

THE CURSE OF EMPTY HANDS.

At dawn the call was heard,
 And busy reapers stirred
 Along the highway leading to the wheat
 "Wilt reap with us?" they said.
 I smiled and shook my head,
 "Disturb me not," said I, "my dreams are sweet."

I sat with folded hands,
 And saw across the lands
 The waiting harvest shining on the hill;
 I heard the reapers sing
 Their song of harvesting,
 And thought to go, but dreamed and waited still.

The day at last was done,
 And homeward, one by one,
 The reapers went, well laden as they passed
 There was no misspent day,
 Not long hours dreamed away
 In sloth that turns to sting the soul at last.

A reaper lingered near,
 "What!" cried he, "Idle here?
 Where are the sheaves your hands have bound to-
 day?"

"Alas!" I made reply,
 "I let the day pass by
 Until too late to work. I dreamed the hours away."

"O, foolish one," he said,
 And sadly shook his head,
 "The dreaming soul is in the way of death
 The harvest soon is o'er,
 Rouse up and dream no more!
 Act, for the summer fadeth like a breath

"What if the Master came
 To-night and called your name,
 Asking how many sheaves your hands had made?
 If at the Lord's command
 You showed but empty hands,
 Condemned, your dreaming soul would stand dis-
 mayed."

Filled with strange terror then,
 Lest chance come not again,
 I sought the wheat fields while the others slept
 "Perhaps ere break of day,
 The Lord will come this way,"
 A voice kept saying, till, with fear I wept.

Through all the long, still night,
 Among the wheat fields white,
 I reaped and bound the sheaves of yellow grain.
 I dared not pause to rest,
 Such fear possessed my breast.
 So for my dreams I paid the price in pain

But when the morning broke
 And rested reapers woke
 My heart leaped up as sunrise kissed the lands,
 For came he soon or late
 The Lord of the estate
 Would find me bearing not the curse of empty
 hands. —Selected.

A MISS AGNEW, of New York, it is said, when only eight years old, gave her heart to mission work. She went to Ceylon and spent forty-three unbroken years. A thousand girls passed through her school. She led six hundred girls to Christ. Forty Bible women in India were trained in her school.

DANGEROUS PRAYERS.

"I WANT you to spend fifteen minutes every day praying for Foreign Missions," said the pastor to some young people in his congregation. "But beware how you pray, for I warn you that it is a costly experiment."

"Costly?" they asked in surprise.
 "Ay, costly," he cried. "When Carey began to pray for the conversion of the world, it cost him himself, and it cost those who prayed with him very much. Brainerd prayed for the dark-skinned savages, and after two years of blessed work, it cost him his life. Two students in Mr. Moody's summer school began to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more servants into His harvest; and lo! it is going to cost our country five thousand young men and women who have, in answer to this prayer, pledged themselves to the work. Be sure it is a dangerous thing to pray in earnest for this work; you will find that you cannot pray and withhold your labor, or pray and withhold your money; nay, that your very life will no longer be your own when your prayers begin to be answered."

NEWS FROM THE FIELD.

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Western education is producing a new and rapidly spreading type of Hindu, no longer fawning and subservient, but ambitious and self-asserting. One of the latest developments of this growth is seen in the appearance of the first number of *The Hindu Magazine*, devoted to the propagation of that faith. Upon this *The Times* says:—

"Everywhere the necessity for a reconstruction of Indian society is felt: for an adaptation of ancient usages and beliefs to the teachings of modern science and the needs of modern life. The struggle is whether the reconstruction shall be from within or without. Hinduism, not less than Christianity, feels confident that it contains within itself the solution of the problem."

But a system which, like Hinduism, can worship almost everything *except* God, and is little better than "a religion of despair," can never raise or purify India either socially or religiously. Dry-rot is fastening upon the ancient religions of the East, and the old superstitions are being violently shaken. Christianity is to take their places, the home churches must send forth more labourers into the Lord's harvest.

THERE are indications that the time is at hand for a great blessing in India. This "slow old land" is beginning to arouse from her sleep of centuries and respond to the tender touch of a faith that regenerates. Dr. Phillips writes almost enthusiastically of the outlook. There are open doors on every side. Prayers are being answered, and long, patient labor is having its reward. All India is ready for a forward movement. In *Life and Light* we are told of a wide-spread restlessness and a spirit of inquiry in India. In a Madras paper these lines are given as the cry of the multitude to-day.

"We are weary of empty creeds,
 Of guides who shew no man the way,
 Of worship linked with lust and shame.
 Life is an ill, the sea of births is wide,
 And we are weary—who shall be our guide?"

Thank God for these consciously weary and heavily laden, to whom the missionaries may carry the pitying "Come with me, and ye shall find rest for your soul."