The Woman's Missionary Society.

[This Department is in the interests of the W. M. Society. All communications for it should be addressed to Mrs. Jos. McLeod, Fredericton.]

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THE NATIVE HELPERS.

Miss L. C. Coombs, of the Free Baptist India Mission, writes in the last *Helper* of the native Christian workers:

PREACHERS.—These are pastors of churches in our Christian communities, and those preachers who are living in out-stations among the heathen where there are no churches, and in some places where as yet there is not even one convert, but where indications are such as to create strong hopes of converts in the near future. They are all from among the graduates of the Bible school, and some of them the very first. Two of our largest churches are self-supporting, and three others nearly so. Some of these pastors are men able to be pastors in very truth, only calling on the missionary for advice in cases of discipline, or plans for special work, while others lean on the missionary and expect to be directed by him in nearly everything. Then there are preachers who are evangelists under the direction of the missionary. Their families live at the central stations, and they go out itinerating as they are sent, or accompany the missionary on evangelistic tours.

COLPORTEURS.—These are men who travel on foot many miles, visiting hundreds of villages, selling books and distributing tracts. Their books consist of Bibles, New Testaments, Gospels, and other portions of the Bible, with sometimes hymn books, Pilgrim's Progress, or other books calculated to attract and hold the attention of those who can read. If they are to be gone some time, and their stock of books is necessarily large, they are accompanied by a *baughy wallah*, a strong man accustomed to carry heavy loads, who swings a bamboo pole over his shoulder with a box of books suspended at each end, and trots off for miles at a stretch. The itinerating preachers also become colporteurs by sometimes doing much of this same work, but a colporteur is not necessarily a preacher.

LIBRARIANS.—In three of our large stations we have mission libraries in town, partaking something of the nature of a reading-room and circulating library. The men in charge of these must be able to attend to the duties immediately connected with such work, and also to converse with those who may desire information on religious subjects.

TEACHERS.—These are not a few, reaching, as they do, from the Bible and high school teachers away down and out and through the whole area of our field. Preparatory schools, primary schools, kindergartens, zenanas, girls' schools, and *patshalas* (schools for beginners)—an army to be taught, and no small task to find those competent to teach them. We have been fortunate, however, in securing men for the higher positions well worthy of the trust—themselves having been educated in other missions, or men who are from among our own very best. We have been obliged to employ Hindu teachers in many of the lower positions, but under the supervision either of the missionaries themselves or of Christian inspectors who visit the schools regularly. The zenanas, kindergarten and girls' schools are all taught by Christian women, some of whom are growing old in the service and some just beginning as young women.

INSPECTORS.—These are men who regularly make the rounds of the schools of the mission, scattered here and there, far away from the central stations. They examine the schools, note their progress or otherwise, supplement the religious teaching, and themselves become evangelists and colporteurs by the teachings they give, the tracts they distribute, and often by the portions of scripture they have for sale along with the school books necessary for replenishing the needs of the schools they visit.

BIBLE WOMEN.—These are often confounded with zenana teachers, but are quite distinct. They are women evangelists going where men would not be allowed, for they can enter the homes of the women, give them the gospel in song, and read to them the teachings of Christ, sitting quietly by their side. Zenana teachers have their regular pupils, to whom they give both secular and religious teaching, but Bible women give only religious teaching, going here and there to many homes in the cities or to the myriad villages scattered far and wide.

No list of native helpers would be complete without mentioning our Sabbath school superintendents and teachers, the faithful ones on committee work in the C. E., the officers in our temperance organizations, those who may be depended on at the prayer-meetings; and, indeed, we should not leave out the cook, the *ayah* (nurse), and the indispensable *punkah wallah* (the man who keeps the house fan in motion).

This army of helpers is the channel, with its ramifications, by which the work of the mission must be done. The missionary is but one individual, and a foreigner at that. He seems to be a necessity to lead, direct and devise, and of course to *do* also so far as one person can, but the men of the country having the language and its idioms, understanding their own countrymen and how to reach them as no foreigner ever can, must be the instruments by which God can accomplish the setting up of his kingdom among them. But right here a state of things confronts us which fills us with apprehension, or might if we did not believe that the Lord of the whole earth accomplishes his purposes in spite of seeming difficulties. Our young men have become educated and fitted for positions commanding higher pay than their fathers ever received, (either in government service with a pension in view, or in some private company with promise of rapid promotion and increase of salary) are not inclined to enter the ministry or mission employ with smaller pay and no provision for the possible years of old age and inactivity. So our ranks of helpers are not filling up according to the widening fields and opportunities nor according to the increase in Christian population.

This condition of things, or something akin, it seems, is not unknown even in Christian America with its centuries of development, so we must not criticise the young Christian men of Bengal and Orissa too harshly, but may it not be possible that we ourselves have thought too lightly of Christ's injunction, "Pray ye the Lord laborers into his harvest," and so are in a measure guilty before him. The mysterious connection of prayer with supply we may not understand, but we can be obedient.

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THE BOY DEMI-GOD OF TIBET.

At the head of the absolutely religious government, or theocracy which rules this strange land, is supposed to be the Dalai Lama, regarded as an incarnation of Buddha, although the power behind this peculiar pope and the actual ruler of the administration, is a person named the Gyalpo, or temporal chief. The Dalai Lama is usually chosen from a select number of little boys, only three or four years old. These lads are subjected to ridiculous tests in order to discover into which of them the spirit Buddha has passed in a new incarnation. Probably they are coached up by some of the lamas, these being bribed by the parents of the children. It is recorded that a boy once attained this dignity because he pretended to recognize certain articles which had been used by him in a former state of existence, and as previous Grand Lamas had actually possessed these objects the demonstration was accounted complete. The child wound up his identifications by choosing a decrepit old horse, and rejecting a number of beautiful ponies, declaring that he had formerly used the sorry jade.

The young Dalai Lama is entitled to profound compassion on account of the certain doom that awaits him. He is kept in absolute seclusion in the palace at Lhasa, and is never seen by the outside world. The Gyalpo has entire charge of him, and at the age of fifteen or sixteen he dies of some mysterious disease, when it is announced that his spirit has passed to another infant, whose identity will be revealed under the conditions of the proper tests.

—The mission stations in Manchuria, formerly supported by Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, have recently either been proscribed or placed in the hands of Russian priests.