches did more or less.

LETTER FROM P'NATHENG, BASSEIN.

I want to let all the missionaries and mammas and all the church members know of our work during the year 1879, and also about the death of our cattle. But amid it all we are not astonished; we think that all that is destroyed is only in order that it may be built up better hereafter.

I will make plain to you below what our church members have done for the Kingdom of God, and what loss of property they have suffered during this year. They have contributed for the support of their own pastor, for the school in town (equivalent to Acadia with you) for the school in our own village, for offerings to the Lord, (given to the poor) for the general fund, (given to missions Home and Foreign) for a new chapel in our own village, and for the Star, (equivalent to Christian Messenger) in all Rs. 1,792, annas 9, and also 344 baskets of paddy.

Now I will tell you of the death of our cattle and loss of property we have sustained. The church members in the village of P'natheng own 603 buffaloes, and this year owing to disease 413 of these died, leaving only 190 among us. The buffaloes that died were worth 39,880 rupees, and because without buffaloes we could not till our fields (the Karens live solely by the product of their fields from year to year) we made a great effort and bought buffaloes to the amount of 6,767 rupees. If we add the amount lost by the death of our buffaloes to what we had to expend again in buying others, it amounts to 46,647 Rs.

Will not all the disciples of Christ remember this village church in their prayers, so that this hardship may pass us by, and easier times may come among us speedily.

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes Pastor's Salary, Town School, Village School, Christian fellowship offerings, General Fund, New Chapel, For "Star", and Total.

TEACHER QUAY.

Teacher Quay would have been ashamed of his church if they had given less, or if they had taken any of their contribution money to buy buffaloes, much as they needed them. I know well that his determination that they shall give is one great reason of their giving. He trains them up to it, and keeps them at it.

I want to call your attention particularly to one thing in closing. Their contributions were given as a matter of course, and when they found their buffaloes, the only permanent wealth they had, were gone, then they "made a great effort," and bought more. Let each ask themselves where in these hard times they have "made a great effort." Has it been to get for themselves, or to give to the Master? Where did you retrench?

H. M. N. ARMSTRONG. Chitacole, Sept. 3, 1879.

Where the peace is that Christ gives, all the trouble and disgust of the world can not disturb it. All outward distress to such a mind is but as the rattling of hail upon the tiles of him who sits within the house at a sumptuous banquet.

For the Christian Messenger. New York Correspondence.

(From our correspondent.)

New York, Oct. 4, 1879.

Broadway is a sort of thermometer, measuring the vital heat of the business machinery throughout the country. When Broadway is crowded and blocked from hour to hour by the movements of men and goods, we may know that mercantile activity prevails from the Atlantic ocean to the Missouri river; that confidence prevails in the strength and financial future of the country, and that the United States are engaged in a lively struggle for the first place among the nations in all the arts of peace. In this point of view the throng and crush of Broadway throughout the month now ending, which has exceeded anything seen here for more than six years, is an interesting object of study. The revival of trade, which began four months ago with scattered symptoms of improvement in the increase of building and of a few manufactures, and in the growing demand for agricultural labor, has spread from one interest to another until almost every department of business is represented on this great central thoroughfare, from the vast export houses near the lower piers to the splendid shopping palaces amid the residences of rich citizens far up the island are fairly glowing with work and excitement. Under these circumstances it becomes interesting to inquire whether the revival of business is really general, and what are the exceptions to the prevailing activity. The iron trade was the first to show marked recovery; then followed the manufacture of staple goods; then the railroad system, and the whole mass of internal commerce rallied from its depression, under the stimulus of the abundant crops and the demand of Europe for bread stuffs; and finally, the values of real estate of almost every grade, in country and city, began to feel the impulse of accumulating wealth and of excited hope. In fact, there may be said to be only two great National interests which conspicuously lag behind in this general business resurrection, the coal trade and insurance. As for the coal industry the story lies in a nutshell. The production this year has been enormously in excess of the demands, and the producers are in trouble solely because of the abundance of the supply, and the consequent low prices. As the demand is rapidly increasing, and there is every prospect that, within a year or two at most, it will overtake the production, the great mining companies are each unwilling to interrupt their work or diminish their prospects of sharing in the improved market of the future, and while few of them are now earning their expenses and fixed charges they are all confident that the time of depression is nearly over. Hence the stocks of the companies are held at higher prices than for several years, and are advancing in the face of their losses. The insurance situation is more complicated. The fire insurance business is conducted at an almost universal loss at the low rates to which competition has reduced premiums, and capital is rapidly going out of it into other and more profitable employment. Doubtless the business has been overdone, and further withdrawals of capital and a general advance of rates will be necessary before it can be regarded as prosperous. But the prospect now is that these changes will be rapidly completed. In life insurance the situation is very different. The great companies which do almost all of this business are wholly independent of current activity, and would be perfectly solvent and successful in the end if they never had another applicant for a policy.

AUGUST.

For the Christian Messenger. London Correspondence.

LONDON, Sept. 26, 1879.

The report of the Select Standing Committee of the Dominion House of Commons on agricultural and kindred matters for the session of 1879 has just been issued. The inquiries of this committee were largely directed to the question of the cattle trade with Great Britain. It appears that while navigation remained open last year 18,655 head of cattle and 41,750 sheep were sent to this country. Some 9,000 of the cattle came from Chicago and the North-West,

and the rest, together with all but some 1,000 of the sheep, were raised in Canada. The export value of the whole was \$2,117,525; the cost of feed to put them in condition for the voyage \$130,602; and the freight paid to the various shippers for their carriage exceeded \$500,000. It also appears that three-fourths of the shipments made from New York and Boston were on account of Canadians, who have the export cattle trade entirely in their own hands. In reply to the question whether the trade was likely to increase in the future one of the witnesses examined made reference to the fact that whereas only 18,600 head of cattle had been exported from Canada last year, the receipts in the market of Chicago alone were last year 1,033,608 head. In other words the entire shipments of cattle by the St. Lawrence route to this country throughout the year only equalled some two days' receipts in the Chicago market, the years value of the one being just over \$2,000,000 and the years value of the other being between \$65,000,000 and \$70,000,000. It may be mentioned that ten years ago the receipts of cattle in Chicago numbered only 323,000. It is estimated that the cattle available for export purposes in Ontario and Quebec (the two exporting provinces) number something like 10,000 or 12,000 head, so it is evident that any extensive development of the export from Canadian ports can only occur in the event of the embargo upon Western American cattle being removed. One of the principal witnesses examined (Mr. Thomas Cramp, of the Dominion Steamship Company) gave lengthy evidence as to the bearing and effect of the existing prohibition to export western cattle by way of Canada. The following are some of the chief points he stated:—

"The order of the Privy Council which has scheduled the United States necessitates the slaughtering of animals within ten days of the arrival on the other side of the Atlantic; at first this was a great blow to the trade, and the regulation which came into force in Canada appeared to secure for Canadians the advantage. But Canadians have so small a number of cattle to export that they are able to make use of that advantage only to a small extent. At the same time, cattle cannot be exported from the Western States through Canada, so that this enormous trade from the United States is lost to Canadians and is done by Americans, although Canadian capital is so largely invested in it. The trade is adapting itself to the ten days rule, and the time will no doubt come when Liverpool and Birkenhead will be the great cattle-markets instead of Smithfield. Our geographical position has enabled us hitherto to tap the trade at the Western States, but it will now pass over American railways and American ground, and we will lose the advantage of it.

For the Christian Messenger. Tabernacle Notes.

The early part of last week was spent in burying the dead, for before Monday at noon I had two engagements, and it awakened within my mind painful as well as pleasing reflections.

Job has put a query thus "But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost," and Where is he?

We are all going—many are gone—but the all important question is, where!

Last week I had a telegram calling me to bury a young man in the country. At Mount Uniacke I met the father, and as we drove towards the home in Lakelands, in a few words he gave me the history of the lad. The father said, 'I cannot weep to-day,' for the Lord has answered my prayer and brought my son home to die in his own bed, and has permitted me to have evidence of his godly sorrow and true repentance and of his happiness and salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord. His weakness—sin, was a love for drink, the habit grew by slow, but sure degrees till it blighted the prospects and life of a young man, and at the age of 23, Herbert Canavan was laid in the silent tomb, a monument of God's sovereign mercy. Ye praying parents be not afraid, only believe. Here we have the testimony of a father's prayer heard and answered, and of a wandering child gathered by the great Shepherd from the wilderness of sin. Young men beware of the Cup!