SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

Dear Girls and Boys,—What large black bonnets those women have on!—as large as huge pumpkins and as black as the boilers that used to hang in grand-father's fireplace. This style has been in vogue ever since we came to India. There are no feathers, no ribbons. The shape is curious. It sits right on top of the head, like a pumpkin; no rim—all crown. The under part of the crown spreads out and flares up like the bottom of a great bowl. Then it slopes in again and tapers toward the top, ending in a round mouth, opening its black lips to the clouds like the crater of a volcano. It looks about large enough to hold a pail of water.

There in a row, straight one behind the other, are a dozen Telugu women walking along the street with these spacious bonnets on. They are advancing to join that party of women who are standing in a ring. As each woman approaches the group she steps up, removes her bonnet and places it on the ground at her feet as carefully as if it were an egg. What can they all be doing? Are they playing some game?

As we draw near we discover that inside of the ring is a square space inclosed by a wall of stone and mortar, like the curb of a well. On a stone spout this side of the wall is a bunch of green moss dripping with water. Beyond the group of women, built upon the sand, is a small heathen temple. Beyond the temple are the leaf roofs of a part of Bimli. Beyond the roofs the sea is roaring on the shore. Beyond the shore the sun has arisen out of the boundless bay.

The women all have ropes in their hands, that hang over the inside of the well-curb, as if they were fishing. Behold, that woman has drawn up a basket full of water and is pouring it into the mouth of her bonnet. The basket is about the shape of a large loaf of bread. If you should cut a good slice off one edge of the loaf and then dig all the soft bread out, leaving the crust—as boys dig out the pulp of a pumpkin to make a jack o' lantern—you would have a crust basket about the shape of one of these baskets. Only these are made of the large leaf of the palmyra palm. They are crinkled like a fan; are as light as a straw hat, and you can buy six of them for a cent. The stem of the leaf is bent across the top of the basket and tied to the other side for a handle. To this is fastened one end of the rope.

Sure enough! this stone wall is a well-curb, and this is a large deep well. Be careful not to tip over the curb and fall in. These women are drawing water with their leaf baskets, and are all pouring the water into their bonnets.

The mouth of the well is as large as a small parlor. A few feet down a thick bush is growing out of the rocky side. A bird that looks like a chickadee has flown in and alighted on the bush. It flits across and offings to the stones. As it flies around here and there the beating of its little wings makes a heavy sound, so that even if your eyes were shut you could tell by the noise of its flight, as well as by the cool breath that comes up and by the music of dripping water, that you were at the mouth of a well. From the top, half way down, the well is thoroughly walled with good stone. But from midway to the bottom it is cut out of the solid rock. Its jagged sides are wild as the flinty precipice that drips the mountain springs.

The women look at us and grin, but pay more attention to their work. Although this is early morning they have no time either to gaze at us or gossip too much with one another, for they all have husbands, and if dinner be not ready when my lord comes home at night, woe to the wife. Therefore each woman throws her basket into the well. Her hand has the knack of a sportsman who throws his fly-hook into the river, and as he waits for a bite, she waits for her basket to fill. It falls upon the face of the water as lightly as a butterfly, but it tips on its side and the water runs in, tipping it more and more until it is full. Then she hauls it up quickly, for there is a slit in one corner, and the water is leaking out fast. When she gets it to the top she pours it into her bonnet. This woman has a new basket which does not leak, and she does not have to haul it up so fast.

See the baskets! One is nearly to the top; another is half way up, nearly half the water leaked out; another has just left the water; another is filling; another has just struck the water; another is just coming down like a falling leaf; another has just left that woman's hand, and another has been lost and is floating about in the troubled water.

What a crowd of women around the well! One, two . . . ten . . . nineteen . . . twenty-six women and girls. That girl about twelve years of age is married, and has her hard day's work to do for her master. There are no happy girls here. They are all married and enslaved to heathen men.

That woman has her bonnet full. That girl is helping her lift it and put it on her head. But just as she sets it on her crown, the bottom of the bonnet caves in and all the water is pouring down over her head and shoulders. She bears the mishap like one who is used to calamities; stoops over and lets her drenched, unkempt locks drip upon the ground, and sets herself at work to wringing out her cloth which serves for a dress, and which is called a "quawka" (I have not tried to spell this word correctly, but have tried to spell it so that it will be pronounced correctly). The bottom of her bonnet catches in her quawka as it falls. She shakes it out and it falls to the earth and breaks again. The top part also has fallen to the earth and broken, and we discover that her black bonnet is an *earthen bucket*.

You wonder, as you watch the women drawing water, if these palm-leaf baskets are like what the woman of Samaria had that noon at Jacob's well, when Jesus asked her for a drink, and when she did not see how He could give her living water, because He had nothing to draw with and the well was deep.

Each woman fills her bucket and gets the nearest woman to help her put it on her head. Then she helps her helper in return. There they go, in a row, with the black pots on their head. This woman keeps one hand on to keep the pot from falling; but that woman walks along and swings both hands without fear.

If you come to this well in the morning or evening you will find the women here with leaf baskets, ropes and water pots. It makes vivid such Bible scenes as that of the memorable evening when Abraham's servant came to the well outside of Haran city at the time when women come out to draw water; when Rebecca let down her pitcher from her shoulder to give him a drink, and then emptying her pitcher into the trough and returning to the well she drew water for his camels. If he had been a gallant Canadian he would have drawn it himself, and then carried Rebecca's pitcher home for her.

The top of the head is the place for everything in India. As we stand at the well there go by four women with large baskets of grass on their heads, frightening as they pass a black pig that was rooting on the side of the road. As we came down we met a poor little girl staggering under a great bundle of sticks which she was taking to the bazaar to sell for cordwood. The other day we met a woman with two pots on her head, one on top of the other, and a child in her arms. I met a woman one day with a chip on her head; a man with his cane balanced on his head, and a boy with a cucumber nestled on his crown. The other day, when Mr. Higgins was at Bimli, Mrs. Morse gave Enid a took and told her to take it to her father. Immediately she put it on her head and ran with it to him. When Harold and Herbert Shaw bring out the hymn books and Bible to their father for family prayers, they always bring them on their heads.

These women at the well come for water every morning and night, cook dinner for their husbands and children, gossip what they can, fight with their tongues, cry when they are beaten, live and die and —. They know nothing but drudgery, gossip, quarreling, and a few old jewels that they can get on their wrists or ears, or around their necks, or in their noses. If that woman were your mother or mine, how we should long for her to hear until her heart was won by the pleadings of the gospel.

These are all the mothers that the poor children here have! If we had been brought up by such mothers, what kind of creatures would we have been? We would have been full of all kinds of evil in body and soul. We would not have known our Creator even, except as we had seen His picture in the ugly faces of hideous stone gods, or as we had heard of Him as an angry Master, who sends the scorpions and the cobras, and cares no more for sinners than sinners care for Him. But our mothers are Christians. We have heard of Him on whom the Spirit came in the form of a dove; who blessed the children; who wept over Jerusalem, and who died for our redemption on the bitter cross.

Yours fraternally,

L. D. MORSE.

Bimlipatam, India, April 28th.

VIZIANAGRAM NOTES.

Our quarterly meeting, held on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of April, was a success. The Bimlipatam missionaries and helpers dined with us, and the interest and profit was doubled on that account. There were sermons, carefully prepared and admirably delivered, by the preachers; papers on Bible topics and characters, by Bible women and others, that showed study and thoughtful comparison of Scripture with Scripture; an address by Mr. Morse on the study of the Bible, with illustrations, that created intense enthusiasm; and sessions of prayer and testimony that brought all into closer fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The conference meeting on Saturday was made especially interesting by the examination of a candidate for baptism, and the baptismal service on Sunday evening was an impressive one to many of the onlookers. There were 25 of us to sit down to the celebration of our Saviour's death in communion. Sunday, April 2, was a day of days to the little flock in Vizianagram.

The man who was baptized impressed us all by his apparent honesty and straightforwardness. His native place is Jagdalpur, in Bastar. He was a Komity by caste, and his parents are in comfortable circumstances. He first heard about Christianity about five years ago, through some missionaries who were exploring his state, and at that time, in company with a young Kamasali man, went to Nagpur and essayed to join the Christians there. He was captured by his relatives, however, and imprisoned for several weeks in the common jail. This treatment failed to shake his purpose, and after nearly five years had elapsed, and the fact of his being of age was beyond dispute, he began, a few weeks ago, to make such preparations to carry out his determination to embrace Christianity as could not fail of success. He provided for the support of his wife in a house away from his or her parents, gathered together his few personal effects, took his adopted son, about eight years of age, and came away toward Vizianagram on horseback. While stopping for the night in a lonely part of the road in the Jepur country a tiger killed his horse, and from there the two travelled by easy stages on foot. When he reached Vizianagram he was told that there were two Christian missionaries. One "Padre" had no wife and children (the Catholic priest), the other had a wife and children; so he came to me. After a week's probation, and satisfying ourselves that his story was straight, we joyfully acceded to his earnest request and received him by baptism. One incident like this in a year is sufficient to keep the outlook bright with hope.

M. B. SHAW.

Vizianagram, April 6.

From Friend to Friend

Goes the story of the excellence of Hood's Sarsaparilla and what it has accomplished, and this is the strongest advertising which is done on behalf of this medicine. We endeavor to tell honestly what Hood's Sarsaparilla is and what it will do, but what it *has done* is far more important and far more potent. Its unequalled record of cures is sure to convince those who have never tried Hood's Sarsaparilla that it is an excellent medicine.

Minard's Liniment is the best.

The New Sinai Gospels.

Whence do we get the text of our English New Testament? From the Greek, most of our readers will answer. But few, we venture to think, have ever cared to trace the steps by which it has been won from moldering fragments, by patient scholar or by enterprising traveller.

The edited text of our Greek New Testament rests mainly on four great manuscripts, or codices, as they are called—the Vaticanus, of the fourth century, now in the Pope's palace; the Alexandrinus, of the fifth, carefully preserved in the British Museum; the Sinaiticus, won by Tischendorf, not without guile, from the monks in the convent of Mount Sinai; and the Codex Bezae, in the University Library at Cambridge. These are all clearly written, the chief difficulty in deciphering them being that the writing, like that of most ancient Greek manuscripts, is in capital letters, called uncials, without division of the letters into words, and without punctuation. Other difficulties are caused by the finger of time. Sometimes a hole exists where an important word might be looked for; sometimes the writing is so faded that the keenest eyes can hardly decipher it, and sometimes the pages have stuck so close together that the upper surface of the one has been transferred to the other when they were separated. But we are deeply thankful that it has been possible for British and American scholars, with the help of these and other codices, to adopt a text which represents the Word of God, in all its main essentials, very nearly as it was first penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Since the Revised Version of the Bible was given to the world twelve years ago, it is now no secret that in many minor points these great codices differ. Their variations seldom affect any serious doctrine; they merely represent a different choice of words to express the same thing, and are due to the idiosyncrasies of early scribes. To us they afford witness that the immediate followers of the Lord had no slavish veneration for mere words: that His teaching, as by them reported when fresh in their memories, has been transmitted to us more faithfully than if learned rabbis had watched over its every jot and tittle.

Now, when Greek codices vary, where can we look for an umpire? Naturally, to the ancient codices in those languages into which the gospel was first translated. And here the language which was spoken in the humble workshop of Nazareth, the language in which our Lord restored a dead girl to life, and in which His despairing cry was uttered from the cross, the Syriac, or Aramaic, becomes of first importance.

Early Syriac versions of the New Testament fall naturally into two divisions—the common one, or Peshito, universally adopted by the Syriac churches after the fourth century, and the more ancient one, named the Curetonian, from William Cureton, who discovered the only known copy, in 1842, amongst some manuscripts brought from the Nitrian Desert to the British Museum.

The Curetonian, being the earlier of these two, is the more highly valued. But it is imperfect, containing portions only of Matthew, of Luke, and of John, whilst of Mark all but the last four verses had disappeared before Cureton found it.

Scholars have therefore often expressed a hope that the Curetonian version might some day be supplemented by the discovery of another manuscript. For this, Eastern monasteries have till now been vainly searched; and the present writer believes that she can distinctly trace the finger of Providence in the way that she and her twin sister, Mrs. James G. Gibson, were led, in the spring of last year, to place their hands on an almost complete copy of these early Syriac Gospels.

We had often thought of visiting Mt. Sinai; for the warm welcome extended to us in other Greek monasteries had awakened the hope that our command of colloquial Greek might be the key to doors which have baffled the efforts of former European travellers. But family circumstances prevented our carrying out our purpose till the spring of 1892; and our thoughts were turned in the direction of the Syriac library through the publication, in 1891, by Mr. Rendel Harris, of the Apology of Aristides, which he had recently discovered there.

The Syriac language, to one who has already mastered Arabic and Hebrew, is not very difficult; but a new source of power was unexpectedly placed in our hands by Mr. Harris himself, who insisted on teaching us photography. November skies are not, however, in England, very favorable to this art, and we had only half learned our lesson when our kind instructor received a commission from the University of Cambridge to visit other Eastern monasteries in search of manuscripts. It thus came to pass that we had taken only one respectable picture before we started, on the 7th of January, with over a thousand Eastman films and a manuscript-stand, designed by Mr. Harris, to obviate the difficulties which he had himself met with.

We were received by the monks with great cordiality, which ripened into a sincere friendship with some of them during our stay. Amongst the Syriac books which they showed us, I soon picked out a volume of a hundred and seventy-eight leaves, nearly all glued together with some greasy substance. I separated them partly with my fingers and partly with the steam of a kettle. They had the more fascination for me that no human eye had evidently looked on them for centuries; and I soon perceived that it was a palimpsest, whose upper or later writing contained the stories of women saints, whilst the under, or earlier one was the four Gospels, as I knew from many pages being headed, "Evangelion," "Matthi," "Marous," or "Luca." I could also read detached words or lines where they appeared on the margins. I therefore at once determined to photograph the whole of this palimpsest.

Space fails me to relate all the difficulties we surmounted. The manuscript stand was excellent, but its screws would not fit, and it had to be tied together with cords; and there was a critical defect in our two Eastman boxes, which caused them to tear up the films, and so clog their own machinery. Besides this, my sister, who seconded me with great assiduity, sometimes lost her place in turning over the leaves, and thus put me in possession of at least thirty-three duplicates, which I did not want, as they increased both my work and her own.

We returned home in the end of March, and developed most of our photographs successfully, with the exception of some which were sent to the Eastman Company and were spoiled. The box which contained these had been picked out at random from amongst over forty similar ones, yet, strangely enough, it contained those of which my sister's mistakes had furnished us with duplicates.

When the three hundred and fifty-six pages of our palimpsest were completed, I read the upper writing, and found that it contained the stories of Thecla, Eugenia, Pelagia, Marian, Euphrosyna, Onesima, Dorsis, Barbara, Maria, Irene, Euphemia, Sophia, Theodosia, Theodota, a short creed, and the stories of Susanna and of Cyprian and Justina. As my eyes were not keen enough to read the under writing which ran between and underneath the lines of the upper, and was, of course, much more minute than the original, I showed my photographs to several Syriac scholars, asking if they could help me to find out to which version these gospels belonged.

They were all either too busy, or their eyes were, like my own, not of the kind which read minute things easily. At length I showed some of the clearest photographs to Mr. F. C. Burkitt, and he asked Professor Busby's help in transcribing a page, with the result that they pronounced the version to be one closely allied to the Curetonian.

It was evident that a satisfactory transcription could be made only from the manuscript itself, and as these two gentlemen, with Mr. Rendel Harris, undertook to transcribe it, my sister and I offered to return with them to Mt. Sinai, as we thought that our presence would induce the monks to lend it the more readily to our friends.

We were not mistaken. The treasure was at once confided to my keeping, and for more than a month was worked upon from sunrise till sunset, with the following results:

The upper writing is in one column, and, as we have said, a continuous volume; a selection of short biographies of women saints, with the title, "Select Narratives," by one John Hedesh, made in A. D. 778. To supply the vellum on which this is written, an older book has been taken to pieces, and arranged so that the gospels are interleaved with each other.

They seemed to be there in a complete form, if only they could be all read; but the words, which are in two columns, can only be distinctly seen when they are on the margin, or beyond the upper or lower line. The smaller letters of the Gospels have often to be traced amongst the larger ones of the martyrology. Some are distinct, but some are greatly faded, and show themselves only when touched by a chemical reviver. Nearly the whole of the Gospel of St. Mark has been transcribed, except the last twelve verses, which are absent, as they are from some of the older Greek codices.

It is supposed from this that our manuscript may be a more ancient one than the Curetonian.

The old reading, "Goodwill towards men" (*en anthropois eudokio*), in Luke 2:14, is confirmed.

Lastly, our manuscript is linked to the Curetonian by its colophon, which came up under the reviver, and which tells us that these are the separated gospels, separated, perhaps, from the Diatessaron, or Harmony of Tatian, which was used by the Syriac church during the second and third centuries. The gospels end on page 320 of the manuscript. The remainder is apocryphal writings, in Syriac and in Greek, which are as yet only partly transcribed.

We can only hope that this discovery of an early text of God's great message to the world, may lead to an increased interest in Syriac studies, and to a renewed search in Eastern monasteries for further documents which will, like the Apology of Aristides, give us a more intelligent insight into the history of the first martyrs and confessors.—*Agnes Smith Lewis, in S. S. Times.*

— What a striking and at the same time beautiful contrast does the Carpenter in the humble cottage in Nazareth present to all this rush and eager anxiety to be out in the world! The years come and go, and still He remains hidden away in that little town, as though there was nothing for Him to do beyond its narrow borders. Can He fail to feel the deep need of the perishing world around Him? Does He not see the gross misconception of all that is Divine in the teaching of those who were the accredited teachers of holy things in Palestine? Does He not know that He alone knows the truth, and that He alone can clear away the rubbish of rabbinical tradition that hides the pure light of truth from the eyes of men? What is He waiting for? . . . He is waiting until He shall be fully matured as a man and fully assured of His Divine mission. "There are twelve hours in a day," He said to one of His disciples on one occasion, thus reminding him that His Master took no steps in the dark, but waited, if necessary, year after year. Deep down in the ground, hidden from the eye of man, lie the secret sources of the strength the tree displays when the hurricane sweeps over the earth. In the humble home at Nazareth, in the daily doing well of the smallest thing that ought to be done; in the obedience to Mary and Joseph, and, above all, to the Father whose business He was to do in this world, are to be found the preface to that life whose closing word is "Finished." Never could such a word close it had not every word in this greatest of Living Epistles been written with infinite care. . . . If we would perform our life-work so as to be thorough in the performance, we must, as He did, have a lofty conception of the magnitude of that work. It must seem to us a great thing. It must seem the all-important thing. As we undertake anything it should be done in this spirit, "This one thing I do." Then we shall be able to say that, if not of the whole life, when we lay it down, "It is finished."—*Rev. James A. Duncan.*

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Waiting on God.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

"They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles." This passage from the old Jewish prophet has the ring of an Alpine horn. It is very easy to misunderstand this word "wait," and regard it as meaning inactive passivity. There is a vast deal of nerve in the original Hebrew; it signifies to be strong enough to hold out. It expresses a solid endurability such as belongs to a stiff piece of oak that never bends and never breaks under heavy pressure. Thence the word came to signify patience as opposed to worry and despondency. *Waiting*, in this oft quoted text, denotes a *habit of mind*—a devout habit that loves to call on God, a submissive habit that is ready to receive just what God sees fit to send, an obedient habit that is glad to do just what God commands, a stalwart habit of carrying such loads as duty lays upon our backs. It is a religion of conscience and not a mere effervescence of pious emotion. In short, it is a grace, just as much as the grace of faith, or love, or humility.

If you and I have this grace and practice it, what may we expect? The first thing is that God will "renew our strength." For every new occasion, every new trial, every new labor, we shall get new power. If we have failed, or have been foiled, God will put us on our feet again. The spiritually weak will gain strength, and those who were strong before will wax stronger. I have often gone to Saratoga in the heats of early summer, quite run down, and my vitality burned out as coal gets exhausted in the bunkers of a steamer. Then I repaired to one of the tonic springs and "waited" on its babbling waters, trusting them and taking them into my system. Presently a new appetite for food was awakened, and a new life crept into my tem fingers; walking became a delight and preaching as easy as for a lark to sing. All this renewal of vitality was the result of waiting on one of those wonderful health-fountains. I brought but little there; I took a great deal away. Just such a well-spring of spiritual force is the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Him in a receptive, suppliant, hungering spirit, He restores our souls, He heals our sickness, He girds up our weak will as with steel, He infuses iron into our blood, He makes our feet like hind's feet; we can run without getting weary. Paul had put himself into just such a connection with the Source of all power when he exclaimed, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

All the men and women of power are men and women of prayer. They have the gift of the knees. "Waiting on the Lord" by prayer has the same effect on them that it has on an empty bucket to set it under a rain-spout. They get filled. The time spent in waiting upon God is not wasted time. "I have so much to do," said Martin Luther, "that I cannot get on with less than two hours a day in praying." When I have heard Spurgeon pray, I have not been so astonished at some of his discourses. He had fed his lamp with oil from the King's vessels, and his sermons were full of light.

(2) Waiting on God not only gives strength, it gives *inspiration*. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." God means that every soul which waits on Him, shall not creep in the muck and the mire, nor crouch in abject slavery to men or devils. When a soul has its inner life hid with Christ and lives a life of true consecration, it is enabled to take wing and its "citizenship is in heaven." He catches inspiration; his calm wide outlooks: his faith; his clear and crystalline atmosphere. He outflies many of the petty vexations and grovelling desires that drag a worldling down into the mire. What cares the eagle as he bathes his wing in the translucent gold of the upper sky for all the turmoil, the dust, or even the murky clouds that drift far beneath him? He flies in company with the sun. So a heaven-bound soul flies in company with God.

You may gain all this strength and reach these altitudes of the Christian life, my friend, if you will wait steadily on God and knit your soul's affections fast to Jesus Christ. You will find a wonderful lift in your religion. You will be delighted to find what power it has to carry you clear of low, base, grovelling desires, and to inspire high ambitions and holy thoughts. It will kindle joy in the darkest hours of affliction, and keep you serene as the stars whom no storm-clouds can ever reach. Try all this for yourself. Quit waiting on your fellow-men's opinions and rules and ways of living, and try waiting on God. Try the wings of prayer. Set your affections on things above, and insure your heart's best treasures by lodging them in heaven.

Keeping thus the Godward side of your life clear and strong, your religion will be all the stronger on its manward side. The celestial springs will brighten and fertilize and refresh the lowly valleys of your every-day existence. Christ will be with you in your home, in your business, in your fields, in your shop, in your humblest toils. Christ will sweeten your daily cup. His love will lighten every cross and every care. Don't expect to get to heaven before your time; wait on the Lord down here.

"The daily round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves—a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

—EVANGELIST.

— The joy of dying that others might live, the glory of living without self-concern, the enthusiasm of feeding His life away to His hungry brothers—this was the joy that was set before Christ, and is the quenchless joy before us set. To get men to love one another, and thus get the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven, is our mission as truly as it was the mission of Jesus. We can each take this mission as our life motive—the motive which abides in the heart of God—and keep this motive as the seed of life through all joy and sorrow, success and disappointment, failure and victory. Upon the altar of this infinite purpose we may each dedicate ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God.—*George D. Herron, D. D., in A Plea for the Gospel.*

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Rev. Henry M. Spike, Rector of Musquash, N. B., says: "I am personally acquainted with Mrs. Tompson's case, and am greatly pleased that the medicine which I recommended to her produced such remarkable results."

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