

Famine's Legacy to the World.

Half a Million Orphans in Need of Help—What it Costs to Support One.

News by cable from India's Viceroy, the Governor of Bombay and other officials, from American missionaries and from newspaper correspondents, report a general rainfall in the famine stricken districts and prospects brighter than at any time for the past two years.

This means that the gaunt, woful, hideous figure of famine is being literally drowned. River-beds which for twenty-four months have been bared to the sky and baked by the sun till rock-hard, are now gradually softening into their natural muddiness. Streams are manifesting signs of life. The water in the few wells which were not drained by the long drought, are growing deeper and fields, meadows, farms, grazing grounds, garden-plots, in fact the whole parched earth is giving promise of generous fertility, as in the years gone by.

But these are after all, only signs and promises; which, while restoring hope to the hearts of the stricken millions must not be taken as meaning that the famine is at an end. Famine may be dying, but she is not yet dead. She still stalks abroad in all the western and central provinces, and for at least three months to come she will continue her deadly work.

And the cause of the awful distress and desolation was lack of rain, it will take a very long, steady rainfall to restore the ground to a condition rich enough to yield. With the exception of a one hour shower on July 20 of last year, the present rainfall is the first Western India has known for four and twenty months. Hence, not until rain has fallen continuously for weeks and weeks, will the ground be sufficiently soaked and softened to assure the raising of a crop.

Moreover, millions of head of cattle, indeed, ninety percent of all the cattle, have died, for want of fodder; and farmers will remain tied hand and foot till Government supplies new live stock to replace the old, whose bones lie scattered over the country.

Therefore, desperate distress still exists. Utter desolation is still the lot of millions. If the government were now to withdraw its aid, shut up the relief works and poor houses, if American contributions were now to cease and missionaries to stop their work, ten million homeless, helpless people would be in imminent danger of starving to death.

Furthermore, since the rain has come, scores of thousands who have been saved from death by starvation, are threatened with death by exposure. Blankets and clothing are scarce; only about one person in every thousand possessing a halfway decent garment.

Meanwhile, famine has written her will on the face of the land. She is leaving Christendom a legacy in form of hundreds of thousands of homeless, helpless orphans.

The million men and women, who, after indescribable suffering, have succumbed, since the famine began, not only to starvation, but to fever, plague and cholera besides, have left fully half a million fatherless, motherless children. When the government closes its relief works, its poor-houses, sending millions of absolutely penniless people to their desolate homes to begin life's struggle over again, what is to come of the parentless, ownerless children. Who is to shelter them, clothe, feed, instruct them, and fit them for lives of usefulness?

I have myself just returned from India, and I can truthfully write that of all the sad sights to be seen in the famine district, the most pitiable is the starving child. Not a few, but tens of thousands, are wandering along the highways, waifs of a desert country, living drift-chips on a shoreless sea. Their mothers and fathers have died of starvation, and now they have not a soul in the world to turn to, no kith, no kin, not a single heart among their own people to look after them.

It is in the rescue of these orphans, from the highway of death itself, that the missionaries devote a large part of their working hours. Once inside a mission compound, the poor, little starveling, if care and food have not come too late, is supported by funds sent to the missionaries by the American people.

Among the many starving orphan children gathered in from the fields by Dr. Taylor and his wife, missionaries at Ahmedabad, there came one little girl who insisted on entering the house. She came into the library, and after a brief look about, lieped in her own tongue "Please may I die here?" and then threw herself down on the floor and went to sleep. It is gratifying to add that the long sleep and

the hot milk afterward given to this child, saved her from death and she was added to the fold of orphans in Mr. Taylor's care.

Even in the streets of Bombay, there are hundreds of famine children wandering about. With sunken eyes, hollow cheeks and indented temples, with weary, weak, skeleton legs, they totter, by the dozen, in the footsteps of the European, crying "Salam, Sahib,"—which is their way of saying "Peace to you." Then slapping their hollow and naked stomachs to emphasize their need of food, they continue their piteous supplications, begging for enough food to keep them alive just another hour.

Sometimes a mother accosts one, a babe in her arms, trying its little best to get food from the dry, parched breast—and this mother also entreates you, saying: "Give us something to eat, and God will bless you with many children."

The group of waifs about her cling as if by instinct to her scant, ragged skirt, as if they felt that since this woman is mother to the babe she will act also as a kind mother to all who struggle up to her.

Saving the children, in famine time, is one of the most encouraging phases of relief work, while to see children starve, to die by inches for want of food, is a condition of affairs that wrings the heart.

Thousands of these orphans are now in the hands of American missionaries, having been plucked by them from the jaws of the famine, but they must soon be turned out to starve unless the missionaries receive the means to purchase food for them.

Bishop Thoburn, the dean of missionaries in India, who is now in this country for the recovery of his health, said to a correspondent of this paper: "The highways are covered with people, many of whom are mere walking skeletons, vainly seeking a region where food can be found. Children, whose parents have perished, are wandering everywhere. The spectacle is one of the most painful which can be found on earth. The cries of the orphans, if they could only enter into the ears of all good people in distant lands, would stir the Christian world to such a movement of sympathy and help as has never been witnessed on earth."

From Rev. R. A. Hume, Ahmednagar, I have received a letter, saying: "I have seen within the past few days young mothers with new born children, who have not tasted food in several days. Hundreds of children deserted by their parents, who could not bear to see them die of hunger, have come to our house pathetically holding out their tiny hands. A heart of stone would melt at the sight of such suffering."

The missionaries, indeed, foreseeing the legacy which famine would surely leave, have throughout the period of distress employed famine labor at four cents a day—government rate—in building the numerous mission orphanages with which the famine district is now dotted. They built these houses of refuge, that they might be in readiness, when the relief camps close, to receive the orphaned children who will then be turned adrift with no one to care for them.

But whence is to come the money for the support of these helpless little ones? A plan for the solution of this problem has been formed by Dr. Louis Klopfch, proprietor of The Christian Herald.

He says: "Living expenses in India are light. The expense of caring for the five hundred thousand orphans, while stupendous in the aggregate, is yet easily within reach when considered one by one. It is not to be expected that any one person should assume the whole responsibility, yet everyone can do something."

"Five cents for every working day or thirty cents a week will clothe, feed, shelter and instruct a child, and there are but few people who cannot undertake the responsibility for one child, giving part themselves and collecting the balance from friends and neighbors. To every person so contributing will be given the name and address of the orphan for whom they have assumed responsibility, and once every three months they will receive an English letter from India, either from the child or from its teacher, reporting the progress it is making. I am sure the charitable, sympathetic people of our prosperous country will prove equal to the occasion and tens of thousands of famine waifs will be saved for lives of Christian influence."

Dr. Klopfch's paper will receive all pledges to this end and will cable the money to India free of all expense, and weekly reports of pledges received will be cabled at the same time. This course will

enable the missionaries to take, promptly and quickly, as many children as there are pledges.

If it be desired that the children be received in the orphanages of any particular denomination, and this wish is clearly expressed at the time when the pledge is made, it will be conscientiously respected; or if preference for either sex is expressed, such preference will also be faithfully respected; and every pledge for one year, and every remittance, however small, towards orphan support will be promptly acknowledged in public print.

A plan on similar lines was adopted by Dr. Klopfch, for the support of orphans after the famine of 1897. The plan was successful, and since that year the money sent to India, through his paper has supported thousands of the helpless ones.

Just back from India himself, Dr. Klopfch is enthusiastic in his praise of the magnificent work now being carried on by the Christian missionaries among the orphans of the 1897 famine. On the day of his arrival in Bombay, five hundred of these famine waifs greeted him with songs and addresses and presented him with a copy of the New Testament, printed in India, in the Narathi language. This orphan work, he says, is the hope of the nation, and the work of the Interdenominational committee which distributes the money sent to India, through The Christian Herald, deserves unstinted praise.

The committee referred to, the only one of the kind, is composed exclusively of American missionaries representing every denomination in India. There are no Hindu or Mohammedan members. There is no other organization in India that can do the work of distribution so effectually. The money passes from the committee at large to the central denominational committees, in proportion to the need of their respective fields. These missionaries, than whom there are no better men and women on the earth, at the peril of their lives are toiling amid famine and cholera and plague to save the dying people. The work of distribution is done under their personal supervision. Their high character, and the nature of their regular work, peculiarly fit them for this special relief service which they conduct without one cent of pay, so that the money sent them goes intact to buy food for the starving. No other way of sending relief could be so successful.

AMERICAN NERVE IN LONDON.

Two Americans Who Bluffed Their Way Into the House of Lords.

It is believed that the first Americans who ever succeeded in bluffing their way into the House of Lords are Dr. Frederick L. Forker and Ralph D. Smith of Birmingham, N. Y. who have just returned from a European trip. The tourists visited the vacant chambers in parliament building when they first went to Europe two months ago, but at that time neither house was in session. When they returned to London week before last and learned that both houses were in session they determined to try to witness the working of the most dignified and august body in the world, the House of Lords.

Inquiring at their hotel they learned that no tickets are issued for admittance to the House, in fact that there are no admittances, except to friends, who are taken in by members. They learned that the American Embassy had two tickets each day for admission to the House of Commons, and that it is also much easier to get admitted to that body through some member.

They visited the embassy, but learned that all tickets were spoken for weeks in advance. The attaches of the embassy could suggest no way in which they could secure admittance unless they knew some member. After a day's unsuccessful effort to place a member of parliament on their acquaintance list, they visited the Cunard agent who had shown them courtesies when they first landed. He could suggest nothing, until he remembered that he knew a member of the lower house. He promised to see what he could do for the tourists.

That night he came to their hotel bringing them two tickets from his member acquaintance which would admit them to the House of Commons. When they suggested their desire to visit the House of Lords to several Englishmen, the Britishers simply gaped in wonder at the men whose nerve would prompt them to think of such a thing.

On July 19 the tourists were admitted to the gallery of the House of Commons, where they listened for some time to the weighty discussion on the advisability of permitting the Irish language to be taught in the schools of Ireland. This debate soon became too tame for the Americans, and they left the house in quest of larger game.

They started down the long hall leading to the assembly chamber of the upper house. Soon they were stopped by the uplifted hand of a guard. "S-s-t. You

musn't come here. The House of Lords is in session."

The Americans were not to be stopped by such trifles. They engaged the guard in conversation, and soon worked themselves into his good graces. Then they explained the situation and asked him to help them get into the house.

"Don't you know some lord?" inquired the good natured fellow.

The American admitted that they had no lords on their calling list. The guard scratched his head in perplexity. Finally he suggested:

"Well, I'll tell you. Just bide a bit, han' per'aps some lord will come out."

The tourists bided several bits but none came. More scratching of his head brought another idea to the guard, who suggested: "Nowt don't tell no one that I told you, but go down to the door there and inquire for Lord Aberdeen, and see if you can make it."

The Americans believed that this was good advice, as it put them on guard near the goal. They presented themselves to the stiff officials, who stood at the outer door of the house, and Mr. Smith said:

"We would like to see Lord Aberdeen."

The guards were inclined to argue the question, but the Americans stood their ground, emphasized their demands, and convinced the guards that they were important dignitaries. Their cards were carried in to the former governor-general of Canada.

"Does his lordship expect you?" inquired one of the guards.

"I don't know as he expects us today," replied Mr. Smith.

"But the waiting time, my brothers, was the hardest time of all," explains Dr. Forker, in describing the incident. "As we stood there we had time to think of the sublime nerve of the thing, and the perspiration stood out on our faces. We wondered how we were going to know his Lordship should he come out. But we were too far into the game to throw up our hands. While we stood debating what we should do next, a guard loudly announced: 'Lord Aberdeen.' Turning, we saw behind us a peasant looking, but very dignified, well dressed man of middle age, and then we knew we had got to see the game to the limit."

Putting on his best brand of bluff Mr. Smith stepped up to his Lordship and began:

"Mr. Aberdeen, we owe you an apology, but we wish to get into the House of Lords and we were referred to you to take us in."

"Mr. Aberdeen was too much surprised to speak at first, so the young attorney explained:

"We have just come from the House of Commons."

"How did you get into the House of Commons?" inquired Lord Aberdeen.

"On tickets from a member."

"What member?"

"Why it was—ah—it was—what member was it, Doc?" inquired the nonplussed attorney, ending his sentence in an aside to his companion.

"Daminio," whispered back the physician.

"I never thought to look at the ticket."

"Well, really, Mr. Aberdeen, we've forgotten the member's name," explained Mr. Smith, "but we just came from the lower house, and we were referred to you to take us into the House of Lords."

"A very wise adventure, gentlemen," suggested his Lordship with a trace of sarcasm. But his twinkling eyes showed that he appreciated the humor of the situation. "Come with me," and he led the way through the ante rooms, opening into the assembly chamber.

When the stairs leading to the gallery were reached he reflected a minute and then said: "I think I won't send you into the gallery; come this way," and he led them on to the floor of the house.

His lordship conducted the Americans up to the bar of the House, stood with them for a short time, pointing out Lord Salisbury and other prominent members and then found seats for them.

The Americans listened to the debate for some time, having an opportunity to hear Lord Salisbury speak briefly. A few minutes later Lord Aberdeen on leaving the house came up to the tourists, explained a few points about the debate and cordially shook hands with them as he went out. They followed him shortly, reflecting on what can be accomplished by bluff and Yankee nerve.

A Musical Finger-Ring.

One of the most interesting rings in the world is the property of Mr. Temple of London, a descendant of Sir Richard Temple. An English exchange describes it as a prized family heirloom, having been once in the possession of one of Mr. Temple's ancestors who lived in France during the Revolution.

This ancestor was a Royalist, and was sent to prison for his championship of the king and queen. He languished in jail for many weeks, his only solace being the

sweet little tune played by his ring, which would make music for him whenever its spring was pressed. Additional value was attached to the ring by this unfortunate man, because it had been made by his grandfather's own hands.

When he was sent to the guillotine he marched bravely to the scaffold, holding his hand to his ear, that he might hear the delicate music to the last.

Eventually the ring found its way back to the Temple family in England, where it is now.

SHELL AND PEA GAME'S ORIGIN.

Assertion That it was Invented in China Centuries ago.

"It is a curious thing," said a professor of the ethnological department of a Western college, at one of our city clubs the other night, "to trace the origin of some of our gambling games. I was much surprised a few summers ago, while tramping through the forests in the Northwest on a shooting and fishing trip, to find the real home of the shell and pea game. We stayed a few days with the Indians of the Sac and Fox tribe, and were invited one evening to enter a little game of real cards. Some of our party had scooped the Indians of nearly all their ready money, in the white man's proverbially better play, when one of the tribe thought to redeem the honor of his people by calling our attention to what he called the moccasin and ball game. It was a curious modification of the old shell and pea game, and was played by shuffling some baked clay balls about the size of hickory nuts, under overturned moccasins.

"The natural clumsiness of the moccasins made us inclined to bite at the game, but really it resulted in the same disastrous results as with the neat little shells in the land of the merry-go-round and racetrack. I was rather astonished to hear the Indians say that the game had been known in their tribe for over 200 years, and had originated with them. One of our party improvised some little wooden cups that did good service for the trim shells and with some borrowed peas showed the Indians how his pale faced brothers did practically the same trick which, of course, was new to them. I am quite convinced that the shell and pea game is a Yankee improvement on the Sac and Foxes, moccasin and clay ball game."

"That explanation is all very well for the pioneer West," said an Eastern professor, "but the explanation won't suit the effete East. It might pass muster if it were not for the fact that in my work in archaeology in Rome last winter I had this very matter of gambling games thrust persistently under my very nose, and I found the 'game of the golden cups,' played in ancient Rome, was the modern shell and pea game; it was copied by them from the effete Greeks, and was almost identical with the to-many-of-us-painful experiences with the shell and pea game of degenerate days. Probably in the light of your ethnological Indian discoveries, the French Jesuits, carrying French and Roman seeds of vice in the folds of their garment, in the forms of pastimes of recreation and skill, showed your Sacs and Foxes this little game some time in the sixteenth century and the subtle but imprudent Indian used his moccasin and the little balls of earth, which could always be obtained wherever he might camp. I suppose the Jesuit game of recreation in time ceased to be known as harmless, as Indian after Indian was fleeced of his few belongings."

"Even your explanation does not cover the ground, in fact, does not go back far enough," said a well-known retired East Indian importer. "The little shell and pea game is really Indian in origin, but in the East Indian. Several years ago, while I was in North India, I saw the shell and pea game played in the street. I thought as the first speaker tonight said, that the game was American in origin, but came from the clever wits of the shrewd Yankee as the racetrack, instead of among Indians. It seems the Indians never really realized the trick's value as a means of gambling. It is a very old form of amusement among the East Indian nation, and is really of Chinese origin."

"A very interesting fact about the matter," said the importer, with a twinkle in his eye, "is that as a matter of pure sport, I showed some boys the gaming propensities of the American people by describing our manner of using the little shells. It delighted and amused them very much, and since then, I am informed that the game is very popular with the fakirs who practise gambling in that city. It is known as the 'American Game.' So, gentlemen, having been born in St. Louis, you will see that a pioneer Westerner did give points not only to the effete East, but the really very effete East."

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